



ASSESSMENT and  
QUALIFICATIONS  
ALLIANCE

# Vocationally Related Qualification

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## Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills 2006

### Special Features

- National framework accredited qualification
- Flexible Unit construction
- 60 to 75 guided learning hours
- Internal and external assessment
- AQA advisor/External Verifier.

This specification will be published annually on the AQA Website ([www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)). If there are any changes to the specification centres will be notified in print as well as on the Website. In the case of any difference between the printed and the website version of the specification, the version with the highest number, as currently published on the AQA Website, is the definitive one.

Vertical black lines indicate a significant change or addition to the specification published for 2005.

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# Background Information

## 1

# AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills

## 1.1 Introduction

The *AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills* is designed for those people who wish to learn and to practise a range of counselling skills.

Candidates are likely to fall into two main groups:

- those wishing to enhance their functional role by acquiring proficiency across a range of counselling skills. Counselling skills have proved to be effective in many work roles where interactions between people occur;
- those who wish to progress to Practitioner Level in Counselling and who see skills' acquisition and practice as a sound basis for beginning their training.

The **Primary Learning Goal** of this award is that on completion candidates will:

- (a) be competent in using a full defined range of counselling skills;
- (b) understand the importance of using counselling skills ethically and within The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's (BACP) *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*;
- (c) gain access to progression opportunities in employment;
- (d) gain access to progression opportunities in education and training.

Following the BACP Guidance, the Certificate content encourages the concept of 'intentionality' – that is, that counselling skills should be used ethically and 'with intention' whether in a personal or employment arena.

**Put more directly, candidates should know not only which skills they are using, but also why they are using them.**

The qualification has clear links to the **CAMPAG S/NVQ Level III Units**, providing opportunities for candidates to acquire portfolio evidence towards that qualification, should they so wish. The award has also been designed with the **BACP Accreditation** routes in mind, providing those wishing to progress to BACP accreditation with credible units of training to support their application. Successful candidates will be able to progress to level 3 Advanced Counselling Awards, if they so wish, within the AQA suite. The qualification may also be used as an entrée to other courses and as credit, Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), towards some other awards (e.g. in Care, Guidance, Mediation, and IPM).

**The award does not provide the candidate with a professional qualification or entitle its holder to practise counselling professionally.**

This fact must be drawn to the attention of all applicants and candidates.

As candidates progress through the award, the difference between Counselling and using Counselling Skills will be emphasised (e.g. by the use of the term **Listener** or **Helper**, not 'Counsellor' in skills' practice work). This will be reinforced by tutors consistently referring to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy* or an equivalent code.

The assessment process is focused on knowledge and use of the counselling skills defined in this specification.

## 2

## Specification at a Glance

### *AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills*

2.1	<b>The Qualification</b>	To qualify for the full award, candidates must pass Mandatory Unit 1 (VC11) and one other Option Unit, chosen by the centre from the standard AQA list below, and the AQA Written test (V11W)						
2.2	<b>Guided Learning Hours</b>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Mandatory Unit 1</td> <td>40 to 50 guided learning hours per unit.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Option Units 2 to 7</td> <td>20 to 25 guided learning hours per unit.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Full Qualification</td> <td>60 to 75 guided learning hours.</td> </tr> </table>	Mandatory Unit 1	40 to 50 guided learning hours per unit.	Option Units 2 to 7	20 to 25 guided learning hours per unit.	Full Qualification	60 to 75 guided learning hours.
Mandatory Unit 1	40 to 50 guided learning hours per unit.							
Option Units 2 to 7	20 to 25 guided learning hours per unit.							
Full Qualification	60 to 75 guided learning hours.							
2.3	<b>Mandatory Unit 1</b>	<p><b>Unit 1 (VC11) Skills Acquisition and Practice</b></p> <p>Internally Assessed Component V11C</p> <p>Externally Assessed Component V11W</p>						
2.4	<b>Units 2 to 7</b>	<p>Select one unit from the following approved list of AQA Intermediate Counselling Skills Units.</p> <p><b>Unit 2 (VC12) Working with Loss and Grief</b></p> <p><b>Unit 3 (VC13) Working with Life Threatening Illness</b></p> <p><b>Unit 4 (VC14) Working with Children and Young People</b></p> <p><b>Unit 5 (VC15) Counselling Skills for Debriefing</b></p> <p><b>Unit 6 (VC16) Counselling Skills in Schools</b></p> <p><b>Unit 7 (VC17) Counselling Skills at Work</b></p>						

## 3

## Availability of Assessment Units And Entry Details

3.1 Availability of Assessment Units	Assessment units and their components are available in two examination series, January and June. Candidates should be entered by the normal AQA deadlines of 21 October and 21 March respectively.
3.2 Course Registration	Courses for AQA Vocationally Related Qualifications must be registered with AQA by the course start date, using the form CS/VER/1.
3.3 Candidate Entry Details (Example)	<p>A centre is to run a complete Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills course comprising mandatory unit 1 and option unit 2 all of which are to be completed in one year. The course is to begin in September and end the following June. The centre must:</p> <p>(a) <b>Register the course</b>, using the course registration forms <b>CS/VER/1</b>. The completed forms must be sent to Department A17 at the Guildford office by the course start date. This will enable AQA to provide centres with the essential documents needed for the course. To order CS/VER/1 forms contact: Department A17 at the Guildford office on 01483 477836 or e-mail <a href="mailto:counselling@aqa.org.uk">counselling@aqa.org.uk</a>.</p> <p>(b) <b>Enter candidates for units and components</b> Refer to '<i>AQA General Regulations</i>' section 5 'Entry Administration'.</p> <p>(i) <b>Enter candidates for the mandatory unit and its components</b> for either the January or June series, as appropriate, using the following three codes:</p> <p><b>VC11</b> - The unit code;</p> <p><b>V11C</b> - Internal coursework component;</p> <p><b>V11W</b> - External written test component.</p> <p>(ii) <b>Enter candidates for the option units 2 to 7</b> for either January or June series, as appropriate. In this case the code is:</p> <p><b>VC12</b> for Unit 2</p> <p>(iii) <b>Apply for the Award</b>. When candidates have completed the mandatory unit and one option unit, they will have qualified for the Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills. The centre must claim the award using the <b>Award code 0506 at the same time as they enter for the final units; in this example, by 21 March.</b></p>

3.4 Single Unit Entry	<p>Individual option units are available for certification. These may be used for continuing professional development purposes or to enable centres to offer a broader based course to meet a market demand. The procedure for registration and candidate entry remains the same as that described in 3.3 above.</p>
3.5 Other Entry Considerations	<p>Centres candidate admission procedures should include a screening/selection process in order to establish candidates' suitability for counselling skills training.</p> <p><i>Prospective candidates for all counselling courses should be made aware that while on the course, high priority will be given to moral and ethical issues, equal opportunities and the importance of <b>giving and receiving</b> personal and sensitive information confidentially and in a non-judgemental way. This must be made clear to prospective candidates before they are admitted on to a counselling skills course.</i></p>
3.6 Prohibited Combinations	<p>There are no prohibited combinations of qualifications.</p>
3.7 Private Candidates	<p>This specification is not available for private candidates.</p>
3.8 External Assessment	<p>Details of examination dates and the candidate entry procedure can be obtained through AQA offices.</p> <p>AQA Counselling examinations and tests are conducted in accordance with the Awarding Bodies' common <i>Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations</i>, as current at the time of the examination.</p> <p>Copies of '<i>AQA General Regulations</i>' for the Conduct of Examinations and Tests are available through AQA registered offices.</p>
3.9 Access Arrangements and Special Consideration	<p>AQA pays due regard to the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in its administration of this specification.</p> <p>Arrangements may be made to enable candidates with disabilities or other difficulties to access the assessment. An example of an access arrangement is the production of a Braille paper for a candidate with a visual impairment. Special consideration may be requested for candidates whose work has been affected by illness or other exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Further details can be found in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document:  <i>Access Arrangements and Special Consideration Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examination GCE, VCE, GCSE, GNVQ, Entry Level &amp; Key Skills</i>  This document can be viewed via the AQA web site (<a href="http://www.aqa.org.uk">www.aqa.org.uk</a>)</p> <p>Applications for access arrangements and special consideration should be submitted to AQA by the Examinations Officer at the centre.</p>
3.10 Language of Examination	<p>All assessment will be through the medium of English. Assessment materials will not be provided in Welsh or Gaelic.</p>

# Scheme of Assessment

## 4

## Introduction

4.1	Prior Level of Attainment	Candidates must have appropriate Communication Skills. e.g. Key skill of communication at level 1.
4.2	Other Entry Requirements	None
4.3	Progression (Full Qualification)	This qualification provides opportunities for progression to: AQA Advanced Certificate or Diploma; Other National Framework Level 3 qualifications; Employment; Career and personal development.

## 5

## Aims

5.1	Mandatory Unit VC11	On successful completion of the Mandatory Unit the candidates will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• take appropriate precautions to protect the health and safety of candidates and their clients;</li><li>• be competent in using a defined range of counselling skills;</li><li>• understand the importance of a therapeutic alliance;</li><li>• understand the importance of using the counselling skills ethically and within the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's (BACP) <i>Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy</i> (or other suitable Code of Conduct);</li><li>• demonstrate self-awareness and reflection in the use of the counselling skills;</li><li>• be qualified to progress to level three qualifications.</li></ul>
5.2	Units VC12 to VC17 Option Units	On successful completion of any one of the option units, the candidates will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• take appropriate steps to protect the health and safety of Listener (counsellor) and Talker (client);</li></ul>

- be able to apply the counselling skills defined in unit 1;
- understand how the context affects the use and application of the counselling skills;
- recognise and acknowledge their own limitations in the use of counselling skills;
- understand the ethics of using counselling skills within the specialism;
- adhere to the BACP's *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy* (or other appropriate code) at all times.

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5.3 Full Award

On completion of the Award, the candidates will:

- understand the importance of ethical principles and codes of ethics and practice to the counselling process;
- be competent to use the specified counselling skills ethically in accordance with a code;
- be able to apply the counselling skills effectively in specific situations;
- have acquired the skills and knowledge necessary to assure the health and safety of both Listener (counsellor) and Talker (client);
- gain access to progression opportunities into:

National Framework Level 3 or Higher Awards  
AQA Advanced Counselling Awards  
Employment  
Career development opportunities.

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5.4 Signposting Opportunities to promote these issues



The following symbol in the left-hand column throughout this specification indicates where opportunities for tutors to promote the candidates' understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical, social, cultural and other issues can be found.

# 6

## Assessment Objectives

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### 6.1 Unit 1 (VC11)

The combination of assessment processes will assure interested parties that upon completion of the qualification candidates will:

1. Know the meaning of the term Counselling Skills as defined by the BACP.
2. Know the place of counselling skills on a helping continuum.
3. Know health and safety precautions.
4. Understand how counselling skills relate to helping as a process.
5. Identify and demonstrate the Active Listening Skills required for establishing a helping relationship.
6. Understand the need to move helping interviews forward.
7. Understand, at a basic level, some concepts from the three main “roots” of counselling.
8. Demonstrate the skills needed to develop and maintain the helping relationship.
9. Understand how endings are an integral aspect of the helping process.
10. Demonstrate how endings are an opportunity for growth, in relation to goal and target setting.
11. Demonstrate the appropriate skills to conclude a helping relationship.

### 6.2 Units 2 – 7 (VC12 to VC17)

Upon completion of any option unit candidates will have achieved the learning outcomes specified within the unit.

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## 7

## Scheme of Assessment

### 7.1 Introduction

AQA Intermediate Counselling Skills Certificate features both internal and external assessment processes.

Internal assessment for each of the units is conducted by the course tutor and is externally verified by AQA.

External assessment is linked to the Mandatory Unit 1 and comprises an AQA set and marked test of **60 minutes**. This is explained further in section 8.10.

