

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	Cert HE Psychodynamic Counselling (Level 4)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	N/A
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home School/other teaching departments	Birkbeck Centre for Counselling
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Part-time (2 years) September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	UCHPSCSL_C
HECoS Code	100495 counselling
Start date of programme	Autumn 2018-19
Date of programme approval	Spring 2018
Date of last programme amendment approval	July 2020
Valid for academic entry year	2024-25
Programme Director	Clea McEnery-West
Date of last revision to document	06/07/2020

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

There are no formal entry criteria. In their application form applicants need to show an understanding of and interest in psychodynamic counselling. Relevant work experience is particularly important, especially for applicants without formal academic qualifications.

Applicants who can successfully demonstrate that their prior learning covers the main elements of the syllabus of Year one, may be considered by the departmental admissions tutors for direct entry to Year 2 of the programme under the college's APL Policy

Course aims

The rationale for the programme:

1. to provide a progression route primarily for the two clinical Masters programmes in the department, but also to the newly developed B.A in Psychosocial Studies and Principles of Psychodynamic Counselling
2. the programme also functions as a free-standing course teaching counselling and counselling skills for those interested in becoming counsellors without a full clinical training (e.g. to work as "befrienders" or offering counselling related work in a voluntary or public agency), or interested in learning counselling skills to apply to their existing work

Programme aims:

1. To teach the basic aspects of psychodynamic theory
2. To teach the basic elements of counselling skills from a psychodynamic perspective
3. To provide a coherent context for understanding and practicing psychodynamic counselling by introducing students to concepts and ideas from psychosocial studies and organizational dynamics
4. To develop the personal qualities required for psychodynamic counselling, notably self-reflection and the capacity to learn by experience

Course structure

The Higher Education Certificate in Psychodynamic Counselling is a two year, part time programme which teaches the basic theoretical ideas and practical listening skills needed to work in a counselling or therapeutic setting. The programme consists of four modules, which focus on the development of the capacity for self-reflection, on how the inner and outer worlds relate to each other, how psychodynamic theory informs practice, and how social and organizational dynamics and factors affect the professional context in which counselling takes place. The programme can be taken as a progression route onto the accredited clinical trainings (MSc in Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy, MSc in Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy with Children and Adolescents) for those with the appropriate academic and professional qualifications, or onto the B.A in Psychosocial Studies and Principles of Psychodynamic Counselling within the Department of Psychosocial Studies. The programme can also be taken as a course of study in its own right, suitable for those wishing to

employ psychodynamic skills in a counselling or therapeutic setting (e.g. in a public or voluntary agency), or to inform and enrich their existing work. There are no formal entry criteria, but relevant work and life experience would be considered important.

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Part-time – 2 years					
Year 1					
4	SSPA107S4	Listening, self-reflection and the counselling setting	30	Compulsory	T1-2
4	SSPA106S4	Inner and outer worlds: psychoanalytic and psychosocial understandings	30	Compulsory	T2-3
Year 2					
4	SSPA108S4	Psychoanalytic theory and practice	30	compulsory	T1-2
4	SSPA109S4	Psychodynamic counselling in a psychosocial framework	30	compulsory	T2-3

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student

Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)

Option: Student can choose to take this module

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Learning is through academic study of theoretical ideas and texts, experiential learning through exercises for developing self-knowledge, and learning of skills necessary for understanding the client's experience and starting to develop ways of working therapeutically.

Teaching is through a mix of more formal academic teaching (lectures and seminars), skills teaching (through focused skills based exercises), and experiential learning (through class exercises designed to foster self-knowledge and self-reflection).

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment.

Assessment is by written essays, designed to test academic knowledge, and the development of counselling skills and self-knowledge (e.g. by describing the learning achieved in skills-based exercises, and through the use of examples recorded in a "learning journal").

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. demonstrate understanding of the basic elements of psychodynamic theory sufficient to enable you to link the theory to your counselling skills
2. demonstrate the capacity for listening with an "analytic attitude" (the capacity to listen in such a way as to understand the client's experience, and in particular their unconscious communications)
3. demonstrate a beginning capacity to express understanding of the client's experience and their unconscious communications
4. demonstrate the capacity for self-reflection sufficient for understanding the client's experience and unconscious communications
5. show understanding of the basic elements of the professional, institutional and social context of counselling.

Careers and further study

This certificate is a valuable first step for graduates to pursue career paths or further training in counselling/psychotherapy (but is not in itself a training).

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services.](#) This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

[Further information](#) about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is available online.

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