COSCA VALIDATION OF COURSES
COSCA COUNSELLING SKILLS CERTIFICATE

VALIDATION AND REVALIDATION
GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

The Application for COSCA Validation of the COSCA Certificate in Counselling Skills can be found on www.cosca.org.uk.

COURSE VALIDATION - Certificate in Counselling Skills

- Min. 2 people involved in organisation
- Involvement in counselling field
- Adequate complaints procedure
- Appropriate Equal opportunities policy

Apply for Organisational Membership

Applications considered at Panel meetings

- 120 hrs: 4x30 hr modules
- Each module: 3-12 wks
- Min 2 week gap between modules
- Accredited/Accreditable Trainer(s)
- Opt. Trainer:Participants ratio 1:12 (15 max for 1 Trainer, 24 max for 2)
- Appropriate resources

Apply for Course Validation (5 copies)

COSCA CVP meets regularly

Initial Validation Awarded by COSCA

Conditional Initial Validation (if info is outstanding)

During running of first delivery:

- COSCA Assessor visit (mod 1)
- Report to CVP (on non-accredited trainer, at end of mod's 2 & 3 and end of course)
- Trainer Accreditation awarded (on completion of course, if applicable)

To be submitted by organisation:

- Non Accredited Trainer Observation Report (*Appendix 6 of guidelines*)
- Completion of Modules 2 & 3 Report, at the end of each of these modules (*Appendix 4*)
- Course Completion Report (Appendix *5)* Includes: written assignments, participant evaluation forms, External Assessor report and trainer's report.

Full Validation Awarded

Organisation completes and submits Annual Monitoring Form by 31st October each year

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Apply for Revalidation Every 5 years

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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 Validation of COSCA's Counselling Skills Certificate

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

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 Course Validation Panel

COSCA's Course Validation Panel decides on all applications for course validation. It holds regular Panel 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 Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework Award (SCQF)

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

The Course has been awarded 40 SCQF credits at SCQF level 8.

1.6 Useful Contacts

The COSCA Development Officer (Individuals/Courses) is available to respond to queries or concerns about applications, criteria or procedures – www.cosca.org.uk for contact details.

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

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

The Chair of the Course Validation Panel can be contacted through the Development Officer (Individuals/Courses) at the COSCA address.

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 (www.cosca.org.uk). Submissions for course validation therefore will only be considered from Corporate, Full 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   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.

1.6   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.

1.7   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

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

3. Trainers

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

3.2 To obtain Full Validation, the core training team must have at least one COSCA accredited trainer (Certificate or Diploma level).

Participants who have successfully completed a relevant counselling skills course require a period of 1 year from completion of their training in counselling skills to commencement of delivery of training and must be practising counselling skills.

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

In any application for validation, it is a requirement that the training provider submits to COSCA for all non COSCA Accredited Trainers involved in the delivery of training on the course:
1. **Non COSCA Accredited Trainers Observation Report of Trainer Competence** within 6 months of being involved in the delivery of training indicating a level of competence sufficient to deliver the validated course – **Appendix 6**.
2. **Non COSCA Accredited Trainers: Application to Deliver Training on a COSCA Validated Course** – www.cosca.org.uk, prior to being involved in the delivery of training

   In order to meet the terms of the validation guidelines, non accredited trainers must be prepared to work towards COSCA Trainer Accreditation within 2 years of commencing delivery of the course (even if it is on a freelance or sessional basis).
3. When revalidation is applied for, all non accredited trainers involved in the delivery of the course (even if it is on a freelance or sessional basis) for more than 2 years prior to the revalidation deadline must be COSCA accredited (Certificate or Diploma level) by the point of revalidation, that is within 5 years of the organisation's award of Initial Validation.

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

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 Associate Member (unless the trainer is a practising counsellor/psychotherapist, whereby Practitioner Membership may be more appropriate) in order to have access to COSCA resources and support.

