Accreditation of Training Courses

(including the Core Curriculum) 2009 Scheme, 6th edition – amended 2021 to include online teaching delivery and remote placements)

Accreditation of training courses

A course applying for accreditation must demonstrate that the training encompasses a definable mix of the following elements:
- knowledge based learning
- therapeutic competencies
- development of self-awareness
- professional development
- skills work
- practice placements

The course must have published learning outcomes in respect of these elements which are made clear in the accreditation application.

Criteria for BACP Course Accreditation

The criteria are divided into two parts:

Part A   Eligibility criteria for entry to the scheme
Part B   Course delivery criteria

Courses must meet all criteria in order to become BACP Accredited

BACP regrets that the scheme in its current edition cannot accommodate courses which have yet to graduate a cohort of students from the training.

References to 'OPT' throughout the criteria refer to 'Online and phone therapy'

Part A. Eligibility criteria for entry to the scheme

These criteria must be met before an application can be accepted for assessment under part B of the course delivery criteria.

A1 The training provider must be an organisational member of the BACP and thus subject to the current BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions (Ethical Framework).

A2 The training provider must deliver an in-depth course offering professional practitioner training. There must be a minimum of 400 hours of direct teaching or instruction time. A maximum of 30% of the total tutor contact time can be delivered online. Only synchronous, 'live' online teaching can be counted towards the minimum 400 hours of direct teaching or instruction time.

A3 Students must undertake a minimum of 100 hours of supervised practice exclusive of missed sessions. The majority of the overall supervised practice hours must be conducted face-to-face with clients. The remainder can be a combination of online-video and phone, or online-video only.

A4 The course must have at least two core members of staff who have substantive involvement in admission, assessment, course management and decision making, in addition to teaching.

A5 All course staff must be members of an appropriate professional body with a

complaints procedure to which they are subject.

A6 The majority of the course staff should have current BACP counsellor/psychotherapist accreditation or be registered with an appropriate professional body to an equivalent level and should be in current, supervised practice.

A8 The course must submit evidence to demonstrate the accountability of the training provider for the course.

This will include published policy and procedures on:

i.   admission

ii.   fees

iii.   placements

iv.   assessments

v.   appeals

vi.   complaints

vii.   quality assurance and enhancement

viii.   OPT appropriate data protection policies and procedures

The above list is the minimum requirement and is not necessarily exhaustive.

A9 The course must provide evidence of its staffing structure that clearly demonstrates lines of responsibility.

A10 If the course seeking accreditation admits students after the start of the course via Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) procedures, the procedure/s must be submitted for assessment as part of the application. Please see criterion B9.

A7 It must be demonstrated that the training provider is submitting a specific course for accreditation, rather than a network of courses.

Separate procedures exist for identical courses to be delivered at different venues by the same provider. Please contact the BACP (Course Accreditation) for information.

Part B. Course delivery criteria

B1. Admission

B1.1 Applicants must be provided with detailed and accurate information about the course, including its:
i.   structure

ii.   aims

iii.   staffing

iv.   contents

v.   assessment procedures

vi.   fees (including any 'extras', e.g., supervision, personal therapy and residentials)

vii.   conditions of participation (e.g., time commitments and the need for a private space to attend online training sessions and to deliver OPT sessions if remote client work at the student's home is required/allowed)

B1.2 The procedure for selection (including the requirements for written application/interview etc) must be clearly explained and be consistent with the course rationale. Core staff must be involved in the selection process, which must include some form of structured interview.

B1.3 The course must show how the course applicants are assessed for the following attributes or the potential for developing them:

i.   Self-awareness, maturity and stability

ii.   Ability to make use of and reflect upon life experience

iii.   Capacity to cope with the emotional demands of the course

iv.   Ability to cope with the intellectual and academic requirement

v.   Ability to form a helping relationship

vi.   Ability to be self-critical and use both positive and negative feedback

vii.   Awareness of the nature of prejudice and oppression

viii.   Awareness of issues of difference and equality

ix.   Ability to recognise the need for personal and professional support

x.   Competence in, or the aptitude to develop generic professional skills, including literacy, numeracy, information technology, administrative skills, self- management skills, communication and interpersonal skills

B1.4 Where the course is made up of a number of awards, for example a combination of a certificate and a diploma, it must be made clear to prospective students that they must complete all components of both/all courses as a continuous cohort in order to graduate from a BACP Accredited Course, unless the APL procedures are approved by BACP. (See Criterion B9)

B2. Teaching and learning

B2.1 All course staff must be appropriately qualified and demonstrate competence between them to cover all elements of the course. Course staff must have knowledge and experience in working with clients online and over the phone and be competent in delivering experiential learning online.

Courses may bring in specific expertise to teach elements of the OPT training where there are gaps in knowledge within the teaching team. Courses are responsible for assessing students' competence for OPT working throughout the course.

