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COSCA VALIDATION OF DIPLOMA COURSE IN COUNSELLING/PSYCHOTHERAPY

VALIDATION & REVALIDATION APPLICATION & GUIDELINES

The Application for COSCA Validation of Diploma Course in Counselling / Psychotherapy is available on www.cosca.org.uk

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Background Information

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 and counselling skills training which have met COSCA's standards and procedures. In doing so, it advances COSCA's aim of supporting the development of counselling and psychotherapy as a profession that has high standards in both training and practice. The Validation Panel also 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. However, a formal statement of course requirements should not imply that every course should be identical. Standardisation can ensure that essential elements are present while not dictating how these will be covered. This document aims to provide a general framework within which course planners, designing counselling training courses at professional level, can introduce their own emphasis. Variety and innovation are to be encouraged.

The essential content areas in counsellor/psychotherapist training are counselling skills and counselling process, supervised practice, theory, self-awareness and personal development each delivered with a clear understanding of the client context. It is expected that any organisation applying for COSCA Diploma 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 claiming COSCA Validation must have completed the full validation procedure with the COSCA Course Validation Panel detailed in section 4 of this document.

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

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

All documentation mentioned in these Guidelines and Procedures are available on www.cosca.org.uk

1.2 BASIC PRE-REQUIREMENTS

The guiding principles of a Diploma course in counselling/psychotherapy are:

1. The needs of the client are paramount and all work must be approached in the context of the client.

2. All diploma courses must have a participant selection process that must take place before any client work is endorsed.

3. The aims, objectives, learning outcomes, rationale and theoretical base of the course should be well thought out, clearly stated and compatible with client well-being, course content and staff / student relationships.

4. Course planners and staff should be familiar with, and incorporate into the course, the COSCA criteria for counsellor/psychotherapist accreditation.

5. The position of the course regarding equal opportunities and/or anti-discriminatory practices should be clearly stated and adhered to, especially in participant selection and assessment.

6. The importance of maintaining group continuity to facilitate learning should be emphasised.

7. Course assessment criteria should be clear and made available to participants.

8. 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.

9. Provision must be made to allow continual monitoring of participants' progress and the effectiveness of the course.

10. All diploma course applicants should have robust complaints and appeals procedures to which participants have access.

1.3 ORGANISATIONAL PRE-REQUIREMENTS

Any organisation wishing to apply for diploma course validation must:

1. Be an organisational member of COSCA and abide by COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice.

2. Have its own formal organisational, managerial and financial structure.

3. Have procedures for handling staff and student complaints, appeals, grievances and disciplinary matters.

4. Have a core of permanent administration, teaching/training and supervisory staff.

5. Ensure all staff are properly and appropriately trained.

6. Have clear arrangements for staff supervision which are regularly monitored and continually developing.

7. Provide staff conditions which meet all health and safety at work legislation and support high staff morale.

8. Provide adequate resources for course participants e.g. suitable premises, library, audio-visual equipment, computers.

9. Actively promote anti-discriminatory practices and maintain an equal opportunities policy.

10. Have adequate insurance/indemnity cover.

2. DIPLOMA COURSE REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Ethics and Code of Practice

Courses must refer to and work within the COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice (www.cosca.org.uk).

2.2 Publicity of Course and Recruitment of Trainers

2.2.1 Publicity of Course
It is required that organisations' publicity includes reference to COSCA (Counselling and 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 Diploma 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.

2.2.2 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.

2.3 Course Aims and Objectives

1. The aim of the diploma course is to equip participants with the range of knowledge and skills necessary to work with clients as a counsellor/psychotherapist and to provide the necessary training for them to later apply for COSCA accreditation as a counsellor/psychotherapist.

2. Participants should leave the course at ease, confident and competent to begin counselling.

3. The course should help participants develop a high level of counselling skills and to integrate those skills into the counselling/psychotherapeutic process.

4. The course should foster participants' personal development and insight and should provide a safe environment where attitudes damaging to the counselling/psychotherapeutic process can be challenged.

5. The course should help participants understand the variety of social, cultural and religious backgrounds in which they will be expected to work as counsellors/psychotherapists.

