



COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)
16 Melville Terrace | Stirling | FK8 2NE
t: 01786 475 140 f: 01786 446 207
e: info@cosca.org.uk w: www.cosca.org.uk

COSCA VALIDATION OF COURSES

COSCA COUNSELLING SUPERVISION COURSE

VALIDATION AND REVALIDATION

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

The Application for COSCA Validation of the COSCA Counselling Supervision Certificate Course can be found on www.cosca.org.uk – Courses – COSCA Counselling Supervision.

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A INTRODUCTION

1 An Overview of COSCA Validation

COSCA, the professional body for counselling and psychotherapy in Scotland, seeks to advance all forms of counselling, psychotherapy and the use of counselling skills by promoting best practice and through the delivery of a range of sustainable services.

The COSCA Course Validation Panel awards validation and revalidation to organisations delivering counselling, counselling skills and related training that meets COSCA's standards and procedures. Both course and course provider have to reach the required standards in order for the Panel to grant validation. The Course Validation Panel recognises the importance of high quality training as a means of protecting both practitioners and clients.

It is COSCA's intention to help course planners, by identifying and clearly stating essential course requirements and standards. This standardisation aims to ensure that essential elements are present while not dictating how these will be covered. Validation procedures provide a framework within which course planners, designing training courses at a professional level, can introduce their own material. Variety and innovation are to be encouraged.

It is expected that any organisation applying for COSCA validation will adhere to the standards required in each area but it should be noted that having done so does not imply course validation can be assumed, or that it will automatically be awarded.

Any course and course provider claiming COSCA validation must have completed the full evaluation procedure with the COSCA Course Validation Panel detailed in section C of this document.

The Panel aims to function in an open and transparent manner and to work with applicants to build up the quality of training in the counselling field throughout Scotland.

The Panel also understands that its procedures require continual monitoring, evaluation and refinement. The Panel welcomes any written submission suggesting improvements to validation procedures.

2 The Validation of Courses in Counselling Supervision

2.1 This document lays out guidelines and procedures for the current validation of COSCA Counselling Supervision Course offering training in counselling supervision. It is COSCA's intention to actively foster the development and availability of high quality supervision to all those working throughout the counselling field.

To this end COSCA is seeking to facilitate the provision of counselling supervision training to meet the needs and aspirations of all those for whom it will benefit current practice.

Within this context of a developing professional framework and standards, COSCA anticipates that within a timescale of approximately 5 years, counselling supervision training will normally only be offered to those with substantial training and experience as counselling or psychotherapy practitioners.

2.2 Counselling supervision courses may be validated which provide training for individuals who have at least 2 years' relevant experience as:

- Counsellors
- Psychotherapists
- Counselling skills practitioners and are sponsored to do the course by the agency in which they work

Part 1 of the course (Certificate in Counselling Supervision Skills) is for those who wish to develop a better understanding and use of supervision but not practice as supervisors.

Part 2 of the course (Certificate in Counselling Supervision) is for those who wish to become supervisors, or for those who are currently working as supervisors and seek to develop their skills and/or understanding in supervision, in a private, professional or voluntary setting. Please note that on completion of the course COSCA expects Counselling Skills Practitioners to supervise other Counselling Skills Practitioners within an agency context and not independently.

2.3 In their application for validation, therefore, course providers are required to specify for whom the course is intended and what a successful participant will be qualified to do. This will need to be consistently evidenced through pre-course publicity, the selection process, assessment and the description of the award. It is acceptable for courses to offer training to mixed groups where course providers can provide robust evidence how this will be effectively managed.

3 COSCA Course Validation Panel

COSCA's Course Validation Panel awards COSCA Validation and Revalidation to organisations delivering counselling, counselling skills and counselling related training which have met COSCA's standards and procedures.

In doing so, the Course Validation Panel aims to function in an open and transparent manner and to work with applicants to build up the quality of training in counselling, counselling skills and counselling related training throughout Scotland.

4 COSCA Validation Guidelines and Procedures

The Guidelines and Procedures are offered to help in the completion of applications for Validation and Revalidation of courses in Counselling Supervision.

COSCA Validated organisations are required to abide by current and any future updated Guidelines and Procedures for Course Validation and Revalidation.

5 Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework Award

The COSCA Counselling Skills Course has been credit-rated and levelled by Edinburgh Napier University.

The COSCA Counselling Supervision Skills Certificate has been awarded 10 SCQF credits at SCQF level 8.

The COSCA Counselling Supervision Certificate has been awarded 15 SCQF credits at SCQF level 9 (note: this includes the 10 SCQF credits at SCQF level 9 allocated to the Counselling Supervision Skills Certificate Course).

6 Useful Contacts

The COSCA Development Officer (Individuals/Courses) is available to respond to queries or concerns about applications, criteria or procedures. See COSCA website www.cosca.org.uk for contact details. The Chair of the Course Validation Panel can be contacted through the Development Officer (Individuals/Courses) at the COSCA office.

Please note that Applicants require to use the current Guidelines and Application Forms for submission for Validation, found on www.cosca.org.uk - 'Validation'.

All documentation mentioned in these Guidelines and Procedures are available from the COSCA website: www.cosca.org.uk.

Where *supervision course(s)* or *supervisor(s)* are mentioned throughout this document, it is understood to mean *counselling supervision course(s)* or *counsellor supervisor(s)*.

B GUIDELINES FOR VALIDATION APPLICATIONS

1 Ethics and Practice

- 1.1 In order to ensure the well-being of all concerned, the validation process requires that the training course provider works within the COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice (www.cosca.org.uk - Ethics). Submissions for course validation therefore will only be considered from COSCA Corporate, Full Organisational or Companion Organisational Members and any award of validation will depend on the maintenance of COSCA Organisational Membership.
- 1.2 It will be necessary to submit a copy of the organisation's equal opportunities and/or anti-discriminatory policy(s) with the membership application. In the event of granting validation, COSCA does not accept the adequacy and legality of any documentation submitted.
- 1.3 Organisations are required to have a robust and fair Complaints Procedure and have submitted a copy of this with their membership application. Initial Validation or revalidation will only be awarded if this is deemed to be the case.
- 1.4 Organisations will have adequate insurance/indemnity cover.
- 1.5 In instances where an organisation's structure is such that it does not have a management committee or equivalent but is run by the trainers involved in the delivery of the course, it is essential that the organisation evidence in its application for Initial Validation or Revalidation that it has an external and independent person who will deal with complaints.
- 1.6 There is an expectation that trainees will be informed that the training is provided within such policies and statements. This information should be readily available to participants although it may simply be included in the course publicity material, copies of which will be submitted with the application for validation.

