



ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

Vocationally Related Qualification

Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice

draft

This specification will not be re-issued annually but will remain in force until further notice. Details of any amendments to the document will be notified to centres both in print and on the Website (www.aqa.org.uk). The version on the Website will be dated and become the definitive version of the specification.

In the Spring Term before the start of the course, details of any year-specific information, such as set tests, theme/topics, will be notified to centres in print and on the Website.

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Background Information

1

AQA HIGHER DIPLOMA IN COUNSELLING PRACTICE

1.1 Introduction

The AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice is a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 5 qualification, which has been developed specifically to provide an accessible professional level qualification for counselling practitioners. The term ‘counselling practitioner’, as it is used here, includes all categories of people engaged in therapeutic counselling with clients, professionally or voluntarily, and also those who are in the process of starting out in such practice.

Therapeutic counselling has become an important social function in recent years, with huge growth in the number and variety of counselling services available throughout the UK. There has been a corresponding growth in the demand for counsellors. This AQA qualification has been developed in response to the demand and it sets out the benchmarks of the core knowledge and skills required in counselling, at an appropriate level for practitioners.

The qualification is intended for use by education and training providers in both the public and private sectors; typically, this includes organisations that provide Higher and Further Education, Adult and Continuing Education and occupational and professional training.

Counselling appeals to students from a wide range of cultural and social-economic backgrounds. It has been estimated that around 80% of these are female, and that the vast majority are mature students.

The AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice is intended primarily for part-time study in association with the candidates’ live counselling practice work with clients. Full-time or block release course arrangements may also be suitable, subject to the condition that the candidates are ‘in practice’ and are able to comply with AQA’s placement conditions, as specified herein, regarding minimum hours of client work, personal supervision and personal therapy.

The AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice is designed to show that successful candidates have achieved generic personal and professional standards in both intellectual and practical skills, which are at least those propounded by the leading professional bodies and standard-setting organisations for therapeutic counselling practitioners. Therefore, in completing this qualification, successful candidates can achieve all of the training elements towards their individual professional accreditation.

The focus for this qualification is the promotion of best practice combined with a strong academic theme. Students are challenged to address the academic disciplines of:

- Study skills
- Problem solving
- Critical reasoning
- Data collection and research
- Analysis and interpretation.

The qualification is unitised for flexibility, and the award of the AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice requires candidates to aggregate six unit passes.

Individual higher level counselling units are also available for certification separately if required.

In keeping with the traditions of best practice in therapeutic counselling, candidates commit to a coherent theoretical approach to their counselling work from the outset. This core model will then be the central construct for study throughout the programme.

The core model approach does not limit, or simplify, a candidate's study base, as candidates are also challenged to critically analyse and evaluate key aspects of their chosen approach relative to other theories, which will require of them a significant conceptual knowledge of alternative theoretical traditions.

On completion of the AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice, candidates will have acquired substantial conceptual knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the practice of modern therapeutic counselling. They will also have acquired much deeper insight into their own capacity, capability and limitation to engage effectively in a wide range of complex therapeutic relationships with different clients.

The AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice is a national framework qualification at Level 5.

This specification complies with The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) higher Level design principles.

In compiling this specification, AQA acknowledges that the practice of therapeutic counselling or therapy requires the very highest moral, ethical and Health and Safety standards from its practitioners. Therefore, in their provision of courses for this qualification, AQA centres, and their candidates, are required to comply with an appropriate code of ethical practice, for example BACP's *"Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy 2002"*.

The AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling is a national framework qualification, which provides a reliable assurance that the successful candidate has achieved all of the learning outcomes detailed in the specification of the units covered, at Level 5. **It does not provide a successful candidate with the right, or the licence, to practise therapeutic counselling.**

Successful candidates will have the opportunity to progress into:

- Employment, with one of the many counselling services operating in the UK
- Self employment, i.e. Professional Private Practice
- Voluntary service
- Higher Education – The AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice has been designed to comply with the proposed National Credit Framework for England.

The AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice is available in each of the following core theoretical approaches:

Psychodynamic

Humanistic

Cognitive – Behavioural

Transtheoretical Model.

The term *transtheoretical model* is used to describe any approach to counselling which seeks to bring together concepts and practices from more than one of the main theoretical traditions into a coherent alternative. Some limitations apply and these are described in more detail within this specification.

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Specification at a Glance

Higher Diploma in Counselling

2.1 Structure

This is a unitised Level 5 programme which requires all six units to be aggregated in order for the candidate to qualify for the award.

A core theoretical approach to counselling must be nominated by the centre at the outset of a course.

Entry to Unit 6 is conditional on the candidates having completed study for the other five units.

Units are:

1. Counselling Theory (See options available below)
2. Developing Higher Counselling Skills
3. Counselling Practice
4. Counselling in Context
5. Counselling Supervision and Principles of Continuing Professional Development
6. AQA Synoptic Assessment in Counselling Practice.

2.2 Volume

Units 1 to 5 are 75 to 90 guided learning hours (g.l.h.) each and Unit 6 is 10 g.l.h.

Recommened nominal learning time for units 1 to 5 is 200 to 250 learning hours, and Unit 6 will require a further 20 to 30 learning hours.

Total guided learning hours for the qualification = 385 – 460 g.l.h.

2.3 Core Theory Options Unit 1

Choose one from

1 A Psychodynamic	V41A	75 – 90 g.l.h.
1 B Humanistic	V41B	75 – 90 g.l.h.
1 C Cognitive – Behavioural	V41C	75 – 90 g.l.h.
1 D Transtheoretical	V41D	75 – 90 g.l.h.

2.4 Units

2. Developing Higher Skills	VC42	75 – 90 g.l.h.
3. Counselling Practice	VC43	75 – 90 g.l.h.
4. Counselling in Context	VC44	75 – 90 g.l.h.
5. Counselling Supervision and Principles of Continuing Professional Development	VC45	75 – 90 g.l.h.
6. AQA Synoptic Assessment in Counselling Practice	VC46	10 g.l.h.

2.5 Recommended Prior Achievement on Entry

To enter the AQA Higher Diploma, candidates:

- will already be practising counsellors, or be in the early stages of commencing in counselling practice, **and**
- will already be committed to client work within an ethical framework, **and**
- will already hold a recognised level three qualification in counselling which is either the AQA Advanced Diploma in Counselling, or its equivalent from another Awarding Body, **or**
- must be able to provide the centre with sufficient evidence of considerable experience in the practice of therapeutic counselling supported by substantial knowledge of significant counselling theory. *Candidates who present extensive practical experience but who are unable to show “substantial knowledge of significant counselling theory” are not eligible and should be referred to an appropriate level three qualification, and*
- must commit to a specified theoretical approach for both academic study and client work.

There are no other restrictions to entry.

Centres are required to assess all applicants for this qualification to establish their eligibility to enter.

AQA level three units are available to its centres to help them provide a bridge to the entry standard for candidates who fall short.

2.6 Placements

The term placement is used here to describe any form of counselling practice, which is approved by the centre and is suitable to support the candidates' study and learning whilst on the course.