2.4 Course Structure

2.4.1 Duration of Course

1. The minimum duration of the course will be 400 hours of participant/trainer contact, covering theory, skills and counselling process, personal development, supervision and tutorials.

2. A minimum of 50% of training, and 100 hours of supervised practice must be done under the auspices of the awarding organisation.

3. Practice placements and personal counselling will not be included in the 400 hours.

4. The application will show how the needs of the trainers and participants are met within the delivery schedule of the course.

5. The course should be completed in no more than 5 years.

2.4.2 Balance of Course

The course must balance theory, ethics, personal development, skills and counselling process, and supervised practice.

2.5 Selection of Participants

2.5.1 Counselling Experience
It is expected that participants on diploma courses will have experience in the use of counselling skills in an environment that offered support and supervision.

2.5.2 Counselling Training
It is recommended that successful applicants have completed 120 hours counselling skills training to COSCA Certificate level or equivalent. Prior to acceptance on to a diploma course, participants must have completed 60 hours of counselling skills training equivalent to Modules 1 and 2 of the COSCA Four Module Course in Counselling Skills.

2.5.3 Accreditation of Prior/Experiential Learning (APL/APEL)
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 to the COSCA Four Module Course in Counselling Skills.

2.5.4 Individual Suitability

It is recommended that successful applicants will have demonstrated their ability to manage anxiety, their capacity to conceptualise, and their maturity and life stability.

2.5.5 Selection Procedure

The selection procedure should produce a clear statement of the course criteria for selection and require all applicants to provide evidence that they meet the selection criteria through an application form, written submission and interview.

2.6 Core Course Content

2.6.1 Skills and Counselling Process

Counselling skills should be a central element of the course and participants must be given ample opportunity to learn and practise advanced counselling skills in the context of the counselling process. In the main, participants should master counselling skills through experiential learning.

2.6.2 COSCA's Core Competencies for Counselling

COSCA's core competencies for fitness to practise counselling (see below) are considered core for all counselling practice. In the process of diploma training they should be deepened and developed through practice, theoretical learning, reflection and self- awareness work.

The core competencies for fitness to practice counselling include the capacity:

> ➢ to enter and understand the world of another person and to be authentically present for him/her in the therapeutic relationship
> ➢ to understand the counselling relationship and process in theory and in practice
> ➢ to establish and maintain a therapeutic relationship
> ➢ to work coherently within a theoretical model that informs the counselling practice
> ➢ to be ethical and accountable in all aspects of practice
> ➢ to use supervision for development of self-awareness and safety of clients
> ➢ to recognise and respond to one's needs and limits in relation to professional competence, boundaries and personal circumstances
> ➢ to value and support difference and diversity
> ➢ to understand, recognise and integrate personal and professional values and be accepting of the challenge of difference
> ➢ to work with risk, resilience and change
> ➢ to have an awareness and understanding of issues of personal and professional power and authority
> ➢ to tolerate uncertainty and the unknown.

2.6.3 Theory

1. The theoretical content of the course must be relevant to counselling and the emphasis should be on the application of theory to the client/counsellor relationship.
2. The theoretical content should highlight the counselling process and the theories that inform counselling practice and counselling approaches.
3. A clear statement about the core theoretical base of the course should be available and course organisers should ensure that participants are aware of the orientation of the course. This core orientation should inform the delivery and structure of the course.
4. While being set within a core approach, the theoretical content of the course must be balanced and broadly based to offer participants the opportunity to study theories that may not be part of the core theoretical base or orientation.
5. The counselling process must be conceptualised within the value system and theoretical base of the course and within an understanding of human growth and development.
6. The course must teach and assess knowledge of more than one theory of human development and human developmental problems. Sociological as well as psychological perspectives should be included.
7. The course must teach and assess knowledge of the different models of psychopathology.

2.6.4 Self-awareness and personal development

1. The personal development aspect of the course must be based on the clearly stated rationale of "the reflective practitioner"

2. The personal development component of the course should help participants to develop self-awareness and should provide a safe environment in which this can occur.

3. The personal development aspect of the course should include both an individual and a group focus to help participants develop self-awareness in relation to others.