B2.2 All training staff for the course should be familiar with and agree to work within the current BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions (Ethical Framework).

B2.3 Course staff must have regular meetings and access to other forms of support, consultation, and professional development.

B2.4 The course must provide appropriate accommodation and teaching and learning resources, library facilities, and other learning support facilities for students plus access to appropriate recording equipment.

For online teaching delivery:

i.   The course must have the appropriate technology, software, and IT support for online teaching delivery to take place without unnecessary interruption.

ii.   There must be adequate data security in place.

iii.   The course must have a policy for online teaching that includes:

- o Student attendance (e.g., fully present with cameras on)

- o Student 'netiquette' (e.g., not engaging in 'private' text-based communication with other group members during taught sessions, mics on mute when not speaking etc.)

For B2.5 to B2.15, the course must:

B2.5
i.   Demonstrate that its teaching and learning methods are consistent with the course rationale and philosophy.

ii.   Include assessment of how far the course learning outcomes are being fulfilled.

iii.   Include a requirement for substantial reading and written work from the students to clarify philosophical and theoretical concepts and in particular, to show how far students are becoming able to utilise these in their practice.

B2.6 Provide regular and systematic opportunities for demonstrating self-awareness, which are consistent with its rationale and philosophy.

B2.7 Provide structured teaching and learning experiences and regular opportunities for observation, practice, feedback (from both staff and peers), discussion and review.

B2.8 Ensure that the students have the opportunity to benefit from a regular process of self-exploration, self-examination, and reflection in a confidential setting in order to develop an understanding of themselves.

B2.9 Demonstrate that it assists its students to develop as reflective learners and practitioners.

B2.10 Encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.

B2.11 Require students to monitor and evaluate their own learning.

B2.12 Provide opportunities for the students to practise the blend of skills appropriate to the rationale and philosophy of the course. The skills should be identified and developed so that students can describe, analyse, and utilise them.

B2.13 Provide opportunities for analysis, reflection, and feedback on how the overall counselling process develops over time.

B2.14
i.   Ensure students develop an ethical sense in relation to therapeutic practice and ethical decision making.

ii.   Enable students to work individually and collaboratively with ethical dilemmas.

iii.   Ensure students are given ample opportunity to study and discuss all aspects of the Ethical Framework and to be continually mindful of its implications for their own practice and how it relates to their own values and attitudes.

B2.15 Demonstrate that the course keeps abreast of developments relevant to the profession.

B3. Knowledge

B3.1 The course must demonstrate that it provides a counsellor/psychotherapy training with a clear rationale and philosophy that underpins the whole programme and by which students can account for their practice.

B3.2 There must be sufficient theory, drawing upon relevant social science disciplines to enable students to make explicit and critically appraise the philosophical assumptions that underpin counselling and psychotherapy and its historical development.

B3.3 There must be sufficient theory to enable students to develop an in depth understanding of a substantial body of knowledge. This should draw upon relevant social science disciplines to enable students to make explicit and critically appraise:

i.   The social, political and legislative systems in which we live and the ways these affect client development and counselling practice.

ii.   The underlying research basis, philosophy, assumptions, basic principles and elements, concepts, strategies and techniques of the course's rationale and philosophy. The following questions must be addressed:

   a.   What assumptions are made about the nature and development of human beings?

   b.   How do psychological problems develop and what are the implications of severe pathology for practice?

   c.   How does the rationale and philosophy account for the perpetuation of psychological problems?

   d.   How does the course's rationale and philosophy explain the process of therapeutic change?

   e.   What therapeutic interventions are explicated within this rationale and philosophy?

iii.   Comparisons with other therapeutic approaches.

iv.   The theoretical basis for any specific client problems or issues included as topics in the course programme e.g., anxiety, bereavement and loss, etc.

v.   How other psychological concepts and ideas that are congruent with the course rationale and philosophy are considered or incorporated by reference to relevant research findings.

B3.4 The course must introduce students to the concept of a continuum of mental wellbeing through to severe psychological and emotional distress. Students must be made aware of the influence of social and cultural factors on mental health and the interrelatedness of psychological and physical symptoms.

B3.5 The course must ensure that students are aware of the types of medication commonly used in treatment of various psychological states and their effects and possible side effects, including the potential impact on the therapeutic process.

B3.6 Students must be enabled to develop an understanding of the work

and roles of other professionals in the mental health field.

B3.7 Students must be helped to develop a critical awareness of research findings in counselling, psychotherapy, and related areas through study of the relevant literature and to reflect on how these inform evidence-based practice.

B3.8 Students must be enabled to gain an awareness and working knowledge of research methodology to enable them to develop basic competences in small scale research projects.

B3.9 The course must demonstrate that students are taught in all the elements included within Option 1: Core OPT training within the OPT curriculum.

