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## **COSCA VALIDATION OF COURSES SPECIALIST COURSES**

### **VALIDATION AND REVALIDATION GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

The Application for COSCA Validation and Revalidation of the Specialist Courses can be found on [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) – Courses – Specialist Courses

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 COSCA Course Validation

COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) seeks to advance all forms of counselling, psychotherapy and the use of counselling skills by setting standards and promoting best practice. To this end, COSCA awards course validation to organisations delivering training courses related to counselling and psychotherapy that meet COSCA's standards and procedures. COSCA recognises the importance of high quality training as a means of protecting both the public and practitioners.

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.

## 1.2 COSCA Validation of Specialist Courses

These Guidelines and Procedures are offered to help you to complete the application form for COSCA validation of Specialist Courses. In producing this document, COSCA's intention is to actively encourage and promote the validation of Specialist Courses throughout Scotland and to provide increased access to all those who wish it of high quality training.

Specialist Courses can be validated at post-diploma and pre-diploma levels to distinguish them from generic diplomas in counselling and psychotherapy.

COSCA is committed to regularly reviewing these Guidelines and Procedures and validated providers are required to abide by any changes made to them.

## 1.3 COSCA Course Validation Panel

COSCA's Course Validation Panel decides on all applications for course validation. It holds regular meetings to consider applications for course validation. The 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 supervision throughout Scotland.

It is the policy of the Panel to support and assist all applicants to develop quality training in counselling, counselling skills, counselling supervision and specialist courses and this support is extended to you and your application.

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

#### 1.4 COSCA Course Validation Guidelines

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

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

#### 1.5 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](http://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](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - 'Validation'.***

***All documentation mentioned in these Guidelines and Procedures are available from the COSCA website: [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk).***

## **A. GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING FOR VALIDATION**

### **1 Ethics and Practice**

- 1.1 In order to ensure the well-being of all concerned, the validation process requires that the training organisation/agency works within the COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice (see COSCA's website). Submissions for course validation, therefore, will only be considered from Corporate, Full Organisational or Companion Organisational members of COSCA and any award of validation will depend on the maintenance of COSCA Organisational Membership.
- 1.2 Only organisations and not individuals can apply for Initial Validation. On completion of the Initial Validation stage, Full Validation will be awarded if the application is successful (see Section C Validation Process). Organisations will not claim COSCA validation of courses until the Full Validation procedure has been successfully completed. Course publicity material will not mislead candidates and will state clearly the validation status of courses.
- 1.3 In all cases it will be necessary to submit with your membership application a copy of your equal opportunities and/or anti-discriminatory and grievance/complaints policies or statement.
- 1.4 When organisations are applying for Initial Validation or revalidation, organisations must have robust and fair Complaints and Equal Opportunities Procedures. These must have been submitted with your Organisational Membership application. Initial Validation or revalidation will only be awarded where appropriate procedures are in place.
- 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 participants 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 Course and Recruitment of Trainers

### 2.1 Publicity of Course

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 delivering:

- courses at Certificate Skills Level be a Counsellor Member or an Associate Member of COSCA and accredited by COSCA to Certificate Level (see Accreditation of Trainers at Counselling Skills Certificate Level – Guidelines and Criteria).
- Specialist courses (Diploma level) be a Practitioner Member or an Accredited Counsellor/Psychotherapist Member of COSCA and accredited by COSCA to Diploma Level (see Accreditation of Trainers at Diploma level).

3.2 To obtain Full Validation, the core training team must have at least one COSCA accredited trainer (Certificate or Diploma level). When there is more than one trainer involved in the delivery of the course, a team approach to training must be taken. Application Forms to Deliver Training of all other trainers involved in the delivery of the course are required to be submitted by the Training Provider to the Panel for approval in advance of delivering the COSCA Validated Specialist Course – [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) – Validation – General – Non-COSCA Accredited Trainers: Application to Deliver Training on a COSCA Validated Course. 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 In any application for validation, the training organisation/agency is required to complete and submit **Appendix 6: 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.

COSCA requires the competence and suitability of non-accredited trainers on COSCA validated courses to be verified by the submission of a Application Form(s) to Deliver Training and the **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.

