

MA/Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling

For students entering in 2005

Awarding Institution: The University of Reading
Teaching Institution: The University of Reading
Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences
Programme length: 36 months – Part time
Date specification last updated: 4 May 2006
Programme Director: Barbara Richards
Board of Studies: MA/Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling
Accreditation: British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

Summary of Programme aims

Part I, the Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling, is focused upon the training to become a clinical practitioner and is accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. It consists of the first 2 years of the Course. Part 2 consists of a further year for the Masters Degree in Counselling and is focused upon research into counselling practice or counselling issues.

The aims of the Programme are:

- To introduce the principles of psychodynamic counselling and facilitate the development of skills based on an understanding of the psychodynamic model
- To develop competence in undertaking counselling work with individual clients
- To locate the practice of psychodynamic counselling within a professional, social and cultural context
- To acquaint students with the nature and range of research in the counselling field
- To enable students to plan, conduct and write up a research project of MA standard.

Transferable skills

Within this Programme students will develop skills that are readily transferable to employment and other contexts. Students are expected, by the end of their degree Programme, to have an understanding of individuals, relationships and groups and an awareness of inter personal and intra psychic processes. They are expected to have an understanding and awareness of themselves and be able to work both independently and as part of a team. They will be competent as a counsellor and able to work ethically using the psychodynamic model. They will have knowledge of other major theories and models of counselling. In following this Programme they will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills in verbal and written communication, processing of information, project development and management of their future career.

Programme content		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
Mod Code	<i>Module Title</i>		
HCMD1	The Counselling Relationship	20	M
HCMD2	Clinical Practice	30	M
HCMD3	Theory – Human Development	30	M
HCMD4	Theory – Counselling Concepts	20	M
HCMD5	Theory – Applications	20	M

HCMD6	Personal Development	20	M
HCMD7	Counselling and Research	60	M

The six modules which comprise Part 1, to Postgraduate Diploma level, are all compulsory and to a great extent are taught concurrently. Part 2 includes a taught Research Methods course which must be completed before progressing to the research project and dissertation.

Part-time/modular arrangements

The Programme is studied on a part-time basis over a period of 3 years.

In Part 1, students are required to attend the University on one day per week and also for an Introductory Day and for one Saturday workshop each term. It is also a requirement that students are in weekly personal counselling or psychotherapy, consistent with the theoretical model, from the beginning of the Programme and throughout the duration of the training. The cost of therapy is additional to the tuition fees and is paid by the student directly to the therapist. In addition, from Term 2 onwards, students attend a counselling placement weekly and carry an ongoing case load of 3 - 4 clients and attend weekly individual supervision. Students are required to attend a personal tutorial each term and an academic tutorial following the return of assessed work. Tutorials are arranged with the individual student and are likely to be in addition to the normal timetabled Programme.

Part 2 begins with a taught Research Methods course. For this it is necessary to attend the University for a half day per week during the autumn term of Year 3. Following this, the dissertation stage begins in January. This requires independent study and regular tutorials with an appointed Research Supervisor. The supervision process will be supported by the use of Blackboard, and through School dissertation workshops.

Progression requirements

On admission to the Programme each student attends the six modules which make up the Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling (140 credit points at M level). It is this part of the Programme that is accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Students who have successfully completed Part 1 may undertake the Research Methods course and dissertation stage in order to attain the Masters Degree (200 credit points at M level).

Summary of teaching and assessment

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
<u>Failing categories:</u>	
40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degree

To pass the Masters, students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall in modules worth 220 credits including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits. Module HCMD2

is of special significance to the programme and students must pass all aspects of assessment for this module with a mark of 50 or more.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 70 or more for the dissertation will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

For PG Diploma

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more in modules worth 140 credits and have no mark below 40. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits. Module HCMD2 is of special significance to the programme and students must pass all aspects of assessment for this module with a mark of 50 or more.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

If students do not complete or pass the clinical practice element of the Programme, but achieve a pass in not less than 60 credits, a Certificate in Psychodynamic Theory may be awarded. This is not however a qualification to practice.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this Programme are normally required to have obtained:

1. A degree or relevant professional equivalent from an approved University or recognised training institution. The programme is also available to non-graduates who are able to provide evidence of ability to study at postgraduate level.
2. Minimum of two years working experience in a setting where interpersonal relationships are of central importance. (This may be as a volunteer).
3. Some form of basic counselling skills training which might be formally certified or be as part of another related training course.