The **minimum periods** of professionally supported counselling placement/practice hours and personal therapy deemed necessary to provide candidates with sufficient client-related activity for study purposes during the lifetime of the course are:

Supervised counselling – **50 hours**

Personal Therapy – **25 hours**

Please note that these are minimum hours and that candidates may exceed but not fall short of them.

Professional Accreditation

This qualification may be used to support candidates' applications for professional accreditation or membership of a professional body. In all such cases, the professional body's rules and/or accreditation criteria must take precedence, unless they are less than AQA's minimum periods of professionally supported counselling placement/practice hours and personal therapy, shown above, and the centre may make adjustments to a course to ensure that the professional accreditation criteria are also met.

Responsibility for authenticating the numbers of professionally supported counselling placement/practice hours and personal therapy hours greater than those required by AQA for assessment purposes lies with centres and not AQA.

The responsibility for finding, arranging and paying for suitable professional counselling supervision to support placement/practice hours, and for making arrangements for personal therapy lies with the candidates.

AQA centres are accountable to AQA for the probity and suitability of candidates' placements and personal therapy arrangements in connection with their study for the AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice.

AQA does not accept any responsibility for candidates' placements or personal therapy arrangements.

2.7 Counselling Supervision

Counselling supervision is the enactment of a formal agreement between a counsellor and a supervisor to enable the counsellor to discuss his/her counselling work regularly with the supervisor. The counselling supervisor is a person experienced and competent in therapeutic counselling and in the process of counselling supervision.

2.8 Tutors and Assessors

Centres' tutors must be capable of teaching and assessing candidates at high levels. AQA recommends the following selection criteria:

Counselling Experience	Extensive experience of counselling practice, with not less than 3 years' post-qualification practising.
Formal Qualification	Professional accreditation by BACP, or equivalent accrediting body, or working towards accreditation and/or Postgraduate qualification in counselling.
Teaching	Considerable experience of teaching/training counsellors.

3

Availability of Assessment Units And Entry Details

3.1 Availability of Assessment Units

AQA Higher Vocationally Related Counselling units are available from June 2005 examination series for courses starting from January 2005; thereafter, biannually in January and June examination series only.

3.2 Entry Details

AQA Higher Vocationally Related Counselling Qualifications will require **course registration** at the start of the course (by 21 October for September start) followed by a “pay as you go” approach to unit entry.

Entries for each unit are then made to *meet* normal AQA entry deadlines of 21 October for the January examination series and 21 March for the June examination series.

For example, a centre is to run The AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice over 2 years, beginning in September of year 1 and ending in June of year 2. It must:

- (a) **Plan the course**, starting with unit 1 and including schemes of coursework assessment for the units.
- (b) **Register the course with AQA**, specification code **0520**.

Use form **CS/course details/1** to register the course and to notify AQA that it is intending to run a Higher Diploma course.

The form asks for some basic details of the course; the form should be sent in even if all of the details are not yet available. Forms are available from the subject office at the address given below.

Send the completed form to Dept A17

AQA
Stag Hill House
Guildford
GU2 7XJ

- (c) **Enter units (1 and two others in this case)**, say Unit 2 and Unit 4, by 21 March (e.g. for the June series in year 1), using the unit codes below.
- (d) **Submit the unit marks**, using the Centre Mark Sheet (CMS) supplied by AQA. Send the unit marks complete with a Centre Declaration Sheet and Candidate Record Forms by the AQA deadline.
- (e) **Repeat the process for the remaining units in year 2.**
- (f) **Apply for the Award.**

When a candidate has completed all units required for the Higher Diploma, the centre applies for overall qualification certification, using **award code 0521**, at the same time as candidates are entered for the final units. In this example, this would be 21 March in year 2.

3.3	Unit Codes	Unit 1 A	Psychodynamic Theory	V41A
		Unit 1 B	Humanistic Theory	V41B
		Unit 1 C	Cognitive – Behavioural Theory	V41C
		Unit 1 D	Transtheoretical Approach	V41D
		Unit 2	Developing Higher Skills	VC42
		Unit 3	Counselling Practice	VC43
		Unit 4	Counselling in Context	VC44
		Unit 5	Counselling Supervision and Principles of Continuing Professional Development	VC45
		Unit 6	AQA Synoptic Assessment in the Practice of Counselling	VC46
3.4	Single Unit Entry	Single units are available.		
3.5	Prohibited Combinations	There are no prohibited unit combinations.		
3.6	Private Candidates	The specification is not available to private candidates.		
3.7	Equality of Opportunity	Centres must ensure access and equality of opportunity to all appropriately qualified applicants for this qualification.		
3.8	Special arrangements & Special consideration	<p>Special arrangements for candidates with permanent or temporary disability are approved before an examination or assessment.</p> <p>Special consideration is given following an examination or assessment for candidates whose work has been affected by temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time it is conducted</p> <p>Enquiries should be directed to the AQA office through which examination entries are made for your centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southern office: specialneeds-s@aqa.org.uk Northern office: specialneeds-n@aqa.org.uk 		
3.9	Language of Examination	<p>All assessment will be through the medium of English. Assessment materials will not be provided in Welsh or Gaelic.</p> <p>The language used in this specification is plain, clear, free from bias and appropriate to the qualification.</p>		
3.10	Code of Practice	<p>No Code of Practice for VRQ qualifications is yet available from the regulators.</p> <p>This specification complies with the statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004.</p> <p>This specification conforms to the principles set out in the GCSE, GCSE in vocational subjects, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA Code of Practice 2005.</p>		

Scheme of Assessment

4

Introduction

4.1 Introduction

The qualification comprises six assessment units, five of which are internally (centre) assessed coursework units and one which is an independently marked synoptic written assessment.

To qualify for the award, candidates must aggregate all six unit passes.

The units are of equal value (weighting).

Unit 1 is offered in four theoretical options.

Units 1 – 5 are centre assessed.

Unit 6 is independently assessed and is synoptic.

Units 1 and 2 are prerequisites for Units 3, 4, 5 and 6.

4.2 Assessment Aims

On completion of the AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice, candidates will have acquired substantial conceptual knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the practice of modern therapeutic counselling. They will also have acquired much deeper insight into their own capacity, capability and limitation to engage effectively in a wide range of complex therapeutic relationships with different clients.

The aims of assessment are that, for each unit:

- Candidates are assessed by competent assessors whose knowledge and experience of counselling are such that their judgement is reliable
- All learning outcomes are achieved
- Pass standards for the learning outcomes are set at a level which is consistent with professional standards of performance for counselling practitioners
- Standards and quality of assessment processes in and across centres are equally robust, valid, relevant, consistent and fair.

4.3 Confidentiality and Data Protection Act

Good practice requires that centres use confidentiality agreements for both legal and ethical reasons. Centres must formally procure the agreement of students and take action to secure confidentiality of written and other permanent records, such as Video recordings and computer files used for assessment purposes, as required by both the Data Protection Act and the *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*.

4.4 Centre-assessed coursework units (Units 1 to 5)

The awarding body specifies:

- learning outcomes
- methods of assessment
- assessment criteria.

Centres are responsible for:

- selecting and recruiting candidates
- course design and attendance
- schemes of work
- schemes of internal assessment
- the quality of internal assessment arrangements
- assessing candidates' coursework
- giving students formative feedback
- reporting candidates' grades to AQA on time.