- 3.4 Evidence needs to be provided on the organisation's trainer development strategy and the provisions for trainer support and supervision.
- 3.5 It is recommended that non-accredited trainers join COSCA as a Counsellor Member or an Associate Member (unless the trainer is a practising counsellor, whereby Practitioner Membership may be more appropriate) in order to have access to COSCA resources and support.
- 3.6 An Annual Monitoring Form (see Section D Full Validation) must be submitted for each year within the validation period. Provided that a checklist has already been submitted for each non-accredited trainer delivering the course, the training providers must sign that they are satisfied with the trainer's competence. COSCA is aware that there can be differing methods for doing this, for example:
- Ensuring that at selection, the trainer meets the required standard to deliver the course
  - Updating the **Non Accredited Trainers Observation Report of Trainer Competence** checklist (see above)
  - Taking student feedback into account
  - Willingness to work towards COSCA Trainer Accreditation

#### **4 Trainer : Participant Ratio**

- 4.1 The optimum ratio of trainer : participant is 1:12.
- 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 the participants.

- 4.5 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.

## **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 application will also indicate how this review will be ongoing and will involve internal and/or external monitoring as well as periodic evaluation.
- 5.3 The application will give the name, contact details and describe the monitoring role of your appointed External Assessor who will be in place within six months of your award of Initial Validation.

## **6 Resources**

- 6.1 Applicants for validation will have access to adequate staff, accommodation, library and catering to conduct the training in comfort and in line with health and safety requirements. The application will include details of the resources 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 Modules or course. The application will detail the methods, procedures and the personnel responsible for communicating outcomes to participants.
- 6.4 Course organisers will ensure that participants have access to adequate advice and guidance on appropriate progression. 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 him/her, if they wish to do so.



## **7 Course Structure and Content**

- 7.1 The prescribed requirements with regard to content and delivery are that any validated course will contain clearly stated Aims, Learning Outcomes, Range, Methods and Activities.
- 7.2 The Panel wishes to encourage a wide variety of training courses, particularly those that are designed to respond to the needs of specific groups. It is essential for validation however, that all teaching/learning is consistent with the described Aims, Learning Outcomes, Range, Methods and Activities.
- 7.3 The application will include an account with evidence of your understanding of the training process relevant to skills, knowledge and self-awareness.

## **8 Aims, Learning Outcomes, Range, Methods and Activities**

### **8.1 Aims**

The Aims will provide the basic structure that the course designers believe is fundamental to the training. The Aims provide the key principles of the training programme and the skeleton that holds everything else together. The Aims also describe what the trainer is expected to “get across” in the course.

### **8.2 Learning Outcomes**

Learning Outcomes are next in order of priority and they should be defined both in terms of underpinning knowledge and competence. This general heading of Learning Outcomes provides the key to assessment.

Learning Outcomes provide the participant with a perspective on what the course offers and what he/she can reasonably be expected to take away from the course. The role and value of the assessment process through the Learning Outcomes is a vital element in helping the participants to understand their suitability for this type of training. The participants are also encouraged to use the Learning Outcomes and Competencies to evaluate themselves on the course and in their readiness to proceed throughout the training. All the Competencies should relate directly to skills practice. All parts of the course that do not have skills practice do not require to have a list of Competencies.

### **8.3 Range**

Range statements should expand upon the key aspects of performance in terms of the breadth of competence required or the contexts in which the work is done.

### **8.4 Methods and Activities**

These offer one way of achieving the Learning Outcomes.

### **8.5 Applicants will provide details of:**

- the Aims, Learning Outcomes, Range, Methods and Activities of the course
- how and when these are given to participants.

## 9 Assessment

- 9.1 The course assessment process will be both formative and summative, and will be experienced by the participants as supportive.
- 9.2 The formative assessment will be ongoing and based on the Learning Outcomes of the course. It must include the use of observation of practice, feedback and personal reflection and will be linked to individual participant learning.
- 9.3 The summative assessment will be based on the Learning Outcomes of complete Modules and/or sections. A framework will be planned and executed based on the Course Learning Outcomes. The assessment framework will be progressive and cumulative while being consistently stringent and effective.

Evidence of how the framework for 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.