3.6 Continued validation requires that an **Annual Monitoring Form** (see Section D Full 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

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 identify 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 correspond to the Aims, Learning Outcomes, Methods and Activities that have already been presented in the COSCA Certificate in Counselling Skills Course.   (Please refer to the publication *COSCA Counselling Skills Handbook for Trainers.*)

7.2   The COSCA resource material provides a package defined by **Aims, Learning Outcomes, Range and Methods and Activities** and it offers one way of integrating these elements into a comprehensive training programme, but it is not the only way. How each trainer uses what is in the Handbook for Trainers will make it a course. In that transition from resource material to a course some elements will need to remain fixed and some can be adapted.

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 Aims, Learning Outcomes, Range and Methods and Activities described in the Handbook, includes a variety of delivery styles to encourage experiential learning, is non-oppressive, anti-discriminatory and enshrines equal opportunities.

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 and Methods and Activities

8.1   Aims

The Aims provide the basic structure that the course designers believe is fundamental in any training at counselling skills certificate level. 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 each unit by whatever means they choose.

8.2   Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes are next in order of priority and they are 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. Given that the resource material itself does not contain any guidance towards selection, 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 in their use and understanding of counselling skills, and in their readiness to proceed throughout the training. All the Competencies listed in the course relate directly to skills practice.Units that do not have skills practice do not have a list of Competencies.

Together the Aims and the Learning Outcomes are the core of the training material. The trainer should not change these elements since they are the essential threads that keep the course coherent, comprehensive and transferable.

8.3   Range

Range statements 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 how and when details of the Aims, Learning Outcomes, Range, Methods and Activities 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 Modules and/or units. 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 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.

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 of Modules

10.1 Each 30hour Module of the COSCA 120 hour programme, or equivalent, will be completed over a 3 – 12 week period, i.e. at least one and no more than 4 unit(s) is/are completed in a week. The training schedule will leave a gap of at least 2 weeks between Modules 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 full 120 hour Certificate programme will normally be a) delivered and b) completed by participants in no more than 3 years.

10.3 Participants must have completed Modules 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent) within the stipulated 3 year period. If applying to do Module 4 after the stipulated 3year period, participants are required 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 Module or equivalent training. The written summary should demonstrate that the participant is not only using counselling skills, but is also in touch with the relevant under-lying thinking and ethical framework.

10.4 Applicants are required to show evidence of how the information on the spacing of the training 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 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.

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 Modules 2 – 4 will require successful completion of preceding Modules. Decisions on selection to Modules 2 – 4 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 counselling or counselling skills training undertaken not more than 3 years prior to the start of the course, and which meets the Learning Outcomes outlined in the COSCA Modules, 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 COSCA Training.

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

14. Discontinuation of Participants

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

15. Participant's Course Evaluation

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

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 Participants
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. There is no charge for the registration of unsuccessful completion. The cost of registration and certification by COSCA is contained on the proforma (available from the COSCA website). There is no charge for 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 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
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16.5 Sample Letter to Participant 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).

17.2   Participant Certification
        To facilitate consistency in the recognition of the COSCA Counselling Skills Certificate Course, COSCA certificates of completion must be issued to all participants who have successfully completed Module 4.

        Validated providers must apply direct to COSCA for these certificates, giving a minimum of 8 weeks prior notice.   There is a charge for certification (see www.cosca.org.uk).   Please note that COSCA does not send certificates direct to participants.

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

18. Participant and Trainer Handbooks

18.1   Participant and Trainer Handbooks

        Organisations validated to provide COSCA's own Courses are required to use the materials produced by COSCA for the respective course.   Trainer and Participant Handbooks are available for order from COSCA.   Please see www.cosca.org.uk – for an order form.

        The cost of the Participant and Trainer Handbooks may be found on www.cosca.org.uk.

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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). 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.

1.2   When considering an application for validation, the Panel will meet privately and will follow the procedures outlined. 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.

1.3   The decision of the Panel will be communicated in writing to the applicant by COSCA's Chief Executive.

2. Initial Validation Phase

2.1 **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.

2.2 During the period of Initial Validation a COSCA Assessor (CA) will be appointed by the Panel to check that the endorsement of the Panel is justified. The CA is the appointment of the Panel and his/her working contract is with the Panel.