4.5 Independent Assessment

Independent assessment, in this case, means that candidates are assessed independently of the centres' tutors/assessors.

Although some degree of independence is also attributable to the quality assurance provisions described above, independence is secured by the addition of an externally assessed synoptic assessment process.

The synoptic assessment unit is designed to test at random critical aspects of the students' conceptual knowledge, understanding and know-how of the subject matter across the entire specification

4.6 Marks and unit results

Unit marks are reported as **P (pass)** (P) or **R (refer)** (R).

To pass a unit, the candidate must achieve a pass grade for each of the assessments specified by AQA for the unit and, in so doing, must satisfy the centre that he/she has achieved the necessary minimum standard to have passed the unit's learning outcomes.

Unit marks are reported to AQA on or before an examination series deadline, using the AQA Centre Mark Sheet supplied.

Examination series' schedules and key dates are circulated to centres annually and are also posted on the AQA website www.aqa.org.uk.

4.7 Instructions to centres for marking coursework

The basic rules of assessment for centres are as follows.

- Coursework units are each assessed separately and consistently to the AQA specification. Written work is to be marked systematically and clearly.
- Assessors should take note of Assessment Aims, paragraph 4.2, when they are marking candidates' work.
- Coursework units, learning outcomes or other marked components are to be marked as either P (pass) or R (referred).
- Assessors must make every effort to know and understand the assessment standards, and must attend AQA standardisation and training sessions prior to assessing candidates and at least every two years thereafter.
- Centres must secure the consistency of internal assessment through internal standardisation arrangements, where more than one assessor is involved.
- All centre-assessed written work is subject to AQA external verification and must be made available to AQA on request.
- Centres must make arrangements for the secure retention of candidates' assessed work to allow for the possibility of enquiries about results or appeals.
- Centres must establish appropriate complaint and appeal procedures and ensure that these are brought to the attention of candidates.
- Centres must co-operate with AQA external verifiers and provide them with essential course-related documents, such as appropriately detailed schemes of work and schemes of assessment for each unit.
- The pass/refer boundary in each case lies at the minimum acceptable standard as defined by AQA.

The awarding body's external verifiers are empowered to require centres to change marks, where centres' standards are found not to be consistent with nationally agreed standards.

An overall mark of P or R for each unit entered must be reported to AQA by the examination series deadline.

AQA requires that its centres make arrangements to ensure that its assessment processes are conducted with due clarity, rigour and fairness by:

- providing students with clear rules and regulations governing the conduct of assessment, including deadlines for submission of centre-assessed work

- taking measures to prevent fraudulent activities
- defining any special measures that may be necessary for the assessment of materials based on placements
- developing procedures for retention and/or access to centre-assessed work for a defined period of time.

AQA reserves right of access to candidates' assessed written work for a period of up to 2 years after the unit has been completed.

4.8 Quality of Written Communication

The quality of written communication is also to be assessed in all units. In addition to the learning outcomes, candidates will be assessed according to their ability to:

- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to the purpose and to the complex subject matter
- organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary where appropriate
- ensure that the text is legible, and that spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so that meaning is clear.

4.9 Complex Counselling

Complex counselling for the purpose of this qualification is deemed to mean counselling work with clients presenting issues that are:

- unusual and not previously experienced by the counsellor
- apparently irrational
- related to severe trauma, fear, shock, etc
- symptoms of psychological instability
- symptoms of uncontrolled addiction or compulsion
- symptoms of victims of violence or other forms of severe discrimination
- likely to place the client, his or her associates and the counsellor in physical danger
- difficult to uncover or recognise in therapy.

This list is not exclusive and each case must be judged on its merits. The tutor is the primary judge of complexity for coursework. He or she is required to provide suitable examples of “fictitious” casework for the students to work with. To avoid breaching ethical and confidentiality rules and conventions, cases for use by candidates must either be drawn from examples taken from published material that is already in the public domain or be entirely fabricated. Similar precautions are necessary when the examples are drawn from the student's experience.

4.10 Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning strategies adopted for these higher level units are essentially a matter for the centres concerned and each centre is likely to develop its own unique approach. In general, however, it is desirable that all centres promote, in their students, a high degree of independence and personal responsibility for learning.

Centres should be mindful that adults learn at different rates and in diverse ways. There is a wide range of appropriate and effective learning and teaching strategies to choose from, including:

- student-focused approaches that encourage active participation
- formulation of learning plans
- developing resource materials; enabling students to learn from each other
- lectures, demonstrations, role-plays, case presentation, individual and group work, investigative projects, seminars, discussion groups, and tutorials
- use of IT systems
- literature search.

AQA recognises that these methods are not mutually exclusive; lectures, for example, may involve student activity and provide opportunities for dialogue.

Further guidance on delivery is provided within the specification of each unit.

4.11 Scheduling Assessments

Centres should schedule assessment tasks in order to spread out the students' workload. For example, if more than one unit is being taught to a group of students simultaneously, some consideration should be given to offsetting key assignments to help students manage the workload.

4.12 Verification

External verification by AQA is the awarding body's quality assurance activity which is needed to monitor the overall quality of the award. It is conducted by AQA external verifiers following standard procedures.

In practice, AQA's external verifiers are allocated to centres and will report on quality systems and on the quality of assessments. (For more details of external verification, see section 17.)

Draft

Subject Content

5

Unit 1 Counselling Theory

5.1 About this Unit

The development of extensive knowledge and understanding of theoretical frameworks that support and inform work with clients is an essential aspect of training as a counsellor. This unit provides a basic template, described by means of clear learning outcomes, for the study of the theory of counselling. This template is designed to be suitable for a range of theoretical approaches, and will ensure that candidates are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by the choice of a particular theoretical approach.

Candidates are required to work towards mastery of one coherent core theoretical approach for the entire programme and to relate that approach to all other units, where it is appropriate to do so. They are also expected to extend their existing knowledge of other approaches by means of comparative study.

Centres are required to choose a core theoretical approach **either** from one of the three major theoretical traditions named below **or** the Transtheoretical approach.

EITHER

Psychodynamic	VC41A
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Humanistic	VC41B
------------	-------

Cognitive – Behavioural	VC41C
-------------------------	-------

OR

Transtheoretical	VC41D
------------------	-------

AQA recognises that the question of how far it is desirable to train counselling students in one ‘pure’ or ‘core’ theoretical approach, as opposed to encouraging them to take an approach variously described as integrative, eclectic or transtheoretical is the subject of an important continuing debate within the profession. For the purposes of this course, AQA’s view is that it is preferable for most trainees at this level to work towards mastery of one widely recognised theoretical model and that the capacity to adopt a coherent integrative, eclectic or transtheoretical approach usually requires a degree of post-training clinical experience. This is not intended to exclude comparative study of the essentials of other approaches, or a consideration of the important subject of integrationism in counselling theory.