- 9.4 The application will provide evidence that information and support 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. The application will provide information on who, when and how this will be carried out.

## 10 Timing and Spacing

- 10.1 All training should be delivered over a reasonable period of time, e.g. a 30 hour block of training will be completed over a 3 – 12 week period. Each training block will leave a gap of at least 2 weeks between delivery to allow participants to consolidate learning. Where training schedules require delivery outside this recommendation the application will show how the needs of the trainers and participants are to be met within the schedule.
- 10.2 The training as validated will normally be a) delivered and b) completed by participants in no more than 3 years, unless stipulated differently in other COSCA guidance.
- 10.3 The applicant is required to submit evidence to show how participants can complete the remaining blocks of training outside the above stipulated period of time. This will include requiring participants to submit written evidence of continued skills practice to the trainer for consideration.

The written evidence must show that they have continued to practise counselling skills during the extended period and should include a written account of how and where they have practised these since completion of the previous block of training. The written summary should demonstrate that the participant is not only using relevant skills, but is also in touch with the under-lying thinking and ethical framework.

- 10.4 Applicants are required to show evidence of how the information on the spacing, timing and reapplication procedure is communicated to participants.

## **11 Attendance**

- 11.1 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. As a minimum, it is expected that participants attend 85% of each block of training. 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.

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

## **12 Selection**

- 12.1 In all cases, there will be a clear selection policy to avoid discrimination on any ground, including race, gender, disability, religious affiliation, sexual orientation and age.
- 12.2 Selection to further 30 hour blocks of training will require successful completion of preceding blocks. Decisions on selection of further blocks will take account of each participant's proven ability and readiness to proceed.

## **13 Accreditation of Prior Learning and Experience (APL/APEL)**

- 13.1 Where prospective participants have completed previous relevant training undertaken not more than 3 years prior to the start of the course, and which meets the Learning Outcomes of the course, APL may be considered.
- 13.2 Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) may be considered where applicants have at least 5 years experience in the use of counselling skills and can demonstrate achievement of all required Learning Outcomes.
- 13.3 The Assessment of APL and APEL will be carried out by suitably qualified personnel who can demonstrate competence in the assessment of APL and APEL in relation to the training offered.
- 13.4 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.
- 13.5 If APL is to be considered for more than 25% of the complete training programme it must be agreed in consultation with COSCA.

- 13.6 All awards of APL/APEL will be communicated in writing to the COSCA Office on the Student Registration Proforma (available from the COSCA website).

#### 14 Discontinuation of Participants

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 in the application for validation.

#### 15 Participant's 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 **Participant Course Evaluation** proforma contained in **Appendix 7** of these Guidelines and Procedures

#### 16 Registration of Participants

##### 16.1 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.

##### 16.2 Registration of Students

Validated providers are required to complete the **COSCA Registration of Participants proforma** at the end of each Module and return it to the COSCA office for the registration of participants. The cost of registration and certification by COSCA is contained on the proforma [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - Validation – General. There is no charge for the registration of unsuccessful completion.

##### 16.3 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.

##### 16.4 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.

##### 16.5 Sample Letter to Participants Giving Permission 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.

## 17 Awards

### 17.1 Validation Awards

COSCA is pleased to provide Full Validation course awards to COSCA validated organisations. There is a charge for this award (see [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - Costings).

### 17.2 Participant Certification

To facilitate consistency in the recognition of the COSCA Courses – COSCA Counselling Skills Certificate Course, COSCA Further Steps in Counselling Skills (Volume I) and COSCA Group Counselling Skills Course – COSCA certificates of completion must be issued to all participants on successful completion of these courses.

Validated providers must apply direct to COSCA for these certificates, giving a minimum of 8 weeks prior notice. There is a charge for this Certificate (see [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - Costings).

If validated course 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.

## 18 Trainer/Participant Handbook

### 18 Trainer/Participant Handbook

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](http://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](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - Costings.

## B. PROCEDURES FOR VALIDATION APPLICATION

### 1 Applying to the COSCA Course Validation Panel

- 1.1 Applications for Course Validation, presented on the appropriate validation application form, and completed in line with the Guidelines and Procedures, will be accepted from COSCA Organisational Members.
- 1.2 Applications will be submitted to the Panel in good time before the start of the course or advertising of training. Application forms can be downloaded from the COSCA website. 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 COSCA Assessors (CAs) and arrange visits.
- 1.3 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.