B4. Client work

B4.1 The course must require all students to complete a minimum of 100 hours of supervised practice (exclusive of missed sessions), taking note of the following:

i.   Before starting client work, students must be assessed individually for their readiness to take clients. This must include an assessment of readiness to begin work with clients remotely.

ii.   It is not appropriate for students to take other students on the course as clients whether from their own or a different cohort.

iii.   The client work undertaken by students should be congruent with the rationale and philosophy of the course.

iv.   Inexperienced students in training should not gain their client work experience through private/independent practice.

v.   The course has an obligation under the Ethical Framework to ensure that placement providers indicate student status to their clients.

vi.   Due to the particular legislative, insurance and safeguarding considerations for international practice students should only work with UK based clients.

vii.   Details of the client work must be included in a professional log which the student maintains and presents at assessment as evidence of competence to practice. (Client confidentiality must be maintained in the log).

viii.   On adult focused accredited courses, OPT placement hours can only be carried out with adults, not with children and young people (under 16 years old).

ix.   The majority of the supervised placement hours need to be carried out face-to-face and the remainder can be a combination of online-video and phone *or* online-video only. Text-based, asynchronous online practice is not allowed.

B4.2 The course must have a procedure in place for students to extend the training period in order to complete the required practice hours:

i.   the course must indicate clearly under what circumstances an extension is permitted and;

ii.   over what time period this is allowed and;

iii.   how students are being supported during that period.

Practice placement

B4.3 The course seeking accreditation will have clear, written, and published procedures for practice placements, which will include procedures for remote working and any requirements for homeworking where relevant.

B4.4 The course must demonstrate how it approves its placement providers as appropriate for the particular course.

B4.5 There must be an explicit written agreement/ contract between students, the placement provider, and the course, which is available to all. This must include:

i.   A description of the course including its rationale and philosophy, procedures and resources and the requirements of students for client work and assessment (e.g., supervisor reports, electronic media recording).

ii.   A confirmation from the placement provider that its aims, orientation and philosophy are congruent with that of the course.

iii.   Details of where accountability lies for:

    a.   the client work

    b.   reporting relationships

    c.   supervision arrangements

    d.   limits of confidentiality

    e.   complaints procedures

    f.   health and safety issues

    g.   data protection

iv.   A contract between the course and placement provider that details the requirements for reports on students, reciprocal feedback, meetings etc.

v.   Details of the placements remote working support structures, to include:

    a.   where OPT sessions will be conducted with a clear policy for homeworking if relevant

    b.   how students can debrief after OPT sessions and/or where to take concerns about their remote client work

    c.   the placement procedure for when the technology fails during an OPT client session

    d.   information about additional support services and onward referral pathways that students can share with OPT clients when required

vi.   Details of the placement providers' professional practice such as the initial assessment of clients, methods of referral to students, note taking/record keeping requirements

vii.   Details of the type and range of client work undertaken by the placement provider, the kinds of client work contracts offered and any limits upon these in relation to student experience or other factors.

viii.   Details of how clients are assessed for suitability to work with students and for working online or over the phone.

The application of theory to practice

B4.6 The course must ensure that students are formally introduced to the

7

Ethical Framework before starting client work. The course must demonstrate that it assists its students to develop as ethical, accountable, and reflective practitioners. This must include the application of the Ethical Framework in remote working e.g., online 'netiquette', appropriate social networking behaviours and managing own digital footprint.

B4.7 Formal course time must be given to:

i. Training in assessment procedures consistent with the rationale and philosophy of the course and which are relevant for face-to-face and OPT working. This must include the important elements of a risk assessment strategy informed by evidence based practice and relevant research.

ii. Teaching the students to conceptualise the nature of the clients' issues and to negotiate an appropriate therapeutic contract, which may include referral.

iii. Equipping the students to establish and sustain an effective, ethical therapeutic alliance with a client for the duration of the contract; a relationship in which the client is enabled to explore complex emotional concerns.

B4.8 The course will develop, monitor, and assess each student's face-to-face and OPT competence to:

i. Establish a clear framework for the therapeutic work, including;

    a. awareness of the limits of confidentiality and other ethical and professional boundaries

    b. clear procedures for pre-assessment communication with clients about services on offer

    c. clear information about the process of therapy and the process of therapeutic change

    d. a description of the responsibilities of each party to the contract

    e. the negotiation of appropriate outcomes with clients

    f. the negotiation of all details of the practical arrangements including the number of sessions available

ii. Apply a body of knowledge, informed by contemporary research, consistently and effectively during the course of the therapeutic process.

iii. Apply and monitor a range of therapeutic interventions consistent with the rationale and philosophy of the course.

iv. Work with difference and diversity as it impacts on the therapeutic relationship or the process of therapy.

v. Be aware of the potential power imbalance in the therapeutic relationship.

vi. Reflect on and manage the therapeutic process and to work with the unexpected nature of life and of the therapeutic relationship.

vii. Review and evaluate the initial assessment decisions and if necessary modify the work with the client or conduct a referral.

viii. Conduct an ending.