2 Publicity of Courses and Recruitment of Trainers

- 2.1 **Publicity of Courses**
It is required that organisations' publicity includes reference to COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland), the professional validation body for the course being publicised and/or promoted. Course publicity material will not mislead candidates and will state clearly the validation status of courses.

During the assessment stage, and prior to **Full Validation** being awarded, the course provider can use "COSCA Validation applied for" and/ or "awarded COSCA Initial Validation or COSCA Conditional Initial Validation" in publicity material.

All awards to participants on COSCA validated courses are required to use the COSCA logo. Please contact the COSCA office to obtain a copy of the COSCA logo

2.2 Recruitment of Trainers

It is the training provider's responsibility to recruit trainers in a fair, equal and non-discriminatory manner, preferably with ample advertising and marketing of any vacant posts. COSCA expects appropriate use of measurable recruitment tools such as application forms/questionnaires, personal specifications and interviews. The posts should have job descriptions and the post holders should have a contractual agreement, terms and conditions of employment provided, from the trainer provider or an appropriate recruitment agency and should be covered by adequate and appropriate insurance.

3 Trainers

- 3.1 Trainers must be competent to fulfil their responsibility to the course participants in terms of knowledge and experience. To this end it is a requirement that a sole trainer be a Counsellor Member or Associate Member of COSCA and accredited as a trainer by COSCA to Certificate level (see Guidelines and Criteria for Trainer Accreditation).

When there is more than one trainer involved in the delivery of the course, a team approach to training must be taken.

- 3.2 In any application for validation, it is a requirement that the training provider submits to COSCA for all non COSCA Accredited Trainers involved in the delivery of training on the course :

1. **Non COSCA Accredited Trainers Observation Report of Trainer Competence** within 6 months of being involved in the delivery of training indicating a level of competence sufficient to deliver the validated course – **Appendix 6**.
2. **Non COSCA Accredited Trainers: Application to Deliver Training on a COSCA Validated Course** – www.cosca.org.uk – Validation – General, prior to being involved in the delivery of training

In order to meet the terms of the validation guidelines, non-accredited trainers must be prepared to work towards COSCA Trainer Accreditation within 2 years of commencing delivery of the course (even if it is on a freelance or sessional basis).

3. When revalidation is applied for, all non-accredited trainers involved in the delivery of the course (even if it is on a freelance or sessional basis) for more than 2 years prior to the revalidation deadline must be COSCA accredited (Certificate or Diploma level) by the point of revalidation, that is within 5 years of the organisation's award of Initial Validation.
- 3.3 To train others in supervision a trainer must have at least all of the following:
- A Diploma in Counselling or equivalent
 - 450 hours of counselling practice experience over a maximum of 4 years
 - 200 hours of supervised supervision practice over a maximum of 4 years
 - Currently in practice as a counsellor and supervisor
 - Training in supervision (this may be formal or informal. Where informal some account must be given of how this has taken place)

- 3.4 In any application for validation, the training organisation/agency is required to complete and submit **Appendix 4: Non Accredited Trainers Observation Report of Trainer Competence** confirming the competencies of COSCA non-accredited trainers.

It is the responsibility of the training provider to quality assure the training delivered by non-accredited trainers.

- 3.5 COSCA requires the competence and suitability of non-accredited trainers on COSCA validated courses to be verified by the submission of an Application Form to Deliver Training and a **Non Accredited Trainers Observation Report of Trainer Competence** checklist.

Training providers must ensure that at least one **Non Accredited Trainers Observation Report of Trainer Competence** checklist for each non-accredited trainer is submitted to the COSCA office within 6 months of commencing work with them, indicating a level of competence sufficient to deliver the validated course.

- 3.6 For all trainers who are not COSCA Accredited, Application Form(s) to Deliver Training providing details of training undertaken in counselling, supervision and training along with practical experience in counselling, supervision and training will be submitted with the application.
- 3.7 Evidence will be provided of the organisation's trainer development strategy and the provisions for trainer support and supervision.
- 3.8 Trainers working with groups where participants with widely differing levels of training and experience are included will be asked to provide evidence of their competence to work with mixed groups.

4 Trainer : Participant Ratio

- 4.1 The optimum ratio of participants:trainer is 12 : 1.
- 4.2 The minimum number of participants permitted at the beginning of the course is nine.
- 4.3 If the number of participants on courses that have already started drops to less than six the course should be cancelled. In the event of this happening, help should be given to participants to continue their training with other providers or in a partnership arrangement with the applicant and another COSCA validated training provider.
- 4.4 The upper limit on a course delivered by one trainer is fifteen. When the number of participants with one trainer exceeds 12, training providers need to pay particular attention to the needs of the trainer and participants.
- 4.5 It is strongly recommended that where possible, more than one trainer is involved in the delivery of a counselling supervision course.
- 4.6 The maximum number of participants on courses delivered by 2 trainers is 24. Groups of more than 20 will be considered to be 2 discrete groups coming together as a large group for trainer presentations of theory only. In addition, particular attention should be paid to the provision of sufficient space for confidentiality in triad work and the management of large group processes.

- 4.7 You must provide evidence of your trainer(s) competence to offer a good training experience to all members of the group if you plan to offer a course to participants with mixed entry criteria (e.g. counselling skills providers and experienced counsellors).

5 Course Monitoring

- 5.1 The application will indicate in some detail how the overall structure, method of delivery and continued appropriateness for the target group is being reviewed.
- 5.2 The applicant will also indicate how this review will be ongoing and will involve internal and/or external monitoring as well as periodic evaluation.