4. To aid understanding of the counselling/psychotherapy process from a client perspective, and to aid understanding of the impact of the practitioner's own (unconscious or not in one's immediate awareness) processes on the counselling/psychotherapy relationship, all participants must undertake substantial, formal, personal exploration, reflection and development work. This should be undertaken in accordance with the ethos of the course and may often entail a substantial period of personal counselling/psychotherapy with a recognised counsellor or psychotherapist. However, if the participant has employed alternative routes for personal development these should be evidenced accordingly.

2.6.5 Professional Responsibilities

The course should raise awareness of the professional responsibilities of counsellors and should include information on:

1. Working within an organisational context, dealing with contracts and conflicts of interest.
2. Assessment skills
3. Ethics and Codes of Practice
4. Use of supervision
5. Record keeping
6. Confidentiality
7. Responsibilities in relationships with other professionals
8. Relevant legislation

2.7 Supervised Counselling Practice Placement: Readiness for Practice Process

1. Courses must develop and implement a *Readiness for Practice Placement Process.*

2. The process must clearly outline the criteria to be met prior to a student being approved as ready to commence their counselling practice placement.

3. This process must be distinct from any overall assessment of student competency and/or fitness to practice processes, and must be specific to assessing a student's readiness to commence their counselling practice placement.

4. The process must clearly detail those involved in the assessment of readiness to practice, and their respective responsibilities in relation to the process. This must include feedback from tutors, peers, supervisors, placement providers and the student themselves with regards to their assessment of their own readiness to begin their counselling practice. The tutor and student must both sign off the document confirming their verification of the student's readiness for practice placement.

5. Readiness for counselling practice placement approval is subject to the student maintaining the original criteria as set by the training provider for approval purposes. Any of the parties involved in the process, in addition to supervisors and placement providers, may raise a concern in relation to the above. It should be clearly outlined within the 'Readiness for Practice Placement process', the mechanisms by which a concern may communicated to the training provider. This must be communicated clearly within all other relevant and related training provider contractual agreements, policies and procedures.

6. The process must clearly stipulate the maximum duration permitted for the approval of the commencement of a practice placement. It should also outline any remediation that may be offered should the student not complete the process within the timeframe permitted.

7. COSCA wishes to allow training providers a degree of flexibility concerning the methods by which they apply their readiness for practice placement processes. For example, the mechanism by which the student identifies their own readiness to practice could take the form of an assignment, a reflective statement or presentation. Nonetheless, the process must include a range of formative and summative assessment methods.

8. The process must incorporate the assessment of the student's acquisition of the below areas of competency, learning, and documentation. Please note this is relevant to the minimum level required for approval of readiness to *commence* their counselling practice placement, whereby it is expected that the student will continue to develop the skills, theoretical knowledge, self-awareness and understanding of ethical practice throughout the duration of the course:

- Counselling skills

- Remote counselling (if applying for, or approved for blended delivery)

- Theory

- Self-awareness and Identification of own readiness to practice

- Ethics and Codes of Practice

- Insurance

2.8   Practice Placement Hours and Supervision Requirements:

1. The course will include a minimum of 100 client contact hours for each student that will be completed within 18 months of the end of the taught course hours and will ideally give students experience of both short term (i.e., 1 – 6 sessions) and long term (i.e., more than 12 sessions) case work.

2. Counselling Practice supervision will be carried out to provide continual evaluation and monitoring of all client case work and the ratio of supervision hours: client contact hours will be not less than 1:6.

3. The above counselling practice must be with adults, unless the training course is specifically for training to work with other age groups, for example, children and young people.

4. For courses approved to deliver via blended delivery up to 30% of practice placement hours may be delivered remotely.

5. Counselling Practice supervision of students can be delivered face to face or remotely. If the practice supervision is to be delivered remotely, students should meet face to face initially, where feasible, with their counselling supervisor prior to working remotely with them. Students are also required to seek approval in advance from their training provider for the remote delivery of their practice supervision.

2.8.1: Criteria for supervisors:

Supervisors must have substantial counselling experience and will normally have completed counselling training to diploma level and be a COSCA Accredited Counsellor/Psychotherapist, a COSCA Practitioner Member or equivalent.