B4.9 The course must ensure that students are aware of its ethical and legal responsibilities when working with clients who are assessed as being at risk of self-harm or of harming others.

B4.10 The course must ensure that students are able to reflect on and work with the developing therapeutic relationship, including how to monitor the limits of their own competence.

Supervision

B4.11 The course must inform students about different methods of supervision and prepare them for the effective use of supervision as a professional requirement throughout their working life. The course must demonstrate that students can effectively use supervision including the following key aspects:

i. Educational – to stimulate critical thinking about the relationship between theory and practice.

ii. Reflective – (a) to consider how the therapist's own values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours impact on the therapeutic process and (b) reflection on and evaluation of practice.

iii. Developmental – to facilitate student development as ethical, competent and accountable practitioners.

iv. Supportive – to consider student personal and professional well-being with respect to client work.

v. Managerial – to have due regard to the needs of the client, the student, the course, the placement, the profession and society at large in accordance with the Ethical Framework.

B4.12 The course must ensure that students have regular and sufficient supervision in line with the requirements of the Ethical Framework. A mix of individual and group supervision is strongly recommended. The mode of supervision must be the same as the client work, therefore, a mix of face-to-face and OPT supervision is required.

B4.13 The supervisory contract during training must stipulate:

i. That all cases should be presented for supervision.

ii. That students must present their work in supervision not less than fortnightly.

iii. That supervision must be not less than one hour's presenting time to eight hours client work, subject to an overall minimum of 1.5 hours per month. (For compliance with the Ethical Framework the guiding principle should be the nature and complexity of the client work relative to the experience of the student rather than adherence to a minimum).

B4.14 The course will need to demonstrate the effectiveness of its own arrangements for ensuring the quality of supervision. If supervision is provided in-house the course must be aware of the possibility of dual role conflict and ensure that students have access to independent supervision.

B4.15 The course must have specific criteria for the selection of supervisors.

They must work within the Ethical Framework. Their rationale and philosophy should be compatible with that of the course. Supervisors should be experienced and competent in OPT.

B4.16 Supervisors must work to an explicit contract with the course and the placement provider, which clarifies accountability for the client work, reporting and assessment requirements, issues of confidentiality and practical issues such as meetings and finance and the mode(s) of delivery i.e., face-to-face, online/phone supervision.

B4.17 The boundaries of supervision on the course and supervision at the placement provider must also be specified. This contract must include provision for the supervisor to report concerns about any aspect of the student's practice.

B5. Professional context

B5.1 The course must prepare students to take an active role as members of the professional counselling/ psychotherapy community.

B5.2 Students must be made aware of the wider political, social, legal, and organisational framework for therapeutic practice; to ensure that they are able to work appropriately in different counselling and psychotherapy contexts.

B5.3 The course must enable students to understand the role boundaries and issues around communication and collaboration within a multidisciplinary team setting.

B5.4 The course must equip students with the skills to manage the administrative aspects of professional practice; including prioritising workload and time management.

B5.5 The course must make students aware of the importance of identifying, developing, and using networks for their professional support and the benefit of clients.

B5.6 The course must enable students to work with therapeutic outcome measures or other quality assurance procedures.

B6. Student assessment

B6.1 The course must have clear published learning outcomes for the training programme.

B6.2 The course must have clear and published criteria across all elements of the practitioner training for student assessment, which are consistent with its aims and standards.

B6.3 The course must ensure students are fully appraised of assessment procedures at the start of the course. Details of the annual assessment process must be published in advance.

B6.4 To ensure public safety, the course must assess students at appropriate key stages throughout the training for:

i.   readiness/competence to practise counselling/ psychotherapy face-to-face and remotely, and;

ii.   the ability to monitor and manage the therapeutic process in both face-to-face and remote practice.

B6.5 The course must demonstrate that it has an assessment process which includes regular on-going constructive feedback through which students are helped to identify and build upon their strengths and which takes a developmental approach to their difficulties.

B6.6 Formal procedures must be in place to terminate the training of incompetent, incapable or ethically unsound trainees.

B6.7 The course must include assessed written work amounting to a minimum of 15,000 words to ensure that the student's achievement against the learning outcomes is regularly and accurately assessed.

B6.8 There must be evidence of progressive monitoring, evaluation, and assessment of the students':

i. Self-awareness and personal development in relation to practice.

ii. Development as a member of the profession.