## C. VALIDATION PROCESS

### 1 Application Phase

- 1.1 **FIVE copies** of the application completed in line with the Guidelines and Procedures outlined will be submitted to the COSCA Office with the appropriate fee (see [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - Costings). All applications received approximately 14 days prior to the date of any Panel meeting will be considered at that meeting. Information on dates of Panel meetings is available from [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - Validation/General.
- 1.2 When considering an application for validation, the Panel will meet privately and will follow the procedures outlined. The Panel has 4 options:
  - **To award Full Validation**
  - **To award Initial Validation**
  - **To award Conditional Initial Validation**, during which additional information or action will be required before Initial Validation can be awarded
  - **Not to award Initial or Conditional Initial Validation** - a complete re-submission will be required.
- 1.3 The decision of the Panel will be communicated in writing to the applicant by COSCA's Chief Executive.

## 2 Existing COSCA Validated Organisations

- 2.1 Where an organisation already holds validation from COSCA for the delivery of other courses, the Panel is able to award Full Validation for the delivery of a COSCA specialist course or other specialist course without requiring a period of Initial Validation. COSCA's Specialist Courses are the COSCA Introduction to Group Counselling Skills and COSCA Further Steps in Counselling Skills (Volume 1).
- 2.2 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 specialist 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.
- 2.3 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 COSCA assessors, before Full Validation is granted.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 On completion of the Course, all applicants must submit the **Course Completion Report (Appendix 5)** providing evidence that participants have met the required standard for successful completion of the course prior to being awarded a 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.
- 2.6 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 organisations' 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](http://www.cosca.org.uk) – Validation – General.



### 3 Initial Validation Phase

- 3.1 For organisations not already running other COSCA validated courses, and those organisations who hold Full Validation for other courses and have been awarded Initial Validation for a Specialist course, the Panel awards **Initial Validation** prior to granting Full Validation.
- 3.2 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 participants. **Conditional Initial Validation** means that the Panel has agreed that additional information or action will be required before Initial Validation can be awarded.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 The major part of the CA's work will be outlined in a report that will be submitted to the Panel.
- 3.6 The CA will assess the 1<sup>st</sup> block of training to check consistency between the paper application and actual delivery. On receipt of the report on the delivery of this 1<sup>st</sup> block, the Panel can request further information. This can be in the form of written, taped and/or video feedback.

For further blocks of training, the proforma **Completion of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Further Segments of Training - see Appendix 4** - must be sent to COSCA at the end of each block of training.

The information supplied would be seen by the CA who would add his/her comments and pass this to the Panel. The CA would normally only visit the delivery of further blocks of training if there was a need for specific evidence or because of a specific request of the applicant.

Where there is only one block of training, or at the end of the final block if there is more than one block of training, the proforma **Course Completion Report - see Appendix 5** - must be submitted, 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. For this purpose, applicants will require to engage an External Assessor.

- 3.7 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 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](http://www.cosca.org.uk) – Validation – General.

- 3.8 The CA may be remitted to specifically address areas which the Panel feels need 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.
- 3.9 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. As a general guideline it will be necessary for the CA to attend a course session.
- 3.10 Issues of concern that are likely to affect the validation status of the course will be communicated by the CA to the Panel during the period of Initial Validation. The Panel will require the applicant to resolve such issues before the course can move to Full Validation. Failure to address issues to the Panel's satisfaction could mean that all validation is withdrawn from the course.
- 3.11 In general, the CA will both support and monitor the delivery of the course to ensure that the Aims and Learning Outcomes are being met through the methods of delivery. Furthermore, it will be the role of the CA to ensure that the methods of participant assessment are fair, accurate and appropriate to the course.
- 3.12 The applicant for validation will inform the course participants of the existence and identity of the CA and how to contact him/her, if they wish to do so.
- 3.14 The role of the CA is part of 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 Learning Outcomes of the course in using a counselling approach 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.
- 3.15 The fee for the COSCA Assessor is not included in the validation fee. This fee and any associated expenses will be charged to the applicant.