AQA also recognises that some of the approaches variously described as integrative, eclectic or transtheoretical are well-established and influential in the profession. Examples include Egan’s ‘Skilled Helper’ model, Multimodal Therapy, and Cognitive Analytic Therapy. AQA does not wish to exclude centres that are able to teach an approach other than one of the three major traditions, and Unit 1 Option VC41D is available for this purpose. Option VC41D is entitled Transtheoretical and is intended to include approaches often described as eclectic, integrative or specialist. It is particularly likely that some centres will wish to teach Egan’s ‘Skilled Helper’ model, and specific assessment criteria relevant to this model are provided where appropriate in Units 1 and 2. Centres wishing to teach any other approach as their core theoretical model will need to provide a clear description and proposed subject content in order to satisfy the Awarding Body that:

- the centre is equipped to do so in terms of its staff and resources
- students will be learning a coherent and consistent theoretical approach to counselling practice
- the prescribed Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria can be achieved.

5.2 Unit-Specific Entry Requirements

It is expected that candidates will be ready to specialise in an approach drawn from one of the three major theoretical traditions, or in a clearly defined and coherent alternative.

5.3 Aims

The aim of this unit is that candidates will be enabled to acquire knowledge that illustrates and exemplifies the underlying concepts and principles of a theoretical approach which supports and informs work with clients. This will include knowledge which is at the forefront of one coherent theoretical approach to counselling and a substantial knowledge of other significant counselling theories. Candidates will be equipped to apply their knowledge of this framework in the skills and practice units of the course.

5.4 Learning Outcomes

The assessable learning outcomes for this unit are that, on successful completion, candidates will be able to demonstrate:

1. an extensive knowledge of one core theoretical approach to counselling
2. a substantial knowledge of other significant counselling theories
3. an understanding of modern, contemporary theoretical and practical developments in the field
4. an informed critical thinking ability about contemporary counselling.

5.5 Subject Content

A subject content list is considered essential for each of the three major theoretical traditions and one for Egan's 'Skilled Helper' model is given below. Centres choosing to teach theoretical approaches other than these will need to obtain approval from AQA for their suggested comparable list in advance.

The subject content is listed in learning outcome order and is accompanied by appropriate assessment criteria, in italics.

5.5.1 Learning Outcome 1:

Psychodynamic VC41A

Demonstrate an extensive knowledge of one core theoretical approach to counselling.

Criteria:

The candidate must:

1a: describe the origins and subsequent development of the chosen core theoretical approach

Essential subject content:

The transition from hypnosis to psychotherapy
 Freud's development of psychoanalysis
 Briefer, more pragmatic approaches inc. Adler and Rank
 Klein and internal images
 Object Relations inc. Winnicott
 Self-psychology in the USA

1b: describe key theoretical assumptions about the nature and development of human beings relevant to the chosen core theoretical approach

1c: describe the view taken by the chosen core theoretical approach of the development and perpetuation of psychological problems

1d: describe the view taken by the chosen core theoretical approach of the nature and process of therapeutic change

Essential subject content:

Structure of personality:

- Id, Ego and Superego

Drive theory
 Psychosexual development
 Oedipus complex
 Anxiety
 Defence mechanisms
 Dreams
 Phantasy
 Transference

1e: describe a range of typical therapeutic interventions relevant to the chosen core theoretical approach

Essential subject content:

Assessment

Managing boundaries and limits

Free Association

Interpretation of :

- dreams
- the transference
- acting out
- use of the countertransference

5.5.1 Learning Outcome 1:

Humanistic VC41B

Demonstrate an extensive knowledge of one core theoretical approach to counselling.

Criteria:

The candidate must:

1a: describe the origins and subsequent development of the chosen core theoretical approach

Essential subject content:

Phenomenological and Existentialist perspectives

Humanistic psychology – the third force

Maslow

Rollo May

Perls and Gestalt

Transactional analysis

Rogers and the person-centred approach

Prouty and pre-therapy

Gendlin and focusing

1b: describe key theoretical assumptions about the nature and development of human beings relevant to the chosen core theoretical approach

1c: describe the view taken by the chosen core theoretical approach of the development and perpetuation of psychological problems

1d: describe the view taken by the chosen core theoretical approach of the nature and process of therapeutic change

Essential subject content:

Human potential and growth
 The holistic perspective
 Self-actualisation
 The self-concept
 The organismic self
 Conditions of worth
 Fundamental importance of the relationship in counselling
 Rogers' necessary and sufficient conditions
 The issue of transference
 Blocks to awareness :
 • Introjection
 • Projection
 • Retroflexion
 • Confluence
 The paradoxical theory of change
 Ego states
 Scripts and games

1e: describe a range of typical therapeutic interventions relevant to the chosen core theoretical approach

Essential subject content:

Empathy as :
 • a state of being
 • a communication skill
 The communication of the core conditions
 The counsellor's use of self
 Working at psychological depth
 Techniques and experiments

5.5.1 **Learning Outcome 1:**

Cognitive – Behavioural
 VC41C

Demonstrate an extensive knowledge of one core theoretical approach to counselling.

Criteria:

The candidate must:

1a: describe the origins and subsequent development of the chosen core theoretical approach

Essential subject content:

Pavlov and classical conditioning
Watson and phobias
Wolpe and systematic desensitisation
Skinner and behaviour therapy
Ellis and REBT
Beck and cognitive therapy

1b: describe key theoretical assumptions about the nature and development of human beings relevant to the chosen core theoretical approach

1c: describe the view taken by the chosen core theoretical approach of the development and perpetuation of psychological problems

1d: describe the view taken by the chosen core theoretical approach of the nature and process of therapeutic change

Essential subject content:

Cognition as the primary determinant
The ABC model
Automatic thoughts
The acquisition of schemas
The maintenance of irrational thinking
The modification of irrational thinking and schemas
The nature of the counselling relationship

1e: describe a range of typical therapeutic interventions relevant to the chosen core theoretical approach

Essential subject content:

Assessment
Structured sessions
Goal-setting
Homework
Cognitive techniques :

- Socratic questioning
- Relaxation
- Distraction
- Rating
- Disputing

Behavioural techniques:

- Relaxation
- Graded exposure
- Scheduling

Experiments

5.5.1 Learning Outcome 1:

Transtheoretical VC41D
Egan 'Skilled Helper'

Demonstrate an extensive knowledge of one core theoretical approach to counselling.

Criteria:

The candidate must:

1a: describe the origins and subsequent development of the chosen core theoretical approach

Essential subject content:

Eclecticism and integrationism in counselling :

- History
- Debate

Stage-based and skills-based frameworks of counselling :

- Harry Stack Sullivan's 4 stages of the therapeutic interview.
- Truax and Carkhuff – qualities of effective counselling

Strong's model of interpersonal influence in counselling

Egan's model as an integration of:

- Humanistic approach
- Behavioural approach

1b: describe key theoretical assumptions about the nature and development of human beings relevant to the chosen core theoretical approach

1c: describe the view taken by the chosen core theoretical approach of the development and perpetuation of psychological problems

1d: describe the view taken by the chosen core theoretical approach of the nature and process of therapeutic change

Essential subject content:

Human potential and growth

Human beings in social context

Stages of human development

Human nature:

- potential for healthy adaptation to change
- capacity for self-defeating activities
- entropy and inertia

The problem management perspective :

- Personal/developmental
- Organisational
- Social

Rogers' core conditions as

- necessary
- insufficient

Behavioural change as fundamental

1e: describe a range of typical therapeutic interventions relevant to the chosen core theoretical approach

Essential subject content:

Assessment

Contracting

Building empathic and accepting relationship

Empathy as a communication skill

Sensitivity and timing

Facilitating :

- Affective experiencing
- Cognitive mastery
- Behavioural change

Challenging

Use of other techniques, e.g. from:

- Gestalt
- TA

Goal-setting

Evaluation

5.5.2 Learning Outcome 2:

Psychodynamic VC41A

Humanistic VC41B

Cognitive – Behavioural
VC41C

Transtheoretical VC41D

Egan 'Skilled Helper'

Demonstrate a substantial knowledge of other significant counselling theories.

