



Scotland's
Professional Body
for Counselling &
Psychotherapy

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

**COSCA VALIDATION OF COURSES OFFERING A
DIPLOMA IN COUNSELLING/PSYCHOTHERAPY**

REPORT OF THE COSCA ASSESSOR

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

Name of COSCA Assessor	
Address	
Post code	
Telephone number	
E-mail address	
Name of organisation applying for validation	
Contact person within the organisation	
Delivery method of course (face to face or blended)	
Dates of assessment visit with applicant	
Date of submission of the report to COSCA	
Office use: Date of receipt Date to CVP	

1. Basic pre-requirements: Please refer to criteria 1.2 and 1.3 of the validation guidelines

Basic pre-requirements:

1.1 Please comment on how effectively each of the below criteria was communicated to participants:

- learning setting
 - delivery structure
 - course requirements
 - course learning methods. This must include group work requirements and activities supporting the development of self-awareness in relation to equality, diversity and inclusivity and areas of difference and diversity within self and others
 - course title, theoretical base, aims and objectives
 - academic credit rating and awarding body if awarded
 - assessment criteria
 - progression routes
 - course's validation status and the COSCA Assessor's role
 - courses complaints and appeals procedures
-

1.2 Please state any further feedback where relevant on the course's adherence to the basic organisational pre-requirements as identified in section 1.2 of the validation guidelines:

Organisational pre-requirements:

1.3: Please comment on the course's adherence to the organisational pre-requirements, as set down in 1.3 of the COSCA Diploma level Validation guidelines.

You must comment on:

- the suitability of the delivery setting(s), including arrangements for remote delivery where relevant
 - the efficacy of the resources utilised by the course, towards creating a safe learning environment and meeting the course stated equality, diversity and inclusivity policies
 - the methods through which the course's contracts, policies and processes are communicated to participants, including identifying how effective you feel this communication is
 - the consistency and robustness of the above contracts, policies and processes and of their application in relation to participant's where relevant
 - the course's adherence to the COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice
-

2. DIPLOMA COURSE REQUIREMENTS (Please refer to Section 2 of the Validation Guidelines)
Course Aims and Learning Outcomes: (*Please refer to section 2.3 of the Guidelines*)

Communication:

2.3.1: Please identify the arrangements for how the course communicates its Aims and Learning Outcomes, to its participants and on your sense of the courses efficacy in communicating its Aims and Learning outcomes to its participants:

Efficacy of delivery of Aims and Learning outcomes:

2.3.2 Please comment on your sense of the course's efficacy in meeting its Aims and Learning outcomes to its participants:

2.3.3 Please comment on how well you believe the course leaves its participants equipped upon completion of the course to practise sufficiently confidently and competently within the course's stated therapeutic approach, within the various contexts that counselling takes place. This should include organisation, private practice and volunteer settings:

2.3.4 Should the course involve training and/or practice with children and or/ couples and families please comment on how well you believe the course leaves its participants equipped to practise sufficiently confidently and competently within the course's stated therapeutic approach with this client group(s).

Embedded Equality Diversity and Inclusivity:

2.3.5 Please comment on how effectively the course's aims and learning outcomes support participants' abilities to work within difference and diversity within the client population, and their development of inclusive practise, whilst working within their competencies:

2.3.6 Please comment on how sufficiently overall equality, diversity and inclusivity is embedded within the course and it's aims and learning outcomes.

2.4 Course Structure (*Please refer to section 2.4 of the Diploma level validation guidelines*)

2.4.1 Please specify the timing and spacing of the course, e.g., number of full days, weekends, evenings, etc?

2.4.2 Please comment on the efficacy of the course structure. You must comment on the appropriateness of the time allocated to deliver its material, and the balance of the course overall:

2.5 Selection of Participants: (*Please refer to section 2.5 of the Validation guidelines*)

2.5.1 Please specify the course's selection procedure and how this is implemented?

2.5.2 Please comment on the suitability and fairness of the course's selection processes. You must comment on:

- the efficacy of the processes utilised to determine the suitability of participants for the course. This should include determining participants' abilities to manage the emotional and academic demands of the course and their preparedness to meet the courses requirements:
 - the suitability of communications with prospective participants/potential participants surrounding course requirements, content, setting, resources and any other relevant factors such as participant numbers and group arrangements in relation to individual suitability, equality, inclusivity and diversity:
 - the opportunities afforded by the course for participants to identify additional support needs should they wish to. This should include the opportunity for participants/trainers to identify reasonable adjustments, and for participants to build on their own support systems and resources in relation to these needs the suitability of these arrangements.
-