1. Supervisors should have completed recognised and appropriate training in supervision.

2. Supervisors delivering group supervision must have experience of facilitating group supervision within a supervision contract.

3. Supervisors must be members of COSCA, or another recognised professional body and abide by the relevant Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice.

4. Supervisors will undergo supervision in relation to their supervisees.

5. Supervisors must be in agreement with training provider requirements concerning any reports or communication in relation to the student. They should be willing to share appropriate information with regards to the student's competencies, developments and areas for development.

6. Supervisors must inform the training provider regarding any concerns in relation to the students practice, such as serious ethical concerns or supervision non-engagement.

2.8.2 Recognition of Supervisors

The course organisers will take responsibility for approval of supervisors who should meet the criteria listed in 2.8.1.

2.8.3 Ratio of Supervision to Counselling Practice

1. The ratio of supervision hours to client contact hours should be not less than 1:6

2. Where group supervision is provided it will be considered on a pro rata basis e.g., a group of 4 participants having group supervision for 4 hours will have completed 1-hour supervision each.

3. Supervisors must ensure that all practice undertaken by trainees is supervised.

2.8.4 Ratio of Supervision to Counselling Practice:

1. The ratio of supervision hours to client contact hours should be not less than 1:6

2. Where group supervision is provided, it will be considered on a pro rata basis as follows:

· a group of up to four can claim 50% of the time together

· for groups of 5 and more, the time needs to be divided equally e.g., a group of 5 participants having group supervision for 5 hours will have completed 1-hour supervision each.

3. The focus of the work must be on client related issues, and the group led by a recognised supervisor who has experience of delivering group supervision within a supervision contract.

4. Supervisors must ensure that all practice undertaken by trainees is supervised and individual members of the group, and the whole group, have the opportunity to have their developmental needs addressed. 'Peer-led' groups are not acceptable.

2.8.5 Individual and Group Supervision

1. The course must ensure that students have regular and sufficient supervision in line with the ratio requirements in criteria 2.8.4

2. Students should have the opportunity to experience both individual and group supervision.

3. All supervision should be conducted by a recognised supervisor.

4. Group supervision should be calculated on the pro rata basis outlined in 2.8.4

2.8.6 Supervisor Contracts

Each supervisor will enter a clear contract with the course provider, which must include a 4-way contractual agreement. The contract will detail the supervisor's responsibilities towards the course provider, the student and placement provider.

2.9 Coordination of Practice Placements/ Practice Placement Provider Criteria:

1. All practice placements must be approved by the training provider, prior to the student commencing practice. All students must be approved by the training provider as being ready to commence practice placement *(Readiness for Practice Placement Process).* Training Providers must confirm with placement providers students' readiness for practice status, and inform them immediately of any change to student's approval status.

2. Training Providers must develop and implement processes for the assessment, approval and monitoring of the suitability of practice placements providers.

3. Training Providers approved to deliver via blended delivery must develop and implement processes for the assessment, approval and monitoring of the suitability of remote practice placement/practice placement hours.

4. Practice Placement Providers must be willing to enter into the 4-way contractual agreement, which details the practice placements responsibilities to the training provider, the student and their supervisor.

5. Should the student wish to undertake multiple placements appropriate consideration must be given to the individual's capacity and competency to do so, with ongoing consideration afforded to any impact of the additional placement(s).

6. Practice Placement providers must have an induction process in place for students which clearly introduces them to any organisational policies, procedures and requirements.

7. Practice Placement Providers must have an appropriate assessment and/or allocation system in operation, which endeavours to allocate clients respective to students' level of competency and development. Students must be supported by placement providers to refer on where a client's needs exceed their present competency level.

8. Where practice placements offer a specialist service, extra training should be given to ensure that the student has enough tools to be able to work with that specialist need, or to have the confidence to refer on when necessary. The training provider should be made aware of this extra training and what will be required of the student.

9. There must be a named available point of contact within the placement provider for the student to share any immediate concerns.

10. Students on placement must have the opportunity to interact with other counsellors who work for the same placement provider. This must include access to a supervisor or counsellor whom they can contact in real time (either face to face or remotely).

