



EATA Guidelines* to Start your CTA Journey

Pre-Contract Preparation Resource

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* The guide was prepared by the **Exam Project Group (EPG)**, initiated by **Patrick Odendaal**, with contributions from **Sia Susorova, Natalia Vasileva, Rolindes Arroyo, Berit Fahlén** and **Natalia Artamonova-Weimar**. The EPG's aim was to create a clear, approachable resource for trainees who are considering a CTA contract, to help them orient themselves before entering the formal exam process.



What's Inside — The Pre-Contract CTA Journey

This guide supports you in preparing for the CTA journey with clarity and integrity.

Before signing a contract, it invites you to reflect deeply, explore your readiness, and build grounded motivation — aligning who you are with who you're becoming.

You'll find:

Start With Why: Questions that help you connect to your deeper motivation

Reflective Questions Before You Begin: A chance to pause and tune into readiness, values, and direction.

The First Commitment Is to Yourself: The moment you choose to take yourself and your learning seriously

- **Stage One:** Orientation & Exploration: Getting to know the structure, expectations, and support around the CTA process
- **Stage Two:** Testing the Fit: Trying it on — through supervision, journaling, and real-life application
- **Stage Three:** Owning the Process: Moving from passive learning to authorship and inner clarity
- **Stage Four:** Formal Commitment: Signing the contract, choosing your supervisor, and starting the formal CTA path

The First Commitment Is to Yourself: The moment you choose to take yourself and your learning seriously

CTA Requirements at a Glance: Training, supervision, therapy, and practice hours — clearly outlined

Important Notes & Tips: Key clarifications about hours, sequence, and staying grounded

The Journey Is Not Linear: A reminder to honour your rhythm — with support and self-respect

An Invitation to Begin: A call to take yourself seriously — and start walking the path

Start With Why

Why this path? Why now?

What draws you to the path of becoming a **Certified Transactional Analyst** — not just as a practitioner with a certain method, but as a way of seeing, sensing, and meaning-making? A lens that reshapes how you think, feel, and behave.

Ask yourself:

- What kind of practitioner am I becoming?
- What questions keep asking to be lived — not just answered?
- What support, structure, and challenge do I need to grow with integrity?

The CTA certificate isn't just a qualification or a step on a career ladder. It's a commitment — to the work, to your own unfolding, and to the people you choose to support in their development.



Reflective Questions Before You Begin

This is a time for honesty, curiosity, and wide-open eyes. Before the contract, take a breath — and ask yourself:

- **Who am I drawn to work with** — individuals, couples, groups, or whole systems?
- **What field of TA speaks to me most deeply:** psychotherapy, counselling, organisational, educational? And why?
- **What goal am I trying to achieve** — and why does it matter to me?
- **What personal change am I ready to commit to** — and is it:
Positive / Specific / Observable / Achievable / Possible / Safe / From Adult — and is your Free Child enthusiastic? / What might it cost me?
- **How do I relate to contracting** — with clients, supervisors, and myself? Where might I over-promise, under-define, avoid... or even sabotage the clarity I say I want?
- **What is my relationship to power**, responsibility, and the authority of the practitioner role?
- **What does “professionalism” mean to me** — and where does it meet my own script messages or drivers?
- **How do I feel about visibility**, money, and the idea of commercialising my practice?
- **What support do I need** — supervision, community, mentorship — to grow safely and ethically?
- **What are the legal frameworks** in my country around psychological, psychotherapeutic, educational, organisational or counselling work?
- **Is the title I’m aiming for** (e.g. “psychotherapist”) legally protected where I live — and does CTA(P) meet those criteria?
- **Where am I in terms of my own inner process** — am I ready to engage with others’ stories without losing myself?
- **Who do I want to support in their development in this process** — and how can I stay connected to the wider TA community for support, challenge, and perspective?

Becoming an internationally recognised TA practitioner (CTA) isn’t just about skills. It’s about holding presence, power, and permission — with integrity. These questions don’t have to be answered all at once. But they’re worth living, gently and honestly, as you move forward.

The First Commitment Is to Yourself

“I want to become a Certified Transactional Analyst — and I take responsibility for my learning.”

No contract yet. No deadlines. Just a choice. Just clarity.

You begin with intention — not paperwork.

The path becomes clearer as you begin to walk it.