Criteria:

The candidate must :

2a: describe the key theoretical concepts of one other major theoretical tradition in counselling theory

Essential subject content:

Candidates studying VC41A, VC41B or VC41C must be able to describe the following key concepts from **one** major theoretical tradition **other** than their own.

Candidates studying VC41D must be able to describe the following key concepts from **any one** major theoretical tradition.

The relevant key concepts for Learning Outcome 2 are as follows:

Psychodynamic	Humanistic
The Unconscious	Conscious processes
Drive theory	Innate needs
Defence mechanisms	Actualising tendency
Transference	Organismic self
Countertransference	Self-concept
Free association	Psychological contact
Interpretation	Congruence
Dreams	Empathy
Object relations	Acceptance

Cognitive – Behavioural
Learned behaviour
Conditioning
Reinforcement
Behaviour modification
Cognitive distortion
Irrational beliefs
Goals and targets
Homework/tasks

2b: identify and evaluate significant similarities and differences between the chosen core theoretical approach and one other major theoretical tradition in counselling theory

Essential subject content:

Significant similarities and differences between approaches must be considered in terms of:

- Nature and development of human beings
- Development and perpetuation of psychological problems
- Nature and process of therapeutic change
- Typical therapeutic interventions.

Candidates studying VC41A, VC41B or VC41C must be able to describe similarities and differences between their own approach and **one other** major theoretical tradition (Psychodynamic, Humanistic or Cognitive – Behavioural)

Candidates studying VC41D must be able to describe similarities and differences between their own approach and **any one** major theoretical tradition (Psychodynamic, Humanistic or Cognitive – Behavioural)

Guidelines to significant similarities and differences

	Psychodynamic	Humanistic
Nature and development of human beings	The Unconscious Drive theory Object relations	Conscious processes Innate needs Actualising tendency
Development and perpetuation of psychological problems	Oedipus complex Anxiety Neurosis Defence mechanisms	Unmet needs Conditions of worth Organismic self Self-concept
Nature and process of therapeutic change	Transference Increased consciousness	Psychological contact Self-acceptance Enhanced awareness Choice
Typical therapeutic interventions	Neutral stance Free association Interpretation Use of countertransference	Congruence Empathy Acceptance Experiments

	Cognitive – Behavioural	Transtheoretical : Egan ‘Skilled Helper’
Nature and development of human beings	Learned behaviour Conditioning Reinforcement	Humanistic AND Behavioural view Social context
Development and perpetuation of psychological problems	Learned behaviour Conditioning Cognitive distortion Irrational beliefs	Capacity for self-defeating activities Entropy and inertia
Nature and process of therapeutic change	Behaviour modification Rational thinking	Empathic relationship Problem management Behaviour modification
Typical therapeutic interventions	Teaching Use of goals and targets Homework/tasks	Skills-based approach Use of goals and targets Stage 1 Current Scenario Stage 2 Preferred Scenario Stage 3 Strategy

5.5.3 Learning Outcome 3:

Psychodynamic VC41A
 Humanistic VC41B
 Cognitive –Behavioural VC41C
 Transtheoretical VC41D
 Egan ‘Skilled Helper’

Demonstrate an understanding of modern, contemporary, theoretical and practical developments in the field.

Criteria:

The candidate must:

3a: describe how contemporary understanding and practice of the chosen core theoretical approach has evolved over time

Essential subject content:

Candidates must describe how **one** of the following optional subjects has impacted on or compares with their chosen core theoretical approach.

	Psychodynamic VC41A	Humanistic VC41B
Option 1	Mann, Malan, Sifneos, Davanloo: Developments in psychodynamic counselling	Gendlin: Experiential focusing model
Option 2	Hobson, Meares: Conversational model	Greenberg, Rice and Elliott: Process-experiential model
Option 3	White, Epston, Shafer: Narrative therapy	White, Epston, Shafer: Narrative therapy
	Cognitive – Behavioural VC41C	Transtheoretical VC41D Egan ‘Skilled Helper’
Option 1	Kelly, Bannister, Fransella, Mair: Personal construct psychology	Nelson-Jones, Culley: Developments in Skills-based and problem-focused counselling
Option 2	Mahoney, Meichenbaum: Constructivism	de Shazer: Solution-focused counselling
Option 3	White, Epston, Shafer: Narrative therapy	White, Epston, Shafer: Narrative therapy

3b: describe how the chosen core theoretical approach has been adapted to the requirements of contemporary counselling practice

Essential subject content:

Counselling in a multi-cultural context :

- the Euro-centric nature of the chosen core theoretical approach
- racism and other forms of oppression and discrimination

Brief/time-focused counselling

Evidence-based practice

State regulation of counselling

5.5.4 Learning Outcome 4:

Psychodynamic VC41A
Humanistic VC41B
Cognitive – Behavioural
VC41C
Transtheoretical VC41D
Egan ‘Skilled Helper’

Demonstrate an informed critical thinking ability about contemporary counselling.

Criteria:

The candidate must analyse and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen core theoretical approach when applied to:

4a: a range of counselling contexts

Essential subject content:

Two of:

- EAP work
- NHS setting
- Student counselling
- The voluntary sector
- Private practice
- Online counselling

4b: a range of issues presented by clients

Essential subject content:

Two of:

- Depression and/or anxiety
- Stress
- Addiction
- Marital/relationship issues
- Personal growth

4c: the candidate's own developmental process

Essential subject content:

At least two examples from candidate's own experience of where chosen core theoretical approach has been helpful.

5.6 Assessment	This unit is internally (centre) assessed, with external verification by AQA. Unit and component results are reported as Pass (P) or Referred (R); no other grades are available. Centres are responsible for assessing in accordance with AQA’s assessment policy. (See section 4.)
5.6.1 Assessment Components	<p>The assessment regime for each candidate includes both formative and summative components.</p> <p>The outcomes of this unit will be assessed by means of two assessment processes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. a reflective learning journal2. an extended essay.
5.6.2 Assessment Component 1	<p>Learning Journal</p> <p>A reflective journal is to be kept throughout the course and an entry is made for each course session. The candidates record a summary of their learning and self-development, etc. During the course, all of the learning outcomes will have been addressed.</p> <p>As each journal entry is the candidate’s account of what the course had covered at a point in time, it follows that its assessment is a simple case of comparison with the scheme of work and key learning points planned for each session.</p> <p>It is therefore not possible to assess a journal without reference to a scheme of work and lesson plans.</p> <p>The journal is a fairly reliable indicator of the candidate’s knowledge and understanding and it is used to monitor progress and the basis for giving feedback.</p>
5.6.3 Assessment Component 2	<p>Extended Essay</p> <p>An extensive critical essay of 5000 to 6000 words is to be completed by the candidate in his/her own time and towards the end of the unit.</p> <p>Candidates must adhere to a strict deadline and sign a declaration to affirm that the work is their own and that they have received no extra help.</p> <p>Administered at the conclusion of the unit, this assessment component will require the candidate to demonstrate a body of knowledge and understanding which links Learning Outcomes into a coherent critical understanding of the chosen core theoretical approach.</p> <p>An appropriate essay title should be agreed between the centre and the student at the outset.</p>
5.6.4 Marking Journals	Each journal entry is the learner’s reflection of his/her experiences of the course session concerned. A journal entry is required from each candidate for each session whether the candidate attended or not. For the theory unit, the journal is to cover all learning sessions and it is not complete until all of the learning outcomes have been addressed.

