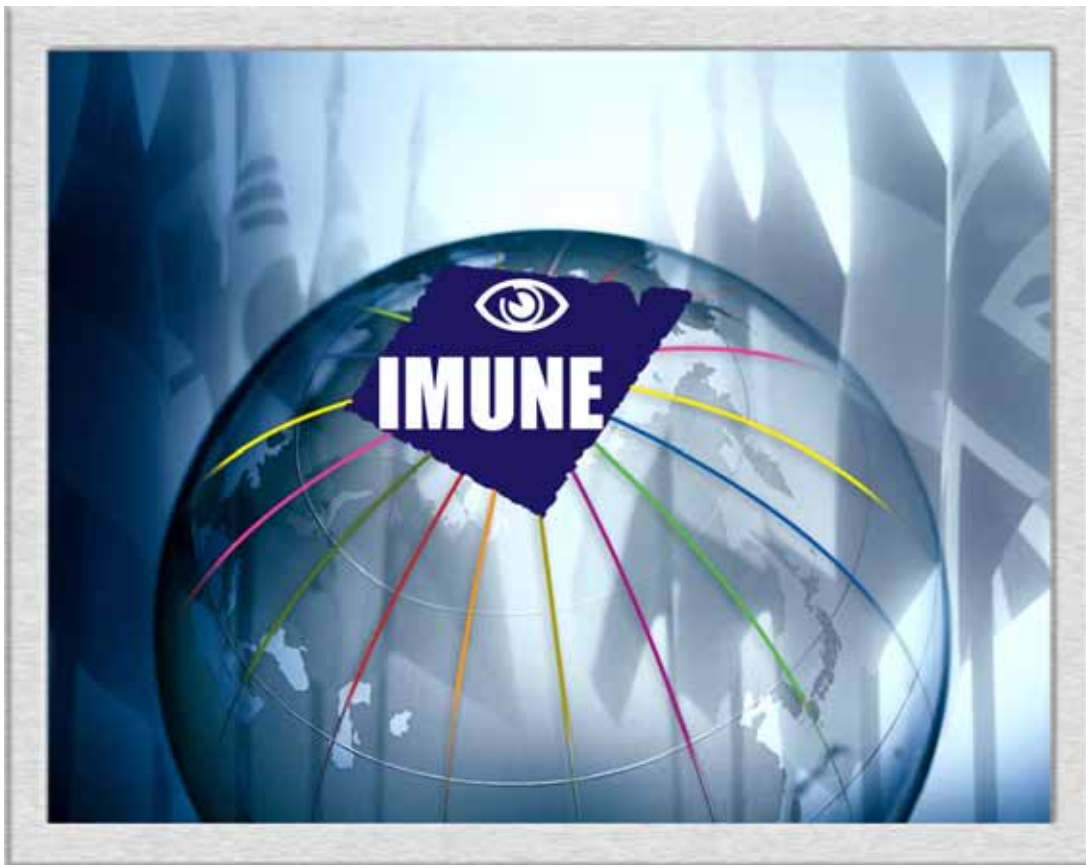


Frequently Asked Questions Qualifications

IMUNE

Uniting the World of Natural Medicine

Free from Borders



Natural Education for the 21st century.

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Certification and Licensing

What is the difference between Certification and Licensing

In many countries Diplomas, Certificates, Licenses there are not defined differences, there is no defined ranking and are issued both self regulating bodies and state legalised organisations (e.g. Universities).

All qualifications originally had two main aims:

1. To define a level of competence
2. Thus to provide a level of public protection against in competency.

These objectives have unfortunately been lost in many cases and the bodies have become vehicles solely for the benefit of professions.

In the USA State Licenses are awarded by legally constituted boards whereas Certification is by self regulating boards. There is a federally sponsored body to oversee Certification Boards (NCCA). Some Certification Boards have assessment documentation from NCCA.

Does Certification have Legal Standing?

Only qualifications issued by a body that acts under the law of a country has any legal standing. Certification boards are generally professional organisations, are incorporated and operate as non profit organisations but are self established and have no legal authority.

Does Licensing have Legal Standing?

In certain states and countries there are regulatory authorities, e.g. government authorised agencies or state boards that issue licences. Only in these cases is the use of the word licence without any other qualification legal. A licence in its own right is not necessarily a legal entity but it becomes one when issued by a statutory instrument.

If I Call Myself a Licensed Biofeedback Technician, am I being Illegal?

This depends on the particular laws in your place of work. In the UK there is no statutory definition or restriction on the issue of licences in many fields. Thus, historically acupuncturists have had the designation Lic.Ac.: licensure in acupuncture.

However in certain places and in particular in states of the USA licensing has a particular legal association with State Boards. There is a public interpretation of the word licensing independent of any specific legal association that effectively means representing yourself as a Licensed Biofeedback therapist could imply that you are State Board licensed. This could attract attention from board licensed practitioners (e.g. Doctors) and create difficulties for yourself.