## D FULL VALIDATION PHASE

- 1.1 The period of Initial Validation concludes with the consideration of the COSCA Assessor's (CA) final report. If appropriate, the requirements of Conditional Initial Validation also require to be met.
- 1.2 Although it is expected that a course will move from Initial Validation to Full Validation following consideration of the COSCA Assessor's report, **the decision to award Full Validation rests with the Panel** and cannot be assumed until that decision has been made.
- 1.3 During the period of Full Validation the course provider must:
  - Continue in Organisational Membership of COSCA
  - Ensure that one member of the core training team is COSCA accredited and that all other trainers are working towards COSCA accreditation as a trainer
  - Continue to comply with the guidelines and procedures for validation
  - Submit COSCA's Annual Monitoring Form
  - 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.
- 1.4 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** form (see [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) – Validation - General, followed by updating in the relevant section of the **Annual Monitoring Form** ([www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - Validation - General). The Annual Monitoring Form requires to be returned completed to the COSCA office with renewal of annual membership.

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 by the end of October annually submit it to COSCA for the attention of the 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 re-validation. The length of the report is variable, but it is essential that all parts of the proforma are completed.

## E NON ACHIEVEMENT OF FULL VALIDATION

- 1.1 The Panel, acting on behalf of COSCA, reserves the right to withhold, refuse or rescind validation at any point in the process if it 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.
- 1.2 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 meeting after the Panel has reconsidered the application in light of the second assessment report.
- 1.3 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.

## F REVALIDATION

- 1.1 Validation will run for 5 years from the date of the Panel's awarding of Initial Validation and at any time during that time the Panel can ask a COSCA Assessor (CA) to visit the course. After 5 years the applicant must apply for revalidation. These forms can be downloaded from the COSCA website: [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk).
- 1.2 When revalidation is applied for all trainers involved in the delivery of the course for more than 2 years prior to the revalidation deadline must be COSCA accredited.
- 1.3 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 standards of the validation system.
- 1.4 The primary assessment instrument will be the Annual Monitoring Forms that have been submitted annually during the previous period of validation.
- 1.5 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 content structure, theory and practice
  - Personnel
  - Assessment and evaluation procedures (internal and external)
  - Location

1.6 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 Panel. If the course is approved by the Panel, a letter of revalidation to the applicant is passed by the Development Officer (Individuals/Courses) to the Chief Executive for signing.

➤ **Assessment stage:**

If the course does not meet the criteria, a quality assurance visit is carried out by a COSCA Assessor. The CA reports directly to the Development Officer (Individuals/Courses). Based on the CA's report, the Panel reaches 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 CVP reaches a decision and, via the Development Officer (Individuals/Courses), passes a letter to this effect to the Chief Executive for signing.

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

1.7 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.

## **G FEES FOR COURSE VALIDATION**

Details of validation fees can be found on [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - Costings.

The fee for COSCA Validation requires to be submitted with the application and payment requires to be made prior to the Panel meeting

## **H APPEALS**

In the case of an applicant wishing to submit an appeal against the Panel's decision, COSCA's Appeals Procedure must be followed. The appeal must be submitted within three months of the decision being made. The COSCA Appeals Procedure is available from [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - Ethics.

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 Counselling Skills Certificate 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, dates of commencement/completion of the course, confirmation of successful or unsuccessful completion of the Modules/Course, whether APL/APEL is applied, month/year of issue of award by COSCA and 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** (see [www.cosca.org.uk](http://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
- Workplace

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

Etc.

## APPENDIX 3

### 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
  - Whether APL/APEL is applied
  - Month and year of issue of Certificate by COSCA
  - Workplace
- 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***

## INITIAL VALIDATION: COMPLETION OF 2<sup>ND</sup> AND FURTHER SEGMENTS OF TRAINING



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

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

The evidence required to be submitted with this form can be in the form of written, taped and/or videoed feedback. Please indicate what evidence you are submitting:

Please ✓ as appropriate: *Written*  *Taped*  *Video*

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 of Segment 1
-------------------------------------

**Initial Validation Report for intermediate segments: Please ✓ appropriate Segment.**

*Segment 2*  *Segment 3*  *Other – please specify*

### 1. PERSONNEL



Please describe any changes to the personnel associated with the delivery of the course since Segment 1. Please include Application Form(s) to Deliver Training – [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) – Validation – General – Non-COSCA Accredited Trainers: Application to Deliver Training on a COSCA Validated Course and **Appendix 6: COSCA Non-Accredited Trainers – Report of Trainer’s Competencies** for new or COSCA non Accredited Trainers. Please also include information on staff absences and how these were covered.

