



Standards of Competence

THE ASSOCIATION FOR IEMT PRACTITIONERS

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Overview

This *Standards of Competence* document establishes core competencies that all Integral Eye Movement Therapy (IEMT) practitioners must meet to deliver safe, effective, and ethical therapeutic services. These standards align with the **Professional Standards Authority's** guidelines for registered health and social care practitioners and reflect IEMT-specific practices as outlined on the [official IEMT wiki](#). They are intended to protect the public, uphold professional integrity, and support ongoing practitioner development.

The professional competencies are one component of our suite of tools used to regulate the profession and should be read alongside our other standards and codes, including the Code of Conduct.

While globally applicable, practitioners must also comply with local laws, regulations, and cultural considerations relevant to their practice areas. Continuous professional development (CPD) is emphasised to ensure practitioners stay current with evolving practices and ethical standards.

Purpose

This document serves to:

- Ensure high standards of competence and client-centred, ethical therapy among IEMT practitioners.
- Provide clear guidelines on the required skills, knowledge, and behaviours for IEMT practice.
- Support continuous professional development (CPD) to maintain and enhance competence, adhering to both global and regional legal requirements.
- Promote inclusivity by integrating trauma-informed care and cultural responsiveness into therapeutic practices.

Scope

These standards apply to all certified members of The Association for IEMT Practitioners, including registered practitioners, trainees, and those in supervisory or training roles. Compliance is mandatory for maintaining registration and professional standing within the Association.

About this document

1. Date of effect

These Standards of Competence were published in November 2024. They will take effect on 25 January 2025.

2. Development of the Standards of Competence

The British Board of Integral Eye Movement Therapy initiated a comprehensive review of professional competencies in 2023 as part of our commitment to maintaining excellence in therapeutic practice. The aim was to establish standards that reflect contemporary developments in therapeutic practice, international competency frameworks, and essential aspects of digital delivery and cultural responsiveness.

These Standards of Competence were developed through extensive research, expert consultation with experienced IEMT practitioners and trainers, and consideration of client feedback. The resulting document represents a robust framework ensuring IEMT practitioners meet the highest standards of professional practice while maintaining the unique aspects of IEMT methodology.

3. Review of this document

The British Board of Integral Eye Movement Therapy will regularly review the *Standards of Competence* to maintain their relevance to the expectations of competence required for contemporary IEMT practice. The next review is scheduled for December 1, 2027, two years after implementation, ensuring the standards remain aligned with evolving therapeutic practices and professional requirements.

Core Competencies for IEMT Practitioners

1. Knowledge and Understanding of IEMT

Practitioners must:

- Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of IEMT principles, methodology, and techniques as outlined in official IEMT training materials and practice guidelines.
 - Clearly explain IEMT principles to clients, including how it works, its limitations, and its benefits.
 - Stay informed about developments in IEMT and related therapeutic fields, demonstrating a commitment to continuous professional development.
 - Understand how cultural, social, and systemic factors influence client experiences and outcomes.
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2. Client Assessment

Practitioners must:

- Conduct thorough assessments to determine IEMT suitability, identifying client needs, risks, and contraindications.
 - Evaluate the client's physical, emotional, and psychological state to tailor the most effective therapeutic approach.
 - Use culturally sensitive assessment methods to ensure inclusivity and relevance.
 - Employ trauma-informed practices to prioritise client safety and trust.
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3. Application of IEMT Techniques

Practitioners must:

- Be proficient in delivering the core IEMT techniques, including:
 - **Eye Movement Techniques:** Using specific, structured eye movements to address emotional imprints and identity-related issues.
 - **Submodality Shifts:** Adjusting sensory representations to alter the client's internal experience of emotions and identity states.
 - **Pattern Recognition and Modification:** Identifying and modifying client patterns, especially in chronic emotional states, and using IEMT to modify them in a therapeutic context.
 - Adapt their use of IEMT to the specific needs of each client, ensuring that the therapy is client-centred and responsive to individual differences.
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4. Ethical Practice

Practitioners must adhere to the Association's ethical guidelines, aligned with the Professional Standards Authority's principles:

- Obtain informed consent, ensuring clients understand IEMT processes and agree voluntarily.
- Uphold strict confidentiality, disclosing information only when legally required or with client consent.
- Provide therapy equitably, avoiding discrimination on any basis.
- Maintain professional boundaries, avoiding dual relationships or conflicts of interest.
- Recognise and act within their scope of practice, referring clients to other professionals when needed.