2.6 Core Course Content (*Please refer to section 2.6 of the Validation Guidelines*) :

Counselling Skills: Please refer to section 2.6.1 of the validation guidelines:

2.6.1 Please specify the ways in which the course supports the development and deepening of participants' counselling skills practice (such as trainer, participant and peer observations and feedback on skills practice and development):

2.6.2 Please comment on your experience of the effectiveness of skills training on the course in developing participants' counselling skills within the course's stated modality:

2.6.3 Should the course involve training and/or practice with children and or/ couples and families please comment on how your experience of how well the course supports its participants to develop counselling skills relevant to these client groups:

Core competencies: Please refer to section 2.6.2 of the validation guidelines

2.6.4 Please comment on how sufficiently you feel COSCA's core competencies for counselling are incorporated and developed throughout the course:

2.6.5 Should the course involve training and/or practice with children and or/ couples and families please comment on how your experience of how well the course supports its participants to develop competencies specific to these client groups:

2.7 Theory: Please refer to section 2.6.3 of the validation guidelines

Please comment on the theoretical components of the course in relation to each of the below criteria:

Coherence of courses core theoretical base:

2.7.1: The availability of a clear and coherent statement about the core theoretical base of course. Please identify how clearly this is communicated to and understood by the course's participants, trainers and other relevant parties, including supervisors and practice placement providers:

Structure and balance:

2.7.2: How effectively the course's core orientation and its theoretical base inform the courses aims and learning outcomes, and the delivery and structure of the course:

2.7.3 How balanced and broadly based the courses theoretical content is. This should include your identification of any opportunities for participants to learn theories that are not part of the course's core theoretical base or orientation.

Human development and psychopathology and working within difference and diversity:

2.7.4 How sufficiently the counselling process is conceptualised within the value system and theoretical base of the course and within an understanding of human growth and development overall:

2.7.5 Please identify the ways in which the course delivers knowledge of theories of human development and human developmental problems. This should include social and psychological perspectives with appropriate consideration being given to areas of difference and diversity and societal, structural and systemic inequalities and experiences of exclusion, marginalisation and oppression and the ways in which these may influence human development and human developmental problems:

2.7.6 How effective is the course in delivering theoretical inputs that are supportive of conditions of equality, diversity and inclusivity within participants' practice?

Risk:

2.7.7 Please identify the ways in which the course delivers theory in relation to risk, including models of risk and identifying factors that may be related to increased risk:

2.7.8 How effectively do you believe the course delivers the above theoretical inputs?

Theory into practice:

2.7.9 How relevant and applicable is the courses theoretical base to the counselling process and counsellor/client relationships?

2.7.10 How effectively does the courses theoretical content highlight the counselling process and the theories that inform counselling practice and counselling approaches to its participants?

2.7.11 Where the course involves any training and/or practice with children and or/ couples and families please identify how sufficiently you believe the course's theoretical content highlights theory informing practice with these specific client groups:

Contemporary Theory:

2.7.12 Please identify the methods through which the course's theoretical content is updated and reviewed and your experience of how sufficient the above arrangements are in ensuring that the course's theoretical content remains relevant, inclusive and ethically and legally compliant.

2.8 Self-awareness and personal development: Please see criteria 2.6.4 of the validation guidelines:

2.8.1 Please specify the methods and activities used to support participants' development of self-awareness on the course:

Working within difference and diversity:

2.8.2 Please specify the opportunities given by the course for participants to develop self-awareness in relation to self and others, including in relation to areas of difference and diversity within self and others:

2.8.3 How effective do you think that the activities selected, trainers' facilitation of these and the training room conditions are in supporting of the development of relational, dialogical and reflective spaces on the course for participants to develop and deepen their self-awareness including in relation to areas of difference and diversity within self and others?