### 7.2 Internal Assessment

Internal assessment is the formal assessment of candidate's work by the centre. Centre assessors must have been officially standardised by AQA **prior** to assessing candidate's work for this award. Standardisation training is provided by AQA at predetermined dates each year. Standardisation is essential to ensure a high degree of consistency and reliability nationally in assessment decisions made. Standardisation training is also a valuable aid to teaching the course.

Centre managers are responsible for maintaining internal quality standards and consistency, on and between, similar courses at the centre (see Section 19: Standardisation).

The method of assessment and procedures to be followed are defined and published by AQA (see Section 20: Administrative procedures).

Assessment procedures and criteria prescribed by AQA for counselling awards are subject to regular review. Tutors/centres are required to plan formal internal assessment to coincide with AQA assessment deadlines. Candidates should be provided with details of internal assessment plans/schedules, normally within two weeks of a course starting.

### 7.3 Internal Assessment Methods

The following assessment methods applies to all of the Intermediate Counselling Skills Units:

- Journal;
- Skills Role-play Practical Assessment.

### 7.4 The Journal

Candidates must keep a reflective journal covering all of the taught sessions for first two thirds of a course only. They make an entry for every taught session, describing what they have learned during the session, what they think and feel about their learning and, if appropriate, how they envisage using it. There is a nominal word limit of 800 words per entry.

The journal must be handed in to the Tutor to be formally assessed and the results reported to AQA by a deadline supplied by AQA.

It is also expected that centres will assess candidates' journals formatively and monitor their progress during a course. Final assessment (after two thirds of a course) should be timed to allow candidates an opportunity to rework those journal entries where assessment criteria have not yet been achieved, and for the centre to re-assess them.

There will be no further opportunity for candidates' to rework journal entries after AQA's deadline. Late submissions are not acceptable unless exceptional personal circumstances have prevented a candidate from completing work. The centre may apply in writing to AQA for special consideration on behalf of a candidate before the due date.

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### 7.5 The Skills Role-Play Practical Assessment

Candidates' proficiency in the use of counselling skills is to be assessed by simulated role-play exercises. For this purpose candidates must work together in trios, taking turns to be Listener (Counsellor), Talker (Client) and Observer. Debriefing sessions must follow each interview. Evidence for assessment purposes may be found at any stage in this process.

Assessing tutors may wish to assess candidate skill acquisition formatively, over several formal sessions, spread throughout the course or summatively, towards the end of the course. In either case the final grade must be reported by the AQA deadline. AQA External Verifiers are available to advise centres if required.

# Subject Content

8

Mandatory Unit

## Unit 1

### *Skills Acquisition and Practice*

#### *(VC11)*

#### 8.1 Introduction

This unit introduces the candidate to counselling, its ethos and methodology, and it enables her/him to learn a number of fundamental counselling skills. Candidates will learn how to use the counselling skills within the boundaries of professional guidelines on ethics and practice in counselling. For this purpose the BACP's '*Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*' is the preferred model. Centres may prefer to work to an alternative code of ethics and practice; this is permitted, although AQA may require assurance from the centre that its standards are comparable with the BACP framework.

**Throughout the course of study for this unit, tutors are required to emphasise any specific or potential risks to the health and safety of counsellors and their clients, which may result from any aspect of the counselling process. Particular reference should be made to the dangers inherent in working with violent, aggressive or high-risk clients. The care and protection of and any legal obligations to, vulnerable people such as children, young people, people with learning disabilities, must also be addressed. Tutors must also stress the importance to the counselling process of maintaining appropriate moral, ethical, standards.**

The unit provides many opportunities for candidates to develop their spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural understanding.

The unit is divided into three elements or logical stages, to facilitate both the delivery and the learning processes. Candidates will be assessed by a combination of internal and external processes to ensure accurate and reliable results.

Candidates acquire through group tuition, small group work, individual practice, and the giving and receiving of non-judgemental feedback, a range of counselling skills.

The skills are grounded in the Egan (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) Three Stage or Phase Model but the structure is not rigidly adhered to. The **skills acquired** from this unit will be as follows:

Setting up an Interview

Skills of attention-giving;

Readiness of self ;

Setting and clarifying boundaries (e.g. of time and confidentiality).

Sharpening Observation

Being alert to non-verbal signals.

Listening

Taking in the whole message – content and effect;

Focusing on the person, not the problem;

Noting filters in self and other(s).

Responding skills

Paraphrase;

Reflection;

Focusing;

Appropriate use of questions;

Summarising;

Managing silence.

When candidates are sufficiently practised in these basic counselling skills, they will move forward to learn the **more complex** responding skills of:

- appropriate challenge;
- balancing support and challenge;
- sensitive use of self-disclosure;
- immediacy/using self and own feelings;
- sensing or having a hunch;
- helping insight into themes and patterns

Having developed proficiency in this deeper level of the counselling skills which enable greater insight, candidates move on to acquisition of skills associated with:

- assisting people to recognise their own resources;
- facilitating goal/target setting (if appropriate);
- making appropriate and ethical referrals;
- managing endings;
- understanding the difference between counselling and counselling skills;
- ethical concerns (related to, for example, confidentiality; referral);
- issues of equal opportunity;
- issues of cultural diversity;
- feedback as a counselling skill;
- the importance of process (especially in relation to power and control);

- self-awareness, self-care and the self-concept;
- the value of supervision;
- value and belief systems.

The Mandatory Unit is underpinned throughout the learning programme with input on and growing awareness of, **health and safety issues, spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural understanding**, and the way in which the **Core Qualities** inform all helping interactions and are demonstrated by way of the counselling skills.

8.2	Unit Specific Entry Requirements	None	
8.3	Aims	<b>On successful completion of Unit 1 the candidates will:</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand health and safety issues for both listener (counsellor) and talker (client);</li> <li>• be competent to use a defined range of counselling skills;</li> <li>• understand the importance of a Therapeutic Alliance;</li> <li>• understand the importance of using the counselling skills ethically and within BACP's <i>Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy</i> (or other appropriate code);</li> <li>• demonstrate self-awareness and reflection in the use of the counselling skills.</li> </ul>	
8.4	Scheme of Internal Assessment	Journal	Internally assessed
		Skills Role-play Practical Assessment	Internally assessed
8.5	Element 1	<b>Initiating a helping interaction</b>	
	Introduction	Element 1 focuses on the identification, practice and development of the basic counselling skills needed to set up a helping interaction. As the award structure is based on the Egan model, these are mainly skills of <b>Exploration</b> . Candidates are also introduced, at a first level of understanding, to some of the ethical concepts underlying an initial counselling relationship.	
	Learning Outcomes of Element 1	<b>On completion of Element 1, the candidates will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appreciate the meaning of the term Counselling Skills (as defined by the BACP);</li> <li>• know the place of skills on a helping continuum;</li> <li>• understand how counselling skills relate to helping as a process;</li> <li>• identify and demonstrate the Active Listening Skills required for establishing a helping relationship;</li> <li>• know actions necessary to safeguard self and talker (client) where potential risks to health and safety are high.</li> </ul>	

Subject Content



- Knowledge of the BACP *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*
- Health and safety risks and risk avoidance for listener (counsellor) and talker (client).
- Knowledge of the place of counselling skills on a helping continuum.
- The qualities of a skilled helper.
- Boundaries in the use of counselling skills.
- Individual, social and cultural pressures that affect helping relationships.
- Roles and responsibilities of users of counselling skills (e.g. supervision).

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8.6 Element 2

**Developing and maintaining the helping relationship.**

Introduction

Element 2 focuses on the second stage/phase skills needed to develop and sustain a helping relationship. Candidates are required to build on the skills acquired in Element 1 and to develop an increasing awareness of selecting skills appropriate to a situation. Candidates are also introduced, at a basic level of understanding, to some of the concepts inherent in the three main roots of counselling. Candidates

are not assessed on this aspect as theory, but the moral and ethical principles of the roots will inform and enhance the skills work.

Learning Outcomes of Element 2

**On completion of Element 2, candidates will:**

- Understand the continued need for health and safety precautions;
- Appreciate the need to move helping interviews forward;
- Understand, at a basic level, some concepts from the three main roots of counselling;
- Identify and practise the skills needed to develop and maintain the helping relationship.

## Subject Content



- Eliminating health and safety risks for listener (counsellor) and talker (client).
- The Johari window.
- Risks and benefits of self-disclosure.
- Challenging skills; balancing challenge and support.
- Using silence.
- Uses of immediacy; utilising the 'here-and-now'.
- Enabling new perspectives.
- Keeping focus.
- The impact of value systems.
- Advanced empathy.
- Where counselling is “coming from”
- Supervision and support.

## 8.7 Element 3

**Conclude a helping interaction using Counselling Skills.**

## Introduction

This element enables candidates to bring to a satisfactory and ethical close, both a single interview and a longer term helping relationship. It requires candidates to explore, at a basic level, some of the models that explain change, loss and separation. The importance of goal/target setting is worked on, with particular emphasis on power issues and their effect on goal setting, to ensure ethical practice. Skills appropriate to both loss/separation *and* to forward-looking are identified and practised. The responsibility for supervision/support is stressed.

## Learning Outcomes of Element 3

**On completion of Element 3, the candidates will:**

- Understand endings as an integral aspect of the helping process;
- Demonstrate how endings are an opportunity for growth, in relation to goal and target setting;
- Demonstrate the ability to conduct an empathic interview using appropriate skills to conclude a helping relationship.

Subject Content



- Health and safety for counsellor and client when concluding a helping interaction.
- Review of the BACP, *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*.
- Aspects of change and transition.
- Models of loss and change.
- Impact of loss on both parties of a relationship.
- Models for designing and implementing change.
- Referral and ethical issues relating to referral, e.g. - Skills for ending
  - Summary skills
  - Evaluating skills
  - Responsible referral
  - Fostering further development.

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8.8 Essential Information for Tutors

This award does not provide the candidate with a professional qualification to practise as a counsellor, and tutors must ensure that candidates are aware of this.

Tutors teaching AQA Counselling Awards are expected to work within the current BACP *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*, including the additional information for Trainers in Counselling Skills.

When delivering a course leading to the AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills, Tutors

- are required to give priority to the health and safety of their candidates and their clients. They must ensure that candidates are made aware of the hazards of using counselling skills and also know how to protect themselves and their clients;
- should take into account signposts to develop the candidates' spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural understanding when delivering the course material;
- must be aware that the course is **Skills based** and therefore the methods of teaching and learning adopted should focus on developing and practising counselling skills;
- are responsible for ensuring that their trainees consider the appropriateness of the setting in which they use their counselling skills and are aware of the consequences of inappropriate use;
- should ensure that their trainees are clear that using counselling skills may lead to conflicting responsibilities;

- should be aware that in delivering this course they must consistently link the underpinning knowledge with observable skills;
- allow candidates ample time for reflection and processing;
- should emphasise the difference between counselling and counselling skills.

## Depth and Level

For the purpose of both teaching and assessing it is important to establish the depth and coverage of topics. At Intermediate level, there is a danger of setting the levels too high or, in some cases, of setting them too low.

AQA Standardisation Training is designed to ensure that tutors recognise the level of performance a candidate must achieve to pass.

In essence, we are looking for candidates who are well grounded in the ethics and purpose of counselling, and these “safety issues” should carry more weight than the use and application of counselling skills.

By the end of the course, candidates will know and recognise the range of counselling skills included in the unit they are studying and will make a reasonable attempt to use them in simulated counselling role play. They must recognise that the use of counselling skills can endanger both the counsellor and the client, and that the skill of protection must take precedence. Candidates must always be mindful of the BACP’s *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy* (or other suitable Code of Conduct) and demonstrate this in their work on the course.

A candidate who is not quite competent to conduct a skilful counselling interview but who is conscious of her/his shortfall may still pass. But candidates who cannot accept, or do not abide by, ethical guidelines *must* be referred.

To help emphasise the difference between Counselling and using Counselling Skills, tutors should use the term **listener** or **helper**, not ‘Counsellor’ in skills practice work (reference to the BACP’s *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*).