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

2.4 The process of COSCA Assessment:

> The CA visits Module 1 and submits a report to the Panel. The CA will assess Module 1 to check consistency between the paper application and actual delivery.

> Based on the CA's report, the Panel can request the applicant to supply information on the course delivery and decide on further visits by the CA. The CA would normally only visit the delivery of Modules 2 and 3 if there was a need for specific evidence or because of a specific request of the applicant.

> At the end of both Module 2 and Module 3 an Initial Validation Report must be submitted separately for both Modules 2 and 3. These Reports should be submitted to the COSCA office not later than 3 weeks following the completion date of each Module. The proforma for the above Report is in Appendix 4 – see *Completion of Modules 2 and 3 proforma (Appendix – 4).* A separate proforma should be used to report on each Module. Please clearly tick the box on the proforma to indicate whether the Report being submitted is for Module 2 or Module 3. The evidence required to be submitted with this form can be in the form of written, taped and/or videod feedback.

> The Panel can then request further information and/or arrange for the CA to carry out a further assessment visit.

> On completion of Module 4, applicants must submit the *Course Completion Report* **(Appendix 5)** providing an overview of the course and evidence that participants have met the required standard for successful completion of the course prior to being awarded the Certificate. This proforma must be submitted to COSCA no later than 3 weeks following the completion of the course.

> 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.

➢ During the initial validation phase, the role of the External Assessor is to produce a written report (400-500 words) to confirm that the participants for whom certificates will be required from COSCA have met the learning outcomes. This report should be produced at the end of the course, not after each module, and should form part of the Course Completion Report (Appendix 5).

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 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.

➢ The CVP meets to make a decision on the validation status of the course.

➢ Formal notification of the outcome of the COSCA Assessment, and COSCA's decision on validation, will be made to the applicant in writing and prior to the awarding of certification.

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.

2.6 The CA will contact the applicant to arrange the details of assessment. The CA will expect to meet with the trainers and participants to gather evidence on course delivery as required for the completion of the CA report. As a general guideline it will be necessary for the CA to attend a course session.

2.7 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.

2.8 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.

2.9 The applicant for validation will inform the course participants of the existence and identity of the CA.

2.10   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 ways that are appropriate to counselling and the use of counselling skills 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.

2.11   The costs of COSCA assessment of your course are included in the validation fee.

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 CA'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 at least 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 Annual Monitoring Form
> ➢   Submit the necessary non COSCA Accredited Trainers Observation Report of Trainer Competence
> ➢   Submit the necessary Application to Delivery Training on as COSCA Validated Course by non COSCA Accredited Trainers
> ➢   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.
> ➢   Engage an External Assessor to produce a report that should be submitted with the Annual Monitoring Form.
>
>   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 to offer a view as to how the course is being delivered.
>
>   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.

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** (www.cosca.org.uk) followed by updating in the Annual Monitoring Form (www.cosca.org.uk).   The completed Annual Monitoring Form requires to be returned 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 Validation that during the period of Full Validation, course providers complete this proforma and return it to COSCA by the end of October on an annual basis. This proforma provides COSCA with a means to ensure that the standards achieved at the point of Full Validation are maintained during its entire period.

It also gives course providers a valuable opportunity to monitor their own activities and outcomes.

The proforma will be used as an important basis of awarding revalidation. The length of the report is variable, but it is essential that all parts of the proforma are completed.

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 Panel 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.

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 Panel 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

1.1   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.
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H. APPEALS

1.1   In the case of an applicant wishing to submit an appeal against the Panel's decision, COSCA's Appeals Procedure must be followed, within three months of the decision being made. The COSCA Appeals Procedure can be found at www.cosca.org.uk.

APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANTS 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, home or work address, training provider, successful or unsuccessful completion of the training, if given APL/APEL, dates of commencement/completion of the course, month/year of issue of award by COSCA, work place.

All information kept on participants involved in COSCA validated courses is held by COSCA, in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

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 Proforma* (www.cosca.org.uk).