In addition, applicants will need to demonstrate during the interviewing process that they:

1. Have sufficient self awareness and motivation to play an active part in their own development. This involves participation in their own personal counselling or therapy during their training.
2. Have the capacity to develop the necessary psychological thinking process to work as a psychodynamic counsellor. This involves a curiosity about and desire to understand themselves and others.
3. Have sufficient motivation to work independently to ensure that they can do the necessary course work and engage effectively in a counselling placement during the course.

Admissions Tutor: Barbara Richards

Support for students and their learning

Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the student Access to Independent Learning ([S@IL](#)) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

An Induction Day will take place on the Saturday prior to the commencement of the Programme. Students will be sent a copy of the Programme Handbook and a pre course reading list a minimum of 4 weeks prior to this date.

Career prospects

Graduates of the Programme enter employment in a wide range of contexts. These include counselling in organisational or agency settings, e.g. NHS and education; counselling service management; counselling training and, following a period of further experience, some graduates establish a private counselling practice. Graduates may also utilise their training in their established core profession, developing their role and taking on new responsibilities. Graduates of the Programme are eligible to apply for individual BACP accreditation upon completion of 450 hours of supervised counselling practice with clients, over a minimum period of three years.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

When the student is deemed, by the Programme teaching staff, to be ready to begin client work, (typically in Terms 2 or 3 of Year 1), a clinical placement is undertaken within a counselling agency or an organisation which offers counselling as a part of its overall service provision. This is to enable students to develop their skills as a counsellor by work with actual clients, and to gain some experience of working formally as a counsellor alongside other colleagues. The student is required to attain a minimum of 150 client hours and a minimum of 40 hours of individual clinical supervision for this work, by the end of year 2. If, however, there has been a delay in the starting of a placement or during the placement, students may continue to accumulate their clinical practice hours whilst undertaking year 3 of the Course. The student must continue in supervision and personal therapy until the clinical component of the Programme is completed, if this be longer than two years.

Educational aims of the Programme

The Programme comprises a series of modules which reflect the key areas of learning: theoretical, personal development, and clinical. It aims to address specifically and in depth a range of topics within each of these key areas and, at the same time, to establish the relationship between them so as to help the student to integrate the Programme learning into effective practice as a counsellor.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. the counselling relationship and the key position that this occupies in psychodynamic counselling2. psychodynamic models of human development and the work of key psychoanalytic theorists in this regard.3. major theoretical concepts relevant to psychodynamic counselling, including unconscious processes.4. key features of other theoretical approaches to counselling5. the effect of external factors, i.e. social, cultural and biological factors upon the internal world of an individual6. professional, ethical and legal issues that arise in counselling7. the relationship between psychodynamic theory and practice8. organisational and group dynamics operating within the course and within the placement agency9. self in relation to others10. own abilities and limitations as a counsellor11. approaches to counselling research	<p>Students will have the opportunity to gain and develop their knowledge and understanding of the counselling process through lectures, seminars, group work, experiential workshops, project work, individual and group tutorials, counselling placement, clinical supervision and personal therapy. The counselling placement will offer the opportunity to gain knowledge through practice work with clients and involvement in an agency setting. Students will be directed with regard to texts and journal articles for further study. Independent study is a key feature throughout the degree and particularly in Year 3 with the undertaking of a research project and writing up of the dissertation.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Assessment is through the completion of course work in the form of essays, case studies, presentation/portfolio, log book and the dissertation in year 3. In addition a satisfactory report is required from the clinical supervisor and the leader of the Clinical Case Discussion Group.</p>