2.8.4 How compatible are these activities and their facilitation with participant and trainer wellbeing and protection from psychological harm, the courses stated policies and procedures and participants development of whole person, inclusive practice?

Risk:

2.8.5 Please specify the opportunities offered by the course to develop their self-awareness in relation to risk:

Trainers:

2.8.6 What opportunities are offered by the course to trainers to deepen their own self-awareness including in relation to areas of difference and diversity within self and others and to consider their own power and positionality within the training space?

2.9 Professional Responsibilities: Please see criteria 2.6.5 of the validation guidelines

2.9.1 What opportunities are provided by the course for participants to learn about the professional responsibilities of counsellors working both within organisational and private practice settings?

2.9.2 How effective is the course in raising awareness of the professional responsibilities of counsellors within the above settings?

2.9.4 How does the course support its participants to develop assessment skills, including the assessment and management of risk:

2.9.5 How effective is the course in supporting its participants to develop the above skills?

2.9.6 Should the course involve training and/or practice with children and or/ couples and families please comment on how sufficiently the course supports its participants to develop professional responsibilities specific to these client groups, including assessment and risk management:

2.10 Group Work Requirements- Please see criteria 2.6 and 2.7.2 of the validation guidelines:

2.10.1 Please identify the course's group work arrangements:

2.10.2 Please comment on the methods and processes through which the 'group working agreement' is created. How suitable do you think these arrangements are and how consistent is this process with the courses stated policies and procedures e.g. equality, diversity and inclusivity, participant contract etc?

2.10.3 How sufficient do you think the course's group work arrangements are, including identifying how clearly the purpose of the group(s) is stated to participants and how clearly the group work arrangements are related to the course's assessment requirements:

2.11 Participant Contract – Please see criteria 2.7.1 of the validation guidelines

2.11.1 Please identify the methods through which the participant contract is communicated and implemented with the course's participants:

2.11.2 How sufficient do you think the above arrangements are how consistent is this participant contracting process with the required criteria and the course's stated policies and procedures e.g. equality, diversity and inclusivity, readiness for practice placements, 4-way agreement, discontinuation etc?

2.12 Readiness for Practice Placement Process (please see criteria 2.9 of the validation guidelines)

2.12.1 Please specify the arrangements for the course's readiness for practice placements process:

2.12.2 Please comment on the suitability of these arrangements, in fostering participant's readiness to practice within the course's stated therapeutic approach. Was this process applied consistently with the required validation criteria and other course policies and procedures such as the 4-way contractual agreement, equality, diversity and inclusion and discontinuation policies?

2.12.3 Where the course involves training and practice with children and or/ couples and families please specify the arrangements for readiness for practice processes with these client groups and comment on their suitability:

2.13 Supervised Practice Placement Hours– (Please see criteria 2.8 of the validation guidelines)

2.13.1 Please state the course's practice placement hours requirements including the ratio of supervision to practice placement hours, blended delivery ratios and any course specific requirements where appropriate:

2.13.2 How clearly is the above communicated by the course and understood by its participants, trainers, practice placement providers and supervisors?

2.14 Supervisors Please see criteria 2.11 of the validation guidelines

2.14.1 Please identify the courses supervision arrangements including the criteria and processes utilised to identify suitable supervisors and the courses group supervision arrangements:

2.14.2 How suitable do you think the above arrangements are?

2.14.3 Should the course involve training and/or practice with children and or/ couples and families please comment on the suitability of supervisors for supporting participants practice with these client groups.

2.15 Coordination of Practice Placements/ Practice Placement Provider Criteria: *(please see section 2.10 of the Validation guidelines)*

2.15.1 Please comment on the course's arrangements for the approval and coordination and monitoring of practice placements:

2.15.2 How clearly is the above communicated by the course and understood by its participants, trainers, practice placement providers and supervisors? How sufficient do you think the above arrangements are? Are these applied consistently with other course policies and procedures such as the 4-way contractual agreement, equality, diversity and inclusion etc?

2.15.3 Please comment on your experience of the course's participants' abilities to obtain a suitable practice placement(s) including any difficulties experienced here:

2.16 Practice Placements – Roles and Responsibilities of the Training Provider/Practice Placement(s)/Student and Supervisor(s): The 4 Way contractual agreement: (please see section 2.12 of the validation guidelines)

2.16.1 Please comment on the suitability of the 4-way agreement and of its implementation. Was this applied consistently with validation criteria and other policies and processes including the participant contract, equality, diversion and inclusion, readiness to practice and discontinuation?

