

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	Grad Cert Foundation in Counselling and Psychotherapy (Level 6)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	N/A
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	Part-time (1 year) October/January
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
<u>QAA subject benchmark group(s)</u> <u>Higher Education Credit Framework for England</u>	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	GCGFDCPY_C GCGFDCPJ_C (January start)
HECoS Code	100495 counselling
Start date of programme	October 2022/January 2023
Date of programme approval	Spring 2022
Date of last programme amendment approval	September 2025
Valid for academic entry year	2026-27
Programme Director	Clea McEneryWest / Valeh Amooi/ Sharon Frazer
Date of last revision to document	29/09/25

Admissions requirements

Applicants will have completed an introductory level course in counselling and/or be working in a helping role. They will also be able to demonstrate their readiness for academic study at Level 5/6 with a first degree or equivalent.

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

This course has been designed as a foundation for a full professional clinical training in counselling or psychotherapy. It is suitable for those working within the helping professions and anyone who has completed an introductory-level course in counselling.

Students will learn about key concepts in counselling and psychotherapy with a focus on the psychodynamic method and psychosocial/organisational perspectives. They will be taught the significance of developmental life stages and the impact of these on the counselling relationship. They will also develop counselling skills in practical listening exercises and engage in a process of personal development through various experiential learning activities

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Part-time – 1 year					
6	SSPA155S6	Foundations of counselling and psychotherapy	30	Core	T1-3
6	SSPA154S6	Psychodynamic practice and psychosocial perspectives	30	Core	T2-3

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.

Academic learning will be achieved through the study of theoretical texts, theory lectures and seminars. Counselling skills will be developed through skills-based class exercises and practice sessions in small groups, in which students will rotate through the roles of client, counsellor and observer. Students will be guided in the use of self-reflection and peer feedback to develop their application of psychodynamic theory to therapeutic practice.

Self-awareness will be developed through experiential exercises designed to foster self-knowledge and self-reflection, as well as through participation in an “experiential group” - an unstructured group in which students learn at first hand some of the key dynamics and processes that occur in groups and organizations.

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 one academic essay and one piece of self-reflective writing in each module.

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.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe the basic principles of counselling and psychotherapy
2. Describe and evaluate the key theoretical ideas underpinning psychodynamic counselling and psychotherapy
3. Apply your understanding of the range of psychoanalytic theory and psychosocial perspectives to think critically about counselling and psychotherapy practice
4. Demonstrate the use of counselling skills in helping interactions
5. Demonstrate a capacity for self-reflection and reflective practice
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic elements of the professional, organizational and social context of counselling.

Careers and further study

This course will enable you to make informed choices about whether counselling and psychotherapy training is right for you.

On completion, you will be ready to apply to clinical training, including Birkbeck's MSc Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy and MSc Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy with Children and Adolescents.

If you choose to continue in your current work role, you will have acquired valuable skills and understanding which can increase your professional effectiveness, especially if you are in a helping role or working with people in some capacity.

Graduates from our MSc clinical training courses go on to work as counsellors and psychotherapists in a range of settings, often related to the placements they undertook while training.

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.

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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