The marking/assessing process is in three parts:

1. individual journal entries
2. learning outcomes
3. the completed unit.

At the beginning of the course, all of the journal's entries are to be assessed and marked on a session-by-session basis, which should continue until the tutor is confident that the students understand the process.

Thereafter, the journals are to be marked regularly, usually timed to coincide with the completion of a learning outcome.

Finally, a summative assessment is needed to confirm that the candidate's completed journal shows that, as far as it is possible to, the candidate has achieved all of the learning outcomes.

The **assessment criteria** for marking journals are as follows.

In each journal entry:

1. the prescribed boundaries of volume are complied with
2. the subject matter of the learning session is accurately reflected
3. appropriate communication skills and terminology are used
4. the key learning points are accurately and appropriately identified and interpreted
5. the candidate relates learning to his/her own developmental process
6. where appropriate, the candidate relates his/her learning to the counselling process
7. where appropriate, the candidate relates learning to ethical and Health and Safety issues.

Finally:

8. In completing the journal, throughout the unit, the candidate will have achieved sufficient knowledge and understanding of all the learning outcomes for this unit.

5.6.5 Conventions for Marking Journals

For clarity, the journal entries must be marked in RED. The marker must indicate clearly in the RIGHT-hand margin.

1. Examples of assessment criterion being achieved (P).
2. Examples of assessment criterion not yet achieved (R).
3. Points where each learning outcome (Lo) is achieved. (P + Lo Reference)

Grading

P – Represents the minimum acceptable level of achievement to PASS.

R – Represents less than the minimum acceptable level of achievement to PASS.

AQA rules allow candidates to rework journal entries which are graded R, on condition that they are submitted for marking on time and in accordance with any timetable or schedule provided by the centre.

Written Feedback to Students

Giving written feedback to candidates is essential – the grade **R** must always be accompanied by written feedback.

All written feedback must be in a form which can be inspected by AQA External Verifiers; for moderation purposes.

Schedules for Marking

It is imperative that candidates are given clear instructions explaining when and where to submit their written coursework for marking, or re-marking in the event of an R grade.

5.6.6 Marking Extended Essays

The main purpose of extended essays is to encourage candidates to widen their field of study, to read more extensively and to develop their ability to use knowledge in order critically to analyse key concepts from an informed perspective. Essays also provide candidates with opportunities to show their ability to work with knowledge and to demonstrate coherently their understanding of the role of theory in counselling practice.

Centres may choose either to set a common essay title for all candidates or to allow individual candidates to negotiate an appropriate title. Either approach is acceptable to AQA.

The titles used should give good indication of the essay's intentions and set an appropriate challenge to candidates.

For example:

“Critically analyse the contributions to modern thinking and understanding of counselling concepts made by three named expert theorists in the field of Psychodynamic/Humanistic/Cognitive – Behavioural (*delete as required*) counselling.”

The marking process for essays must be systematic and consistent. An exemplar marking matrix is appended (Appendix 1.A). Its use is not mandatory and some centres may prefer to develop their own standard marking procedure. A similar instrument of assessment, though, will be required.

5.7 Additional Learning from the Unit

CAMPAG Level 4 counselling NVQ Units:

Unit 41: Employ a theoretical framework in counselling

Element 41.1: Provide a rationale for applying a theoretical framework in counselling

Element 41.2: Review the use of a theoretical framework

Unit 42: Engage in a counselling process with clients

Element 42.1: Apply a theoretical framework with clients

Key Skills (Level 4)

C4:1 Evidence of the development of a strategy for using communication skills over an extended period (at least 3 months)

Improving own learning and performance:

LP4.2: Monitor progress and adapt strategies to achieve the appropriate outcomes.

Working with others:

WO4.1: Developing a strategy for using skills when working with others over an extended period of time (at least 3 months)

WO4.2: Monitor progress and adapt strategies to achieve appropriate outcome

5.8 Delivery Guidance

To teach this unit, tutors will need an extensive knowledge of counselling theories. They will need to be able to teach the chosen core theoretical approach at Level 5, and to have a sufficient knowledge of other theory approaches to enable students to compare and contrast key concepts. They will need to be aware that the “pure/core theoretical approach *versus* an integrationist perspective” debate in the profession is complex and unresolved, and that this is a potentially confusing subject for trainees.

As Counselling evolves into a recognised and regulated profession, trainers must be aware that their students will need to be able to give a convincing and coherent account of how and why they work with their clients. It must also be borne in mind that most counselling students today face a future employment market in which the requirements of brief/time limited work, evidence-based practice and a multi-cultural perspective are at least as important as the particular theoretical preferences of their trainers.

5.8.1 Psychodynamic VC41A

The history and development of the psychodynamic approach is a vast and complex subject in its own right. The essential subject content of Option VC41A focuses deliberately on classical Freudian Drive Theory and Object Relations, and does not attempt to include the perspectives of theorists such as Jung, Adler and Bowlby. Tutors will have their own preferences, but care must be taken to ensure that the overall aim of the Unit, namely the acquisition of a viable theoretical framework to support and inform actual work with clients, is not lost.

Every opportunity should be taken to help students make the essential link between theory and practice, for example by encouraging students to consider how their developing understanding of various ideas about transference and counter-transference may be reflected in their actual experience with clients. The blend of theory and practice contained in texts such as Jacobs (2002) represents an appropriate approach for teaching this Unit.

In view of the increasing popularity of cognitive – behavioural ways of working, it is recommended that tutors should encourage students to use this approach for comparative study.

5.8.2 Humanistic VC41B

Tutors need to bear in mind that there is no single accepted definition of the “Humanistic approach to counselling”. It is sometimes understood to be essentially equivalent to the Person-Centred approach, perhaps with the addition of some ‘techniques’ or insights from Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, Psychosynthesis and the Existential perspective. Another emphasis is that the Humanistic approach is essentially a set of particular values and attitudes which enable it readily to integrate ways of working from the whole range of counselling theories.

Option VC41B is intended, as summarised in the essential subject content, to provide students with a thorough grounding in the Person-Centred approach and to encourage them to form their own view as to whether or not Rogers’ core conditions are sufficient as well as necessary. From this standpoint, the contributions of other approaches such as Gestalt, TA and Psychosynthesis can be introduced, with the emphasis that these are regarded by their practitioners as distinct approaches in their own right and that their integration with Rogerian theory is not a simple or straightforward undertaking.