## 2. TRAINERS

Please describe arrangements for trainers’ self development and attendance at COSCA trainer events (or similar).

## 3. TRAINER:PARTICIPANT RATIO

Please detail the ratio of trainer:participant on this Segment and, where applicable, comment on the provision for dealing with larger or unusually small groups, especially those of more than 15 participants.

## 4. COURSE MONITORING

Please describe how this Segment has been evaluated and include the evaluation report.

## 5. RESOURCES

Please comment on the accommodation for the delivery of this Segment.

## 6. COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

6.1 Please provide a statement that you have delivered this Segment in keeping with the stated Aims and Learning Outcomes.

6.2 Please comment on when and how participants were given detailed information about the Aims, Learning Outcomes, Range, Methods and Activities of this Segment.

6.3 Please detail any additions made to the stated Aims, Learning Outcomes, Ranges, Methods and Activities of this Segment, and comment on how decisions on changes were agreed and the effect of these changes.

## 7. ASSESSMENT

7.1 Describe how and when the assessment framework for this Segment was communicated to participants.

7.2 Please confirm that the formative and summative assessments for this Segment were carried out in accordance with the Guidelines.

7.3 Please describe how the assessment process for this Segment supported self-reflection and self-assessment in your participant group.

7.4 Please describe how ongoing feedback was provided to participants on this Segment.

## 8. TIMING AND SPACING

Please evidence how the guidance on the timing and spacing of this Segment was followed.

## 9. ATTENDANCE

Please describe the level of attendance of participants during the delivery of this Segment and describe any arrangements made to make up for absences.

## 10. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Please provide any additional information/comment on any specific issues or any particular aspect of the delivery of this Segment.

## COSCA ASSESSOR

**Signature:**

**Name (Please print):**

**Position in Organisation:**

**Date:**

## INITIAL VALIDATION COURSE COMPLETION REPORT



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

*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 Assessors involved if appointed**

**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.

<b>1. Report from the Course Trainer(s)</b>
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.
<b>2. Written Assignments</b>
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.
<b>3. Participant Evaluation Form</b>
Please include a sample of Participant Evaluation Forms from the course (minimum 3 / maximum 5).
<b>4. Organisation's External Assessor's Report</b>
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.

<b>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.</b>
<b>Signature</b>
<b>Name (please print)</b>
<b>Organisation and Position within Organisation</b>
<b>Date</b>

## APPENDIX 6: NON-ACCREDITED TRAINERS OBSERVATION REPORT OF TRAINER COMPETENCE

- 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



## REPORT OF TRAINER(S)

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

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

**COSCA VALIDATED SPECIALIST COURSE  
PARTICIPANT COURSE EVALUATION**



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

We hope you have enjoyed your training for this Specialist course. COSCA is continually working to develop and improve the quality of materials and services it offers. You would help us in this work by taking a few minutes to complete the evaluation form and **returning it to COSCA** at the above address or [info@cosca.org.uk](mailto:info@cosca.org.uk).

Please give your opinion, or circle a number which best corresponds to your opinion, where requested. If you wish to make any further comment please do so on the back of the form or on a separate sheet of paper.

**COURSE TITLE:**

**COURSE PROVIDER:**

**DATE:**

**1 YOUR EXPECTATIONS**

- a) Before you started the course what did you expect to gain from it?
  
- b) Have you gained what you expected to?
 

Not at all				Completely
1	2	3	4	5
  
- c) Please comment on how the course did/did not help you gain what you expected to.
  
- d) Having completed the course, do you intend to pursue further training and/or pursue counselling as a career?
  
- e) If you do not intend to continue in the counselling field, can you give a reason?