2.17 Trainers– (Please see criteria 2.13 of the validation guidelines)

Suitability:

2.17.1 Please name and comment on the suitability of the core trainers involved on the course:

You must comment on:

the course's adherence to eligibility requirements for non-accredited trainer approval

the course's communication of course validation guidelines and requirements to trainers

the course's communication of COSCA trainer accreditation requirements and identification of any support offered towards this process

2.17.2 Should the course involve training and/or practice with children and or/ couples and families please comment on the suitability of the training team in relation to this.

Participant Trainer Ratio's and Trainers Role:

2.17.2 Please specify the ratio of trainers to participants:

2.17.3 Please identify the role and involvement of the trainers on their course and whether this meets validation requirements in relation to ratio's, accredited trainer requirements and trainer's role criteria:

Delivery:

2.17.4 Please comment on how familiar trainers were with the aims, objectives learning outcomes and content of the course and its activities and assessment criteria:

2.17.5 Please comment on your experience of their delivery of the course and of its efficacy. You must comment on how well the trainers worked as a team and how effectively you think they met the needs of the group, alongside balancing any individual needs (such as in relation to additional support needs or the implementation of any reasonable adjustments).

Trainer experience:

2.17.6 Please comment on your meeting(s) with trainers involved on the course. You must comment on trainer's reported experience of delivering the course and your sense of the interpersonal dynamics within the training team and organisation, the staff culture and trainer/participant dynamics:

2.17.7 Please identify the arrangements for trainer support, supervision and trainer development opportunities within the organisation:

Personal Tutors, Assistant Trainers and other staffing:

2.17.8 If personal tutors are engaged by the course, please identify arrangements here and the suitability of the tutors appointed for this role:

2.17.9 How effective do you think personal tutors in supporting and assisting in the integration of participants' learning and address any course related difficulties, including in relation to any additional and the implementation of reasonable adjustments where appropriate:

2.17.10 If assistant trainers were appointed by the course, please identify their involvement on the course and the suitability of the trainers appointed for the role.

2.17.11 Please comment on the course's administrative staffing and how sufficient you believe the course's administrative staffing and arrangements are in supporting the course's trainers and participants.

2.18: Optional Course Content (Please see criteria 2.14 of the validation guidelines)

2.18.1 Please identify any optional course content:

2.18.2 Please comment on the suitability of this content including how clear the rationale for its inclusion is and how clearly it is linked to the practice of counselling.

3.1 PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT (*Please see Section 3 of the Validation Guidelines*)

Communication of Assessment Criteria:

3.1.1 Please identify how the course's assessment methods were communicated to participants? How clearly do you think these methods were communicated and understood by the course's participants?

Assessment Methods:

3.1.2 What methods of assessment were used by the course?

3.1.3 What assessment evidence did you observe? Please note you must review a sample of participant assignments and feedback:

3.1.4 Please comment on the course's marking criteria including identifying any marking key or rubric utilised. Was the assignment marking and feedback sufficiently clear and supportive to progressive participant development and in keeping with the course's stated therapeutic approach, its intended aims, learning outcomes and stated academic level, where relevant?

Equality, diversity and inclusivity, Moderation and Standardisation:

3.1.5 Did you consider that participants were equally and fairly treated in the process of the assessment?
Were the trainers in agreement regarding assessment outcomes?

3.1.6 Please identify who is involved in the marking of assignments and what processes are implemented by the course in relation to the standardisation and moderation of assignments, including identifying the course's external assessor arrangements in relation to moderation processes:

3.1.7 Were reasonable adjustments (where appropriate) applied effectively? Was the process of participant assessment consistent with other course policies and processes including equality, diversion and inclusivity, the participant contract, readiness for practice placement processes and the 4-way contractual agreement and discontinuation policies?

Assessment of core components of the course:

Counselling Skills, Counselling process and Supervised Practice Placements: Please see section 3.3.1 of the validation guidelines:

3.1.8 Please identify the methods through which the course assesses participants counselling skills and their supervised practice placements? Please note these must include trainer observation and feedback, trainer and supervisor feedback and reports, submission of a signed practice placement log, client recording, and case study assignment.