The particular emphasis in Humanistic psychology on experiential learning – for example the value of the unstructured process group – should be incorporated insofar as local circumstances permit.

In view of the increasing popularity of cognitive – behavioural ways of working, it is recommended that tutors should encourage students to use this approach for comparative study.

5.8.3 Cognitive Behavioural VC41C

It is expected that tutors will be experienced CBT practitioners. The approach contains a rich array of powerful techniques which must be practised in class before students use them with clients. Although the approach is less focused on the counselling relationship itself than are other traditions, the importance of collaborative working, in which behavioural objectives are carefully agreed with the client, must not be neglected. It is recommended that students should learn to use 'standard' cognitive therapy before attempting schema-focused work with its emphasis on early experience and the therapeutic alliance.

Students should be introduced to established diagnostic tools such as the Beck and Young scale and DSMIV, whilst also giving due attention to how a diagnostic and relatively directive approach fits within a framework of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice.

5.8.4 Transtheoretical VC41D

Egan 'Skilled Helper'

Both the advantages and disadvantages of learning a transtheoretical approach must be explored with students, and the drawbacks of 'wild eclecticism' for students and their clients must be understood. It is important that students are able to offer a clear rationale for their choice of interventions with their clients.

Egan's model is by definition open and flexible, and is more concerned with skills than with theory. It is nevertheless best taught as being rooted in an essentially humanistic view of human beings and the counselling relationship in Stage 1, and an essentially behavioural view of the importance of action in Stage 3. The temptation to encourage students to temporarily 'become psychodynamic' in Stage 2 should be resisted, since experience in Level 3 courses suggests that this usually results in confusion.

Egan's emphasis on understanding clients in terms of social context and stage of development provides rich opportunities for incorporating a multi-cultural perspective.

5.9 Recommended Reading

Unit 1 as a whole

McLeod, J: *An Introduction to Counselling* (3rd Edition) Open University Press 2003. ISBN 0335211895

Palmer, S (Ed): *Introduction to Counselling and Psychotherapy* The Essential Guide –Sage, 2000. ISBN 0761955445

Palmer, (Ed): *Multicultural Counselling. A Reader.* Sage, 2002. ISBN 0761963766

Payne, M: *An Introduction for Counsellors.* Narrative Therapy Sage, 2000. ISBN 0761957839

Psychodynamic VC41A

Jacobs, M: *Psychodynamic Counselling in Action* (2nd Edition) Sage, 2002. ISBN 0761963014

McLoughlin, B: *Developing Psychodynamic Counselling*. Sage, 1995. ISBN 0-8039-8980-6/0803989806

Jacobs, M: *The Presenting Past: The Core of Psychodynamic Counselling and Therapy* (2nd Edition). Open University Press 1998. ISBN 0335201962

Jacobs, M: *Sigmund Freud* (2nd Edition) Sage, 2003. ISBN 076194110X

Segal, J: *Melanie Klein* (2nd Edition) Sage, 2004. ISBN 0761943013

Jacobs, M: *D W Winnicott* Sage, 1996. ISBN 0803985967

Leiper, R & Maltby, M: *The Psychodynamic Approach to Therapeutic Change*. Sage, 2004 ISBN 0761948716

Mander, G: *A Psychodynamic Approach to Brief Therapy*. Sage, 2000. ISBN 0761960066

Humanistic VC41B

Thorne, B: *Carl Rogers* (2nd Edition) Sage, 2003. ISBN 0761941126

Mearns, D: *Developing Person-Centred Counselling* (2nd Edition). Sage, 2003. ISBN 0761949690

McMillan, M: *The Person-Centred Approach to Therapeutic Change*. Sage, 2004. ISBN 0761948694

Clarkson, P: *Gestalt Counselling in Action* (3rd Edition). Sage, 2004. ISBN 141290085

Cognitive – Behavioural VC41C

Wills, F & Sanders, D: *Cognitive Therapy – Transforming the Image*. Sage, 1997. ISBN 0761950834

Trower, P, Casey, A & Dryden, W: *Cognitive – Behavioural Counselling in Action*. Sage, 1998. ISBN 0803980485

Dryden, W & Neenan, M: *Rational Emotive Behavioural Counselling in Action* (3rd Edition). Sage, 2004. ISBN 1412902134

Scott, M J, Stradling, S G & Dryden, W: *Developing Cognitive – Behavioural Counselling*. Sage 1996. ISBN 0803978944

Yankura, J & Dryden, W: *Albert Ellis*. Sage 1994. ISBN 0803985290

Weishaar, M: Sage 1993. *Aaron T Beck*. ISBN 0803985657

Transtheoretical VC41D

Egan 'Skilled Helper'

Egan, G: *The Skilled Helper – A Problem Management and Opportunity Development Approach to Helping*. Wadsworth, 2001 ISBN 0534367313

Palmer, S & Woolfe, R(Eds): *Integrative and Eclectic Counselling and Psychotherapy* Sage, 2003 ISBN 0761957995

Culley, S & Bond, T: *Integrative Counselling Skills in Action* (2nd Edition). Sage, 2004. ISBN 0761969942

DRAFT

Draft

6

Unit 2

Developing Higher Counselling Skills

6.1 About this Unit

This unit focuses the candidates' attention on themselves in order that they will be able critically to analyse their own performance and ability to formulate and develop some problem-solving strategies involving complex counselling problems; in the relative safety of a simulated counselling environment.

The unit is intended to provide candidates with a safe environment in which to work on developing, refining, experimenting with, evaluating and extending their range of counselling skills, techniques and style.

Candidates are introduced to and given opportunities to study new complex counselling situations and to develop appropriate skills and techniques needed to work at this level. Throughout the unit, students are encouraged to share ideas and experiences with other group members and to have an opportunity to simulate counselling situations involving complex and unusual client issues within the comparative safety of a group. They will learn to evaluate the effectiveness of different techniques and styles in establishing, sustaining and concluding therapeutic relationships with different clients presenting complex and/or sensitive issues.

Candidates will become familiar with the skills and interventions most relevant to the core theoretical approach chosen for the whole programme. They will also study and practise skills and interventions drawn from the other theoretical approaches – this will not only develop greater insight, but will also ensure that the essential link between skills and theory and the interrelatedness of the two are reinforced.

The concept of *reflective practitioner* is to be emphasised throughout to promote the candidates' awareness of learning from personal and professional experiences. The use of clinical supervision to ensure safe, ethical practice will be of fundamental importance in this process.

6.2 Aims

The learning aims for this unit are that on successful completion of the unit, candidates will have:

- acquired and practised a range of high level counselling skills, techniques and interventions
- become skilful reflective counsellors within a core theoretical approach
- become competent to conduct complex counselling for the benefit of a range of clients.