Is Certification Legal or Illegal in Respect of Biofeedback?

It is not legal, nor is it illegal. It is not legal because there is no statutory instrument or regulation to give it legality. It is not illegal because there is no statutory instrument to give it illegality, i.e. it is deregulated. Since it is deregulated it is not illegal.

Is Licensure Legal or Illegal in Respect of Biofeedback?

Licensing may be illegal in certain states/countries where licensing has been employed as a statutory or regulatory instrument under a legal government framework. This is specifically the case in the USA (5% of the world population). Misrepresenting or inferring that you are state licensed is illegal unless you are state board licensed. Court cases brought have generally resulted in a misdemeanour charge for the first offence. Second offences, for the very un-astute, have resulted in significant penalties. Where state licensing exists, only if you have been issued the appropriate statutory paperwork from the appropriate statutory body can you call yourself state licensed. This in particular applies to medical doctors but also in certain areas to naturopaths, massage therapists, etc. It does not apply to International Licenses unless you misrepresent this as a state license.

Is it in Principle Better to be Certified or Licensed?

This again depends on the country. Within the UK certain high level courses are certified whereas certain low level courses carry diplomas. However there are an equal number of situations where the high level qualification is called a diploma and a lower one a certificate. The word licence is also used. There is no defined pecking order. However in other countries different terms historically carry different weight. In the USA in court an International License is likely to have more weight than a Certificate: it implies a higher educational standard. The public in the USA also perceives the word License as higher than Certificate.

Why doesn't IMUNE just Issue Certificates?

As explained above different qualification words carry different weights in different countries. IMUNE has the intention of providing education and qualification access in Natural Medicine as "border free" i.e. worldwide. As such it has needed to adopt a universal, education reflective and credible description of the qualification. The options were International Licence or International Diploma. It was felt that International Licence was acceptable in the majority of the world, carried more credibility and intrinsically creates a challenge to ensure that this is reflected in the educational content of the qualification.

Is the Terminology "International Licence" In Biofeedback Legal?

This again depends on the particular country. In terms of the UK and many European countries our research indicates that we could just use the word licence. However the USA has particular requirements prompting the adoption of the terminology "International Licence". Whatever terminology we adopt has to be thoroughly reviewed in relation to the country and this will be part of the IMUNE process. This process has been undertaken in terms of the USA where expert legal opinion has been sought, obtained and published. This supports that the use of the word "International Licence" as a qualification title is not illegal provided that it is no way portrayed as equivalent to a licence issued by a statutory body (or in the case of the USA a State Board).

Is it Legal to Call Myself a Certified Biofeedback Practitioner?

It is neither legal nor illegal. Biofeedback is deregulated – there are no regulations. However any qualification should have a demonstrable pedigree and be traceable to a robust educational process leading to its award.

Is It Legal To Call Myself A Licensed Biofeedback Practitioner?

In the USA, no: it carries the inference of State (legal sanctioned) board Licensing.

Is it Legal to Call Myself an International Licensed Biofeedback Practitioner/Therapist?

According to expert legal opinion sought, obtained and published – yes. It is certainly not illegal.

If I Have an International Licence Can I Claim to be State Licensed?

No.

Can I have both an International IMUNE License and Certification?

You can and if you feel most comfortable this way you may wish to. IMUNE is an offering.

Certification exists. Why should I get an IMUNE International Licence?

There are different bodies offering different certifications to different standards. There are areas of partly medical practice that are not Board licensed. There are certification bodies, (e.g. BCIA in the USA) that have a qualification process and a robustness that appears better than many License. Many Certification bodies are robust and solid establishments with a good pedigree. They are not state recognised and have been set up by interested parties to create standards in the education and qualification process. Their main aim is to create and promote a standard that provides public confidence and protection. They are autonomous, self-regulating instruments. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this. This has been the situation for homeopaths, acupuncturists, reflexologists, chiropractics and, until very recently, osteopaths in the UK. No-one would question the credentials of an acupuncturist who belonged to the self regulating British Acupuncture Council.

Within the UK and many other countries, due to the success and consequent popularity of natural medicine approaches, regulation is happening. In some cases, e.g. osteopaths in the UK, they have gone the way of the modern medical fraternity in having statutory regulation. This in the opinion of many has been to the detriment of the profession in that it considerably narrows the scope of what they can do and becomes far more linear. The USA has in particular experienced this even within modern allopathic medicine. The upshot is that in many cases State regulation has not been to the public benefit. By operating from an international base IMUNE is able to offer pedigree education without the potential watering down and restrictions of government regulation.

Consequently many professional natural therapy bodies are looking towards self regulation but with demonstrable quality. Thus in assessing the acceptability of practitioners for the new

councils, association, etc. the pedigree of their education as well as their clinical experience is being validated for entry.