6 Resources

- 6.1 Applicants for validation will have access to adequate staff, accommodation, library facilities and catering to conduct the training in comfort and in line with health and safety requirements. The application will state that these facilities are available for staff and participants.
- 6.2 It is a requirement of validation that applicants inform COSCA in advance about plans to deliver validated courses in a different venue(s) or engage additional/different trainers. It is a requirement to fully inform COSCA about all trainers' activities carried out under the auspices of your organisation using the validation given by COSCA.
- 6.3 Participants will be informed in writing of the outcome on completion of the course. The application will detail the methods, procedures and the personnel responsible for communicating outcomes to participants.
- 6.4 Course organisers will ensure that students have access to adequate advice and guidance on appropriate progression on the course. Advice and guidance services will be delivered within the requirements of ethical codes and policies.
- 6.5 The applicant for validation will inform the course participants of the existence and identity of the COSCA Assessor and how to contact her/him, if they wish to do so.

7 Course Aims

- 7.1 The course Aims specify for whom the course is intended and the intended outcomes for participants. For example, whether it is for experienced counsellors seeking to become supervisors or for counselling practitioners seeking to deepen their understanding of supervision.
- 7.2 The Aims evidence the following criteria:
1. The course should equip participants with the range of knowledge and skills necessary to meet the stated outcomes.
 2. The course should help participants to integrate the stated level of supervision skills into practice within the training.

3. Successful participants should leave the course confident with their acquired knowledge and skills.
 4. The course should foster participants' personal development and insight and should provide a safe environment where the challenges and dilemmas relating to supervision can be explored robustly and in depth.
 5. The course should help participants understand the variety of social, cultural and organisational contexts in which supervision takes place.
- 7.3 It is expected that information concerning the course aims will be given to the course participants prior to, or at the beginning of, the course. Evidence of this will be included with the application.

8 Course Learning Outcomes

- 8.1 The COSCA Counselling Supervision Certificate Course Handbook:
- provides details of the Learning Outcomes participants can expect to achieve on completion of the course.
 - states what Learning Outcomes participants are intended to achieve on completion of the course
 - lists the Competencies showing the skills, or set of skills, each participant will be able to demonstrate.

9 Timing and Spacing

- 9.1 The same variations of presentation of the Course as described in the COSCA Counselling Skills Certificate Course *Introduction* are possible for this Supervision Course. The material in the supervision Course has been structured in 12 discrete units, each unit being 3 hours in length. However, the ideal presentation of the 36 hours of the Course is one day a week x 6 or half a day a week x 12 with an adequate gap (approximately 4 weeks) between Units 11 and 12 for completion of the transcript assignment. Time for digesting the content of each unit and for implementing the learning outside the training room is desirable.
- 9.2 The units of the Course should be delivered consecutively as listed in the Contents page of the Counselling Skills Supervision Course Handbook.
- 9.3 All providers will have a minimum of 36 hours of participant:trainer contact covering the theory, skills and process of supervision, including ethics and personal development.
- 9.4 In addition to the above, there will be additional study requirement for reading and completing assignments to evidence learning outcomes. For a qualification in the practice of supervision, assignments must include case study work and placement to be completed within a timeframe of not more than 12 months after completing the course.

- 9.5 For a qualification in the practice of supervision, a minimum of 12 hours of supervised supervision practice must be completed in addition to the hours of course study.
- 9.6 The course should be completed in no less than three months and no more than 3 years.
- 9.7 Applicants wishing to complete the course after the 3 years stipulated period since starting the course, will be asked to submit written evidence of continued skills practice to the trainer for consideration.
- 9.8 The written evidence must show that they have continued to practise during the extended period and should include a written account of how and where they have practised since completion of the previous training. The written summary should demonstrate that the applicant is not only using supervision skills but is also in touch with the relevant underlying thinking.
- 9.9 Applicants are required to show evidence of how the information on the spacing of the training is communicated to participants.

10 Attendance

Trainers should inform participants that they should plan for 100% attendance on the course. Participants should commit in advance to this level of attendance. Planned absences should be discussed in advance with the trainer and may or may not be acceptable.

The minimum attendance is 11 out of the 12 units in order to be considered for certification. Units 11 and 12 are compulsory for those wishing to complete the Certificate in Counselling Supervision. If this is not met the COSCA office should be contacted. Due to the experiential nature of the course and its possible impact on the group, absences are to be avoided.

As it is the duty of the course provider to ensure every opportunity for participants to meet and achieve the learning outcomes of the course, in the event of attendance falling below the above level, the trainer should seek COSCA guidance as to whether it is appropriate for the participant to catch up and to continue or, if it is possible, to offer them the opportunity to attend the appropriate sessions with another group at a later date.

Applicants are required to show evidence of how the information on attendance requirements is communicated to participants

11 Course Content

11.1 The COSCA Counselling Supervision Certificate Course Handbook includes the following key components:

- Two theoretical models of supervision
- Professional and ethical issues
- Theoretical and experiential input on the place of unconscious processes in supervision
- Counsellor development (trainee to experienced counsellor) and its relevance to supervision
- Supervised practice placement (for those training to practice as supervisors)
See Section 12 below.

All key components are addressed from the perspectives of:

- Theory
- Skills
- Ethics
- Personal and professional development

11.2 The application will include some indicative course content relevant to theory, skills, ethics and personal/professional development, which demonstrate the content and delivery methods for a section of the course. A brief explanation of why this selection has been made will be included. Normally trainers' notes or session plans will provide sufficient evidence.

11.3 If you plan to offer a course with mixed entry criteria, you must indicate how you will address this in the delivery of further sections of the course.

12 Practice Placement

12.1 If a Certificate in Counselling Supervision is to be awarded, details for the arrangements for the practice placements for participants must be provided and how this will be monitored.

12.2 Where the above Certificate is to be awarded, it will include a practice placement of a minimum of 12 supervisee contact hours for each participant. The practice placement will be completed within 12 months.

12.3 COSCA requires that trainees opting to complete the Certificate in Counselling Supervision are trained well beyond certificate level and have a counselling Diploma or equivalent. If not, COSCA expects that they are working in an agency that is sponsoring their place on the course.

