

MSc Counselling

Accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

Information for applicants

Application and interview

- Entrance to the course is dependent on (i) meeting the academic requirement of an Honours degree or equivalent, (ii) meeting the required standard of English (iii) providing a thoughtful personal statement which addresses the points below and (iv) successfully passing an interview, where you will be assessed on your personal suitability to begin counselling training.
- Because of the nature of counselling training, it is essential that you are the sort of person that can make others feel safe in your presence. You will possess outstanding interpersonal skills, warmth and connection. In addition to that, we are looking for candidates who demonstrate self-awareness, emotional maturity and stability. They must be able to make use of and reflect on life experience. They should be able to cope with the emotional demands of the course. They should be able to cope with the intellectual and academic requirements of Masters level study. They should be able to evidence their ability to form a helping relationship. They must have the ability to be self-critical and to use both positive and negative feedback. They need to have awareness of the nature of prejudice and oppression and issues of difference and equality. Also, they must recognise the need for personal and professional support. Their statement will be reflective and will outline their experience in a helping relationship. It will include their ambitions for counselling learning and their personal suitability to begin counselling training.

Year 1

- The programme runs over 3 years and has teaching throughout the year. In year 1 you are required to attend one day per week (5 hours) for terms 1 and 2 (a total of 26 weeks over September to May). These days will cover introductions to the Pluralistic Model for counselling and psychotherapy integration, a variety of theoretical perspectives, plus practical skills and personal development groups.
- In May of year 1 there is a four-day block of workshops (9.30 – 4.30 each day). These provide essential training required to undertake ethical and professional practice in counselling, for example effective use of supervision, boundaries and record-keeping and crisis management. This is followed by an observed skills exam to check your readiness to start your placement, along with a portfolio of evidence. In addition to passing these, the Programme Team must confirm your readiness to start placement. If the Programme team have any concerns about your practice, you will be asked to delay your placement and an action plan of support will be put in place.

Year 2

- If approved for placement, in year 2 you will go out on placement and attend one full day class per week for terms 1 and 2 (total of 26 weeks over September to May) and, at the start of term 3, there will be a four- day block of workshops.

Year 3

- In year 3, attendance is one full day every three weeks in terms 1 and 2. In term 3 students attend a four- day blocks focussed on professional issues and progression in to registered practice. This is followed by a single day ending event and Viva drop ins as required.
- 90% attendance is required throughout the course

| | Term 1 | Term 2 | Term 3 |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Year 1 Monday* | 13 weeks one day per week | 13 weeks one day per week | Four -day block of workshops |
| Year 2 Tuesday* | 13 weeks one day per week | 13 weeks one day per week | Four-day block of workshops |
| Year 3 Thursday* | 1 day every 3 weeks (approx.) | 1 day every 3weeks (approx.) | Four-day block of workshops plus one day ending event |

*May be subject to change

Assessment

- A range of assessment modalities are used with an average of two assessments per term, these focus on personal awareness, reflectivity and development, theoretical understanding and application to practice, research and practice skills.
- Assessments are designed to facilitate learning processes as well as assessing ability.
- A pass grade in all nine modules is necessary to complete the MSc Counselling and to achieve BACP Accredited Course Graduate status.
- All written assessments are submitted electronically and much of the independent learning is managed through the virtual learning environment (My Learning Space) and digital log PebblePad. You will be introduced to these systems at the start of the programme and support is available.

Teaching

- The focus at Abertay is Pluralistic Therapy and the course will be taught in line with the methods and philosophies of this framework. The teaching team are experienced practitioners who are registered members of BACP. They bring a wealth of experience in counselling practice, research and training.

- Learning will be experiential through skills practice, personal development and professional practice groups. You should be prepared to be personally vulnerable and to build relationships with a range of peers.
- Lectures will provide foundations for knowledge which students are expected to further explore and advance through independent practice and study. You should be prepared to read widely and regularly outside of class to support your learning.

Practice placement

- A total of 100 client hours must be completed to pass the programme. Therapeutic work must be one-to-one adult counselling, under suitable supervision. Private practice is not permissible for placement hours. In line with BACP guidelines, we do not allow students to set up or to maintain a private counselling practice whilst in training.
- While we maintain information on placements which have been approved by the university it is the students who are responsible for arranging their own placement. Organisations that have not been used by our students in the past can be approved under the guidance of our placement administrator Jane Graham (j.graham@abertay.ac.uk)
- Successful completion of CNS503, approval by the Programme Team and a current PVG will be required before students are approved for practice placement
- 30 hours of practice placement should be completed before the end of year 2. 100 hours of practice placement should be completed by the end of year 3.

Fees

- Current fees for the whole programme are approximately £5,500 for Scottish students. Fees for EU and rest of UK students are available from advisory@abertay.ac.uk
- SFC Loans may be available – contact advisory@abertay.ac.uk

Important questions to consider:

Please ask yourself the following questions before deciding to apply or accept a place on the course if one is offered.

- Are you in a suitable place to be able to commit to the 90% attendance requirement?
- Are you able to commit financially? There are 'hidden' costs such as fortnightly supervision in years two and three (£20-£60 per hour), travel to course and placement, membership of BACP (<https://www.bacp.co.uk/membership/student-membership/>) and personal therapy (Personal therapy is not a requirement for the course however many students find it beneficial. Free counselling can be provided by the university counselling service).
- Are you willing to be known by us and by others? Counselling training is intensely personal, not just professional.
- Are you emotionally mature, exceptionally socially skilled, warm, able to make good relationships and to make others feel safe in your presence?