Stage One: Orientation & Exploration

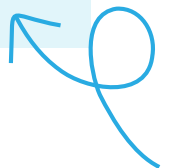
This is where you familiarise yourself with what the CTA path involves — and start feeling into whether it's the right direction for you.

You explore:

- **Your Field:** Psychotherapy / Counselling / Organisational / Educational
- **The Standards:** Required hours (training, supervision, therapy), exams, ethical expectations
- **The Practicalities:** Time, financial investment, emotional availability ~
- **Your Network:** Supervisors, trainers, peers, potential supporters
- **Your Community:** A global, diverse community of practitioners — each on their own path, but walking alongside with shared language and mutual respect

This stage is about gathering information and tuning into your own readiness — not proving anything to others.

Tip: You don't have to know everything now. Talk to different practitioners, read widely — and stay curious. This stage is about orientation, not obligation.




Stage Two: Testing the Fit

In this stage, you experiment. You try the process on. You begin showing up with more clarity, consistency, and ownership.

What You Might Do:

- **Engage** in supervision and real-life practice that links theory to your day-to-day work
- **Keep** a reflective journal — tracking client dynamics, internal shifts, and recurring dilemmas
- **Take part** in group process, peer learning, or mentoring conversations that stretch your thinking

This is a phase of **growing commitment** — still before any formal step — where you act as if you were already on the path and notice what comes alive.



Tip: All eligible hours (training, supervision, therapy) count — even before signing a training contract. Start logging now. Try collecting experience across different fields or populations. It helps you make a grounded, embodied choice about your CTA specialisation.



Stage Three: Owning the Process

Now, you're no longer passively exploring. You're actively shaping your learning — even if the contract hasn't been signed yet.

What Starts to Happen:

- **You take responsibility** for your development
- **You initiate conversations** with supervisors and trainers
- **You track your progress** with a sense of authorship • You use TA — not to perform, but to integrate, reflect, and relate

What You Begin to Grow:

- **The ability to name ego states** in real time — in yourself and others
- **The skill to hold process** as well as content
- **The courage to work** from clarity, not cleverness

This stage often leads naturally to the next question:

Am I ready to formally commit to the CTA path — or do I need more time to integrate, explore, or pause?

Tip: You don't need a contract to take yourself seriously. Start practising as if you're already in — with the integrity, reflection, and presence you want to grow into.

Stage Four: Formal Commitment

This is where the informal path becomes official.

You've explored, tested, and begun to own your learning.

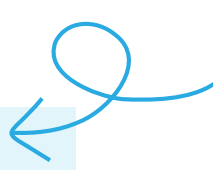
Now, you step forward with clarity and commitment.

What Happens Now:

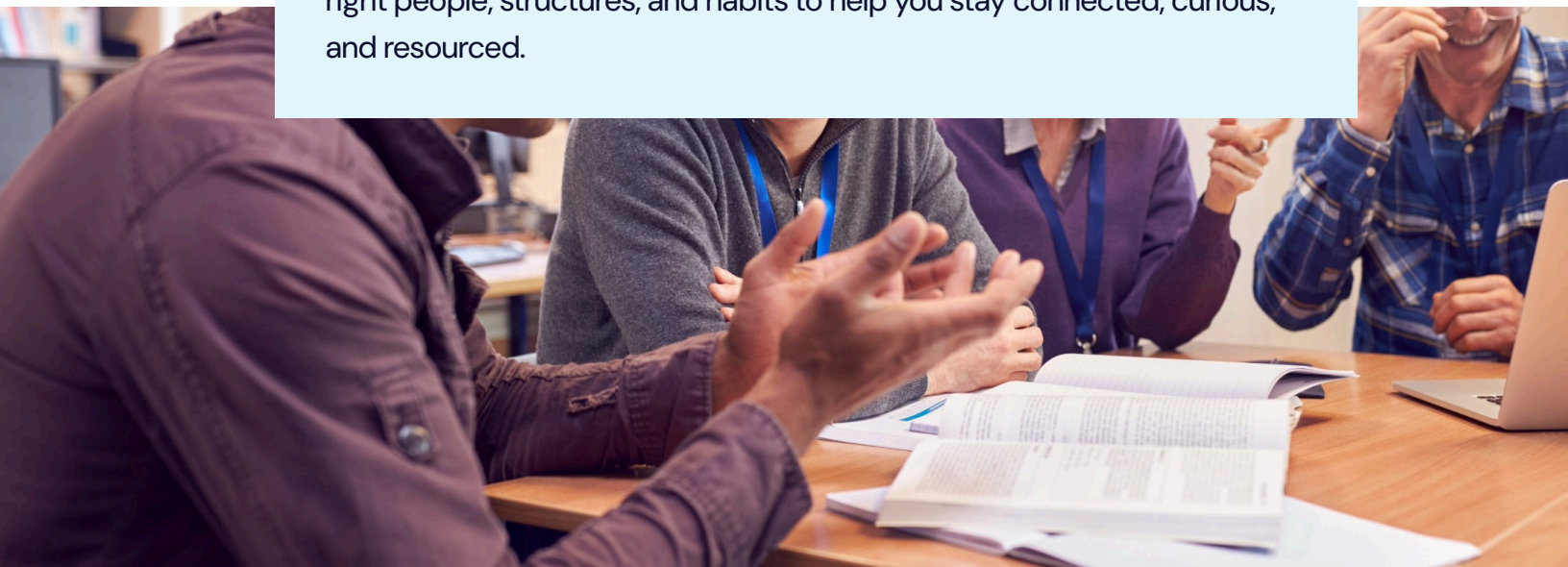
- **You choose your Principal Supervisor** — a PTSTA or TSTA in your chosen field
- **You sign the CTA Training Contract** — the formal agreement that marks your official entry into CTA-level training
- **You submit the contract** via your national TA association or directly to EATA