11. Practice Placement Providers must be in agreement with the training provider requirements concerning any reports or communication in relation to the student. They should be willing to share appropriate information with regards to the student's integration within the service, competencies, developments and any areas for development.

12. Practice Placement providers must be in agreement with the course requirements as identified by the training provider (for instance Case Study and recordings), which must be consistent with any related organisational policies and procedures.

2.10 Practice Placements- Roles and Responsibilities of the Training Provider/ Practice Placement(s)/ Student and Supervisor(s): The 4 Way contractual Agreement:

1. Students must have a practice supervisor in place prior to commencement of practice placement.

2. Training providers must create a 4-way contractual agreement clearly detailing the respective roles and responsibilities of the training provider, practice placement, student and supervisor. This must be completed prior to the student commencing practice placement(s).

3. There should be an open and equal partnership between student, training provider, supervisor and placement organisation with clear lines of communication fostered, and methods of communication by which any concerns can be raised by all parties, clearly stated within the agreement.

4. COSCA does not wish to be prescriptive with regards to the structure of the above agreement, and appreciates there may be some degree of latitude with regards to individual training provider, practice placement and supervisor requirements here. Nonetheless, it must clearly state the roles and responsibilities of each party, and towards each other.

2.11 Staffing: Trainers, Supervisors and Personal Tutors

2.11.1 Staffing

The course should be staffed by an integrated core of trainers which may be augmented as required.

There will be a team of two trainers as a minimum on Diploma courses.

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

2.11.2 Staff meetings

Staff should have regular meetings to discuss course issues such as evaluation, assessment and support.

2.11.3 Staff Support

Evidence needs to be provided on the organisation's trainer development strategy and the provisions for trainer support and supervision.

2.11.4 Recognition of Trainers

The core staff should be experienced counselling practitioners and include at least one COSCA Accredited Trainer (Diploma level) in the core group of trainers.

Participants who have successfully completed a Diploma course in counselling require a period of 2 years from completion of their training as a counsellor to commencement of delivery of training and to be practising counselling whilst training.

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 commencement of the delivery of the course indicating a level of competence sufficient to deliver the validated course – **Appendix 4**.
2. **Non COSCA Accredited Trainers: Application to Deliver Training on a COSCA Validated Course** – www.cosca.org.uk, in advance of the delivery of the course.

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.

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

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 freelance or sessional basis).

It is recommended that non-accredited trainers join COSCA as a Counsellor Member or a Practitioner Member in order to have access to COSCA resources and support.

2.11.5 Annual Monitoring Form

An Annual Monitoring Form (see Section 4 Process of Diploma Validation) must be submitted for each year within the validation period. Provided that the Non Accredited Trainers Observation Report of Trainer Competence has already been submitted in the first year of delivery for each non-accredited trainer delivering the course, the training providers must evidence that they are satisfied with the level of competence of non-accredited trainers in the second and subsequent years of their delivery of the course. Examples of how to evidence this include the following:

- ✓ Updated Non Accredited Trainer Observation Report of Trainer Competence
- ✓ Student feedback on the trainer
- ✓ Annual appraisal of the trainer
- ✓ Performance and competence review
- ✓

2.11.6 Theoretical Base of Trainers and Supervisors

Staff or supervisors involved in the course may have a theoretical base or orientation which is different from that stated by the course; when such a situation occurs it should not affect the theoretical balance of the course.

2.11.7 Personal tutors

It is recommended that the training organisation supports a system of personal tutors to assist in the integration of participants' learning and to address any course related difficulties.

2.11.8 Ratio of Trainers: Participants

- ➢ The optimum ratio of trainer : participants is 2:12.

- ➢ The maximum number of participants on courses with 2 trainers is 24.

- ➢ The minimum number of participants permitted at the beginning of the course is nine.

- ➢ Particular attention should be paid to the provision of sufficient space for confidentiality in triad work and the management of large group processes.

- ➢ If the number of participants on courses that have already started drops to less than six, the course should be either cancelled or deferred, or delivered outside of the validation criteria. This means that the validation status will either be withdrawn or changed to "Conditional" validation for the duration of that cohort. In the event of low numbers of participants occurring, COSCA should be informed as early as possible. If the course is cancelled, all possible 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.