Tutors should be aware that they are expected to assess their candidates both formatively and summatively.

## Formative Assessment

Tutors should record candidates’ progress and skills acquisition and proficiency through their performance in classroom exercises and role-play. Appropriate feedback from the tutor will assist candidates and let them know “how they are doing”.

## Summative Assessment

The official internal assessment processes are as follows and results must be recorded on AQA CAS forms.

## The Journal

Candidates must keep a reflective journal to record what they learned from each course session, what they feel about it and how they may apply the learning in practice. Journal entries are a very good indication of each candidate's progress and the tutor should use them informally for this purpose. The journal is also a formal assessment vehicle and must be assessed formally at the end of each assessed element using the AQA Candidate Assessment Sheet.

It is very important for the development of counselling skills for the tutor to monitor their candidates' performance and to give them constructive feedback on their progress throughout the course. The CAS should not be used for this purpose.

## Practical Skills Role-play Assessment

Tutors must be aware that they are responsible for formally assessing their candidates' ability to use the counselling skills learnt on the course. Therefore, the course should be structured to allow ample practice time.

Candidates are to be formally assessed on their performance in three roles:

- Listener or Helper (Counsellor);
- Observer;
- Talker (Client).

To achieve this, each candidate must attend three formal role-play exercises.

Trio working throughout the course will prepare the candidate for this method of assessment.

It is important that formal assessment dates are predetermined and made known to candidates to allow them time to prepare mentally and physically.

For assessment purposes, counselling skills may be achieved in any of the three roles – e.g. appropriate self-disclosure can be achieved in the client role; ability to give non-judgemental feedback can be achieved in the observer role.

## Grades

- Tutors grade candidates P (pass) where criteria have been achieved and R (refer) where they have not.
- All internal assessment is to be completed and centre grades reported to AQA by the deadlines published by AQA for each examination series.
- This unit is assessed internally through criteria referencing evidence presented by the candidates, and externally through their performance in the external test.

Assessment Processes not completed by the normal end date of the course

Tutors should ensure that all of the candidates are aware of the following, at the outset of their course.

*Candidates are expected to complete all assessed work and to submit it to the tutor for marking within the course boundaries. Tutors should allow time in their assessment plan to allow candidates one further opportunity to re-work referrals.*

Special consideration may be requested for candidates whose work has been affected by illness or other exceptional circumstances. Tutors should contact AQA for further information or help.

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## 8.9 External Assessment (test)

Centres are advised to refer to the specimen assessment materials available from AQA in preparing candidates for this unit. **The test will be of 60 minutes** in duration and will consist of a number of short answer questions.

Entry details and test dates are available from AQA offices.

Counselling examinations and tests must be conducted in accordance with the Awarding Bodies' common *Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations*, as current at the time of the examination.

Copies of AQA's *General Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations and Tests* are available through AQA offices.

## Unit 2

# Working with Loss and Grief (VC12)

### Option Unit

#### 9.1 About this Unit

This intermediate level option unit has been designed to provide opportunity for candidates to study and practise the application of counselling skills in a specialised context. The unit is available as the option component of the full Certificate in Counselling Skills award, or can be studied separately if preferred.

Loss and Grief (not necessarily only bereavement) are likely to be areas where counselling skills are particularly useful. Loss and its accompanying grief may be experienced in a very wide range of contexts, for example:

- Loss of job
- Break-up of relationship
- Loss of home
- Change of environment/school/home.

The skills acquired in the Mandatory Unit may be applied to great benefit in any or all of these. Understanding of health and safety issues relating to vulnerable clients is required. A full understanding of the theories of Loss and Grief is not required, nor is it seen as appropriate for this intermediate level. Some knowledge of the models of Loss and of the language of loss (for example “the grieving process”) is, however, useful. Candidates are made familiar with some of the main models of grief, so that skills may be practised with awareness. As with the Mandatory Unit, ethical use of the skills involves “intentionality” – in this case that the helper has evaluated a suitable model and has some awareness of how it informs their use of skills.

#### 9.2 Unit Specific Entry Requirements

Unit 1 or equivalent.

In addition:

*Centres should be particularly careful when selecting candidates, or recommending this unit to prospective candidates, to ensure that the candidate is not currently experiencing some form of loss or grief.*

#### 9.3 Scheme of Internal Assessment

Journal

Internally assessed

Skills Role-play Practical Assessment

Internally assessed

#### 9.4 Aims and Learning Outcomes

The unit aims to:

- protect the health and safety of both listener (counsellor) and talker (client);

- provide an insight into key issues affecting the use of counselling skills associated with loss and bereavement;
- promote ethical practice in the use of counselling skills;
- develop the candidates' ability to keep themselves safe and supported.

9.5 Objectives (Learning Outcomes)

On successful completion of this Unit, the candidate will be able to:

- protect the health and safety of Listener (counsellor) and Talker (client);
- Reflect on learning from the course;
- Conduct an empathetic and ethical interview using applied counselling skills;
- Understand the importance of forming and accessing a personal support system.

9.6 Subject Content



The following subjects are to be included and studied in sufficient depth and detail to inform and support the candidates' learning of counselling skills only. It is not necessary for candidates to study the theory of the underpinning knowledge for the award.

Models of grief and the reactions described in each

Kübler-Ross - *Stages of dying*  
 Murray-Parkes- *Stages of grief*  
 Worden- *Tasks of grief*  
 Stroebe- *Dual process model*.  
 The Eurocentric nature of the models

Reactions to loss

Emotional  
 Physical  
 Behavioural  
 Cognitive

Applications of Counselling Skills

9.7 What candidates will learn from this unit

Candidates will learn how to conduct an empathetic and ethical interview with a person suffering some kind of loss, using the following counselling skills:

- how to ensure the health and safety of both listener (counsellor) and talker (client);
- hearing talker's concerns accurately;
- empathetic listening;
- beginning to focus;
- ability to stay with talker's concerns;
- sustaining the empathetic relationship.

Candidates will learn how to use and recognise the appropriate counselling skills to apply in terms of:

- Health and Safety;
- Ethical, moral concerns;
- Equal opportunity issues;
- Cultural differences;
- Choice of skills;
- Consideration of the need for referral;
- Overall – meeting the talker’s needs.

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## 9.8 Essential Information for Tutors

*The health and safety of counsellor and client are paramount and Tutors should be particularly careful when selecting candidates, or recommending this unit to prospective candidates, to ensure that the candidate is not currently experiencing some form of loss or grief. The moral and ethical dimensions of counselling practice must be stressed throughout.*

This award does not provide the candidate with a professional qualification to practise as a Counsellor, and tutors must ensure that candidates are aware of this.

Tutors teaching AQA Counselling Awards are expected to work within the current BACP *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*, including the additional information for Trainers in Counselling Skills.

When delivering a course leading to the AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills, Tutors

- are required to give priority to the health and safety of their candidates and their clients. They must ensure that candidates are made aware of the hazards of using counselling skills and also that they know how to protect themselves and their clients;
- should take account of signposts to develop the candidates’ spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural understanding when delivering the course material;
- must be aware that it is **Skills based** and therefore the methods of teaching and learning adopted should focus on developing and practising counselling skills;
- should restrict the knowledge and theoretical input on the course to that needed to inform skills’ usage, and should develop and maintain the interest of their candidates;
- are responsible for ensuring that their trainees consider the appropriateness of the setting in which they use their counselling skills and are aware of the consequences of inappropriate use;
- should ensure that their trainees are clear that the use of counselling skills may lead to conflicting responsibilities;

- should be aware that in delivering this course they must consistently link the underpinning knowledge with observable skills;
- allow candidates ample time for reflection and processing.

If the candidates are studying for this unit only, they must read and show understanding of the current BACP *Statement of Fundamental Ethics for Counselling and Psychotherapy*.

Candidates should be given ample opportunity to practise their counselling skills throughout the unit through structured counselling practice, discussion and exercises. It is important that candidates have regular feedback on “how they are doing” and be given early warning of any shortcomings. This can be achieved in a number of ways but preferably through group discussion and individual tutorial processes.

Candidates may need extra support early in the course to ensure that they are able to make meaningful journal entries.

This unit is entirely internally assessed and externally moderated. Tutors are required to attend AQA standardisation training prior to assessing candidates formally.

Tutors should be aware that they are expected to assess candidates both formatively and summatively.

#### Formative Assessment

Defined Counselling Skills are to be recorded, as they are acquired, and appropriate feedback given to the candidate.

Tutors should record candidates’ skills acquisition and proficiency by way of their performance in classroom exercises and role-play.

#### The Journal

The reflective journal is designed to allow the candidate to reflect on the course content and the learning, as it takes place. It will show the candidate’s understanding of course material. Candidates should maintain the journal for the first two thirds of the course only. This will allow time for them to focus on the Skills Role-play Practical Assessment during the last third.

Tutors are required formally to assess the candidate’s journal when it is completed and record the candidate’s grade for each criterion on the official Candidate Assessment sheet and final result list supplied by AQA.

#### Practical skills assessment

Tutors are reminded that candidates are to be assessed in three roles:

1. Listener (Counsellor);
2. Observer;
3. Talker (Client).

Whatever role the candidate is in – e.g. appropriate self-disclosure can be observed when a candidate is in a “talker” role; or the ability to give non-judgemental feedback can be evidenced in the observer role.

Trio Work	Wherever possible, candidates should work in threes, so that in practical role-play, one of them can be 'The Client', one can be 'The Listener', and the third can be an 'Observer'.
Grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tutors grade candidates P (pass) where criteria have been achieved and R (refer) where they have not.</li><li>• All internal assessment is to be completed and centre grades reported to AQA by the deadlines published by AQA for each examination series.</li><li>• The tutor assesses this unit internally through criteria referencing evidence presented by the candidates.</li></ul>
Depth and Level	<p>For the purpose of both teaching and assessing, it is important to establish the depth and coverage of topics. At Intermediate level, there is a danger of setting the levels too high or in some cases, of setting them too low.</p> <p>AQA Standardisation Training is designed to ensure that tutors recognise the level of performance a candidate must achieve to pass.</p> <p>In essence, we are looking for candidates who are well grounded in the ethics and purpose of counselling, and these safety 'issues' should carry more weight than the use and application of counselling skills.</p> <p>By the end of the course, candidates will know and recognise the range of counselling skills included in the unit they are studying and will make a reasonable attempt to use them in simulated counselling role-play. They must recognise that the use of counselling skills can endanger both the counsellor and the client and the skill of 'protection' must take precedence. Candidates must always be mindful of BACP's <i>Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy</i> (or other suitable Code of Conduct) and demonstrate this in their work on the course.</p> <p>A candidate who is not quite competent to conduct a skilful counselling interview but who is conscious of her/his shortfall, may still pass. But candidates who cannot accept, or do not abide by, ethical guidelines <b>must</b> be referred.</p>
Assessment not completed by the normal end date of the course	Candidates are expected to complete all of the assessed work and to submit it to the Tutor for marking within the course boundaries. Tutors should make this requirement clear to their candidates at the outset and also allow time in their assessment plan for candidates to re-work referrals.

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## Unit 3

# Working with Life Threatening Illness (VC13)

### Option Unit

#### 10.1 About this Unit

This intermediate level option unit has been designed to provide opportunity for candidates to study and practise the application of counselling skills in a specialised context. The unit is available as an option component of the full Certificate in Counselling Skills award, or can be studied separately if preferred.

The growth of the Hospice movement and an increasing concern with dying with dignity mean that counselling skills are becoming essential for professionals, volunteers and other informal carers working in this field. This unit is intended for those workers, and it provides valuable qualification and progression opportunities in employment or to a higher qualification.

Candidates will learn to apply counselling skills to the practice of working with Life-limited people.

#### 10.2 Unit Specific Entry Requirements

Unit 1 or equivalent.

