

Fitzmaurice Institute

Teacher Certification Process and Criteria

Certification as an Assistant Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework®

If you satisfactorily complete certification training, you will automatically be awarded the basic level of certification, “Assistant Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework”—and you are considered a “Trem” (from “*tremore*”.) As a Trem, you are a vital part of an FV community that now spans 6 continents. You are eligible to attend our Advanced Training workshops, as well as submit workshop proposals for our Teachers Symposium and our public Freedom & Focus Conference. Your picture and bio, affiliation, specialties, and contact info, as well as your public workshops and classes, will be posted on the Fitzmaurice Institute website. You also have access to “Trem only” web resources on our new Fitzmaurice Institute website, currently in development.

"Satisfactory completion" of your training means that you have attended all of the sessions of the certification program (or missed sessions with approval), taught in some capacity during the interim year, engaged in the mentoring sessions, emailed exams, have a basic understanding and experience of the work, can offer the work to others in a responsible and receptive way, and have fulfilled all other written requirements.

You may elect to stay at this level of certification for a variety of reasons. Regardless of whether you have an interest in becoming an Associate Teacher of FV, you will be recognized as an important part of the Fitzmaurice community of teachers.

Certification as an Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework

Associate Teacher is the next level of certification. Being an Associate entitles you to refer to yourself as an “Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework.” In addition to indicating that you have gained valuable experience through teaching this work, being named an Associate Teacher means that you have been recognized as having a deeper understanding, embodiment, and ability to teach the work.

There is no time limit for applying to move from Assistant to Associate. However, as an Associate Teacher, you are expected to be familiar with current practices even as you continue to develop your own voice within this work. The work evolves and shifts—what was common a decade ago may no longer reflect our current understanding or practices. Staying current with the work (through advanced workshops, conferences, and/or symposia) is therefore necessary.

Associate Teacher Certification: Basic Requirements

Two or more years after being certified as an Assistant Teacher, you can apply for Associate Teacher certification. During this interim period, you will need to have taught FV to individuals as well as groups of two or more students. At least six months of your teaching needs to be recent—with no more than a year having passed since the last time you taught FV. At a minimum, this includes:

120 teaching hours of teaching groups, after Assistant certification. Self documented.

120 teaching hours of teaching individuals, after Assistant certification. Self documented.

15 hours of offering FV as pro bono work, after Assistant certification. Self documented.

In addition, you will also need three references from students/clients/colleagues (one from a trem) that you have worked with in relation to Fitzmaurice Voicework after Assistant Teacher certification.

If you were pursuing an MFA during certification training, you will need to complete it before being considered for Associate Teacher certification.

Further work with Master teachers or with your Mentor may also be required.

Associate Level Certification: Evaluation Process

To evaluate your readiness for Associate level certification, we take three areas into consideration:

1. The above *basic requirements*.
2. Our evolving experience of you over time.
3. Our evaluation of your *observed teaching*.

Observed Teaching Process

During *observed teaching*, three teachers will witness you teach two small group classes and one individual student (all of the students you teach will have had at least a previous introduction to the work). While each of these three teaching opportunities has a particular focus, it's crucial to recognize that the focus is not mutually exclusive. What follows is our recommended order for the teaching, but you may decide to change the order:

1. First group teaching (30 minutes). *Focus: teach fundamentals*. Teach a basic class on destructuring and restructuring. This class should be prepared ahead of time, and your primary task is to offer basic FV.
2. Second group teaching (25 minutes). *Focus: teach to explore*. Teach into your questions and/or passion in relation to this work. Your primary task is to stretch yourself by teaching into your deepest questions and/or passions about FV. This may include combining FV with other kinds of work. You should prepare for this class ahead of time.

3. Teach an individual (15 minutes). *Focus: teach what's in front of you.* Your primary task is to help the person you are teaching with what s/he needs in that moment in relation to their breath, voice, body, and/or presence. Part of this focus involves letting go of any predetermined teaching agenda as you meet your student in that moment.

The observed teaching/feedback process takes about two hours per applicant and includes up to 45 minutes for conversation after the teaching is done. This conversation includes time for you to reflect on the session, feedback to you from the students and the Master Teachers, and your feedback to us. In addition, there will be a 20-minute warm up each morning or afternoon offered to all of the teachers being observed in that session.

Purpose of Observed Teaching

At its heart, observed teaching is an opportunity for the panel of teachers to support you while you teach. It is an opportunity for all of us to explore and learn together, and practice giving and receiving three kinds of feedback.