2.12 Optional Course Content

2.12.1 Specification of Optional Content
The inclusion of optional elements is encouraged. However, the rationale for the inclusion of options must be stated and links with counselling made clear.

2.12.2 Time Allocation to Optional Components
The maximum time allocated to options within a 400 hours' course will be 65 hours.

3. PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT

3.1 Organisation's External Assessor

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. 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.

3.2.1 Skills and Counselling Process

 a) Trainers' and supervisors' reports should provide ongoing assessments of participants' counselling skills and their integration into the counselling process.

 b) Participants should prepare written submissions which show how their professional counselling skills have developed and been integrated into the counselling process.

3.2.2 Theoretical Knowledge

 a) Trainers should provide a report on each participant's attendance at, and participation in, relevant sessions.

 b) Substantive written submissions should demonstrate participants' theoretical knowledge of different models of human development and psychopathology.

 c) A written examination may be included in the assessment of this section of the course.

3.2.3 Self-awareness and Personal Development

 a) Participants must keep a personal journal throughout the course that logs their development and demonstrates its relevance to their counselling practice.

 b) Participants must demonstrate how deepening personal awareness gained through attendance at personal counselling/psychotherapy and/or other personal development work has affected their counselling practice and understanding of their role in the client:counsellor/psychotherapist relationship.

 c) Supervisors and trainers should report on participants' development throughout the course and their suitability to undertake client case work.

3.2.4 Professional responsibilities

 a) Participants should prepare written submissions that demonstrate their understanding of the professional responsibilities of counsellors / psychotherapists.

 b) Participants should demonstrate their ability to manage professional relationships with colleagues other than counsellors.

 c) Supervisors should report on each participants understanding of professional responsibilities as demonstrated in their practice.

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3.2.5 Supervised Counselling Skills Practice

a)   The supervisor will assist in the evaluation of counselling skills practice but the ultimate responsibility for evaluation of participants' course work rests with the awarding organisation.

b)   Client case studies should be presented by participants to demonstrate their understanding of the counselling/psychotherapy process.

c)   Records of participants' supervised counselling practice should be kept and used in the assessment process.

d)   The assessment of participants should include reference to peer and trainer interactions.

e)   Trainer assessment of participant skills practice should be included in the assessment.

3.3 Optional Component

Organisations including optional content must indicate how it will be assessed. It will be necessary to demonstrate that the assessor(s) involved in this part of the course are suitably qualified to carry out assessment in the relevant areas and if necessary external assessors should be employed.

3.4 Assessment

3.4.1 The course assessment process will be both formative and summative, and will be experienced by the participants as supportive.

3.4.2 The formative assessment will be ongoing and based on the Learning Outcomes of the Modules and/or units. It can include the use of observation of practice, feedback and personal reflection and will be linked to individual participant learning.

3.4.3 The summative assessment will be based on the Learning Outcomes of complete Modules and/or units.   An assessment framework will be planned and executed based on the Module and/or units 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.

3.4.4 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.

3.5 Attendance of Participants

3.5.1. 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 the course. 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.

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

3.6 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.

3.7 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 pass the Course Evaluation Proforma to participants on your course. See **Appendix 5 – Participants Course Evaluation.**

4. PROCESS OF DIPLOMA VALIDATION AND REVALIDATION

4.1 Before Applying

1. An organisation wishing to submit a diploma course to COSCA for validation must be a Corporate Member, Full Organisational Member or an Organisational Companion Member of COSCA.

2. The validation application must be prepared using the same numbering format as the COSCA Diploma Guidelines and Procedures.

4.2 Application for Initial Validation

1. Applications should be made using the Diploma Validation Application Form. An electronic copy of complete applications for diploma validation must be submitted by email to Jenny Bell, Development Officer (Individuals/Courses): jenny@cosca.org.uk Please note that the minimum font size used in your application is 12.

2. Applications need to be submitted by April 30th, August 30th and December 30th at the latest to be reviewed at the next corresponding Course Validation Panel meeting. The dates of Panel meetings are available from the COSCA website: www.cosca.org.

3. The current payment structure for diploma validation is shown on the COSCA website: www.cosca.org.uk.

4. The Course Validation Panel of COSCA will consider the written application and assess the suitability of the course for COSCA Diploma Validation.   The Panel has 3 options:

    ➢ **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.