In addition:

*Centres should be particularly careful when selecting candidates, or recommending this unit to prospective candidates, to ensure that the candidate is not suffering from a life threatening illness.*

#### 10.3 Scheme of Internal Assessment

Journal

Internally assessed

Skills Role-play Practical Assessment

Internally assessed

#### 10.4 Aims and Learning Outcomes

The unit aims to:

- provide an insight into key issues affecting the use of counselling skills associated with care of life-limited people;
- promote ethical practice in the use of counselling skills;
- develop candidates' ability to keep themselves and their clients safe and supported.

#### 10.5 Learning Outcomes (Objectives)

On successful completion of this unit, the candidate will be able to:

- protect the health and safety of listener (counsellor) and talker (client);
- reflect on learning from the course;
- conduct an empathetic and ethical interview using applied counselling skills;
- understand the importance of forming and accessing a personal support system.

## 10.6 Subject Content



The following subjects are to be included and studied in sufficient depth and detail to inform and support the candidates' learning of counselling skills only. It is not necessary for candidates to study the theory of the underpinning knowledge for the award.

- Health and safety issues for both listener (counsellor) and talker (client);
- Principles and Practice of Palliative Care;
- Models of Dying – Kübler-Ross;
- Weisman;
- Cultural issues;
- The Spiritual Dimension;
- Living Wills/“A Good Death”;
- Support and Self-care (Distancing/Burn Out);
- Application of Counselling Skills.

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## 10.7 What candidates will learn from this unit

The candidate will learn how to conduct a safe, empathetic and ethical simulated interview with a person with life-limited concerns, using the following skills:

- hearing talker's concerns accurately;
- empathic listening;
- beginning to focus;
- ability to stay with talker's concerns;
- sustaining the empathetic relationship.
- Overall – meeting the talker's need;
- Overall – meeting the helper's needs.

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## 10.8 Essential Information for Tutors

*The health and safety of counsellor and client are paramount and Tutors should be particularly careful when selecting candidates, or recommending this unit to prospective candidates, to ensure that the candidate is not currently experiencing some form of life threatening illness. The moral and ethical dimensions of counselling practice must be stressed throughout.*

This award does not provide the candidate with a professional qualification to practise as a Counsellor, and tutors must ensure that candidates are aware of this.

Tutors teaching AQA Counselling Awards are expected to work within the current BACP *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*, including the additional information for Trainers in Counselling Skills.

When delivering a course leading to the AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills, Tutors:

- *are required to give priority to the health and safety of their candidates and their clients. They must ensure that candidates are made aware of the hazards of using counselling skills and also that they know how to protect themselves and their clients;*
- *should take into account signposts to develop the candidates' spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural understanding when delivering the course material;*
- must be aware that it is **Skills based** and therefore the methods of teaching and learning adopted should focus on developing and practising counselling skills;
- should restrict the knowledge and theoretical input on the course to that needed to inform skills' usage, and should develop and maintain the interest of their candidates;
- are responsible for ensuring that their trainees consider the appropriateness of the setting in which they use their counselling skills and are aware of the consequences of inappropriate use;
- should ensure that their trainees are clear that the use of counselling skills may lead to conflicting responsibilities;
- should be aware that in delivering this course they must consistently link the underpinning knowledge with observable skills;
- should allow candidates ample time for reflection and processing.

#### Formative Assessment

Defined Counselling Skills can be recorded, as they are acquired, and appropriate feedback given to the candidate.

Tutors should record candidates' skills acquisition and proficiency by way of their performance in classroom exercises and role-play.

#### The Journal

The reflective journal is designed to allow the candidate to reflect on the course content and the learning, as it takes place. The candidate is required to make an entry for every taught session of this unit. In the event that a candidate misses a session, he/she must make an entry to show that an attempt has been made to make up the missing subject matter. The journal will show the candidate's understanding of the subject content and progress towards the learning outcomes. Tutors are expected to monitor entries during the course and to provide the candidates with feedback.

Journals are to be formally assessed by the tutor. An official AQA assessment procedure and Candidate Assessment Sheet are available from AQA offices for this purpose.

#### Trio Work

Wherever possible, candidates should work in threes, so that in practical role-play, one of them can be 'The Client', one can be 'The Listener', and the third can be an 'Observer'.

Grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tutors grade candidates P (pass) where criteria have been achieved and R (refer) where they have not.</li><li>• All internal assessment is to be completed and centre grades reported to AQA by the deadlines published by AQA for each examination series.</li></ul>
Depth and Level	<p>For the purpose of both teaching and assessing, it is important to establish the depth and coverage of topics. At Intermediate level, there is a danger of setting the levels too high or in some cases, of setting them too low.</p> <p>AQA Standardisation Training is designed to ensure that tutors recognise the level of performance a candidate must achieve to pass.</p> <p>In essence, we are looking for candidates who are well grounded in the ethics and purpose of counselling, and these ‘safety issues’ should carry more weight than the use and application of counselling skills.</p> <p>By the end of the course, candidates will know and recognise the range of counselling skills included in the unit they are studying and will make a reasonable attempt to use them in simulated counselling role-play. They must recognise that the use of counselling skills can endanger both the counsellor and the client and the skill of ‘protection’ must take precedence. Candidates must always be mindful of BACP’s <i>Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy</i> (or other suitable Code of Conduct) and demonstrate this in their work on the course.</p> <p>A candidate who is not quite competent to conduct a skilful counselling interview but who is conscious of her/his shortfall, may still pass. But candidates who cannot accept, or do not abide by, ethical guidelines <b>must</b> be referred.</p>
Assessment not completed by the normal end date of the course	<p>Candidates are expected to complete all of the assessed work and to submit it to the tutor for marking within the designated course boundaries. Tutors should allow time in their assessment plan for candidates to re-work referrals.</p>

## Unit 4

# Working with Children and Young People (VC14)

### Option Unit

#### 11.1 About this Unit

This intermediate level option unit has been designed to provide opportunity for candidates to study and practise the application of counselling skills in a specialised context. The unit is available as an option component of the full Certificate in Counselling Skills award, or may be studied separately if preferred.

Working with Children and Young People requires special application of the basic Counselling Skills in terms of communication. This unit enables candidates to practise the counselling skills at a communication level appropriate for a child or young person, but without being patronising or “talking down”.

Some insight into the requirements of the Children Act is given to ensure that candidates are aware of boundary limitations when offering counselling skills in this area.

Candidates for this unit must comply with statutory requirements for police clearance as detailed in the Home Office Circular 47/1993 (*Protection of Children: Disclosure of Criminal Background of Those with Access to Children*)

#### 11.2 Unit Specific Entry Requirements

Unit 1, Candidates currently working with children must have police clearance.

#### 11.3 Scheme of Internal Assessment

Journal	Internally assessed
Skills Role-play Practical Assessment	Internally assessed

#### 11.4 Aims and Learning Outcomes

The unit aims to:

- protect the health and safety of Listener (counsellor) and Talker (client);
- provide the candidate with an insight into some of the issues associated with using counselling skills when working with Children and Young People;
- promote safe, ethical practice in the use of counselling skills with Children and Young People.

#### 11.5 Learning Outcomes (objectives)

On successful completion of this unit, the candidate will be able to:

1. reflect on learning from the course;
2. conduct an empathetic, **safe and ethical** interview using applied counselling skills.

## 11.6 Subject Content



The following subjects are to be included and studied in sufficient depth and detail to inform and support the candidates' learning of counselling skills only. It is not necessary for candidates to study the theory of the underpinning knowledge for the award.

- Health and safety issues for Listener (counsellor and Talker (client));
- Support and supervision;
- Importance of setting(s);
- Relevant sections of the Children Act;
- Communication barriers;
- Existential issues of concern to young people;
- Referral;
- Application of Counselling Skills.

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## 11.7 What candidates will learn from this unit

Candidates will learn how to conduct an empathetic, safe and ethical simulated interview, with a young person using the following skills:

- hearing talker's concerns accurately;
- empathetic listening;
- beginning to focus;
- ability to stay with talker's concerns;
- sustaining the empathetic relationship.

Candidates will learn how to evaluate the cultural and boundary issues involved in this area, and recognise the counselling skills to use in each situation in terms of:

- health and safety;
- ethical, moral concerns;
- equal opportunity issues;
- cultural difference;
- choice of skills;
- consideration of the need for referral;
- overall – meeting the talker's need.

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## 11.8 Essential Information for Tutors

*The health and safety of counsellor and client are paramount and tutors should be particularly careful when selecting candidates, or recommending this unit to prospective candidates. They must be made aware of their statutory duty with regard to police clearance. The moral and ethical dimensions of counselling practice must be stressed throughout.*

This award does not provide the candidate with a professional qualification to practise as a Counsellor, and tutors must ensure that candidates are aware of this.

Tutors teaching AQA Counselling Awards are expected to work within the current BACP *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*, including the additional information for Trainers in Counselling Skills.

When delivering a course leading to the AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills, Tutors:

- are required to give priority to the health and safety of their candidates and their clients. They must ensure that candidates are made aware of the hazards of using counselling skills and also that they know how to protect themselves and their clients;
- should take account of signposts to develop the candidates' spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural understanding when delivering the course material;
- must be aware that it is **Skills based** and therefore the methods of teaching and learning adopted should focus on developing and practising counselling skills;
- should restrict the knowledge and theoretical input on the course to that needed to inform skills' usage, and should develop and maintain the interest of their candidates;
- are responsible for ensuring that their trainees consider the appropriateness of the setting in which they use their counselling skills and are aware of the consequences of inappropriate use;
- should ensure that their trainees are clear that the use of counselling skills may lead to conflicting responsibilities;
- should be aware that in delivering this course they must consistently link the underpinning knowledge with observable skills;
- should allow candidates ample time for reflection and processing.

#### Formative Assessment

Defined Counselling Skills are to be recorded, as they are acquired, and appropriate feedback given to the candidate.

Tutors should record candidates' skills acquisition and proficiency by way of their performance in classroom exercises and role-play.

#### Trio Work

Wherever possible, candidates should work in threes so that in practical role-play, one of them can be 'The Client', one can be 'The Listener', and the third can be an 'Observer'.

#### Grades

- Tutors grade candidates P (pass) where criteria have been achieved and R (refer) where they have not.
- All internal assessment is to be completed and centre grades reported to AQA by the deadlines published by AQA for each examination series.

The tutor assesses this unit internally through criteria referencing evidence presented by the candidate.

## The Journal

The reflective journal is designed to allow the candidate to reflect on the course content and the learning, as it takes place. The candidate is required to make an entry for every taught session of this unit. In the event that a candidate misses a session, he/she must make an entry to show that an attempt has been made to make up the missing subject matter. The journal will show the candidate's understanding of the subject content and progress towards the learning outcomes. Tutors are expected to monitor entries during the course and to provide the candidates with feedback.

Journals are to be formally assessed by the tutor. An official AQA assessment procedure and Candidate Assessment Sheet are available from AQA offices for this purpose.

## Depth and Level

For the purpose of both teaching and assessing, it is important to establish the depth and coverage of topics. At Intermediate level, there is a danger of setting the levels too high or in some cases, of setting them too low.

AQA Standardisation Training is designed to ensure that tutors recognise the level of performance a candidate must achieve to pass.

In essence, we are looking for candidates who are well grounded in the ethics and purpose of counselling, and these 'safety issues' should carry more weight than the use and application of counselling skills.

By the end of the course, candidates will know and recognise the range of counselling skills included in the unit they are studying and will make a reasonable attempt to use them in simulated counselling role play. They must recognise that the use of counselling skills can endanger both the counsellor and the client and the skill of 'protection' must take precedence. Candidates must always be mindful of BACP's *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy* (or other suitable Code of Conduct) and demonstrate this in their work on the course.

A candidate who is not quite competent to conduct a skilful counselling interview but who is conscious of their shortfall may still pass. But candidates who cannot accept, or do not abide by, ethical guidelines **must** be referred.

## Assessment not completed by the normal end date of the course

Candidates are expected to complete all of the assessed work and to submit it to the tutor for marking within the designated course boundaries. Tutors should allow time in their assessment plan for candidates to re-work referrals.