Skills and other attributes

<p>B. Intellectual skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. synthesise new knowledge with prior learning2. be evaluative and analytical3. apply theory to practice4. assimilate and process information in terms of course work and in the counselling relationship5. research issues pertinent to counselling	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Modules within the Programme are taught concurrently and it is an important part of the psychodynamic model that students are encouraged throughout to make links between the constituent elements: theoretical, clinical and personal development. This promotes synthesis of new knowledge with what has been learned previously. A range of topics within each of the three key areas are taught in seminars, workshops, Clinical Case Discussion Groups and small and large group settings, and supported by the tutorial system. A high level of discussion and group interaction, in all of these contexts, challenges the student to develop evaluative and critical thinking. Clinical work and personal experience is constantly held in focus in order to help the student to integrate the Programme learning into effective practice as a counsellor. The dissertation requires the development of research skills.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>All of the assignments require students to be evaluative and analytical, to synthesise knowledge and to demonstrate the ability to assimilate and process information. In particular, the Clinical Case Discussion Group leaders report and the Supervisors report, at the end of year 2, will assess the application of theory to practice, although again, it is expected that this will be evident in all of the assignments. The Seminar Presentation/Portfolio in Year 2 will assess the development of research skills, enable students to integrate and synthesise new knowledge with prior learning and demonstrate application in their practice. The dissertation, in Year 3, will provide the longest assessment of the students' ability to research issues pertinent to counselling.</p>
---	---

C. Practical skills – able to:

1. practice competently, appropriately and ethically as a counsellor
2. observe, assess and discuss group dynamics operating within the course setting and the counselling placement agency
3. show good communication skills
4. demonstrate self awareness
5. prepare and deliver a seminar presentation
6. collaborate with a fellow student in the preparation and delivery of a seminar presentation
7. appropriately carry out a research project into a issue pertinent to counselling

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

In year 1, counselling skills and audio/video workshops provide opportunities for students to practice counselling skills and to develop an awareness of their own part in the counselling relationship. The clinical placement in Years 1 and 2 provides opportunity for students to develop the ability to work weekly, in an ongoing way, with individual clients over a period up to 18 months. Individual clinical supervision is ongoing throughout this period in order to assist the student in the development of competence as a practitioner. In large and small group settings and in the placement, students will observe and have the opportunity to discuss group dynamics. Communication workshops give opportunity for students to practice and reflect upon their own behaviour and styles of communication. Following seminar presentations by the staff team and visiting lecturers, students will each take a turn in pairs or threes, within the 'Applications' Module in Year 2, to prepare and present a seminar on a given topic in this area. In Year 3, a taught Research Methods course will prepare students to conduct their own research project.

Assessment

Clinical Case Discussion Group leaders report, the Supervisors report and Log Book, at the end of Year 2, assess competency to practice and the ability to observe the significance of the group setting (the Supervisor also gives an interim report at the end of Year 1). The Case Studies are also used to assess these skills. The Reflective Writing assignment will assess students' self awareness. The seminar presentation/ preparation portfolio in Year 2 will assess students' ability to collaborate, prepare and present a topic. The dissertation will provide an assessment of ability to carry out a project appropriately.

D. Transferable skills – able to:

1. have an understanding of individuals, relationships and groups
2. understand and be aware of the self
3. work appropriately and ethically with counselling clients in short and long term settings
4. assimilate and process information
5. give oral and visual presentations
6. communicate in writing
7. develop and complete project work
8. work as part of a team
9. plan and work independently
10. identify future CPD needs

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Personal development and work in groups is present in all modules. The clinical placement gives opportunity for the development of competency as a practitioner, the capacity to think and work independently and also as a part of a team. Written and oral presentations are an important element in the theoretical modules. Professional issues relating to being employed and future career development in counselling are taught in the Clinical Practice module.

Assessment

These skills will be assessed in the various essays, case studies, seminar presentation, and dissertation and particularly in the counselling placement.

Please note - This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.