12.4 In addition to the guidance given in the course handbook on practice placement, the training provider should ensure, in the interests of the safety of the supervisee's clients, and the protection of the supervisee and trainee supervisor, that the counselling supervision practice undertaken by the trainee supervisor is with:

- qualified and/or fully trained counsellors/counselling skills users, or
- trainee counsellors or counselling skills users who have additional counselling supervision with counselling supervisors who have successfully completed counselling supervision training and/or who have relevant and appropriate experience in supervision of client work.'

12.5 The supervision practice placement will be supervised by a qualified and experienced supervisor at a ratio of one hour of supervision to every six hours of placement practice.

The supervisors of trainees during the placement must be appropriately qualified and experienced counsellors. They must not be line managers of the trainees.

12.6 Where the Certificate in Counselling Supervision is to be awarded, participants must complete a case study of 2,000 – 3,000 words that is based on the work undertaken with one supervisee, and submit it to the course trainer for assessment.

Re-submission of the case study is possible in certain circumstances, subject to the approval of the course trainer and COSCA and within a set timeframe, and subject to any conditions being put in place by the course trainer.

12.7 The course organisers will take responsibility for the approval of supervisors who should meet the criteria listed below:

- Supervisors must have substantial counselling experience and will normally have completed counselling training to diploma level and be a COSCA Accredited Counsellor/Psychotherapist or equivalent
- Supervisors should have some training in supervision
- Supervisors must be a Practitioner member of COSCA or an equivalent member of another recognised professional body and abide by the relevant Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice
- Supervisors will undertake supervision in relation to their supervisees.

12.8 Each supervisor will enter a clear contract with the course providers. The contract will detail the supervisor's responsibilities to the course providers and the participants.

13 Selection of Participants

13.1 Course providers must demonstrate the rationale for their selection procedure in relation to the Aims of the course to be delivered. It is acceptable for a course to have very open selection or to take only experienced counsellors/psychotherapists, provided that selection is consistent with its Aims and Learning Outcomes

13.2 In all cases, there will be a clear policy to avoid discrimination on any ground, including race, gender, disability, religious affiliation, sexual orientation and age.

- 13.3 **Counselling or Other Relevant Experience:**
Prior to acceptance on to a supervision course participants should have at least 1 year post-training relevant experience. This may be as counselling skills users or as counsellors/psychotherapists.
- 13.4 **Counselling/Counselling Skills Practice:**
It is expected that participants training to practice as supervisors will currently be practicing as counselling skills users / counsellors / psychotherapists, in an environment which offers support and supervision.

14 Assessment

- 14.1 The course assessment process will be both formative and summative, and will be experienced by the participants as supportive.
- 14.2 Formative assessment will be ongoing and based on the Learning Outcomes of the units, or sessions of the course. It can include the use of observation of practice, feedback and personal reflection and will be linked to individual participant learning.
- 14.3 Summative assessment will be based on the Learning Outcomes of the course. The assessment framework will be progressive and cumulative while being consistently stringent and effective. Evidence of the framework for summative assessment showing how the summative assessment is planned and executed and how it helps develop an environment where the participant can be self-reflective and self-assessing of his/her own learning will be submitted with the application.
- 14.4 Where the COSCA Counselling Supervision Course is being delivered, assessment must include case study work and a report from the supervisor of supervision practice undertaken.
- 14.5 The application will provide evidence that information concerning the process and criteria for assessment will be given to the course participants prior to the course or at the latest before the end of the first session.

15 Accreditation of Prior Learning and Experience (APL/APEL)

- 15.1 Selection of participants for courses should recognise existing training in the statutory and voluntary sectors and should encourage mobility between both. Course organisers should have a suitable system of APL/APEL which establishes equivalence of previous training.
- 15.2 Where prospective applicants have completed previous training undertaken not more than 3 years prior to the start of the course, and which meets the Learning Outcomes outlined in the COSCA Counselling Supervision Course, APL may be considered.
- 15.3 Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) may be considered where applicants have at least 5 years experience in the use of supervision skills and can demonstrate achievement of all required Learning Outcomes.
- 15.4 The Assessment of APL/APEL will be carried out by suitably qualified personnel who can demonstrate competence in the assessment of APL and APEL in relation to the COSCA Counselling Supervision Certificate Course.

- 15.5 The application for validation will detail the criteria and procedures for the assessment of awarding APL and APEL and will demonstrate that the system accurately assesses all relevant Learning Outcomes.
- 15.6 If APL/APEL is to be considered for more than 25% of the complete training programme in counselling supervision, it must be agreed in consultation with COSCA.
- 15.7 All awards of APL/APEL will be communicated to COSCA on the Participant Registration Proforma for the participant's name to be inserted on COSCA's database.

16 Discontinuation of Participants

- 16.1 Course providers should have written contractual arrangements with participants to cover the discontinuation of participants from COSCA validated courses. A statement to this effect should be presented to the Panel at the validation application stage.

17 Participant Course Evaluation

COSCA is continually working to develop the quality and value of the services it offers. To this end, it is required that you bring to the attention of your participants, the Course Evaluation proforma contained in the Participant's Handbook.

18 Registration of Participants

- 18.1 Participants Database – please refer to Appendix 1
This is a statement of the information held on COSCA's Participants Database, and how to access the information contained in it.
- 18.2 Registration of Students
Validated providers are required to complete the **COSCA Registration of Participants proforma** at the end of either Counselling Supervision Skills Course or Counselling Supervision Course and return it to the COSCA office for the registration of participants. The cost of registration and certification can be found on www.cosca.org.uk - Costings. There is no charge for registration of unsuccessful completion.
- 18.3 Signed Declaration by Trainer
The **COSCA Registration of Participants proforma** requires applicants to make a signed declaration that participants have been assessed to have met all of the Learning Outcomes detailed in the course validated by COSCA.
- 18.4 Sample Letter to Participants Regarding the COSCA Database/Participant Registration – please refer to Appendix 2
This is a sample letter providers are advised to issue to participants containing information on the storage of information in keeping with the Data Protection Act 1998.

18.5 Sample Letter to Participant Permission Form for Registration

– please refer to Appendix 3

This is a sample form for participants to give permission for their details to be passed to COSCA for storage on the COSCA database.