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## Unit 5

# *Counselling Skills for Debriefing (VC15)*

### Option Unit

12.1	About this Unit	<p>This intermediate level option unit has been designed to provide opportunity for candidates to study and practise the application of counselling skills in a specialised context. The unit is available as an option component of the full Certificate in Counselling Skills award, or can be studied separately if preferred.</p> <p>Structured debriefing is becoming a very important stress-reducing strategy in many professions. The unit gives candidates an insight into how structure can, in itself, be therapeutic. Candidates work with the seven-step structure of a debrief and practise the skills appropriate to this context.</p> <p>The health and safety of both counsellor and client is to be stressed throughout this unit.</p>	
12.2	Unit Specific Entry Requirements	Unit 1 or equivalent.	
12.3	Scheme of Internal Assessment	Journal	Internally assessed
		Skills Role-play Practical Assessment	Internally assessed
12.4	Aims and Learning Outcomes	<p>The unit aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the health and safety of both listener (counsellor) and talker (client);</li> <li>• provide an insight into how debriefing reduces stress;</li> <li>• facilitate the link between debriefing and counselling skills;</li> <li>• promote ethical practice.</li> </ul>	
12.5	Learning Outcomes (objectives)	<p>On successful completion of this unit, the candidate will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflect on the value of debriefing;</li> <li>• conduct an ethical, safe structured debriefing interview using Counselling Skills.</li> </ul>	

## 12.6 Subject Content



The following subjects are to be included and studied in sufficient depth and detail to inform and support the candidates' learning of counselling skills only. It is not necessary for candidates to study the theory of the underpinning knowledge for the award.

- Health and safety issues for listener (counsellor) and talker (client);
- Definition of Debriefing;
- Stresses/Critical Incidents where debriefing is helpful;
- The importance of structure;
- The seven steps of a debrief;
- Supervision and support;
- Application of Counselling Skills.

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## 12.7 What candidates will learn from this unit

Candidates will learn how to conduct an empathic and ethical debrief using the seven-step structure

Candidates will learn how to evaluate debriefing in terms of:

- health and safety;
- ethical, moral concerns;
- equal opportunity issues;
- cultural difference;
- choice of skills;
- consideration of the need for referral;
- overall – meeting the talker's need.

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## 12.8 Essential Information for Tutors

*The health and safety of counsellor and client are paramount and tutors should be particularly careful when selecting candidates, or recommending this unit to prospective candidates. The moral and ethical dimensions of counselling practice must be stressed throughout.*

This award does not provide the candidate with a professional qualification to practice as a Counsellor, and tutors must ensure that candidates are aware of this.

Tutors teaching AQA Counselling Awards are expected to work within the current BACP *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*, including the additional information for Trainers in Counselling Skills.

When delivering a course leading to the AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills, Tutors:

- are required to give priority to health and safety of their candidates and their clients. They must ensure that candidates are made aware of the hazards of using counselling skills and also that they know how to protect themselves and their clients;
- should take account of signposts to develop the candidates spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural understanding when delivering the course material;
- must be aware that it is **Skills based** and therefore the methods of teaching and learning adopted should focus on developing and practising counselling skills;
- should restrict the knowledge and theoretical input on the course to that needed to inform skills' usage, and should develop and maintain the interest of their candidates;
- are responsible for ensuring that their trainees consider the appropriateness of the setting in which they use their counselling skills and are aware of the consequences of inappropriate use.;
- should ensure that their trainees are clear that the use of counselling skills may lead to conflicting responsibilities;
- should be aware that in delivering this course they must consistently link the underpinning knowledge with observable skills;
- should allow candidates ample time for reflection and processing.

#### Formative Assessment

Defined Counselling Skills are to be recorded, as they are acquired, and appropriate feedback given to the candidate.

Tutors should record candidates' skills acquisition and proficiency by way of their performance in classroom exercises and role-play.

#### The Journal

The reflective journal is designed to allow the candidate to reflect on the course content and the learning as it takes place. The candidate is required to make an entry for every taught session of this unit. In the event that a candidate misses a session, he/she must make an entry to show that an attempt has been made to make up the missing subject matter. The journal will show the candidate's understanding of the subject content and progress towards the learning outcomes. Tutors are expected to monitor entries during the course and to provide candidates with feedback.

Journals are to be formally assessed by the tutor. An official AQA assessment procedure and Candidate Assessment Sheet are available from AQA offices for this purpose.

Trio Work	Whenever possible, candidates should work in threes so that in practical role-play, one of them can be ‘The Client’, one can be ‘The Listener’ and the third can be an ‘Observer’.
Grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tutors grade candidates P (pass) where criteria have been achieved and R (refer) where they have not.</li><li>• All internal assessment is to be completed and centre grades reported to AQA by the deadlines published by AQA for each examination series.</li></ul> <p>The tutor assesses this unit internally through criteria referencing evidence presented by the candidate.</p>
Depth and Level	<p>For the purpose of both teaching and assessing, it is important to establish the depth and coverage of topics. At Intermediate level, there is a danger of setting the levels too high or in some cases, of setting them too low.</p> <p>AQA Standardisation Training is designed to ensure that tutors recognise the level of performance a candidate must achieve to pass.</p> <p>In essence, we are looking for candidates who are well grounded in the ethics and purpose of counselling, and these “safety issues” should carry more weight than the use and application of counselling skills.</p> <p>By the end of the course, candidates will know and recognise the range of counselling skills included in the unit they are studying and will make a reasonable attempt to use them in simulated counselling role play. They must recognise that the use of counselling skills can endanger both the counsellor and the client and the skill of ‘protection’ must take precedence. Candidates must always be mindful of BACP’s <i>Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy</i> (or other suitable Code of Conduct) and demonstrate this in their work on the course.</p>
Assessment not completed by the normal end date of the course	<p>A candidate who is not quite competent to conduct a skilful counselling interview but who is conscious of her/his shortfall, may still pass. But candidates who cannot accept, or do not abide by, ethical guidelines <b>must</b> be referred.</p> <p>Candidates are expected to complete all of the assessed work and to submit it to the tutor for marking within the designated course boundaries. Tutors should allow time in their assessment plan for candidates to re-work referrals.</p>

13

## Unit 6

# *Counselling Skills in Schools*

### *(VC16)*

#### Option Unit

#### 13.1 About this Unit

This intermediate level option unit has been designed to provide opportunity for candidates to study and practise the application of counselling skills in a specialised context. The unit is available as an option component of the full Certificate in Counselling Skills award, or can be studied separately if preferred.

Tutors are now required to be expert in much more than their subject area. The pastoral function of tutors, as emphasised in OFSTED and HMI reports, is increasingly important. This unit offers tutors the insights needed to assist pupils and an opportunity to practise appropriate counselling skills. The importance of reversing the "I talk; you listen" role of the subject tutor to the "You talk; I listen," role of pastoral helper is stressed.

Candidates for this unit must comply with statutory requirements for police clearance as detailed in the Home Office Circular 47/1993 (*Protection of Children: Disclosure of Criminal Background of Those with Access to Children*)

#### 13.2 Unit Specific Entry Requirements

Unit 1 or equivalent.

Candidates for this unit must comply with statutory requirements for police clearance when working with children.

#### 13.3 Scheme of Internal Assessment

Journal

Internally assessed

Skills Role-play Practical Assessment

Internally assessed

#### 13.4 Aims and Learning Outcomes

The unit aims to:

- protect the health and safety of listener (counsellor) and talker (client);
- help define the pastoral role of Tutors/Assessors;
- explore the use of counselling skills in pastoral work;
- promote ethical use of counselling skills in schools.

**13.5 Learning Outcomes (objectives)**

On successful completion of this Unit, the candidate will be able to:

- work safely and ethically;
  - reflect on the pastoral role of teachers;
  - understand boundary issues of discipline;
  - understand boundary issues relating to the law and teaching;
  - understand setting;
  - understand appropriate referral;
  - understand particular issues of confidentiality;
  - access support network(s);
  - apply counselling skills to school work;
  - understand application of counselling skills.
- 

**13.6 Subject Content**



The following subjects are to be included and studied in sufficient depth and detail to inform and support the candidate's learning of counselling skills only. It is not necessary for candidates to study the theory of the underpinning knowledge for the award.

Candidates will learn how to conduct an empathetic, safe and ethical simulated interview, with a pupil presenting a school-related issue:

- Health and safety;
  - Hears talker's concerns accurately;
  - Demonstrates empathic listening;
  - Beginning to focus;
  - Is able to stay with talker's concerns;
  - Sustains the empathetic relationship.
- 

**13.7 What candidates will learn from this unit**

Candidates will learn how to apply counselling skills within the boundaries of a pastoral role, talking the following into consideration.

- health and safety issues for both listener (counsellor) and talker (client);
- ethical, moral concerns;
- equal opportunity issues;
- cultural difference;
- choice of skills;
- consideration of the need for referral;
- overall – meeting the talker's need.

### 13.8 Essential Information for Tutors

*The health and safety of counsellor and client are paramount and tutors should be particularly careful when selecting candidates, or recommending this unit to prospective candidates. They must be made aware of their statutory duty with regard to police clearance. The moral and ethical dimensions of counselling practice must be stressed throughout.*

This award does not provide the candidate with a professional qualification to practise as a Counsellor and tutors must ensure that candidates are aware of this.

Tutors teaching AQA Counselling Awards are expected to work within the current BACP *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*, including the additional information for Trainers in Counselling Skills.

When delivering a course leading to the AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills, Tutors:

- are required to give priority to the health and safety of their candidates and their clients. They must ensure that candidates are made aware of the hazards of using counselling skills and also that they know how to protect themselves and their clients;
- should take account of signposts to develop the candidates spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural understanding when delivering the course material;
- must be aware that it is **Skills based** and therefore the methods of teaching and learning adopted should focus on developing and practising counselling skills;
- should restrict the knowledge and theoretical input on the course to that needed to inform skills' usage, and should develop and maintain the interest of their candidates;
- are responsible for ensuring that their trainees consider the appropriateness of the setting in which they use their counselling skills and are aware of the consequences of inappropriate use;
- should ensure that their trainees are clear that the use of counselling skills may lead to conflicting responsibilities;
- should be aware that in delivering this course they must consistently link the underpinning knowledge with observable skills;
- should allow candidates ample time for reflection and processing.

#### Formative Assessment

Defined Counselling Skills are to be recorded, as they are acquired, and appropriate feedback given to the candidate.

Tutors should record candidates' skills' acquisition and proficiency by way of their performance in classroom exercises and role-play. *(An example of a suitable skill acquisition form is appended to this document.)*

## The Journal

The reflective journal is designed to allow the candidate to reflect on the course content and the learning as it takes place. The candidate is required to make an entry for every taught session of this unit. In the event that a candidate misses a session, he/she must make an entry to show that an attempt has been made to make up the missing subject matter. The journal will show the candidate's understanding of the subject content and progress towards the learning outcomes. Tutors are expected to monitor entries during the course and to provide candidates with feedback.

Journals are to be formally assessed by the tutor. An official AQA assessment procedure and Candidate Assessment Sheet are available from AQA offices for this purpose.

## Trio Work

Wherever possible, candidates should work in threes so that in practical role-play, one of them can be 'The Client', one can be 'The Listener', and the third can be an 'Observer'.

## Grades

- Tutors grade candidates P (pass) where criteria have been achieved and R (refer) where they have not.
- All internal assessment is to be completed and centre grades reported to AQA by the deadlines published by AQA for each examination series.

The tutor assesses this unit internally through criteria referencing evidence presented by the candidate.

## Depth and Level

For the purpose of both teaching and assessing, it is important to establish the depth and coverage of topics. At Intermediate level, there is a danger of setting the levels too high or, in some cases, of setting them too low.

AQA Standardisation Training is designed to ensure that tutors recognise the level of performance a candidate must achieve to pass.

In essence, we are looking for candidates who are well grounded in the ethics and purpose of counselling, and these 'safety issues' should carry more weight than the use and application of counselling skills.