B6.9 The course should provide evidence that students are assessed against clear and specific criteria as being competent to practise with real clients both face-to-face and remotely. (NB: for assessment of OPT competence, courses should refer to the core learning outcomes in Option 1 of the OPT training curriculum)

B6.10 The course must provide clear evidence of the development of the following attributes in students:

i. Self-awareness, maturity and stability.

ii. Ability to make use of and reflect upon life experience.

iii. Capacity to cope with varying emotional demands.

iv. Ability to cope with intellectual and academic requirements.

v. Ability to form a working alliance with clients.

vi. Ability to use self-awareness in monitoring the therapeutic relationship.

vii. Ability to be self-critical and use both positive and negative feedback, reflect and make appropriate changes.

viii. Ability to draw on personal and professional support.

ix. Awareness of the nature of prejudice and oppression.

x. Transferable skills: appropriate levels of written and spoken English (or Welsh where applicable), numerical skills, information technology, problem management skills, communication skills, skills in working with others, skills in personal and professional development.

B6.11 The annual assessment process must be monitored by an external examiner who must be appropriately qualified and have no current association with the training provider or the course, or any personal or social relationship with any of the course staff or students.

The task of the external examiner is to monitor and safeguard the standard of the students' assessed course work and to compare the performance of students with that of their peers on comparable courses elsewhere.

B6.12 There must be a published and readily accessible appeals procedure.

B7. Course completion

B7.1 Students who complete the BACP Accredited Course successfully should receive a formal academic award from the training provider. The award

certificate should include the words, "BACP Accredited Training Course" or alternatively, the course should issue students with a written statement confirming that they have 'successfully completed a BACP Accredited Training Course'.

B7.2 The course must provide a detailed statement of topics covered during the course and the student's achievements. This should include a statement about the range of clients seen by a student and the settings in which counselling / psychotherapy practice / client work has been undertaken (to include the proportion of face-to-face and OPT client work undertaken).

B7.3 The course must make students aware of the purpose of ongoing Continued Professional Development (CPD) post qualification.

B7.4 The course must make students aware of the BACP counsellor/ psychotherapist accreditation scheme.

B7.5 There must be provision for students to complete the course in the event of it being withdrawn or of departmental/ institutional failure.

B8. Course evaluation

B8.1 The course must provide on-going opportunities for students and staff to meet as a whole community to reflect on all aspects of the course.

B8.2 The course must give students regular opportunities to evaluate their training experiences and give feedback on the course.

B8.3 The course should hold regular course management meetings with the opportunity for student representation.

B8.4 The course must demonstrate that it provides opportunities for feedback from persons external to the course e.g., the external examiner, course consultant, complaints mediator.

B8.5 The course management meetings must consider feedback from appropriate sources and show how this contributes to the development of the course.

B8.6 The course is required to demonstrate how it reviews and amends the training programme in line with developments in the profession.

B8.7 The course must have a published complaints procedure that includes a person in the hearing process who is independent of the course.

B9. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) procedures

If the course seeking accreditation admits students after the start of the course via APL procedures, it must submit evidence in support of B9.

B9.1 The course seeking accreditation will have clear, written, and published procedures for the admission of students via APL.

B9.2 The course must provide a rationale for:

i.   The points of entry where students can be APLd onto the course.

ii.   The maximum percentage possible to APL onto the course for any cohort.

iii.   How internal consistency within the course will be maintained.

B9.3 The APL procedure must demonstrate how the course assesses a potential student's:

i.   Suitability for the training offered.

ii.   Ability to demonstrate 'reflective practitioner' qualities.

iii.   Ability to form a working alliance with the course team and existing student group.

B9.4 The hours which can be admitted by APL will not exceed 150 hours or a third of the programme, whichever is the greater number of hours.

B9.5 The course must require APLed students to undertake a minimum of 100 hours of supervised client work whilst on the course.

Explanation of terms

Accreditation of Training Courses 2009 is a framework of good practice for counsellor/psychotherapist training courses and their provision. BACP does not intend to prescribe how the elements of Accreditation of Training Courses should
be implemented by training providers. To assist users, the criteria are listed without accompanying explanations or examples. The accompanying explanations in this section are used to clarify and support the criteria. Where given, examples are not intended to be exhaustive compilations nor used as checklists but are used to illustrate concepts. Training providers should be able to demonstrate that they are addressing the criteria effectively by means of their own course management, culture, staff, structures, course content, policies, procedures, and facilities.

APL (includes APCL and APEL)

Accreditation of prior learning is a process that awards credit for previous learning. It enables individuals of all ages and backgrounds to receive formal recognition and credit for learning gained in the past through formal or informal study, work, and life experience. APL may be Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and/or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).

Assessment
Assessment describes any processes that appraise an individual's knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills. Assessment is usually diagnostic, formative, or summative by type. A training course may use more than one type of assessment and a single assessment may use two or all of these types in combination. Different forms of assessment may include feedback to the student, grading/marking work, evaluating performance, award of a qualification.