1. **Evaluation:** This is an opportunity for us to evaluate your readiness to be an Associate Teacher of FV (based on the criteria articulated below).
 - We may evaluate based on any part of your observed teaching session, including the discussion afterward.
 - Should you wish, you can also evaluate the observed teaching process and communicate to us about it during or after your teaching session.
2. **Coaching:** This is an opportunity for us to offer you coaching.
 - We may point to what is working well (in order to recognize and support it).
 - We may also identify areas that can be improved (or that are not working) so that they can be further explored and developed.
 - Should you wish, you can also offer us coaching and communicate to us during or after your teaching session.
3. **Curiosity:** This feedback focuses on being curious and asking questions about what has been offered. You may also wish to share and ask questions about your areas of curiosity.

Associate Level Certification: Evaluation Criteria

The purpose of our articulating and applying these criteria is to support richly varied (but still recognizable), practical, creative, and responsible expressions of Fitzmaurice Voicework.

There are four separate but related categories within our assessment of your application to become an Associate Teacher: Conceptual Understanding; Physical/Vocal Embodiment of the work; Personal and Social Integration of the work; and Ability to Teach the work. Details follow.

Conceptual Understanding

Our Basic Assumptions

It is helpful to comprehend and describe the practice and process (the *what* and *how*) of a subject clearly. Understanding can clarify what may be helpful or unhelpful, provide focus in the midst of chaos, and reveal a need for further clarity. In these and other ways, developing an understanding that is rooted in direct experience supports a continual learning process. The following are meant to be more implicit than explicit and a demonstration of each is not required. Rather, these are the main areas that will help us identify your conceptual understanding.

Define **FV Purpose**: These are the reasons why this work was created and continues to be offered and adapted for specific contexts. There are general purposes that are important to internalize; but it's important that each teacher accesses their own individual sense of this, too.

Identify **FV Principles**: These are the fundamental ideas or concepts that arise within an experience of Fitzmaurice Voicework. An example would be, "teach what's in front of you." A current draft of FV principles can be found in a separate document, currently in development.

Explain **FV Exercises**: These activities are the primary building blocks of the work. In general, these are the destructuring, restructuring, and presence exercises and the various applications that have been developed to explore them.

Integrate **FV-related Anatomy, Physiology, and Neurobiology**: Knowledge of anatomy and physiology related to the voice; including (but not limited to) respiration, phonation, resonance, and articulation. Knowledge of neurobiology as it pertains to our work, including (but not limited to) the central and peripheral nervous systems, fight, flight, freeze, and social engagement, basic regulation and dysregulation of the nervous system.

Summarize **Evolution and Major Influences of FV**: This refers to the genesis of the work and how it has developed over the years as well as the distinct sources that have contributed significantly to shaping the work.

Physical/Vocal Embodiment of Fitzmaurice Voicework

Our Basic Assumptions

Embodying FV is one of the most important aspects of teaching or sharing the work. It is also helpful to develop a congruence between what is said/communicated and how it is embodied by you in the moment.

Incorporate **Responsive & Fluid Breath**: The needs of the moment are clearly reflected in the breath.

Incorporate **Effective Structuring**: The mechanics of structuring are linked with the need to communicate. Your communication is embodied and integrates, as needed, your intellect, passion, creative spirit, and availability.

Use **Flexible & Responsive Voice and Body Language**: Voice, facial expression, and body language shift according to the ever-changing needs of the moment (rather than expressing only a fixed aspect of the personality or expressing only chaotically).

Use **Appropriate Clarity of Speech and Level of Volume**: There is a balance of effort and ease in articulation. There is an ability to adapt with more or less volume depending on the space, the student(s), the witnesses, and the moment.

Use **Appropriate level of Neck, Jaw, and Tongue tension**: There is no noticeable effort in the throat, no noticeable excess effort in the jaw, and no excess tension we might hear/feel in the tongue.

Personal and Social Integration

Our Basic Assumptions:

We're looking for a mix (in no fixed ratio) of freedom and focus, spine and heart, receptivity and capacity to speak in a direct manner.

Model **Presence**: Subjectively, presence is experienced as a fluid awareness of internal and external experience. It includes the ability to focus on and be curious about what matters in the moment. It also includes an ability to take up space—to be seen, heard, and felt with a vulnerable confidence (rather than diminishing oneself or needing to prove oneself).