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

APPENDIX 2:   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

Please tick relevant box

I hereby give permission for *name of provider* to pass the following details on to COSCA, Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland.

➢ My forename and surname and home or work address
➢ Date of Birth
➢ Name of the provider of the training I am enrolled on
➢ Dates of commencement and completion of the training
➢ My successful or unsuccessful completion of the training
➢ If given APL/APEL
➢ Month and year of issue of Certificate by COSCA
➢ 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*

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

COSCA COUNSELLING SKILLS CERTIFICATE

APPENDIX 4.   INITIAL VALIDATION REPORT COMPLETION OF MODULES 2 AND 3

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

Any evidence 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

Initial Validation Report for: Please ✓ appropriate Module. *Module 2* *Module 3*	
Name of COSCA Assessor for Module 1	

Office Use | Date of Receipt: |

1. PERSONNEL

1.1 Please describe any changes to the personnel associated with the delivery of the course since the last Module. Please include Application Form(s) to Deliver Training and **Appendix 6: COSCA Non-Accredited Trainers – Report of Trainer's Competencies,** for new or non Accredited Trainers. Please also include information on staff absences and how these were covered.

2.TRAINERS

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

3. TRAINER:PARTICIPANT RATIO

3.1 Please detail the ratio of trainer:participant on this Module 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

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

5. RESOURCES

5.1 Please comment on the accommodation for the delivery of this Module.

6. COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

6.1 Please provide a statement that you have delivered this Module 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 Module.

6.3	Please detail any additions made to the stated Aims, Learning Outcomes, Ranges, Methods and Activities of this Module, 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 Module was communicated to participants.

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

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

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

8. TIMING AND SPACING

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

9. ATTENDANCE

9.1 Please describe the level of attendance of participants during the delivery of this Module 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 Module.

ASSESSOR	
Signature:	
Name (Please print):	
Position in Organisation:	
Date:	

Scotland's **Professional Body for Counselling & Psychotherapy**

COSCA
Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland

COSCA COUNSELLING SKILLS CERTIFICATE

APPENDIX 5: INITIAL VALIDATION COURSE COMPLETION REPORT

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 in Modules 1 – 3

Office Use | Date of Receipt: |

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- ❑ The Course Validation Panel would like an insight into the delivery of the course including areas of development based on learning from the first cohort of participants.

- ❑ The learning outcomes in the four Modules of the course are to be assessed by course trainers.

- ❑ At the end of Module 4, course trainers must ensure that the participants for whom Certificates are requested from COSCA have achieved the knowledge, skills and self-awareness contained in the learning outcomes of the entire course.

- ❑ You are required to submit the information requested below in order that the Course Validation Panel can make an informed decision that the assessment framework is in place that warrants the request for Certificates.

1. Report from the Course Trainer(s)
Please submit a report by the course trainer(s) (400 – 500 words) which provides a brief overview of the course, including any areas of good practice, learning points and improvements or changes to be made for future cohorts of participants.

2. Written Assignments
Please enclose a sample of the final assignments to cover the range of ability among participants (minimum 3 / maximum 5) and any that were unsuccessfully completed. Please note that these should not identify participants.

3.   Participant Evaluation Form
Please include a sample of Participant Evaluation Forms for Module 4 (minimum 3 / maximum 5).

4.   Organisation's External Assessor's Report
Please submit a report (400 – 500 words) from the External Assessor appointed by your organisation (not the COSCA appointed Assessor).   This report should confirm that the participants for whom Certificates will be required from COSCA have met the learning outcomes.

To be completed by the named person within the organisation applying for Validation.
I confirm that the participants for whom we request COSCA Certificates for successful completion of the course have met the learning outcomes of the course.
Signature:
Name (Please print):
Organisation and Position within Organisation:
Date

COSCA COUNSELLING SKILLS CERTIFICATE

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 NON ACCREDITED TRAINER:	**DATE OF REPORT:**

Personal style & Abilities	
Skill mix and level of competence	
Areas of strengths	
Developmental points/areas	

Name of person completing the form (please print clearly):	Signature:
Designation	Date