Competence
This is intended to mean 'to be able to do something or to be capable of doing something'. For the purposes of this document, 'competence' is generic and not used as a qualification level indicator. Competence is where the student can demonstrate that they know or can do something following the completion of that part of the training.

Cohort
A group of students recruited to a specific course at the same time, with the expectation that the group proceeds to complete the whole programme of training together as a group and at the same time, graduating with the award pertaining to that course (not withstanding circumstances that might prevent an individual from completing with that cohort).

Course

A planned, coherent learning experience, such as a specific combination of taught modules or a taught programme of study, to which a student can be admitted, which leads to a named qualification or award upon successful completion of all requirements. For the purposes of Accreditation of Training Courses, the term 'course' is used to mean the total programme of study which is being submitted for accreditation. This may be one course or a combination of courses (for example a two-year MSc course or three-year training programme which consists of certificate, diploma and advanced diploma).

Where a programme of training is submitted for accreditation, there should be clear evidence that a single, discrete, and identifiable cohort progresses continuously through all stages of the course and graduates together with the award pertaining to the programme.

A course applying for accreditation must be able to stand as an award in its own right.

Direct teaching or instruction time

This is the timetabled course time where students receive direct, face-to-face instruction from members of course teaching team. Essentially, it is made up of timetabled tutor-led lectures, tutorials, and seminars.

Dual roles

Dual roles occur within a relationship between two or more people who encounter one another in different circumstances. Where a person has responsibility in more than one area, the overlapping knowledge and responsibilities concerned with each of these areas may come into conflict. For example, a student may not wish to disclose to a supervisor who is responsible for assessing their course work as a tutor, or a supervisee may not wish to disclose to their supervisor if he/she also has line management responsibility for them as an employee.

It is not always possible for a dual relationship to be avoided. Certain steps may be taken to counteract the situation, e.g., by ensuring a supervisee can take work to an independent person. However, if dual relationships are not managed to clear boundaries, there is a risk for a potentially damaging situation to develop. This may lead to less effective work and possible unexpected complications.

Further reading:

BACP has a range of Good Practice in Action resources to help you and your students implement the Ethical Framework in practice.

Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions (BACP 2018). This is available to download on our website.

The Online and phone therapy competence framework, user guide and training curriculum can also be accessed via the BACP website.

Guided learning time

Guided learning time is where a member of the teaching team is present to give specific guidance towards the qualification or module being studied on a course of study either in the classroom or via live, synchronous online teaching delivery.

Guided learning time can include tutor-led lectures, tutorials and facilitated study. It also includes directed assignments, skills practice sessions, facilitated workshops, discussion groups, timetabled group supervision and experiential groups. Facilitated study could include tutor guidance for students

14

in open learning centres, staff-facilitated research, or research awareness, learning workshops, and web-based tutorials.

Guided learning time can also include time spent by course tutors when assessing students' achievements, for example in 'live' practice assessments where demonstration of competence is assessed by course tutors. Tutor-student community meeting time may also be counted.
It excludes learner-initiated private study (self-directed study) and any asynchronous online learning that the student undertakes.

Learning outcomes
Those things that a student is expected to know, understand or able to do on completion of a learning process, module, or course of study.

OPT – online and phone therapy
Counselling or psychotherapy practice that relies on technologically mediated applications and processes for some or all its delivery. This may involve the use of phones (traditional or smart), tablets or any kind of computer (desktop, laptop etc.) with an internet connection. These enable interactions to take place remotely, implying that practitioner and client will not share the same physical space. Some of the administrative communication between the two parties may also be asynchronous.
Technologically mediated communication may be the foundation for either a part or all of the therapeutic work. For further guidance on OPT, please see the OPT competence framework, user guide and OPT training curriculum:
www.bacp.co.uk/optcompetences
The OPT competences for supervisors are described in the Supervision competence framework which can be accessed here: Supervision competence framework (bacp.co.uk)

Philosophy and rationale
BACP accreditation requires that accredited courses demonstrate that they provide an in-depth practitioner training. (See B3.3) The training should be underpinned by a defined body of knowledge and the concepts and assumptions of which should be consistently applied to the elements of the course, to ensure a training experience that is congruent with the stated theoretical model(s).

Placement
The period of time in which a student is required to complete a determined number of hours' experience of formal, fully- contracted, direct counselling of real clients as an integral component of the training. Course placement hours are in addition to the timetabled taught contact hours of the course and the placements usually take place outside of the training institution (NB some training providers have counselling services at which trainee practitioners can work as counsellors and/or psychotherapists with real clients).

It is important that relevant learning outcomes are identified and the students' experience and learning is appropriately monitored. Placements should be structured, supported, monitored, and evaluated by both the course and the workplace.

In this context, placement does not mean work-based learning of any other type or the practise of counselling skills embedded within another role (e.g., nursing staff).