Adopt **Clear and Adaptable Boundaries**: This is rooted in understanding and awareness that one's own experience isn't the same as others' experience. While our experience can be influenced by others, we nevertheless take responsibility for our own experience. This includes the ability to differentiate between our interpretation of others' actions on the one hand and their subjective experience and intentions on the other. Teaching is not invasive, forcing, or hyper sexualized; it is also not overly protective. Touch and language are respectful and responsive to the specific students being worked with.

Practice **Self-Regulation and Self-Care**: Self-regulation is the ability to maintain a well-regulated nervous system. This includes the ability to experience and express through a range of intensity, and relax after intensity is experienced; to allow comfortable and uncomfortable experience; and to manage physical and mental stress through cultivated resilience. This also includes the ability to contain or act on feelings and motor impulses (including vocal impulses), as appropriate in the moment. Self-care helps maintain self-regulation. Self-care involves acting in ways that contribute towards one's own physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and energetic health. This includes the ability to be gentle and kind with oneself while still holding oneself accountable.

Display **Receptive Leadership**: This is the ability to have direction and initiative while also remaining open, inclusive, and responsive. This includes strong listening abilities—being curious about and valuing others' verbal and non-verbal communication—that support your understanding of others' communication.

Use **Appropriate Communication about the Work with the Public**: This is talking and writing about the work, and advertising it, in ways that accurately represent the work and are congruent with the spirit of this work.

Operate with **Accountability**: This is holding ourselves responsible for our own actions, being reliable, and acknowledging when we make mistakes.

Ability to teach the work

Our Basic Assumptions:

We assume that FV teachers cultivate teaching with an open heart and care about the people with whom they work. We want to see you teaching FV; we also want to see you bring your own passion, curiosity, and personal integration of the work (not just parroting what has been learned). In other words, we want to see you in FV.

Establish a **Positive, Empowering Atmosphere**: This is the ability to foster a safe, supportive, (and enjoyable when possible) environment in which to work and explore. Empowering others supports their sense of confidence, freedom, and structure—a reclaiming of personal and vocal rights—and supports them in finding their voice in the largest sense possible.

Demonstrate **Clarity and Adaptability**: Lessons are clear (even if not explicitly articulated or written down). Teaching brings about the desired result or invites a surprising process that encourages learning, regardless of whether there is an obviously intended or even good result. There is an awareness and consideration of the needs of the students and a willingness to soften any agenda and to enter the unknown. In addition to the ability to shift one's teaching *in the moment* based on what's happening in the moment (aka, *teach what's in front of you*), there is also the ability to shift one's teaching approach *over time* based on new learning.

Utilize **Accurate and Judicious Use of Technical and Scientific terms**: The ability to use terms accurately (including but not limited to anatomy, physiology, and neurobiology) and prioritize the students' ability to comprehend the terms in useful ways.

Other: This category exists because we recognize that we don't know everything that is important in considering teachers' readiness to be Associate Teachers of this work. Having this open category encourages us all to grow as we learn more about what this process entails.

Our Basic Assumptions in Employing These Criteria

We use the word "teacher" throughout this document, but "coach", "director", or other terms might more accurately reflect what you do. We use the word "student" throughout, but "client", "participant", or "colleague" might more accurately reflect the people to whom you offer this work.

We take it as a given that deepening your understanding, embodiment, and actions in relation to these criteria provides crucial modeling for your students, and that modeling is a large part of your responsibility as a teacher.

There is a creative tension inherent in applying these criteria. The work is alive, fluid, adapting—your response to the moment will hopefully reflect this more than it will reflect your trying to fulfill each and every one of these criteria.

Success and failure can both be valuable teachers. Learning from what you perceive to be your failures, and learning to do so with a gentle touch, is just as important as learning from your successes.

Useful learning can happen when you feel comfortable or uncomfortable, and in the movement between the two. Useful learning doesn't happen when you feel fundamentally unsafe or overwhelmed. We will do our best to provide a clear and supportive environment for you. We expect you to communicate with us respectfully if you perceive that we are failing to do that adequately for you. This provides an opportunity for all of us to learn.

We evaluate based on several kinds of information:

1. What we see (and how we make sense of that)
2. What we hear (and how we make sense of that)
3. What we feel physically and emotionally (and how we make sense of that)
4. How we make sense of the connections between what we see/hear/ feel and think
5. Our history with and understanding of FV
6. Our intuition

This means that how we respond is subjective. That's why we include three people on the panel--so that a range as well as consensus in our responses might be possible.