19 Awards

19.1 Validation Awards

COSCA is pleased to provide Full Validation course awards. There is a charge for this award: www.cosca.org.uk - Costings.

19.2 Participant Certification

To facilitate consistency in the recognition of the COSCA Counselling Supervision Certificate Course, COSCA certificates of completion must be issued to all participants who have successfully completed Part 1 and Part 2 of the Course.

Validated providers apply direct to COSCA for these certificates for which there is a charge (see www.cosca.org.uk - Costings). A minimum of 8 weeks prior notice is required for the preparation of certificates. Please note that COSCA does not send certificates direct to participants.

If validated providers wish to issue their own awards in addition to the COSCA certificate, providers are required to use the COSCA logo on these awards. Please contact COSCA to obtain a copy of the COSCA logo.

19.3 Participant/Trainer Handbooks

Organisations validated to provide COSCA's own Courses are required to use the materials produced by COSCA for the respective course. Handbooks are available for order from COSCA. An order form is available from www.cosca.org.uk - Validation – General.

As it is not always possible to despatch the order by return, providers should give as much advance notice as possible of their requirements.

The cost of the Handbook may be found on www.cosca.org.uk - Costings.

C APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR COURSE VALIDATION

- 1.1 The Panel holds regular validation meetings to consider applications for the validation of courses. It is the policy of the Panel to support and assist all applicants to develop quality training in the counselling field and this support is extended to you and your application. The Panel aims to respond to queries or concerns about applications, criteria or procedures and can be contacted through the COSCA Development Officer (Individuals/Courses).
- 1.2 Applications for Validation, presented on COSCA Validation Application Forms, and completed in line with the guidelines outlined, will be accepted from COSCA Organisational Members.
- 1.3 Applications will be submitted to the Panel approximately 14 days before the next Course Validation meeting. Dates of Panel meetings are available from www.cosca.org.uk - Validation - General. The applicant's training schedule will take account of the timing of Panel meetings, the time required to consider applications, the possibility of the Panel wishing to consult with the applicant and the time required to appoint, if appropriate, COSCA Assessors (CAs) and arrange visits.
- 1.4 The principal agent acting on behalf of the organisation applying will sign all submitted applications for validation. This signature will be taken as an understanding and acceptance, by the organisation, of the terms and conditions for Course Validation as presented. The person signing will be understood by the Panel as being the **representative of the organisation**, responsible for ensuring that the training continues to meet the required standards for on-going validation.
- 1.5 FIVE copies of the application completed in line with the guidelines outlined will be submitted to the COSCA Office with the appropriate fee (see www.cosca.org.uk - Costings). Applications received 21 days prior to the date of any Panel meeting will normally be considered at that meeting. Information on dates of Panel meetings is available from www.cosca.org.uk - Validation General.
- 1.6 When considering an application for validation, the Panel will meet and follow the procedures outlined. There will be one of four possible outcomes.
 - **To award Full Validation.** (Only possible where an organisation is already running other COSCA validated courses)
 - **To award Initial Validation.** (This option is for organisations who are not already running other COSCA validated courses and for organisations already running other COSCA validated courses but where the Panel requires some detailed monitoring of the first delivery of the course.)
 - **To award Initial Conditional Validation.** The Panel will decide that additional information or action is required before Full / Initial Validation can be awarded
 - **Not to award Initial/Initial Conditional/Full Validation.** The Panel will decide that a complete re-submission of the application is required.
- 1.7 The decision of the Panel will be communicated in writing by the Chief Executive to the applicant.

D VALIDATION PROCESS

1 Existing COSCA Validated Organisations

- 1.1 Where an organisation already holds validation from COSCA for the delivery of other courses, the Panel is able to award Full Validation for the COSCA Counselling Supervision Course without requiring a period of Initial Validation.
- 1.2 Where an organisation already holds Full Validation and the Panel requires some detailed monitoring of the first delivery of the course, the Panel may offer Initial Validation to the supervision course to allow for assessment of delivery by COSCA Assessors before Full Validation is granted. For example, if a course is to be delivered to participants starting with differing levels of experience and training.
- 1.3 Where an organisation is not currently validated by COSCA for the delivery of other courses it will be required to undergo the full process of Initial Validation, including assessment of delivery by a COSCA Assessor, before Full Validation is granted.
- 1.4 In the event that Initial Validation is awarded and a COSCA Assessor is appointed, the COSCA Assessor's fee plus expenses will be charged to the applicant.
- 1.5 On completion of the Course, all applicants must submit the **Course Completion Report (Appendix 5)** providing an overview of the course and evidence that participants have met the required standard for successful completion of the course prior to being awarded the Certificate. This proforma must be submitted to COSCA no later than 3 weeks following the completion of the course. The proforma is required to maintain the Full Validation and/or course validation status to move from Initial to Full Validation.
- 1.6 External Assessor to the Course
Applicants will require to engage, within six months of the award of Initial Validation, an External Assessor who must be different from the COSCA Assessor, and independent of the organisation, in order to provide the evidence required in this proforma. Impartiality should be observed when an organisation recruits an External Assessor.

It should be noted that your External Assessor is a different appointment to the COSCA Assessor and you are advised to appoint someone into the role who has a good understanding of COSCA training standards, is experienced and preferably qualified in both training and counselling practice and who is independent of your organisation.

The External Assessor's role is one of verification and evaluation. The organisation's External Assessor is required to visit the COSCA validated course to observe and assess its delivery, and to speak to the course participants. As well as offering a view as to how your course is being delivered, the External Assessor needs to be able to remain objective and he/she is required to act as a moderator i.e. if there is a dispute regarding decisions, assigning marks and awards, etc. The appointment and costs of the organisation's External Assessor are met by the validated organisation and not COSCA.

To assist with the completion of the External Assessor's Report, please see a copy of COSCA's proforma 'A Guide for the External Assessor's Report' under www.cosca.org.uk – Validation – General.