By the end of the course, candidates will know and recognise the range of counselling skills included in the unit they are studying and will make a reasonable attempt to use them in simulated counselling role play. They must recognise that the use of counselling skills can endanger both the counsellor and the client and the skill of 'protection' must take precedence. Candidates must always be mindful of BACP's *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy* (or other suitable Code of Conduct) and demonstrate this in their work on the course.

A candidate who is not quite competent to conduct a skilful counselling interview but who is conscious of her/his shortfall, may still pass. But candidates who cannot accept, or do not abide by, ethical guidelines **must** be referred.

Assessment not completed by the normal end date of the course

Candidates are expected to complete all of the assessed work and to submit it to the tutor for marking within the designated course boundaries. Tutors should allow time in their assessment plan for candidates to re-work referrals.

## Unit 7

### Counselling Skills at Work (VC17)

#### Option Unit

#### 14.1 About this Unit

This intermediate level option unit has been designed to provide opportunity for candidates to study and practise the application of counselling skills in a specialised context. The unit is available as an option component of the full Certificate in Counselling Skills award, or can be studied separately if preferred.

Recently the original Lead Body for Counselling (CAMPAG) merged with ENTO – the Employment Training Organisation – indicating how counselling skills, and the values which underpin them, are relevant across all sectors of employment. This unit offers candidates the opportunity to practise the counselling skills acquired in the Mandatory unit across a wide range of work situations.

#### 14.2 Unit Specific Entry Requirements

Unit 1 or equivalent.

#### 14.3 Scheme of Internal Assessment

Journal

Internally assessed

Skills Role-play Practical Assessment

Internally assessed

#### 14.4 Aims and Learning Outcomes

The unit aims to:

- protect the health and safety of both listener (counsellor) and talker (client);
- explore areas of the working environment which would be enhanced by using counselling skills;
- raise awareness of boundary issues;
- promote ethical practice.

#### 14.5 Learning Outcomes (objectives)

The unit aims to:

- reflect on learning gained from the course;
- conduct an empathic, safe and ethical simulated interview using counselling skills applied to a work setting.

**14.6 Subject Content**

The following subjects are to be included and studied in sufficient depth and detail to inform and support the candidate's learning of counselling skills only. It is not necessary for candidates to study the theory of the underpinning knowledge for the award:

- Health and safety issues for counsellors and clients;
- Work based stressors;
- Benefits of stress reduction;
- Symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression;
- Bullying and harassment issues;
- Management of own role and self-care;
- Referral and own proficiency;
- Boundary issues;
- Application of counselling skills.

**14.7 What candidates will learn from this unit**

Candidates will learn how to conduct an empathetic and ethical interview, with a person suffering some kind of work-based stress using the following skills:

- hearing talker's concerns accurately
- empathetic listening;
- beginning to focus;
- ability to stay with talker's concerns;
- sustaining the empathetic relationship.

Candidates will learn the importance of enabling colleagues to manage stressful work situations, while maintaining own role. They will recognise:

- health and safety issues;
- ethical, moral concerns;
- equal opportunity issues;
- cultural difference;
- choice of skills;
- consideration of the need for referral;
- overall – meeting the talker's need.

**14.8 Essential Information for Tutors**

*The health and safety of counsellor and client are paramount and tutors should be particularly careful when selecting candidates, or recommending this unit to prospective candidates. The moral and ethical dimensions of counselling practice must be stressed throughout.*

Tutors teaching AQA Counselling Awards are expected to work within the current BACP *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*, including the additional information for Trainers in Counselling Skills.

When delivering a course leading to the AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills, Tutors:

- are required to give priority to the health and safety of their candidates and their clients. They must ensure that candidates are made aware of the hazards of using counselling skills and also that they know how to protect themselves and their clients;
- should take account of signposts to develop the candidates spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural understanding when delivering the course material;
- must be aware that it is **Skills based** and therefore the methods of teaching and learning adopted should focus on developing and practising counselling skills;
- should restrict the knowledge and theoretical input on the course to that needed to inform skills' usage, and should develop and maintain the interest of their candidates;
- are responsible for ensuring that their trainees consider the appropriateness of the setting in which they use their counselling skills and are aware of the consequences of inappropriate use;
- should ensure that their trainees are clear that the use of counselling skills may lead to conflicting responsibilities;
- should be aware that in delivering this course they must consistently link the underpinning knowledge with observable skills;
- should allow candidates ample time for reflection and processing.

#### Formative Assessment

Defined Counselling Skills are to be recorded, as they are acquired, and appropriate feedback given to the candidate.

Tutors should record candidates' skills acquisition and proficiency by way of their performance in classroom exercises and role-play.

#### The Journal

The reflective journal is designed to allow the candidate to reflect on the course content and the learning as it takes place. The candidate is required to make an entry for every taught session of this unit. In the event that a candidate misses a session, he/she must make an entry to show that an attempt has been made to make up the missing subject matter. The journal will show the candidate's understanding of the subject content and progress towards the learning outcomes. Tutors are expected to monitor entries during the course and provide the candidates with feedback.

Journals are to be formally assessed by the Tutor. An official AQA assessment procedure and Candidate Assessment Sheet are available from AQA offices for this purpose.

Trio Work	<p>Wherever possible, candidates should work in threes so that in practical role-play, one of them can be ‘The Client’, one can be ‘The Listener’, and the third can be an ‘Observer’.</p>
Grades	<p>Tutors grade candidates P (pass) where criteria have been achieved and R (refer) where they have not.</p> <p>All internal assessment is to be completed and centre grades reported to AQA by the deadlines published by AQA for each examination series.</p> <p>The tutor assesses this unit internally through criteria referencing evidence presented by the candidate.</p>
Depth and Level	<p>For the purpose of both teaching and assessing, it is important to establish the depth and coverage of topics. At Intermediate level, there is a danger of setting the levels too high or, in some cases, of setting them too low.</p> <p>AQA Standardisation Training is designed to ensure that tutors recognise the level of performance a candidate must achieve to pass.</p> <p>In essence, we are looking for candidates who are well grounded in the ethics and purpose of counselling, and these ‘safety issues’ should carry more weight than the use and application of counselling skills.</p> <p>By the end of the course, candidates will know and recognise the range of counselling skills included in the unit they are studying and will make a reasonable attempt to use them in simulated counselling role play. They must recognise that the use of counselling skills can endanger both the counsellor and the client and the skill of ‘protection’ must take precedence. Candidates must always be mindful of BACP’s <i>Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy</i> (or other suitable Code of Conduct) and demonstrate this in their work on the course.</p> <p>A candidate who is not quite competent to conduct a skilful counselling interview but who is conscious of her/his shortfall may still pass. But candidates who cannot accept, or do not abide by, ethical guidelines <b>must</b> be referred.</p>
Assessment not completed by the normal end date of the course	<p>Candidates are expected to complete all of the assessed work and to submit it to the tutor for marking within the designated course boundaries. Tutors should allow time in their assessment plan for candidates to re-work referrals.</p>

# Key Skills and Other Issues

## 15

## Key Skills

### 15.1 Introduction

The Key Skills qualification requires candidates to demonstrate levels of achievement in the Key Skills of *Application of Number, Communication and Information Technology*.

The units for the ‘wider’ Key Skills of *Improving own Learning and Performance, Working with Others* and *Problem-Solving* are also available.

The acquisition and demonstration of ability in these ‘wider’ Key Skills is deemed highly desirable for all candidates, but they do not form part of the Key Skills qualification.

Copies of the Key Skills units may be downloaded from the QCA web site (<http://www.qca.org.uk/keyskills>).

The units for each Key Skill comprise three sections:

- A What you need to know
- B What you must do
- C Guidance.

### 15.2 Key Skills Opportunities in Awards for Counselling

Counselling skills and their application call upon candidates to demonstrate a high level of interpersonal skill. The knowledge and skills embedded in all counselling courses are ideally suited to enable candidates to produce the evidence they will need to obtain accreditation for the Key Skills of *Communication*. The units for the ‘wider’ Key Skills of *Improving own Learning, Working with Others* and *Problem-Solving* may also be addressed through study for counselling qualifications.

The tables overleaf signpost opportunities for the acquisition, development, and production of evidence for Section B of each of the six Key Skills units at *Level 2*, in the teaching and learning modules of this specification. The degree of opportunity in any one module will depend upon a number of centre-specific factors, including teaching strategies and level of resources.

### 15.3 Mapping to the National Occupational Standards

The level 3 N/SVQ is aimed at counsellors who conduct one-to-one counselling with individual clients and will be “involved in complex work, with considerable autonomy in their immediate work with each client, but will report to a manager who will take responsibility for their clinical work”.

This means that for the majority of candidates studying for the *AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills*, opportunities for gathering appropriate portfolio evidence will be limited.

However, for those candidates who are intending to progress in the field of counselling, the AQA award does provide some opportunity to begin an NVQ portfolio.

It is essential for candidates to realise that although work on this course will be invaluable preparation, serious evidence for the level 3 S/NVQ is beyond the scope of this award. Candidates are advised to consult the CAMPAG Standards in Counselling Level 3 to establish whether or not their own counselling related work outside of the course qualifies, or is appropriate evidence for the level 3 S/NVQ.

Communication	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Units	
What you must do:	Unit VC11	Units VC12 To VC17
C3.1a Contribute to discussions	✓	✓
C3.1b Make a presentation	✓	✓
C3.2 Read and synthesise information	✓	✓
C3.3 Write different types of document	✓	✓
Working with Others		
What you must do:		
WO3.1 Plan the activity	✓	✓
WO3.2 Work towards agreed objectives	✓	✓
WO3.3 Review the activity	✓	✓
Improving own Learning and Performance		
What you must do:		
LP3.1 Agree and plan targets	✓	✓
LP3.2 Seek feedback and support	✓	✓
LP3.3 Review progress	✓	✓
Problem Solving		
What you must do:		
PS3.1 Recognise, explain and describe the problem	✓	✓
PS3.2 Generate and compare different ways of solving problems	✓	✓
PS3.3 Plan and implement options	✓	✓
PS3.4 Agree and review approaches to tackling problems	✓	✓

**N.B.**

The signposting opportunities in the table above represent opportunities to acquire and produce evidence of the Key Skills which are possible through this specification. There may be other opportunities to achieve these and other aspects of Key Skills by way of this specification, but some opportunities are dependent on the detailed course of study delivered within centres.

**16**

## Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Cultural and Other Issues

16.1	Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and Cultural Issues	Counselling and allied work has always worked within a moral and ethical framework, which is in part regulated by the professional bodies (e.g. BACP and UKRC). These AQA qualifications have been designed to promote awareness in candidates of spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues. Content and assessment processes of the qualifications reflect a commitment to the values inherent in these issues. This specification offers many opportunities to allow tutors and candidates to explore these issues in relation to using counselling skills.
16.2	European Developments	European examples should be used where appropriate in the delivery of the subject content. Relevant European legislation is identified in the specification where applicable.
16.3	Environmental Issues	In so far as environmental issues affect the delivery of the course they must be taken into account.
16.4	Health and Safety	Candidates are to be made aware of health and safety issues for counsellors and clients, which could result directly from the use of counselling skills.
16.5	Signposting Opportunities to promote these issues	The following symbol in the left-hand column throughout this specification indicates where opportunities for tutors to promote the candidates' understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical, social, cultural and other issues can be found.



## Centre-Assessed Components

17

### Guidance on Internally - Assessed Components

#### 17.1 Advisors

An AQA External Verifier will be available to assist centres with any matters relating to internal assessment procedures.

18

### Supervision and Authentication

#### 18.1 Supervision of Candidates' Work

Candidates' work for assessment must be undertaken under conditions which allow the tutor to supervise the work and enable the work to be authenticated. If it is necessary for some assessed work to be done outside the centre, sufficient work must take place under direct supervision to allow the tutor to authenticate each candidate's whole work with confidence.

