**Working towards minimal standards for EU fluency specialists**

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### 1. ECSF specialization course

- The European Clinical Specialization on Fluency Disorders (ECSF) is a one-year specialization course of 20 ECTS* credits (corresponding to 200 hours of study time).
- Developed by 10 EU universities from 7 countries (Belgium, Ireland, Malta, Sweden, Germany, Finland, The Netherlands) with EU funding (Erasmus curriculum development: 28095-IC-1-2005-1-BE-ERASMUS-MODUC-1).
- The specialization course, compatible with current speech-language therapy (SLT) workload, consists of 2 weeks of intensive teaching and learning (Dublin & Antwerp) with in between home-follow-up sessions (mentor/coach sessions) at regular intervals during the year.
- Lecturing is combined with preparatory readings & home assignments. The specialized clinical training, under supervision of an approved fluency specialist, can start after intensive week 1. Evaluation is portfolio-based.

### 2. ECSF graduates

- 54 participants over 3 course cycles.
- Course graduates distinguish themselves by their outstanding ability, in-depth knowledge and expertise in the field of fluency disorders.
- ECSF graduates are now undertaking work in Europe and beyond.

### 3. Need for minimal standards

- Minimal standards are necessary for quality assurance of the certification of new specialists and the ongoing certification of former graduates.
- The development and establishment of ‘preferred practice guidelines’ relating to standards, covering ethical and professional elements, are integral to the ECSF-objectives.

- Completion of the first year of the ECSF training is the first important step in the certification process as a Fluency Specialist. For ECSF-graduates to become ‘ECSF-recognized/registered fluency specialists’, the following will be necessary:
  a) Additional clinical practice working with clients who stutter over a specific period of time;
  b) Continuing professional development activities (similar to CEUs);
  c) Participation in mentoring activities;
  d) Participation at intervision activities (e.g., discussion groups);
  e) Final evaluation by the ECSF committee.

### 4. Stages of development

- The proposed project for developing minimal standards consists of the following steps:
  a) Reviewing documents developed for specialists in other speech language pathology professional organizations, including ASHA, IALP, CPL0L, and a range of EU professional bodies.
  b) Reviewing minimal standards documents of other disciplines, including medicine and clinical psychology.
  c) A consultation process among the consortium members and other experts - including ASHA’s Specialty Board on Fluency Disorders;
  d) Collecting and reviewing established documents of major national and international professional bodies;
  e) Drafting basic principles that need to guide the development of best practice and ethical guidelines and that transcend national boundaries;
  f) Preparing the first draft of the European specific minimum standards guidelines;
  g) These draft guidelines will be submitted for review to appropriate professional bodies;
  h) Further consultation among the ECSF consortium members;
  i) Finalization of the trans-European agreement on minimum standards.
  j) Implementation and ongoing evaluation of the minimum standards agreement.

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*a* ECTS (European Credit Transfer System)

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