It the pedigree of the education and clinical ability that is the crucial aspect: the qualification title is less important than the education. The process leading to the qualification needs to be very clear and solid. The process of achieving a qualification needs to be recorded and auditable. A degree from a university in Outer Mongolia has the same title as from Oxford but may or may not be educationally equivalent – only a review of the course content and of the examining process will validate this.

Is Certification Better than an International Licence?

It depends purely on the educational content of the qualification.

Is an International Licence Better than Certification?

It depends on the quality of the education. There is however a perception in certain parts of the world that a licence is a better qualification.

Why Should I not just Get Certified?

If that is adequate for what you are going to do, fine. If it provides the learning that you need to be confident in your chosen field that is also fine. The key point is when regulation comes in will the education be good enough to be accepted for both what you now do or aspire to do in the future.

Why Get An International Licence?

IMUNE is about these important areas:

- Setting quality education standards for Natural Medicine.
- Providing education access for now and the future
- Supporting practitioner access to future regulatory requirements

The IMUNE international licence is set out to be a process whereby the student can:-

1. Just choose to get basic qualifications to operate in a basic way, perhaps only achieving the minimum qualification necessary for safe and insurable practising.
2. Undertake additional modules to achieve higher level qualifications that will provide better evidence of competence when statutory regulation occurs.
3. Study certain modules in isolation and not use these for a qualification but just for the knowledge element.
4. Study modules as part of the requirement of continuing education credits/continuing professional development.

Practise Related

Can an IMUNE Qualification get me Professional Indemnity Insurance in the USA

Yes. The Biofeedback technician certificate will facilitate this.

If I Have to go to Court for any Reason is Certification or International Licensing Likely to Stand me in Better Stead?

Intrinsically licensing will carry the implication of higher credibility in places where the word licensing has a higher profile. In either case the robustness of the education process behind the qualification carries the main weight when this is presented.

Can I Practice without Certification or International Licensing?

This question is really can I practise without any qualification.

This depends on local regulations. If you practise without infringing the regulations of the country and in particular if you do not make a charge or claims it appears that you may. People may buy devices for home, family or friends uses. Even then there is always a danger that inappropriate use of the device may create a reaction (this may not be harmful but may be perceived so by the recipient) and result in confrontation and/or legal action.

There are a number of factors that come into play when you start charging for your services. There are mundane elements that apply to any trade such as Trade Descriptions Acts, Fair Portrayal of Services, Misleading Information and the very important one of Insurance. Practitioner or Professional Indemnity insurance requires submission of certain abilities to operate. In some countries this may be as simple as certificate of training that states the user has had training and has been assessed in terms of their safe and appropriate use of the device or modality. In other countries there may be no requirements, different requirements or more stringent requirements.

What Terminology Can I Use?

This again varies from country to country and is becoming increasingly more restricted as part of the strategy from modern medicine to try and restrict natural medicine. It is better to review this locally as any statement made herein may not apply to certain countries. However the words that should be considered are diagnosis, assessment, evaluation, treating, curing, practitioner, therapist, etc. These are not always illegal, especially when associated with specific approaches (e.g. Cancer Biofeedback Clinic was used as a title by a USA practitioner for 20 years without an issue- indeed medical doctors and insurance companies referred to her). They may however, like all words, create a misleading impression. Words are powerful and an astute practitioner uses open, non confrontational or mis-interpretable words.

The simplest principle to apply is to be a reflecting board on the client: person/client centred counselling approaches as expounded by Dr Carl Rogers will give you a very good framework for understanding this mechanism. Beyond providing a degree of safety it is also an extremely respectful and effective concept to use when dialoguing with clients.

Can I Recommend Supplements?

This again varies from country to country. Possibly a safe way is to make clients aware of the existence and if the information is in the public domain provide it to them. However you must do this without making specific claims or recommendations. If you reference your personal experience or the experiences of others then you must make clear that everyone is an individual and their response is different.

Can I Educate The Client?

Education is effectively making offerings of information to people. This is a common part of life although may again find there are restrictions and to be appropriate in wording is both respectful to the client and protective.

Can I Sell Supplements etc. to Clients?

You need to look at the regulations within your own country. You also need to look at the ethics involved in that there may be a perception, particularly when multi level marketing is involved, that you are using a very basic qualification level to sell clients supplements. The key is not to be misleading.

What Are Some Methods I Can Adopt To Ensure I Have Good Protection?

1. Consider the words you use in your marketing and in your interaction with clients carefully.
2. Do not make any unsupported claims.
3. Use a combined information/waiver form.
4. Regulatory authorities in some countries pretend to be clients, there for their personal health. Practitioners have been caught out in some cases. A good protection is to include in your waiver that they declare “they are not working or present on behalf of any regulatory or investigatory agency and are purely and solely present for their own health considerations”.
5. Consider recording the session: however you must advise the client of this.