2 Non-Validated Organisations

- 2.1 For organisations not already running other COSCA validated courses, the Panel awards **Initial Validation** prior to granting Full Validation. Initial Validation means that the Panel has agreed that the course as it is outlined on paper provides sufficient assurance of quality and appropriate safeguards that it can be endorsed by the Panel to run with one cohort of trainees. **Conditional Initial Validation** means that the Panel has agreed that additional information or action will be required before Initial Validation can be awarded.
- 2.2 During the period of Initial Validation a COSCA Assessor (CA) will be appointed by the Panel to check that the endorsement of the Panel is justified. The CA is the appointment of the Panel and his/her working contract is with the Panel.
- 2.3 In the event that Initial Validation is awarded and a COSCA Assessor is appointed, the COSCA Assessor's fee plus expenses will be charged to the applicant.
- 2.4 The major part of the CA's work will be outlined in a general report that will be submitted to the Panel.
- 2.5 The CA may be remitted to specifically address areas that, in the Panel's view, needs closer scrutiny, clearer explanation or minor development. These areas will be outlined in the letter sent out to applicants informing them of the Panel's decision and require to be resolved before the course can move to receiving Full Validation status. Failure to address issues to the Panel's satisfaction could mean that Initial Validation is withdrawn from the course.
- 2.6 The CA will contact the applicant to arrange the details of assessment. The CA will expect to meet with the trainers and participants to gather evidence on course delivery as required for the completion of the CA report.
- 2.7 The Panel considers CA's reports at its meetings and decides on the applicant's validation status.
- 2.8 On completion of the Course, all applicants must submit the **Course Completion Report (Appendix 5)** providing an overview of the course and evidence that participants have met the required standard for successful completion of the course prior to being awarded the Certificate. This proforma must be submitted to COSCA no later than 3 weeks following the completion of the course.
- 2.9 External Assessor to the Course
Applicants will require to engage, within six months of the award of Initial Validation, an External Assessor who must be different from the COSCA Assessor, and independent of the organisation, in order to provide the evidence required in this proforma.

It should be noted that your External Assessor is a different appointment to the COSCA Assessor and you are advised to appoint someone into the role who has a good understanding of COSCA training standards, is experienced and preferably qualified in both training and counselling practice and who is independent of your organisation.

The External Assessor's role is one of verification and evaluation. As well as offering a view as to how your course is being delivered, the External Assessor needs to be able to remain objective and he/she is required to act as a moderator i.e. if there is a dispute regarding decisions, assigning marks and awards, etc. The appointment and costs of the organisation's External Assessor are met by the validated organisation and not COSCA.

To assist with the completion of the External Assessor's Report, please see a copy of COSCA's proforma 'A Guide for the External Assessor's Report' under www.cosca.org.uk – Validation – General.

3 Full Validation Stage

- 3.1 It is expected that a course will move from Initial Validation to Full Validation following consideration of the CA's report. If appropriate, the requirements of Conditional Initial Validation also require to be met. However, the decision to award Full Validation rests with the Panel and cannot be assumed until that decision has been made.
- 3.2 Where appropriate Full Validation will be granted for a period of 5 years following the Panel's decision to award Initial Validation. At this stage the course can claim to have Full Validation.
- 3.3 In the Full Validation stage the course applicant is required to inform the Panel of any changes to the delivery, setting, content or personnel associated with the course. This is to be carried out through the submission of the Annual Monitoring Form.
- 3.4 During the period of Full Validation the course provider must:
 - Continue in Organisational Membership of COSCA
 - Ensure that at least one COSCA Accredited Trainer is delivering the course and that other trainers are working towards COSCA Trainer Accreditation
 - Continue to meet course criteria
 - Submit COSCA's Annual Monitoring Form (Counselling Supervision Course)
 - Demonstrate that the trainers are actively engaged in self development and networking with other course providers by attendance at COSCA's Annual Trainers Event or similar.
- 3.5 In the Full Validation phase the applicant is required to inform the Panel of any changes to the delivery, setting, content or personnel associated with the course. This is to be carried out in the first instance by completing the **COSCA Validation Application to Change Existing Delivery** www.cosca.org.uk - Validation - General, followed by updating in the **Annual Monitoring Form** (www.cosca.org.uk - Validation - General). It is a requirement for continued COSCA Validation that the completed **Annual Monitoring Form** is returned to the COSCA office by 31 October annually. It is the organisation/agency's responsibility to ensure that the Annual Monitoring Form is forwarded to the COSCA office.

Annual Monitoring Form

It is a requirement of continued COSCA Validation that during the period of Full Validation, course providers complete this proforma on the renewal of membership on an annual basis and submit it for the attention of the Course Validation Panel. This proforma provides COSCA with a means to ensure that the standards achieved at the point of Full Validation are maintained during its entire period. It also gives course providers a valuable opportunity to monitor their own activities and outcomes. The proforma will be used as an important basis of awarding revalidation. The length of the report is variable, but it is essential that all parts of the proforma are completed.

- 3.6 At the end of the period of Full Validation, each course must be submitted for revalidation.

4 Non-Achievement of Full Validation

- 4.1 The Course Validation Panel, acting on behalf of COSCA, reserves the right to withhold, refuse or rescind validation at any point in the process. The above actions will be taken if the Panel considers that there exists in the training programme factors which undermine COSCA's commitment to quality or if it believes that the position or standing of COSCA is being compromised by continuing to endorse the training.
- 4.2 At the end of a period of Initial Validation, where the Panel considers that the course has not provided satisfactory justification for being awarded the status of Full Validation, the course may be awarded Initial Validation status for a second period to allow a second assessment to be carried out. Alternatively, **Conditional Full Validation** can be awarded where specific requirement(s) are still outstanding. **Full Validation** may be awarded at a further Panel meeting after the Panel has reconsidered the application in light of the second assessment report.
- 4.3 Initial Validation status will not be awarded on more than two consecutive occasions and failure to gain Full Validation status on a second attempt automatically means that Initial Validation is rescinded and cannot be reconsidered for a minimum period of one year from the date of the Panel's decision.

5 COSCA Assessors

- 5.1 As part of the Initial Validation process, a COSCA Assessor (CA) is appointed by the Panel to work with each application and will meet with the course trainers. As a general guideline, it will be necessary for the CA to attend a course session, or part thereof. In general, the CA will both assess and monitor in a supportive manner the delivery of the course to ensure that the Aims and Objectives are being met. Furthermore, it will be the role of the CA to monitor the methods of assessment to ensure that they are fair, accurate and appropriate to the course.
- 5.2 The CA is the appointment of the Panel. The working contract is with the Panel and the final report is to be submitted to the Panel.