- Reflect critically on personal biases and their potential impact on the therapeutic process.
 - Apply ethical decision-making frameworks to address dilemmas.
 - Ensure therapy is accessible, providing accommodations for clients with disabilities or language barriers.
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5. Cultural Competence and Inclusivity

Practitioners must:

- Demonstrate cultural competence by understanding and respecting the diverse backgrounds, values, and beliefs of their clients.
 - Be aware of how cultural differences influence emotional experiences, perceptions, and responses to therapy.
 - Tailor their approach to meet the cultural needs of clients, ensuring therapy is both effective and sensitive to cultural differences.
 - Be mindful of language barriers, cultural taboos, and varying expectations around mental health and therapeutic practices.
 - Continuously educate themselves on cultural issues, seeking supervision or guidance when working with clients from backgrounds different from their own.
 - Address and respect any specific cultural norms or practices relevant to the therapeutic process, ensuring a non-judgemental and inclusive environment.
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6. Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Practitioners must:

- Communicate effectively, providing clear explanations of IEMT and actively listening to client concerns.
 - Build relationships based on trust, empathy, and respect, fostering a supportive therapeutic environment.
 - Coordinate and collaborate with colleagues, supervisors, and other professionals when necessary, especially in cases requiring referrals or integrated care.
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7. Record-Keeping

Practitioners must:

- Maintain accurate, clear, and timely records of all client interactions, including assessments, treatment plans, progress notes, and outcomes.

- Retain records securely in compliance with GDPR or relevant data protection and privacy laws, keeping them for a minimum of five years or as required by local regulations. Practitioners should verify specific retention requirements based on regional or national guidelines.
 - Ensure records are accessible to clients upon request, in accordance with data protection and privacy laws.
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8. Remote Therapy and Digital Competency

In delivering IEMT through remote or digital means, practitioners must ensure the same standards of care, confidentiality, and professionalism as with in-person sessions. Remote therapy requires additional considerations to address technical, ethical, and client engagement factors unique to digital environments.

Practitioners must:

- **Ensure Technical Competency:** Familiarise themselves with the necessary technology for remote therapy (e.g., video conferencing platforms) and ensure all digital tools are secure, reliable, and user-friendly. Conduct a trial session or connection test with clients to confirm that both practitioner and client are comfortable using the technology. Have a backup plan (e.g., telephone session) in case of technical issues that interrupt a session.
- **Secure Client Data:** Use encrypted and secure platforms that comply with data protection regulations (e.g., GDPR or HIPAA, as applicable). Ensure all digital records are stored securely and in compliance with local privacy laws, treating remote session notes with the same confidentiality as in-person sessions.
- **Create a Suitable Remote Environment:** Conduct sessions in a private, distraction-free space to maintain confidentiality and focus. Guide clients in preparing their own private and comfortable space for the session to foster an environment conducive to therapy.
- **Obtain Informed Consent for Remote Therapy:** Clearly explain the remote therapy process to clients, including potential limitations, and obtain their informed consent for remote IEMT sessions. Address issues specific to digital settings, such as privacy concerns, potential interruptions, or limitations in reading nonverbal cues, so clients are aware of possible differences from in-person sessions.
- **Adapt Techniques as Needed:** Be prepared to modify certain IEMT techniques to suit a remote format and ensure the techniques can be delivered effectively without physical presence. Use alternative approaches when eye movement techniques or other physical cues are harder to guide through a screen, remaining mindful of how this impacts the therapeutic process and client experience.