3.1.9: Please comment on how consistently that you believe that the above arrangements are applied with validation requirements. How sufficient do you think these methods in assessing the development of participant's counselling skills and their integration into the counselling process respective to the course's stated therapeutic approach?

3.10 Should the course involve training and/or practice with children and or/ couples and families please identify how sufficient these methods were in assessing the development of participant's counselling skills and their integration into the counselling process respective to practise with these client groups.

Theory: Please See criteria 3.3.2 of the validation guidelines:

3.11 Please comment on the course arrangements for the assessment of participants theoretical knowledge. Please note that this must include trainer and supervisor feedback and reports and written assignments:

3.12 Please comment on how consistently that you believe that the above arrangements are applied with validation requirements. How sufficient do you think these methods are assessing the development of participant's theoretical knowledge and its integration into their practice respective to the courses stated therapeutic approach?

3.13 Should the course involve training and/or practice with children and or/ couples and families please identify how sufficient these methods were in assessing the development of participant's theoretical knowledge and its integration into their practice respective to practice with these client groups:

Self-awareness and Personal Development: Please see criteria 3.3.3 of the validation guidelines:

3.14 Please comment on the course arrangements for the assessment of participants self-awareness and personal development. Please note that this must include submission of a reflective journal, trainer and supervisor feedback and reports:

3.15 Please comment on how consistently that you believe that the above arrangements are applied with validation requirements. How sufficient do you think these methods are in assessing participant's development of participant's self-awareness and personal development including in relation to areas of difference and diversity within self and others:

Professional Responsibilities: Please see criteria 3.3.4 of the validation guidelines:

3.16 Please comment on the course arrangements for the assessment of participants professional responsibilities. Please note this must include trainer, supervisor and practice placement reports and written assignments:

3.17 Please comment on how consistently that you believe that the above arrangements are applied with validation requirements. How sufficient do you think these methods are assessing the development of participant's professional responsibilities?

3.18 Should the course involve training and/or practice with children and or/ couples and families please identify how sufficient these methods were in assessing the development of participant's professional responsibilities respective to practice with these client groups:

3.2 Optional Content: Please see section 3.4 of the validation guidelines:

3.2.1 How is the courses optional content assessed (where relevant) and how sufficient are arrangements here?

3.3 Attendance: Please see section 3.5 of the validation guidelines:

3.3.1 Please comment on the level of attendance of participants during the course

3.3.2 How clearly do you think the course's attendance criteria is communicated by the course and understood by its participants and trainers?

3.3.3 How consistent is the course's attendance criteria with the course's other stated policies and procedures including the participant contract, equality, diversity and inclusivity, readiness for practice placement process, the 4-way agreement and discontinuation processes?

3.4 Discontinuation of participants

3.4.1 Please comment on the clarity and suitability of the course's discontinuation process including in relation to the stated grounds for discontinuation, the sequence of processes involved, and the support offered to participants by the course:

3.4.2 If the discontinuation process was implemented, please comment on whether the stated sequence of processes was followed and how consistently this was applied with the course's other policies and processes including the participant contract, equality, diversity and inclusivity, readiness for practice placement process and the 4-way agreement?

3.5 Participants:

3.5.1 Please give details of, and comment on, any time you spent with participants of the course. Please ensure to identify any participant feedback specific to the course and its delivery that you have not referred to elsewhere within the present report, where applicable.

3.5.2 Please identify the methods through which the course obtains its participant's feedback. How sufficiently do you think this is responded to?

3.6 Course Evaluation and Monitoring:

3.6.1 Please comment on the methods through which the course is monitored, reviewed and evaluated, including identifying external assessor arrangements Where any quality assurance issues were identified please comment on how sufficiently you believe these issues were responded too by the course.

3.6.2 How sufficient do you think the above arrangements are?

4 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Please comment on any concerns, specific issues or any positive aspects of the course you wish to draw to the attention of the CVP.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Please state whether you recommend that this course should receive Full Validation and please state why. If you decide not to recommend the course for Full Validation, please state your reasons below.

Signature of COSCA Assessor

Name (Please print)

Date