- 5.3 The role of the CA is clearly set out by the Course Validation Panel in reference to the specific course with which he/she has been invited to work. There is an existing general structure for the reporting of the CA and this will be added to depending on the course that is seeking validation, and any specific issues raised by the Panel.
- 5.4 The applicant for validation will inform the course participants of the existence, identity and role of the CA.
- 5.5 The role of the CA is intended to facilitate the supportive and enabling function of the Panel. This means that the COSCA assessment task is not simply one of monitoring but also contributing to the guarantee of good practice. In effect the CA monitors and supports the course trainers in fulfilling the Aims and Objectives of the course in ways that are appropriate to a counselling ethos and respectful of all participants. The facilitators of the training should, therefore expect to conduct a dialogue with the CA and be given verbal feedback on the delivery of the training. However, the CA's role is not to give advice as such to the applicants.
- 5.6 The CA will remain in contact with the Development Officer (Individuals/Courses) throughout the period of Initial Validation who will communicate any concerns about the delivery of the training to the Panel.

6 Fees for Validation

- 6.1 Details of validation fees can be found on www.cosca.org.uk - Costings.
- 6.2 The fee for the COSCA Assessor is not contained within the fee for Validation. This fee, and any associated expenses, will be charged to the applicant. Further expenses may be passed to the applicant to cover additional work that they may be required to undertake in supporting the application.
- 6.3 When Initial Validation is extended to a second period there will be an extra charge to cover the second process of assessment.

7 Appeals

Where an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the validation process, the applicant can appeal against the Panel's decision through the COSCA Appeals Procedure. The appeal must be submitted within three months of the decision being made. (www.cosca.org.uk - Ethics). However, it is expected that prior to an appeal being submitted, that written exchanges and discussions will have taken place between the applicant and the Panel.

8 Revalidation

- 8.1 Validation will run for 5 years from the date of the Panel's awarding of Initial / Full Validation. At any time during that time the Panel can ask a COSCA Assessor to visit the course. After 5 years the course providers must apply for revalidation. These forms can be downloaded from www.cosca.org.uk - Validation.
- 8.2 The revalidation process acknowledges that the course had already been validated by COSCA. It does not set out to repeat the initial validation process. Its main aim is to check that the course still meets the criteria set originally.
- 8.3 The primary assessment instrument for revalidation will be the **Annual Monitoring Forms** that have been submitted during the previous period of validation.
- 8.4 In the revalidation application form applicants will be asked to report the following kinds of changes made to the course since the initial validation:
- Core orientation
 - Course Aims and Objectives, Learning Outcomes and Competencies, structure and content
 - Personnel
 - Assessment and evaluation procedures (internal and external)
 - Location
- 8.5 At the revalidation submission stage the following process will be carried out.
- **Factual verification stage:**

Factual verification by COSCA's Development Officer (Individuals/Courses) and Chair of the Panel to establish the completeness of the application and to identify any gaps to be filled.
 - **Evaluative reading stage:**

The application will be evaluated by the Validation Panel. If the course is approved by the Panel, a letter of re-validation to the applicant is passed by the Development Officer (Individuals/Courses) to the Chief Executive for signing.
 - **Assessment stage:**

When the application has been checked and approved at the factual and evaluative stages, there is no need for a quality assurance visit.

If the course does not meet the criteria, a quality assurance visit is carried out by an COSCA Assessor appointed by COSCA. The CA reports directly to the Development Officer (Individuals/Course) who submits a report to the Course Validation Panel for a decision.

If the course is approved at this point, a letter of revalidation is passed by the Development Officer (Individuals/Courses) to the Chief Executive for signing. If the course is not approved at this stage requirements are set and the course is given a time frame within which the requirements need to be met.

After the deadline for meeting the requirements has passed the Panel reaches a decision and the Development Officer (Individuals/Courses) passes a letter to this effect to the Chief Executive for signing.

- 8.6 In considering an application for revalidation, COSCA reserves the right to seek further information or clarification. COSCA also reserves the right to carry out a quality assurance visit at the applicant's expense.

9 Fees for Revalidation

Details of revalidation fees can be found on www.cosca.org.uk - Costings.

Information on participants involved in all COSCA validated courses is held on COSCA's participant database. The procedure for entering participant information onto this database varies depending on the nature of the validated course. Information on participants involved in:

- COSCA's Counselling Skills Course is entered at the end of each of the four Modules of the course
- COSCA validated counselling diploma courses is entered at the completion of the diploma course
- other COSCA validated courses is entered at the completion of the course.

Identifying data is held electronically and includes the participant's name, date of birth, home or work address, training provider, successful or unsuccessful completion of the training, if given APL/APEL, dates of commencement/completion of the course, month/year of issue of award by COSCA, work place.

All information kept on participants involved in COSCA validated courses is held by COSCA in line with the Data Protection Act (1998).

COSCA validated course providers can request access to information relating to whether a participant has started a COSCA validated course, which parts, if any, have been completed and which organisation or agency provided the training. Participants whose names are listed on the database can have access to their own information. Information will only be given to other parties with the written permission of the participant on whom information is requested. All requests for information must be made in writing either by email or letter, using the relevant **Participant Information Request Pro-forma** www.cosca.org.uk - Validation - General.

Access to the information on participant databases kept by COSCA is accessible through the Administrator at the COSCA Office.

**SAMPLE LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS REGARDING THE
COSCA DATABASE/PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION**

Dear (Participant's name)

As you aware, ***name of provider's course*** is professionally validated by COSCA, Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland.

Registration

As part of the validation system, COSCA maintains a register of all participants enrolled on COSCA validated courses. The register contains:

- The name and either home/work address of the participant
- Date of Birth
- Name of the provider of the training
- Dates of commencement and completion of the Modules/Course
- Confirmation of successful or unsuccessful completion of the Modules/Course
- Whether APL/APEL is applied
- Month and Year of issue of Certificate by COSCA
- Work place

In order to maintain this register, ***name of provider*** with participants' permission, passes these details on to COSCA.