#### 18.2 Guidance by the Tutor

The work assessed must be solely that of the candidate concerned. Any assistance given to an individual candidate which is beyond that given to the group as a whole must be recorded on the Candidate Assessment Sheet and Candidate Record Form.

#### 18.3 Unfair Practice

At the start of the course, the supervising tutor is responsible for informing candidates of the AQA Regulations concerning malpractice. Candidates must not take part in any unfair practice in the preparation of portfolio Unit work to be submitted for assessment, and must understand that to present material copied directly from books or other sources without acknowledgement will be regarded as deliberate deception. Centres must report suspected malpractice to the AQA Malpractice Officer.

#### 18.4 Authentication of Candidates' Work

The supervising tutor is responsible for authenticating candidates' internally assessed work. AQA Regulations regarding unfair practice must be brought to the attention of the candidates.

## 19

## Standardisation

### 19.1 Standardising Meetings

Annual standardising meetings will usually be held in the Autumn and Spring terms. Centres entering candidates must send tutors to the meetings when:

- they have not previously taught and assessed AQA Intermediate Counselling Skills Units;
- two years have expired since they were last standardised by AQA;
- there has been a serious misinterpretation of the specified requirements;
- the nature of practical assessment role-plays set by a centre has been inappropriate;
- a significant adjustment has been made to a centre's assessments in the previous year.

### 19.2 Internal Standardisation of Marking

The centre is required to standardise the assessment across different tutors and teaching groups and within and across Units to ensure that all work at the centre has been judged against the same standards. If two or more tutors are involved in marking Units, one tutor must be designated as responsible for internal standardisation. Common pieces of work must be marked on a trial basis and differences between assessments discussed at a training session in which all tutors involved must participate. The tutor responsible for standardising the marking must ensure that the training includes the use of reference and archive materials such as work from a previous year or examples provided by AQA.

## Administrative Procedures

- 
- 20.1 Recording Assessments within each Unit** The candidates' work must be marked according to an assessment plan. Tutors must keep records of their assessments during the course in a format which facilitates the complete and accurate submission of the final overall assessments at the end of the course. Final assessment decisions must be recorded on an AQA Candidate Assessment Sheet as P or R only and sent to AQA by the assessment dates in January or June.
- 
- 20.2 Submitting Marks and Sample Work for verification** The External Verifier will confirm arrangements for sampling and verifying internal assessments to the centre.
- External Verifiers may require access to candidates' journal or to attend a practical skills assessment at any time.
- 
- 20.3 Factors Affecting Individual Candidates** Tutors should be able to accommodate the occasional absence of candidates by ensuring that the opportunity is given for them to make up missed assessments.
- Special consideration should be requested for candidates whose work has been affected by illness or other exceptional circumstances. Information about the procedure is issued separately.
- If work is lost, AQA should be notified immediately of the date of the loss, how it occurred, and who was responsible for the loss. AQA will advise on the procedures to be followed in such cases.
- Where special help that goes beyond normal learning support is given, AQA must be informed so that such help can be taken into account when assessment and verification take place.
- Candidates who move from one centre to another during the course sometimes present a problem for a scheme of internal assessment. Possible courses of action depend on the stage at which the move takes place. If the move occurs early in the course the new centre should take responsibility for assessment. If it occurs late in the course it may be possible to accept the assessments made at the previous centre. Centres should contact AQA at the earliest possible stage for advice about appropriate arrangements in individual cases.
- 
- 20.4 Retaining Evidence and Re-Using Marks** The centre must retain the work of candidates, with Candidate Assessment Sheets attached, under secure conditions, from the time it is assessed, to allow for the possibility of an enquiry upon results. The work may be returned to candidates after the issue of results provided that no enquiry upon results is to be made which will include re-assessment of the work. If an enquiry upon result is to be made the work must remain under secure conditions until requested by AQA.

## Verification

### 21.1 Verification Procedures

AQA verifiers are allocated to a centre and are responsible for reporting to AQA issues relating to the overall quality of assessment and delivery of AQA counselling qualifications at the centre.

External Verifiers normally visit centres annually to meet with curriculum managers and other tutor staff. In some circumstances, a postal only verification may be authorised by AQA where a visit is not appropriate.

External verifiers are the first line of enquiry for their centres and are able to advise and support the centre.

External Verifiers moderate the centre's marking to ensure that assessment is consistently at the national level.

The External Verifier will visit the centre to observe approximately 20% of practical role-play assessments.

Verification of the internally assessed units is by inspection of a sample of candidates' work. Centre marks to be submitted to AQA by the date specified by the External Verifier .

External Verifiers are empowered to require the centre to remark candidates' work.

External Verifiers produce an annual report for each centre they are allocated.

### 21.2 Post-Verification Procedures

The centre receives a report form giving feedback on the appropriateness of the tasks set, the accuracy of the assessments made, and the reasons for any adjustments to the marks.

Some candidates' work may be retained by AQA for archive purposes.

## Awarding and Reporting

### 22

## Grading, Shelf-Life and Resits

22.1	Grading System	Intermediate units are graded P (pass) and R (refer) only.
22.2	Shelf-Life of Unit Results	The shelf life of individual Unit results, prior to certification of the qualification, is limited only by the shelf life of the specification.
22.3	Assessment Unit Resits	Each internal assessment component may be resat once only. Candidates may, however, resit the whole unit more than once.
22.4	Minimum Requirements	<p>P grades are required for every assessed component of every unit of the appropriate combination of units to qualify for a Certificate. In all other cases a unit results slip will be provided.</p> <p>Candidates must pass all assessment components to qualify for the award of a unit.</p>
22.5	Quality Assurance	The process for both internal and external assessment for this qualification will conform to agreed procedures of the Code of Practice. AQA is committed to the maintenance of national standards and will provide advice about, and moderate, the assessment of candidates' work in centres.

## Assessment Documents

### 23.1 Contents

Internal Assessment documents for mandatory and option units: The following documents will be despatched to centres upon receipt of a completion of course registration form.

- Candidate Assessment Sheet (CAS11) Intermediate Unit 1 Skills Acquisition and Practice
- Candidate Assessment Sheet (CAS12/3/4/5/6/7) Intermediate Option Units

## Appendices

A

Overlaps with Other Qualifications

B

Candidate Assessment Booklet

C

Course Registration Form

D

Candidate Assessment Sheets

E

Centre Declaration Sheet and Candidate Record Form

## A

## Overlaps with Other Qualifications

A.1	GCSEs	None.
A.2	Vocational GCSEs	None.
A.3	Advanced Level	None.
A.4	GNVQ	None.
A.5	Other Vocationally-related Qualifications	None.
A.6	Relationship with National Occupational Standards	Where a clear relationship exists with national occupational standards, details are stated in the <i>About This Unit</i> section of each unit.

**B**

# Candidate Assessment Booklet



## **Candidate Assessment Booklet**

**For**

**0505**

**AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills**

Assessment and Qualifications Alliance  
Stag Hill House, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 7XJ Tel: 01483 506506

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales 3644723 and a registered charity number 1073334.  
Registered address AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX. *Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.*

## **Foreword**

This booklet is to be made available to candidates at the beginning of the course.

Although assessment must be rigorous, it is part of the AQA philosophy that its candidates have the opportunity to consider how their work is assessed. Initially, the learning requirements of a qualification may seem daunting to the candidates but as a course progresses they will become clearer. It is worth bearing in mind that if candidates could achieve (show understanding of) all the assessment requirements at the outset of a course, there would be no need for them to do the course. Courses are designed to help candidates achieve specified learning outcomes needed for them to pass both the component units and the full qualification.

By providing candidates with access to the learning outcomes they are required to achieve from the outset, AQA is making every effort to make the assessment process both transparent and fair. There will be no surprises and no reason for confusion over what must be achieved. This open assessment system allows both candidates, and their tutors, to know in advance what is required of them. The assessment process has been designed to provide opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their achievement and for the assessors to judge whether or not each candidate has met the standard required.

This booklet is designed to provide candidates with information and advice which will help her or him make the best of their course.

## Introduction

If you have copy of this booklet then you have probably joined a course at an AQA centre and are aiming to achieve an AQA Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills. This is a nationally accredited qualification which is part of the national framework of qualifications. Which means that its worth will be clearly understood by employers and other important stakeholders. Progression opportunities, either to AQA qualifications or to qualifications offered by other awarding bodies are also clear.

You can use this booklet to help you understand what you must do in order to pass. It will also help you to see how your course is helpful and will enable you to reach the standards.

## The qualification

This is a unitised award (qualification) which means that you must enter and pass 2 units in order to pass the qualification. This will be explained in more detail by your centre.

The units are only available twice each year in January and June.

There is no grading system for this qualification, your coursework will either pass or not pass. If it does not pass then it will be graded refer (or R).

AQA has specified the coursework you must do and the standard you must achieve in order to pass a unit. That coursework will be marked either by your centre, normally your tutor, or by AQA. When the work is marked by your centre and it does not pass you may be given a second opportunity to get it right. You will only get this opportunity if you complete your coursework by the deadlines given to you by your tutor. If you do not complete the work by the due date then it is unlikely that there will enough time for your tutor to allow you another opportunity. If the work is to be marked by AQA there will no opportunity to rework it. Though should you not pass you would be able to enter for the unit again in a later series.

When your work is marked by your centre it must also be ‘verified’ by AQA. AQA Verifiers monitor the centre to ensure that AQA’s standards are upheld and sustained. Your coursework marks may be changed by a verifier in the unlikely event that the centre’s assessor has made a mistake.

In order to pass a unit you must achieve a number of “learning outcomes”. A learning outcome is simply a statement explaining what you should learn, know, understand and/or do in order to pass. Some learning outcomes require a substantial amount of work to achieve and may occupy several course sessions. It is important therefore that you attend every session of your course. In the event that you are unavoidably absent for one or more course sessions you must discuss the matter with your tutor and if possible undertake additional study to compensate.

## INTERNAL ( CENTRE ) ASSESSMENT

Your tutor will explain what coursework you must do for each unit and how it is to be marked.

It is your responsibility to do the coursework required and present it to your tutor for marking on time. It is very important that you keep to the timetable your tutor will give you. Your tutor may legitimately refuse to mark any of your coursework if you present it late.

In the event that circumstances beyond your control were to prevent you from completing work on time, you must discuss the matter with your tutor as soon as you can. You may be eligible for special consideration.

Coursework is marked at the centre and will be awarded either Pass (P), if it is at the standard or above, or Refer (R) if it does not meet the standard.

To pass the full qualification you must pass two complete units. Mandatory unit 1 and one other option unit.

To pass a unit you must pass all of its assessment components.

e.g. Mandatory unit 1 has 2 components; an AQA externally set and marked component and a centre marked component. Option units have only one centre assessed component.

The AQA marked component is a written test taken under exam conditions.

The centre marked component is in two parts; a written element and a practical element.

To pass a component of a unit you must pass all of its elements.

e.g. Centre assessed components have 2 elements, a **practical skills assessment** and a **written assessment**.

Your practical helping skills are assessed by your tutor who will observe you in role-play and listen to your contribution to discussion within your triad immediately after the role play exercise.

Your knowledge and understanding of counselling skills is assessed by written assessment. In this case the written work is a coursework journal.

AQA unit assessment is available in series, twice each year only, in January and June. You will be, entered by your centre, for one of these series. Be sure that you know which series you are entered for and make sure that you get your work in for marking on time. AQA deadline for its series are absolute and late marks cannot be accepted.

Your results will be published and sent to your centre on results day. Your centre will know this date.

## Remember

It is your responsibility to:

- attend the course regularly, to keep your journal up to date and hand it to your tutor for marking;
- attend three practical assessment sessions;
- attend the test on the given day, date and time.

If you are to be sure of getting your assessment results from AQA you must complete your journal and hand it in on or before the date(s) set by your tutor. You must also be sure to complete your skills assessment sessions set by your tutor.

If you do not do these things then you may not be able to pass.