We recognize that giving and receiving feedback, and more specifically being evaluated and coached, is a sensitive and sometimes uncomfortable process. You don't have to agree with or be happy with our feedback, but we encourage you to stay present. Our intention is to share feedback in a way that is as enriching as possible to all involved. We want to keep learning how to do this better, and being in dialogue with you and receiving your feedback is a crucial part of this process.

Associate Application Process

At least two years after you become an Assistant Teacher of FV, and after you have completed the basic requirements (see above), you may apply for Associate level certification. The process is as follows:

Email the Director of Certification with your application. This includes:

- Letter of intent giving an account of how the certification criteria have been met
- Current resume/CV
- Three student/colleague references (including one from a trem)
- Any additional supporting documents that you would like us to consider (videos, publications, reviews, sample syllabi, teaching evaluations, etc.)

Convening a Certification Panel

After receiving your application, the Director of Certification will put together a certification panel that will include three FV teachers. At least two of these teachers will be Master teachers. The first task of the panel is to determine whether the basic certification requirements have been met. If they have been met, the panel will arrange a suitable day/time/ venue to witness your teaching— whenever possible in connection with other trem events. In some cases it may take months before such a date is possible. It may be that delegates are chosen from outside of the panel to observe your teaching and report back to the panel. In rare cases, with the unanimous agreement of the Director of Certification, the Director of the Institute and one other Master Teacher, the requirement for observed teaching may be waived.

Notice of Decision

After your observed teaching sessions, the panel will confer privately, make a determination about certification, and communicate this to the Director of Certification. The Director of Certification will then email you to inform you of the decision within four weeks of the observed teaching session.

If your application for certification is approved, you are immediately entitled to refer to yourself as “An Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework.” You will receive a certificate indicating you are now an Associate Teacher, and your Fitzmaurice website bio will also be updated.

If your application for certification is denied, the Director of Certification, or someone from the panel appointed by the Director of Certification, will offer you clear feedback within three weeks of the emailed decision to outline the areas that you will need to address prior to any future advancement. At that time, we may also recommend additional mentoring or training.

If we deny your application for Associate certification, our hope is that you will work on the feedback that we offer to you and reapply after you feel confident you have understood and embodied the feedback well enough to make the required improvement.

Fee for Evaluation

The fee for being evaluated (which includes gathering the three-person panel, assessing whether you have met the basic requirements, considering our evolving experience with you, two hours of observed teaching by the three-person panel, conferring about your candidacy, and writing to you about the determination) is \$500. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate teachers with financial need.

Appeals Process

If we deny your certification change, and you strongly disagree with our decision, you may make a formal appeal within three months of the decision by emailing the Director of the Institute and indicating the reasons for your appeal. The Director will then bring in a new Master Teacher to review your application. If the new Master Teacher agrees with the previous denial, the original decision will stand and you will be emailed about the decision. If the new Master Teacher believes your application for Associate certification should be accepted, a panel will be convened consisting of one member of the original panel, the new Master Teacher, and one other teacher. If at least two of the three members of this new panel believe your application should be accepted, you will be named an Associate Teacher. This appeals process may only be initiated once. There is no fee for the appeals process.

Maintaining Certification Status

Assistant Teacher Certification: To maintain Assistant Teacher certification, your annual dues of \$100 are required on July 15 each year.

While not required, we hope you will be an active part of the FV community and keep up with FV developments by attending trainings and gatherings of various kinds.

Associate Teacher Certification: To maintain Associate Teacher certification, there are two requirements:

- Yearly dues of \$100 are required on July 15 each year.
- Every five years, you are required to email the Director of Certification requesting re-certification. In this email, indicate your desire to be re-certified and include your teaching and/or other use of FV during the prior 5 years, what training you have done in FV and other modalities during that time, and reflect on the main developments and challenges in your own learning during that period. Assuming you are keeping current with the work, in most cases your re-certification request will be accepted automatically. However, we reserve the right to request a more thorough evaluation which may include, among other things, observed teaching. To help us process your request in a timely way, please include the words "Recertification Request" in the subject line of your email.

Revoking Certification Status: If you engage in egregious, irresponsible conduct that seriously harms a student or negatively impacts the FV community of teachers, the Fitzmaurice Institute reserves the right to revoke your certification at any time. In this case, the Director of Certification will notify you of this decision and make an appeals process available to you.

One Last Item: This is an evolving document. We look forward to your feedback so that we can provide the clearest and most helpful information possible.