Certification

On successful completion of the course, each registered participant is awarded a COSCA Certificate. The COSCA Certificate confirms the professional award included in the programme.

These certificates are issued direct to ***name of provider*** who passes them on to the participants.

In order to ensure that you are registered with COSCA, please complete the attached permission form. You are entitled to withhold this permission. In this case, however, you would not be able to receive the relevant COSCA Certificate on completion of your studies.

Yours sincerely

**SAMPLE LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS GIVING
PERMISSION FOR REGISTRATION**

PERMISSION FOR COSCA REGISTRATION

Please tick relevant box

- I hereby give permission for *name of provider* to pass the following details on to COSCA, Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland.
- My forename and surname and home or work address
 - Date of birth
 - Name of the provider of the training I am enrolled on
 - Dates of commencement and completion of the training
 - My successful or unsuccessful completion of the training
 - If given APL/APEL
 - Month and year of issue of Certificate by COSCA
 - Work place
- I do not give permission for *name of provider* to pass on the above details to COSCA. You are entitled to withhold this permission. In this case, however, you would not be able to receive the relevant COSCA Certificate on completion of your studies.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

Please return this form to: *name of provider*

NON ACCREDITED TRAINERS OBSERVATION REPORT OF TRAINER COMPETENCE

APPENDIX 4

Page 1 of 3

- This form must be completed for all non COSCA Accredited Trainers during the period covered by this Annual Monitoring Form
- All non COSCA Accredited Trainers must be observed for the purposes of completing this Form
- You must comment on the trainers performance and qualities and the extent to which they meet each competency

Details of Non Accredited Trainer
Name
Address
Post Code
Telephone Number
Email Address

Details of Validated Provider
Name of Provider
Address
Post Code
Name of Contact Person and Designation
Telephone Number
Email Address

A report about the ability and competence of all non-accredited trainers who are, or who have been, involved in the delivery of COSCA validated training is required on an annual basis to meet COSCA Validation criteria.

You are invited to provide a commentary of:

- Personal style and abilities of trainer
- Skill mix and level of competence
- Areas of strength
- Developmental points

A template is provided for the report if required, but it does not have to be used.

You may find it helpful to refer to the list of necessary skills and competencies below. The person completing the report must be familiar with the work of the trainer. Where appropriate, more than one person can contribute to the information, including the trainer.

Please note that in order to comply with COSCA validation and revalidation criteria and requirements, all non-accredited trainers who have been involved in the delivery of the course for *more than 2 years prior to the revalidation deadline* must be COSCA accredited at the time of applying for revalidation.

Trainer Skills and Competencies:

- Ensures that participants feel safe and supported
- Models the counselling approach in interactions with students
- Presents and explains the aims and outcomes of the activity/exercise
- Presents information clearly and accurately
- Uses a variety of training methods to enhance the learning opportunities
- When using visual aids makes them legible and accurate
- Sequences and paces information to suit the group and individual learners
- Uses language appropriate to the level of understanding within the group
- Provides additional and summary information, on request
- Adjusts presentations in response to learners needs
- Deals sensitively and appropriately with distractions and interruptions
- Uses appropriate questioning and information seeking techniques
- Creates a climate where learners can comfortably ask questions and make comments
- Supports learners in learning new skills
- Appropriately challenges excluding or discriminatory behaviour or language
- Gives appropriate feedback in a positive and helpful manner
- Facilitates participants in self assessment
- Welcomes and uses feedback about self from participants and others I involved in training delivery

**NON ACCREDITED TRAINERS OBSERVATION
REPORT OF TRAINER COMPETENCE**

**APPENDIX 4
PAGE 3 OF 3**

NAME OF NON ACCREDITED TRAINER:		DATE OF REPORT:	
Personal style & Abilities			
Skill mix and level of competence			
Areas of strengths			
Developmental points/areas			
Name of person completing the form (please print clearly):		Signature:	
Designation		Date	



COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)
16 Melville Terrace | Stirling | FK8 2NE
t: 01786 475 140 f: 01786 446 207
e: info@cosca.org.uk w: www.cosca.org.uk

COSCA COUNSELLING SUPERVISION CERTIFICATE COURSE

INITIAL VALIDATION COURSE COMPLETION REPORT APPENDIX 5

please indicate where additional information is included and clearly mark all additional paperwork with the relevant Section number.

GENERAL INFORMATION
Name of Applicant Applying for Validation
Address
Post Code
Telephone No.
Email address
Contact Person within the Organisation
Date of Submission of this Report
Name of COSCA Assessor

Date of Receipt:

Explanatory Notes

- ❑ The Course Validation Panel would like an insight into the delivery of the course including areas of development based on learning from the first cohort of participants.
- ❑ The learning outcomes in the course are to be assessed by course trainers.
- ❑ At the end of the course, course trainers must ensure that the participants for whom Certificates are requested from COSCA have achieved the knowledge, skills and self-awareness contained in the learning outcomes of the entire course.
- ❑ You are required to submit the information requested below in order that the Course Validation Panel can make an informed decision that the assessment framework is in place that warrants the request for Certificates

1. Report of the Course Trainer(s)
Please submit a report by the course trainer(s) (400 – 500 words) which provides a brief overview of the course, including any areas of good practice, learning points and improvements or changes to be made for future cohorts of participants.
2. Written Assignments
Please enclose a sample of the final assignments to cover the range of ability among participants (minimum 3 / maximum 5) and any that were unsuccessfully completed. Please note that these should not identify participants.
3. Participant Evaluation Form
Please include a sample of Participant Evaluation Forms from the course (minimum 3 / maximum 5).
4. Organisation's External Assessor Report
Please submit a report (400 – 500 words) from the External Assessor appointed by your organisation (not the COSCA appointed Assessor). This report should confirm that the participants for whom Certificates will be required from COSCA have met the learning outcomes.

I confirm that the participants for whom we request COSCA Certificates for successful completion of the course have met the learning outcomes of the course.
Signature
Name (Please print)
Designation within the Organisation
Date