5. If the Panel considers that the application demonstrates that the course is eligible for ***Initial Validation***, the application will proceed to Assessment and the Panel will appoint a COSCA Assessor(s) (CA) to observe the course and prepare a report on how the course meets the criteria in practice.

6. Alternatively, ***Conditional Initial Validation*** can be awarded where specific requirement(s) are still outstanding, prior to awarding Initial Validation.

7. If the Panel considers that the course is not eligible for Initial or Conditional Initial Validation, the application will proceed no further.

8. The applicant will be advised of the Panel's decision in writing by the Chief Executive within a reasonable time frame.

4.3 COSCA Assessment

1. 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.

2. The major part of the CA's work will be outlined in a report that will be submitted to the Panel

3. The CA will be responsible to the COSCA Course Validation Panel.

4. The CA will liaise with the course provider to arrange suitable times to visit to determine if it meets COSCA Guidelines and Procedures.

5. When the course is finished the CA will prepare a written report for the Panel.

4.4 Full Validation

1. The period of Initial Validation concludes with the consideration of the COSCA Assessor's (CA) final report and, if appropriate, the requirements of Conditional Initial Validation are met.

2. Although it is expected that a course will move from Initial Validation to Full Validation following consideration of the Assessor's report, **the decision to award Full Validation rests with the Panel** and cannot be assumed until that decision has been made

3. The CA's report will be considered by the Panel and if the Panel is satisfied with the standard of the course it will award the course COSCA Diploma Validation. The CA is not required to submit his/her report to the applicant.

4. The decision to award Full Validation will be the responsibility of the Course Validation Panel and not the CA.

5. Written notice of the Panel's decision will be sent to the applicant by the Chief Executive within a reasonable time frame.

4.5 Changes to a Validated Course

1. Course providers must inform COSCA of any changes to the content of a validated course. Failure to disclose such information may affect the validation status of the course. COSCA reserves the right to withdraw validation from any course that fails to adhere to this condition.

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.   This is to be carried out in the first instance by completing **COSCA Validation Application to Change Existing Delivery** (www.cosca.org.ukl followed by updating in the Annual Monitoring Form ((www.cosca.org.uk).   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.

3. 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.

4.6 Publicity Material and Awards

1. When an organisation has been advised of the Panel's decision to offer Full Validation of the course, it can use the term "COSCA Validated Diploma" on its course publicity material and awards.

2. COSCA is pleased to provide Full Validation course awards.   There is a charge for this Award (see www.cosca.org.uk).

3. On request, and with a minimum of 8 weeks' prior notice, COSCA is able to provide Diploma awards for participants. There is a charge for the production of this award (see www.cosca.org.uk).   All awards issued by COSCA validated providers 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.

4.7 Registration of Participants

4.7.1 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.

4.7.2 Registration of Participants

Validated providers are required to complete the ***COSCA Registration of Participants proforma -*** www.cosca.org.uk - at the end of the course 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. There is no charge for registration of unsuccessful completion. The applicant is required to make a signed

declaration on this proforma that participants have been assessed to have met all of the Learning Outcomes detailed in the course validated by COSCA.

4.7.3 Sample Letter to Participants regarding the COSCA Database/Registration of Participants – 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 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

4.7.4 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.

1. 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 through the submission of the Annual Monitoring Form (on COSCA website), 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.

2. 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 guidelines and procedures for validation
    ➢ 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
    ➢ Submit the COSCA Annual Monitoring Form.

    If the above requirements are not complied with, COSCA will carry out a quality assurance visit to the course, the cost of which will be borne by the applicant

3. During the period of Full Validation the course provider must:

    ➢ Submit COSCA's Annual Monitoring Form (available from www.cosca.org.uk)

Annual Monitoring Form:

It is a requirement of continued Validation that during the period of Full Validation, course providers complete the Annual Monitoring Form and return it to COSCA by the end of October annually, for the attention of the Course Validation Panel.

This form 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 form 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 form are completed.   If completing the Annual Monitoring Form at the end of the first year of a two-year course, you can omit sections 1 and 2.