- **Respond to Emergencies or High-Risk Situations:** Have a protocol for managing high-risk situations in a remote setting, including access to emergency contacts, local resources, and client location information if intervention is needed. Establish clear steps with clients on what to do if they become emotionally distressed during a remote session, including safe ways to pause or end the session if needed.
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9. Supervision and Self-Reflection

Practitioners are required to:

- Engage in regular supervision with a qualified supervisor to support reflective practice, enhance therapeutic skills, and address any professional or ethical challenges. The frequency and format of supervision should align with the practitioner's level of experience and the demands of their practice.
 - Practice self-reflection by continuously evaluating their work, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, and ensuring they remain within their scope of competence. This includes being aware of personal biases and emotional responses that may influence the therapeutic process.
 - Seek supervision when facing complex cases, ethical dilemmas, or when personal factors may affect their professional judgement. Supervision ensures accountability, guidance, and support in such situations.
 - Maintain records of supervision sessions, documenting key discussions, insights, and actions taken to enhance practice. Practitioners should be able to provide evidence of these sessions upon request.
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Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

1. CPD Requirements

Practitioners must:

- Complete a minimum of **30 CPD hours** annually, covering IEMT techniques, therapeutic competencies, and professional ethics.
 - Participate in diverse CPD activities, such as workshops, conferences, peer learning, and online courses.
 - Align CPD activities with personal development needs identified through self-reflection or supervision.
 - Maintain detailed CPD records, providing evidence upon request by the Association.
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2. Development and Maintenance of Skills

Practitioners must:

- Regularly update skills to reflect advancements in IEMT and related therapeutic fields.
 - Undertake refresher training after extended periods of absence from practice.
 - Develop expertise in managing complex or specialised client cases, including those involving trauma or diverse cultural backgrounds.
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Fitness to Practice

1. Physical and Mental Fitness

Practitioners must:

- Ensure their physical and mental health supports safe and effective practice.
 - Seek supervision or withdraw from practice if personal issues impair competence.
 - Create and maintain a self-care plan to manage stress, workload, and professional resilience.
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2. Legal and Professional Standing

Practitioners must:

- Maintain valid insurance, licenses, and certifications.
 - Report disciplinary actions or legal violations to the Association promptly.
 - Understand and comply with jurisdiction-specific legal requirements for therapeutic practice.
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Professional Behaviour

1. Conduct

Practitioners are expected to uphold professionalism, integrity, and respect in all aspects of practice. Any misconduct, whether in or outside the therapeutic context, may lead to disciplinary action.

2. Addressing Competency Issues

If a practitioner is found lacking in competence or violating these standards, the British Board of IEMT may assign remedial actions, such as further training or supervised practice. Repeated failure to meet these standards may result in suspension or certification revocation.

3. Social Media Conduct

Practitioners must:

- **Maintain Professional Boundaries**
 - Avoid interacting with clients or discussing client-related matters on personal or public social media platforms.
 - Refrain from connecting with clients on personal social media accounts unless appropriate to the professional context and agreed upon by the client.
 - Ensure any online interactions are strictly professional, avoiding dual relationships that may blur personal and professional boundaries.
- **Respect Client Confidentiality**
 - Never share client information, case studies, or therapy details on social media, even in anonymised form, unless explicit consent is obtained and the context is entirely suitable (e.g., professional forums intended for case consultation).
 - Be cautious about sharing any material that could indirectly reveal a client's identity, location, or other personal details.
- **Accurately Represent IEMT and Scope of Practice**
 - When discussing IEMT online, practitioners should provide clear and accurate information that aligns with current IEMT guidelines, avoiding exaggeration of outcomes or making unfounded claims.
 - Do not give specific therapeutic advice or engage in "therapy" with clients or potential clients over social media. Public discussions should remain general and educational.
- **Be Mindful of Public Perception and Professional Integrity**
 - Uphold a standard of professionalism in all online interactions, including comments, likes, or shares, to maintain public trust in IEMT and the Association.
 - Avoid posting or engaging with content that could be considered disrespectful, inflammatory, or discriminatory.
 - Practitioners are advised to be cautious with opinions on controversial topics, as these may impact their reputation and credibility.