Provided that you do comply with these requirements but do not achieve the pass grade, you would normally be allowed one further attempt to pass. This privilege does not apply if your original coursework is late.

**To summarise**

**To qualify you must pass both the mandatory unit and one other option unit**

**The Mandatory Unit** has two assessed components:

An externally, AQA, set and marked test.

and

An Internal centre assessed coursework component comprising:

- A Journal
- Practical skills role-play assessment

**Optional units** have one internally assessed component, comprising:

- A Journal
- Practical skills role-play assessment.

Your coursework, Journal and Skills Role-Play Practical Assessment, are marked internally by your centre (a course tutor), and externally verified by AQA.

Throughout your course emphasis will be given to the high importance of moral, ethical and health and safety issues for the responsible use of counselling skills.

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) publication *An Ethical Framework for Counselling and Psychotherapy* is essential reference material for all candidates studying for AQA's Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills.

More about the assessment processes on the next page.

## Journal

You will be required to keep a written journal whilst on the course and the journal will also be used to assess your knowledge and understanding of the subject. It is also an important opportunity for you to develop note taking skills, which are essential to professional counsellors.

A journal entry is a reflective account of a course session. It should briefly summarise what has been covered in the session, with a description of how your knowledge and understanding of the subject has changed. You should also attempt to explain its affect on you. Journal entries should be written in the first person, as if you are writing to yourself. It is intended to help you develop the essential skill of self-awareness. Your tutor will use your journal as a formal assessment method and will mark it to assess your knowledge and understanding of the subject.

A well structured journal will enable you, and your tutor, to map and monitor your progress. It will help you identify your strengths and weaknesses and/or those subject areas where you may need to study in more detail. From your point of view the journal will:

- a) help your understanding of helping relationships;
- b) enable you to express your knowledge of counselling skills and their use in developing a helping relationship.
- c) help you identify when others are using counselling skills intentionally in both simulated role play exercises and in real life.
- d) help you clarify your understanding of ethical values and principles and embrace ethics as essential to good counselling practice.
- e) help develop your sense of self and of self-awareness.
- f) help you know and understand the importance for counsellors of taking measures to ensure the safety of both parties in a helping relationship.

## Remember

You keep a Journal, for both assessment and personal development purposes. For the purpose of assessment your journal entries should be brief, no more than 800 words per entry, and there should be a separate entry for each of the taught sessions of your course.

You must make your journal available to your tutor at all times. He/she may wish to see your journal entries regularly, particularly at the beginning, to monitor your progress.

Towards the end of each unit your tutor must formally mark your journal to show that you have achieved the knowledge and understanding required for the unit.

## **Skills Role-play**

This is a counselling skills qualification and so you can expect to spend a significant amount of course time engaged with your classmates in various role-play exercises designed to simulate counselling processes.

This provides a safe environment for you to learn a range of helping skills and to try them out. Your tutor will be on hand to advise, support and protect you.

Role-play exercises are also used to formally assess your achievement.

You may be introduced to many different activities in your practical sessions and this is a matter for your centre/tutor.

For assessment purposes, role-play exercises are conducted more formally in groups of three, or triads. Each member of the triad must take on all three parts of a triad interview. i.e. over three interviews. The parts (roles) are: Helper (counsellor), Talker (client) and Observer. You will be assessed on your performance in all three roles.

### **Assessment Process**

You will be formally assessed in each of the following guises:

1. Role-play as helper.
2. Role-play as observer.
3. Role-play as talker.
4. Subsequent discussion in any/all of these roles.

You gain marks towards your assessment during all of these processes.

### **Role play**

You must make every effort to observe good ethical practice throughout. When in the helper role remember to:

1. set appropriate boundaries within the working relationship;
2. show sensitivity to both verbal and non-verbal responses;
3. try to understand the talker's perspective;
4. try to use skills appropriate to the talker's concerns.

### **Discussion as observer**

You will be asked to summarise the session as you saw it and you should comment on the extent to which you felt that it complied with your knowledge of good ethical practice.

You must also comment on the less formal, but important, factors relating to establishing, sustaining and concluding the helping relationship.

Point out where you thought the talker was employing specific counselling skills with intention.

### **Discussion as helper**

This gives you the opportunity to explain how you felt the session had gone. To show your knowledge and make up for any omissions. You will be able to explain what you tried to do what was successful and what was not. You may also wish to comment on intentional and unintentional consequences of your attempted use of skills.

### **Discussion as talker**

You will be able to explain how it felt to be in the role and how you were affected by the helper's interventions.

Be sure to de-role as soon as you have finished.



# Course Registration Form

CS/VER/1



## VRQ COUNSELLING COURSE REGISTRATION FORM

Please complete a separate form for each course and send it to AQA 28 days **prior** to the course start date.

### 1. Centre details

Centre name \_\_\_\_\_ Centre number

Course manager \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Address for course  
Please enclose directions to site.

### 2. Course details

Course units	Unit 1				Unit 2				Unit 3				Unit 4			
Unit code	V	C			V	C			V	C			V	C		
Examination series																

Course start date:  Course end date:

Regular attendance details: Day ..... Start time ..... End time .....

Additional sessions: (state, Day School, Week-end, etc.) .....

Date ..... Start time ..... End time .....

Date ..... Start time ..... End time .....

### 3. Assessment plans

Use the following table to show dates when centre assessed work will be available for external verification.

	VC			VC			VC			VC		
	Day	Mnth	Yr	Day	Mnth	Yr	Day	Mnth	Yr	Day	Mnth	Yr
Journal												
Practical												
Essay												

Signed .....

Date .....

Name in block capitals .....

Centre to detach and retain Pink copy. Return other copies to:  
Subject Officer A17, AQA Stag Hill House, Guildford, GU2 7XJ



# Candidate Assessment Sheet

CAS11



**CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT  
INTERMEDIATE UNIT 1  
SKILLS ACQUISITION AND PRACTIC**

Name of Centre ..... Centre No. 

--	--	--	--	--

Candidate's surname & initials .....Candidate No. 

--	--	--	--

Unit No. 

V	1	1	C
---	---	---	---

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

In order to achieve a pass the candidate will show evidence of having achieved all the following Learning Outcomes.

	GRADE (P/R) Tutor use <b>RED</b> pen please.			REFERENCES
	TUTOR		EV	
	P	R	P/R	
<b>1. Initiating a helping interaction</b>				
Appreciate the meaning of the term Counselling Skills.				
Know the place of skills on a helping continuum.				
Understand how counselling skills relate to helping as a process.				
Identify and demonstrate Active Listening Skills.				
Be aware of potential health and safety risks to counsellor and client.				
Know actions necessary to safeguard self and client where potential risks to health and safety are high.				
<b>2. Developing and maintaining the helping relationship</b>				
Understand the continued need for health and safety precautions.				
Appreciate the need to move helping interviews forward.				
Understand, at a basic level, some concepts from the three main "roots" of counselling.				
Identify and practise the skills needed to develop and maintain the helping relationship.				
<b>3. Conclude a helping interaction using Counselling Skills</b>				
Understand endings as an integral aspect of the helping process.				
Demonstrate how endings are an opportunity for growth, in relation to goal and target setting.				
Demonstrate the ability to conduct an empathic interview using appropriate skills to conclude a helping relationship.				

Tutor's comments

Tutor's Signature:.....

Date:.....

Tutor's Name Printed:.....

EV's Signature:.....

Date:.....



**CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT SHEET  
INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATE IN COUNSELLING SKILLS  
OPTION UNITS 12/3/4/5/6/7\***

Name of Centre ..... Centre No. 

--	--	--	--	--

Candidate's surname & initials .....Candidate No. 

--	--	--	--

Unit No. 

V	C		
---	---	--	--

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

In order to achieve a pass the candidate will show evidence of having achieved all of the following Learning Outcomes.

		GRADE (P/R) Tutor use <b>RED</b> pen please.			REFERENCES
		TUTOR		EV	
		P	R	P/R	
1.	<b>Knows how to protect the health and safety of counsellor and client.</b>				
2.	<b>Able to reflect on learning from the course.</b>				
3.	<b>Conducts an empathetic, safe and ethical interview using applied counselling skills.</b>				
4.	<b>Understands the importance of forming and accessing a personal support system.</b>				
5.	<b>The candidate has achieved all of the Learning Outcomes for the unit.</b>				

Tutor's comments

\*delete as appropriate

Copy to be sent to  
External Verifier

Tutor's Signature:.....

Date:.....

Tutor's Name Printed:.....

EV's Signature:.....

Date:.....

E

# Centre Declaration Sheet and Candidate Record Form

(Sheet 1)



## Centre-assessed work Centre Declaration Sheet January/June 2006

VRQ in Counselling

Specification Title: ..... Unit Code(s): VC...../VC...../VC...../VC.....

Centre Name: ..... Centre No: 

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### Authentication of candidates' work

This is to certify that marks have been awarded in accordance with the requirements of the specification and that every reasonable step has been taken to ensure that the work presented is that of the candidates named. Any assistance given to candidates beyond that given to the group as a whole and beyond that described in the specification has been recorded on the Candidate Record Form(s) and has been taken into account. The marks given reflect accurately the unaided achievement of the candidates.

Signature(s) of tutor(s) responsible for assessment

Date: .....

Tutor 1 ..... Tutor 2 .....

Tutor 3 ..... Tutor 4 .....

Tutor 5 ..... Tutor 6 .....

*(continue overleaf if necessary)*

### Internal standardisation of marking

Each centre must standardise the assessments across different tutors and tutor groups to ensure that all candidates in the centre have been judged against the same standards. If two or more tutors are involved in marking, one of them must be designated as responsible for standardising the assessments of all tutors at the centre.

The tutor responsible for ensuring standardisation must sign declaration (a).

If all the work has been marked by the same person, that person must sign declaration (b).

I confirm that [please tick either (a) or (b)]

- (a) the procedure described in the specification has been followed at this centre to ensure that the assessments are of the same standard for all candidates; or
- (b) I have marked the work of all candidates.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Signature of Head of Centre ..... Date: .....

This form should be completed and sent to the External Verifier



**Centre-assessed work**  
**Candidate Record Form**  
**January/June 2006**

**VRQ – Intermediate Certificate in Counselling Skills (0505)**

Centre Name: ..... Centre No: 

--	--	--	--	--

Candidate Name: ..... Candidate No: 

--	--	--	--

*This side to be completed by the candidate.*

**Sources of advice and information**

- Any help or information you have received from people other than your tutor(s) must be clearly identified in the work itself.

Any books, information leaflets or other materials (e.g. videos, software packages or information from the Internet) which you have used to help you complete this work must be clearly acknowledged in the work itself. To present material copied from books or other sources without acknowledgement will be regarded as deliberate deception.

**NOTICE TO CANDIDATE**

The work you submit for assessment must be your own.

**If you copy from someone else or allow another candidate to copy from you, or if you cheat in any other way, you may be disqualified from at least the subject concerned.**

**Declaration by candidate**

I have read and understood the **Notice to Candidate** (above). I have produced the attached work without any help from other people apart from that which I have declared in the work itself. I have acknowledged all source materials in the work itself.

Candidate's signature: ..... Date: .....

*This form should be completed on each occasion when the candidate submits work for assessment in this specification. The form should be attached to the candidate's work and retained at the Centre or sent to the External Verifier as required.*

*PTO*

*This side is to be completed by the tutor/assessor.*

Marks must be awarded in accordance with the instructions and criteria in the Subject Content section of the specification.

Supporting information to show how the marks have been awarded should be given on the Candidate Assessment Sheets and in the form of annotations on the candidate's work.

Please complete the boxes to show the marks awarded and add any summative comments which seem appropriate in the space below.

Unit Code	Centre mark (P/R)
VC11	
VC12	
VC13	
VC14	
VC15	
VC16	
VC17	

**Concluding comments**

**Details of additional assistance given (if any)**  
Record here details of any assistance given to this candidate which is beyond that given to the class as a whole and beyond that described in the specification. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

**Tutor/assessor's signature:** ..... **Date:** .....