4.9 Revalidation

1. In the revalidation application forms, 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

2. At the revalidation submission stage the following processes will be carried out:

    ➢ **Factual verification stage**:

    factual verification by COSCA's Development Officer (Individuals/Courses) and Chair of the Course Validation 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 Course Validation Panel. If the course is approved 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 (CA). The CA reports directly to the Development Officer (Individuals/Courses). Based on the COSCA Assessor's report, the Course Validation 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 requirement are set and the course is given a timeframe within which the requirements need to be met.

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

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

4. In considering the application for renewal, COSCA reserves the right to seek further information or clarification and COSCA reserves the right to carry out a quality assurance visit at the course's expense.

4.10 Appeal

Applicants wishing to appeal against the decision of the COSCA Validation Panel can do so through the COSCA Appeals Procedure. The appeal must be submitted within three months of the decision being made. www.cosca.org.uk.

4.11 Payment of Fee

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

For Validation fees please see www.cosca.org.uk.

APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT'S DATABASE

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, address, name of training provider, successful or unsuccessful completion of the Course, whether APL/APEL is applied, dates of commencement/completion of the course, month/year of issue of award by COSCA, participant workplace.

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.

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 address of the participant
➢ Date of birth of the participant
➢ 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 of participant

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, and at the request of the trainer/training provider, each registered participant is awarded a COSCA Certificate.

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

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 address
- ➢　My 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
- ➢　My 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*

> **This form must be completed for all non COSCA Accredited Trainers during the period covered by this Annual Monitoring Form and within 6 months of their involvement in the delivery of training**
> **All non COSCA Accredited Trainers must be observed for the purposes of completing this Form. This observation must be completed by a suitably experienced trainer familiar with the work of the non-accredited trainer**
> **You must reflect on the trainer's performance and competencies and the extent to which they meet each competency. Your must reflect on their delivery and development as a counsellor, including areas of strength and clear points for development**
> **All non-accredited trainers must offer their own reflective commentary and assessment of the above criteria**

TRAINER DETAILS
Trainer's Name:
Trainer's Address:
Post Code:
Telephone Number:
Email:

PROVIDERS DETAILS
Providers Name:
Providers Address:
Postcode:
Contact Person:
Designation:
Telephone Number:
Email:

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Report of Trainer(s)

A reflective 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 reflective commentary of:

♦   Personal style and abilities of trainer
♦   Skill mix and level of competence
♦   Areas of strength
♦   Developmental points
♦   Progress towards COSCA Trainer Accreditation

The non-accredited trainer must also input their own self-assessment and reflective commentary in relation to each of the criteria. It is suggested that the non-accredited trainer makes use of this feedback to support them in writing their COSCA Trainer Accreditation Application.

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.

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**
♦ **Where blended or online (real time) delivery is approved, demonstrates an ability to make appropriate use of the selected technology**

NAME OF TRAINER:		DATE OF REPORT:
NAME OF OBSERVER:		
Personal style & Abilities	**Observer Feedback:**	
	Non-Accredited Trainer Comments:	
Skill mix and level of competence	**Observer Feedback:**	

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	Non-Accredited Trainer Feedback:
Areas of strengths	**Observer Feedback:**
	Non-Accredited Trainer Feedback :

Developmental points/areas, including progress made towards COSCA Trainer Accreditation	Observer Feedback
	Non-Accredited Trainer Feedback:

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

We hope you have enjoyed your training for the Diploma in counselling. 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 return it to the above address.

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 Training 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?

2   COURSE PRESENTATION

a)   How do you rate the presentation of the course?

Very poor   Excellent
1   2   3   4   5

b)   How do you rate the materials used?

Very poor   Excellent
1   2   3   4   5

c)   How could the course presentation be improved?

3   COURSE CONTENT

a)   How do you rate the course content?

Very poor   Excellent
1   2   3   4   5

b)   Was the content relevant to your training needs?

Completely irrelevant   Extremely relevant
1   2   3   4   5

c)   What parts of the course were particularly useful?

d)   What parts of the course were not useful?

If you wish to comment on any other aspect of the course, please do so on the reverse of this form or on a separate piece of paper.
THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS EVALUATION