Small scale research project
Such a project will enable students to pursue a viable research question independently, whereby they will consider and select an appropriate research approach to ethically investigate this question. Students will

demonstrate an ability to conceptualise and operationalise a researchable topic, along with knowledge of the subject which is being researched. They will provide a sound rationale for the research question being investigated and the methods/instruments being used to answer this question. Students will demonstrate their competence in both research and research based academic writing by producing a study report/thesis that describes in detail all stages of the research process they have undertaken. Overall, the thesis will illustrate how they have selected and critically evaluated relevant theories, sources, and appropriate data to locate and support their thesis. Students must be introduced to the academic and practical tools necessary for such a project; being able to appreciate and understand issues relating to all stages of managing, undertaking, and writing up an academic research study.

Work-based learning
Work-based learning presents students with opportunities to explore and gain contextual awareness in a professional counselling and/or psychotherapy or appropriate related setting. The learning experience should be designed to enable students to relate their training to the workplace. It is important that relevant learning outcomes are identified, and the students' experience and learning is appropriately monitored. Work-based learning opportunities should be structured, supported, monitored, and evaluated by both the course and the workplace.

Such opportunities for work-based learning might typically include clerical duties; attending team meetings; case management conferences; reading literature, policies, and procedures; skills practice; structured training; observation, assisting, mentoring or job shadowing activities, all of which should be consistent with the learning outcomes of the course.

Work-based learning activities are separate to the counselling placement required by the course (see criterion A3).

Appendix: The Core Curriculum*

What are the key areas in which counsellors and psychotherapists should be competent?

9.1   The Core Curriculum

The key domains of knowledge, skill and application for counselling and psychotherapy practice identified in the generic core competencies document (Wheeler et al, 2006) are used to determine the core curriculum.

These domains are:

A) **The professional role and responsibility of the therapist**
B) **Understanding the client**
C) **The therapeutic process**
D) **The social, professional and organisational context for therapy**

The core curriculum is described here in terms of learning outcomes, incorporating knowledge and performance criteria that are summary statements for the elements identified in the generic core competencies. They are organised using the four domains listed above.

9.1 A - The professional role and responsibility of the therapist

The practitioner will have relevant knowledge to inform his or her ability to:

1.   Show a commitment to personal and professional development

including self-awareness and an awareness of fitness to practice in relation to clients.

2. Reflect on personal development including ways in which life experiences affect self and relationships with peers, clients and other professionals.

3. Demonstrate the psychological and emotional robustness necessary to work with intense feelings and uncertainties.

4. Engage in rigorous self-examination, monitoring thoughts, feelings, physical sensations and behaviour in the therapeutic relationship.

5. Recognise personal and professional limitations and identify ways of addressing these.

6. Recognise and maintain appropriate professional boundaries even when these are challenged by the client or others.

7. Understand the values underpinning the profession, as exemplified in the Ethical Framework.

8. Demonstrate the capacity for reflexivity as applied in therapeutic practice.

9. Understand the importance of supervision, contract for supervision and use it to address professional and developmental needs.

10. Understand the importance of professional development activities.

11. Understand and use a relevant ethical framework to make critical decisions about the practice of counselling and psychotherapy.

12. Manage counselling practice efficiently, including record and note keeping, provision of an appropriate environment, liaison with other services, reviewing of caseloads and evaluation of practice.

13. Identify and use networks that can be used for the benefit of the s service.

14. Communicate clearly with clients, colleagues and other professionals both orally and in writing.

15. Demonstrate a critical awareness of commonly recommended therapeutic approaches that are underpinned by evidence of efficacy and effectiveness.

16. Give and receive feedback constructively, reflect and make appropriate changes.

17. Regularly evaluate and review personal development progress, making links with theoretical knowledge and the counselling process.

9.1 B - Understanding the client

The practitioner will have relevant knowledge to inform his or her ability to:

1. Devise a strategy for conducting assessment interviews with potential clients.

2. Devise and use a comprehensive risk assessment strategy.

3. Use all available information

including pre-assessment information; client presentation; therapist response to the client and quantitative or qualitative measures or assessment tools to make a collaborative decision with clients regarding an appropriate therapeutic contract.

4. Reflect on, and synthesise complex and sometimes contradictory information in order to facilitate an understanding of underlying psychological difficulties.

5. Access and interpret research evidence and organisational guidance about appropriate and effective interventions for particular presentations of personal difficulties.

6. Demonstrate awareness of diversity and the rights and responsibilities of all clients, regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, culture, class, ability, sexuality, religion, and belief.

7. Openly and freely discuss sexual matters, when appropriate with a client, whatever the client's sexual orientation or the nature of the client's problem.

8. Make informed decisions about referral and the compatibility of counselling/psychotherapy and psychopharmacological interventions in conjunction with other professionals.

9. Recognise the signs and symptoms associated with mental distress and regularly update knowledge about mental health and wellbeing.