- **Regularly Review Privacy Settings**

- Practitioners are encouraged to regularly check and update privacy settings on personal social media accounts to prevent unintended access by clients or the public.
- Keep a clear separation between personal and professional profiles where possible to safeguard privacy and maintain a clear professional image.

Glossary of Terms

The following definitions are relevant to understanding the Standards of Competence for IEMT Practitioners. They have been adapted from several documents, including the Association's standards, codes, and guidelines.

Assessment: The process of evaluating a client's suitability for IEMT therapy and determining their specific needs and goals.

Client-Centred Practice: An approach that places the client's needs, preferences, and values at the centre of therapeutic decision-making.

Clinical Governance: The framework through which practitioners are accountable for maintaining and improving the quality of care in IEMT practice.

Confidentiality: An ethical obligation to protect client information, sharing only when legally required or with explicit consent.

CPD (Continuous Professional Development): A structured approach to maintaining and enhancing professional knowledge and skills through various learning activities and formal training.

Cultural Competence: The ability to work effectively with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds by understanding, respecting, and integrating their values, beliefs, and practices.

Data Protection Compliance: Adherence to relevant data protection laws in handling client information.

Digital Competency: The ability to use secure and effective digital tools for therapy, including video conferencing platforms.

Digital Security: Measures taken to protect client data and maintain confidentiality in digital environments, including encryption and secure platforms.

Documentation Standards: Required protocols for maintaining accurate and complete client records in IEMT practice.

Dual Relationship: When a practitioner has more than one type of relationship with a client (e.g., therapeutic and social).

Duty of Care: The legal and ethical obligation to provide appropriate and professional IEMT services within established guidelines.

Emotional Imprint: A persistent emotional response pattern formed from past experiences that IEMT aims to address and modify.

Ethical Decision-Making Framework: A structured approach to resolving ethical dilemmas in IEMT practice.

High-Risk Protocols: Established procedures to address emergencies, including client distress, suicidal ideation, or harm to others.

Identity States: The various self-perceptions and roles that influence a person's emotional responses and behaviours, central to IEMT work.

Informed Consent: The process of ensuring clients understand the therapy, its benefits, risks, and limitations, and agree voluntarily to participate.

Mandatory Reporting: Legal obligation to report certain situations or incidents to relevant authorities.

Outcome Measurement: The systematic evaluation of therapeutic progress and effectiveness of IEMT interventions.

Pattern Interruption: The therapeutic technique of disrupting established emotional or behavioural patterns through specific eye movement exercises in IEMT.

Peer Review: The process of evaluation by other qualified IEMT practitioners to maintain quality standards.

Professional Boundaries: The physical and emotional limits that maintain appropriate therapeutic relationships and protect both client and practitioner.

Professional Indemnity: Insurance coverage required for therapeutic practice, protecting both practitioner and client.

Quality Indicators: Measurable elements used to evaluate the quality of IEMT service delivery and outcomes.

Record Retention: The required duration and manner of maintaining client records according to legal and professional standards.

Reflexivity: A practitioner's ability to critically evaluate their own biases and behaviours to improve the therapeutic relationship.

Risk Assessment: A systematic process of evaluating potential risks to client safety and well-being before and during IEMT intervention.

Scope of Competence: The boundaries of a practitioner's expertise and qualified practice areas within IEMT and related therapeutic approaches.

Scope of Practice: The defined range of activities a practitioner is qualified to perform based on their training and experience.

Submodalities: The specific sensory qualities of internal representations that affect emotional responses and are targeted in IEMT intervention.

Supervision: A structured process for practitioners to receive feedback and support from a qualified supervisor.

Trauma-Informed Care: An approach that recognises the impact of trauma on individuals and integrates safety, empowerment, and trust into the therapeutic process.

Treatment Planning: The systematic process of developing and documenting therapeutic goals and interventions in IEMT.

Commitment Declaration

This document represents the foundation of ethical, client-centred, and professional IEMT practice. It ensures public trust and supports the continued growth of practitioners and the reputation of *The Association for IEMT Practitioners*.

Practitioners must acknowledge and adhere to these standards, striving for excellence and integrity in their practice.