

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	Cert HE Counselling and Counselling Skills (Level 4)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	After 60 credits, a Certificate of Continuing Education.
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home School/other teaching departments	Birkbeck Centre for Counselling
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	1 year full-time October, January
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	Not applicable.
<u>QAA subject benchmark group(s)</u> <u>Higher Education Credit Framework for</u> <u>England</u>	Counselling and Psychotherapy
Birkbeck Course Code	UCHCOUN1_C – 1 year route UCHCOUNJ1_C - 1 year route, Jan start
HECoS Code	100495
Start date of programme	October 2023
Date of programme approval	May 2023
Date of last programme amendment approval	N/A
Valid for academic entry year	2026-27
Programme Director	Esther Ramsay-Jones
Date of last revision to document	18/07/2025

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants who are interested in counselling and counselling skills.

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

Course aims

1. To teach the basic elements of counselling skills from a range of counselling perspectives
2. To provide students with an understanding of the current therapeutic field and the range of modalities available to practice
3. To introduce students to current understanding of trauma and different approaches to responding to traumatic life event
4. To understand the psychosocial in relationship to counselling
5. To develop a capacity for self-reflection
6. To learn about group processes

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
1 year full-time					
4	SSPA172S4	Introduction to Counselling Skills	30	Core.	Term 1
4	SSPA173S4	Understanding Therapeutic Practice	30	Core	Term 2
4	SSPA174S4	Human and Social Development	30	Core	Term 3
4	SSPA175S4	Developing Skills and Groupwork	30	Core	Term 2,3

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student

Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)

Option: Student can choose to take this module

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

Teaching involves a mix of formal academic teaching (lectures and seminars), skills teaching (through focused listening and responding skills based exercises: role plays and triad work), and experiential learning. Each seminar will include time for the practice of the skills necessary for understanding a range of experiences, including the impact of trauma and wider social world on emotional and relational functioning. Experiential learning in group formation will take place, to deepen self-knowledge and to explore self-other dynamics.

Assessment is by written essays, presentations based on groupwork and self-reflective accounts, designed to test academic knowledge, and the development of counselling skills and self-knowledge. Further possibilities include audio visual, mind map, comparative chart submissions.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment.

Assessment is by short written essays, case study, presentations based on groupwork and self-reflective accounts, designed to test academic knowledge, and the development of counselling skills and self-knowledge. These will develop in complexity as the course progresses. Some assignments will include possibilities to submit in audio visual, mind map, comparative chart format.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

By the end of the programme, students:

1. will have developed the capacity for listening and responding, related to basic counselling skills
2. will have developed a capacity for understanding the heterogeneity of human experience in relation to the intersecting layers of internal and social distress
3. will have developed an awareness of the psychosocial context in which counselling is practised
4. will be able to describe and evaluate a range of counselling modalities
5. will be able to demonstrate an understanding of three developmental models
6. will have an understanding of group and organisational dynamics
7. will have a knowledge of trauma and models of recovery
8. will have developed the capacity for reflexivity
9. will be able to describe the basic elements of the ethical and professional context of counselling practice

Careers and further study

Birkbeck's Cert HE in Counselling and Counselling Skills will enable students to:

- Use skills in a range of helping roles
- Work with greater awareness in groups and working contexts
- Skills in evaluating and assessing counselling theory
- The ability to reflect on social identity and role in a range of contexts

- Embark on further counselling training and to be considered for the MSc in Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services](#). This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Tutorials: One-to-one tutorials will be offered to students on a termly basis, of up to 25 minutes per term.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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