Once your contract is approved by EATA (currently confirmed by Marianne):

- **You are officially recognised as a CTA Trainee**
- **Your training becomes formalised** — with structure, support, and shared responsibility
- **Important:** Eligible hours (training, supervision, therapy) completed before signing still count, as long as they meet EATA standards
- **From here on**, you train with clearer direction and increasing focus on assessment readiness



Tip: This is a great moment to revisit your reflective questions, clarify your goals, and strengthen your support systems. **Signing the contract** doesn't mean you're "ready for an exam" — it **means you're ready to deepen your process with full intention**. Surround yourself with the right people, structures, and habits to help you stay connected, curious, and resourced.



CTA Requirements Snapshot

Training (with PTSTA/TSTA): 300 hours

Supervision (with PTSTA/TSTA): 150 hours — including at least 75 hours of formal supervision

Here's what formal supervision means in our CTA training context — based on the **EATA Training and Examinations Handbook** (April 2025, section 7.2.3.5):

"The candidate must have received at least 150 hours of supervision during their training.

75 hours must be TA supervision given by a PCTA TS, PTSTA, CTA TS or a TSTA, of those at least 40 hours must have been with the candidate's principal supervisor."

So, **formal supervision means:**

- You're working with a qualified TA supervisor (PTSTA, TSTA, etc.)
- You are presenting your own work during the session
- It is contracted and part of your official training (logged, counted)
- It contributes to the required 150 supervision hours for CTA

Group sessions count only if everyone presents their own work — for example, if 3 trainees meet for 3 hours and all present, each can count 3 hours.

And what's informal supervision?

That's anything **not logged toward official training hours** — for example:

- **Peer-to-peer reflection**
- **Supervision in a non-TA setting** without a recognised supervisor
- **Attending a supervision group** where you don't present your work
- **Chatting through dilemmas** with a colleague or friend

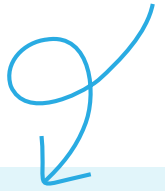
Still useful and supportive — but **it doesn't go on your training log.**



Professional Practice in Your Field: 750 hours

Personal Therapy:

- Mandatory (Psychotherapy)
- Recommended (Counselling, Organisational, Educational)



Tip: Signing the contract is a milestone — not a finish line. Let this be the beginning of training with fuller intention, accountability, and support.

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Important Note

- All eligible hours count from the start — even before signing
- You don't have to be 100% sure to begin
- Trying, testing, and reflecting are part of readiness

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The CTA Journey Is Not Linear

- You will stretch.
- You may pause.
- You will change.

But what holds you is not the title.

It's the process — and the commitment to growing with presence and integrity.

You don't just do your CTA —

you become someone who can carry it.



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An invitation

To those who want to think rigorously.
To feel honestly.
To work with integrity, precision, and care.
TA is not just a method.
It's a way of seeing, choosing, and being — in real contact.
This is your invitation to take that seriously — and to take yourself seriously.

Let's begin.



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