10. Identify ethical and legal responsibilities with regard to potential risk including critical decision making with respect to autonomy of the client and potential harm to self or others.

11. Recognise physical signs and symptoms that may accompany, mimic or be indicative of severe forms of psychological distress.

12. Understand the inter-relatedness of social and psychological factors.

13. Understand the inter-relatedness of psychological and physical illness and recognise that symptoms of physical illness may be indicative of the mental pain/distress/state of the client and vice versa.

14. Critically appraise conceptualisations of the nature of severe psychological distress.

15. Draw on empirical and theoretical sources to make an initial estimation of the number of sessions that may be most appropriate for clients with particular presenting difficulties.

16. Apply consistently a comprehensive, in-depth, and research-informed body of knowledge in their practice.

17. Critically appraise theoretical frameworks which underpin therapeutic practice.

9.1 C - The therapeutic process

The practitioner will have relevant knowledge to inform his or her ability to:

bacp | counselling changes lives

1. Establish and maintain an effective, collaborative therapeutic alliance with the client, with due regard to the physical, contractual, and ethical framework.

2. Manage the beginning, middle and end of a therapeutic relationship according to their theoretical perspective of practice.

3. Develop and sustain a relationship with the client that offers sufficient safety and security, understanding and warmth to explore complex emotional concerns and clearly defines the boundaries of the relationship.

4. Clearly agree roles and responsibilities with the client whilst in a therapeutic relationship.

5. Negotiate and agree with clients' appropriate and achievable therapeutic goals or outcomes and the process by which these can be achieved.

6. Demonstrate awareness of theoretical and research literature regarding the provision of a secure frame for therapy, including physical environment, contractual arrangements, and ethics.

7. Apply and monitor a range of appropriate therapeutic interventions and strategies.

8. Acknowledge diversity relating to gender, age, ethnicity, culture, ability, religion, spirituality, and sexuality as it impacts on the therapeutic relationship or the process of therapy.

9. Acknowledge changes that have occurred for the client during the course of therapy whether they be practical, behavioural, emotional, or relational.

10. Acknowledge difficulties and ruptures encountered as part of the therapeutic process in order to find ways of making progress and re-establishing a positive therapeutic alliance.

11. Recognise and work with distortions in the client's perception of the therapist or of their experience in therapy.

12. Support clients when in crisis by providing information about self-care strategies and making clear arrangements for future meetings or contact.

13. Anticipate the types of 'out of session' communication that clients might use, such as email, letters, text, telephone, and visits, and determine an appropriate policy for managing and responding.

14. Recognise ways in which breaks and holidays may affect the therapeutic relationship or therapeutic process and make appropriate arrangements for clients to seek support in case of emergency.

15. Apply a theoretically and empirically informed body of knowledge consistently and effectively during the therapeutic process.

16. Clearly communicate imminent endings for the client and work to ensure these are managed safely and appropriately.

17. Negotiate an end date with the client allowing sufficient time to process the ending in accordance with a consistent, coherent, and in-depth perspective.

9.1 D - The social, professional, and organisational context for therapy

The practitioner will have relevant knowledge to inform his or her ability to:

1. Take an active role as a member of a professional community.

2. Show a critical awareness of the history of ideas, the cultural context and social and political theories that inform and influence the practice of counselling and psychotherapy.

3. Identify and critique the philosophical assumptions underpinning the practice of counselling and psychotherapy.

4. Understand the inter-relatedness of truth claims, belief and ideology and their influence on professional practice.

5. Interpret and apply relevant policies and codes of the employing organisation, including equal opportunities statements, disability statements and widening participation strategies.

6. Explore sensitively and respectfully with clients their culture and associated values recognising cultural differences, for example, in terms of predispositions to individualism and collectivism, emotional involvement and detachment.

7. Reflect on the role and function of counselling and psychotherapy in society and understand national politics in relation to mental health service provision and client wellbeing.

8. Demonstrate a clear commitment to best practice and work within an ethical framework for professional practice.

9. Demonstrate understanding of the relevant legislation that affects the practice of counselling and psychotherapy.

10. Make a contract with the appropriate organisation for the provision of therapy, including the extent of the provision with regards to time, place, and resources.

11. Demonstrate an awareness of power relationships and dynamics within groups and organisations and their potential impact on therapy.

12. Work in multidisciplinary teams with other professionals and participate effectively to maximise therapeutic outcomes as appropriate.

13. Critically appraise published research on counselling and psychotherapy and integrate relevant research findings into practice.

14. Understand methodologies to evaluate the process and outcome of therapy.

15. Monitor and review the effectiveness of own practice.

16.   Participate in therapeutic practice audit and other quality assurance procedures.

17.   Identify suitable criteria and evaluation tools for evaluating own practice.

*9.1 Core Curriculum extracted from Towards Regulation: The Standards, Benchmarks and Training requirements for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP 2007)