6.3 Learning Outcomes

Aim 1. Acquire and practise a range of high level counselling skills, techniques and interventions

Learning Outcomes for Aim 1

- (a) The candidate will have **extensive knowledge and understanding** of what is meant by the terms counselling skills, techniques and interventions.
 - (b) The candidate will have acquired an extensive range of counselling skills, techniques and interventions
 - (c) The candidate will be able to **apply** these skills, techniques and interventions in practice.
-

Aim 2. Become a skilful reflective counsellor within a core theoretical approach

Learning Outcomes for Aim 2

- (a) The candidate will have a **knowledge and understanding** of what it is to be a skilful reflective counsellor within a core theoretical approach.
 - (b) The candidate will be able to **apply** the knowledge and understanding from 2(a) to counselling skills, techniques and interventions
 - (c) The candidate will have the ability to **conduct** counselling within a core theoretical approach.
-

Aim 3. Become competent to conduct complex counselling for the benefit of a range of clients.

Learning Outcomes for Aim 3

- (a) The candidate will have a **knowledge and understanding** of what it entails to be competent to conduct complex counselling.
- (b) The candidate will be able to identify and describe complex counselling issues and to devise strategies for counselling clients presenting such issues
- (c) The candidate will be able to identify and examine cases of complex counselling to establish how counselling skills are used in practice, and to **achieve a degree of mastery** of the relevant methods
- (d) On completion of the unit, candidates will have demonstrated the ability to conduct complex counselling effectively with a range of clients.

On completion of Unit 2, candidates will have practised and evaluated a wide range of counselling skills, using techniques and a personal style which are consistent with their chosen core theoretical approach, for:

1. Assessing the suitability for counselling of a range of clients presenting different and sometimes complex difficulties.
2. Engaging a range of different clients in counselling
3. Developing and sustaining a therapeutic relationship with a range of different clients
4. Assessing the effectiveness of interventions
5. Ending or concluding a therapeutic relationship with different clients
6. The use of clinical supervision.

6.4 Subject Content

To complete this unit satisfactorily, candidates will engage in learning activities which enable them to:

- Revise and build upon their existing understanding of an extensive range of generic counselling skills
- Study and/or observe the expert use of counselling skills, techniques and interventions consistent with a core theoretical approach to counselling
- Study the core characteristics of alternative core theories in comparison with own core theory
- Practise and evaluate the application and use of a wide range of counselling skills, techniques and interventions consistent with a core theoretical approach to counselling
- Critically evaluate the difference between the core characteristics of effective counselling and the particular skills, techniques and interventions relevant to a core theoretical approach to counselling
- Assess and diagnose clients' needs, using counselling skills, and recognise signs of complex and/or sensitive issues
- Gain critical understanding of the essential need for practitioner self-awareness
- Analyse the ways in which emotions are communicated
- Apply knowledge of the concept of change, and of the skills which facilitate change.

6.5 Core Counselling Skills

Candidates are required to develop their mastery of the generic skills listed below and to incorporate them into a range of therapeutic techniques and strategies with which they will develop a coherent approach to counselling. In studying for this unit, candidates will address

- key concepts of the core theory
- skills whose roots are from the core theory
- skills which are inappropriate or should be used with caution
- ethics and safety
- practical issues.

The following generic counselling skills form the foundation for competence and should all be within the scope of students for this unit:

- attending
- observing
- active listening to clients':
 - experiences
 - behaviour
 - feelings
 - thoughts
- listening to own :
 - thinking
 - feeling
 - intuiting
- the use of silence
- empathy
- advanced empathy
- questioning
- reflecting by :
 - restating
 - summarising
 - paraphrasing
 - giving feedback
- probing by :
 - questioning
 - making statements
- self-disclosure
- information sharing
- immediacy
- challenging
- closure.

6.6 Higher Level Skills Specific to Core Theoretical Approaches

The core theoretical approach chosen for the course as a whole will present its own particular challenges and learning opportunities where skills training are concerned.

Candidates will need to develop appropriate techniques and strategies informing the way in which skills are used.

Some of the more important issues for each of the mainstream core theories and for one widely used transtheoretical approach are identified below, and, in each case, these represent the very least that a candidate will need to consider if he or she is to be successful.

6.6.1 Psychodynamic

- Assessment of:
 - available support mechanisms in addition to counselling
 - psychological mindedness
 - ability to form working alliance
- History taking
- Establishing boundaries and limits
- Determining if, when and how to interpret the transference
- Use of triangle of insight
- Use of the countertransference
- Recognition of resistance and acting out

6.6.2 Humanistic

The particular way in which this tradition views counselling in terms of “skills” and “techniques” will need to be explored and discussed.

It is expected that the Person-Centred approach will feature strongly in centres using the humanistic tradition as the core theoretical approach for this unit. The successful provision and *communication* of the core conditions are fundamental and must be explored continuously.

Other key skill areas to be covered are:

- Maintaining empathy and a non-judgemental attitude across a range of clients
- Establishing psychological contact with a range of clients
- Entering the client’s world with willingness, confidence and respect
- Analysing the degree of externalisation or internalisation of the client’s locus of evaluation
- Challenging the client in ways that evoke a congruent response.

Centres may wish to incorporate other approaches commonly regarded as belonging to the Humanistic tradition, such as Gestalt and Transactional Analysis. They will need to ensure that this is not done at the expense of providing students with a thorough grounding in the above aspects of the Person-Centred approach.

6.6.3 Cognitive – behavioural approach

- Identifying emotions, assumptions and beliefs
 - Identifying and rating negative automatic thoughts
 - Challenging, modifying and revising assumptions
 - Modifying negative thoughts
 - Guided discovery and Socratic questioning
 - Encouraging diary-keeping
 - Devising and encouraging behavioural experiments
 - Distraction
 - Problem solving
-

6.6.4 Transtheoretical

The following skills must be revisited and developed:

- active listening
- reflecting
- paraphrasing
- checking understanding
- open questions
- summarising
- challenging
- facilitating
- focusing
- prioritising
- brainstorming
- imaginative thinking
- selecting

- reality checking
- action planning
- exploring costs and benefits
- checking commitment to goal.

Centres wishing to use other integrative, eclectic or transtheoretical approaches will need to agree a suitable list in advance with AQA.

6.7 Assessment

The unit is intended to enable candidates to explore thoroughly the use and application of counselling skills and to develop their own counselling expertise to a high level, as befits a professional practitioner. The stated learning outcomes for each of the learning aims identified in this specification form the basis for assessing candidates. To pass the unit, candidates will need to have achieved all of the learning outcomes to a satisfactory standard.

The unit is assessed through the candidates' performance in the following prescribed coursework exercises.

Centres must devise a range of suitable fictitious counselling scenarios to be used by candidates in both learning and assessed simulation exercises.

Centres must take particular care that any learning material or assessment material used, which is based on actual cases, does not breach professional and ethical codes and does not endanger strict rules of confidentiality.

Centres must provide AQA with an outline scheme of work for the unit and a scheme of assessment. Schemes of assessment must show clearly when and how assessment is to be administered.

A final unit result, grade, for each candidate must be reported to AQA on or before the coursework deadline for the examination series concerned.

A scheme of assessment should also be provided to candidates at an early stage in a course.

AQA reserves the right of access to written work submitted by candidates for assessment purposes for a period of up to 2 years after the unit has been completed, in the event of an enquiry upon results.

Candidates are graded P if they achieve the assessment criteria/learning outcomes/unit satisfactorily, or R where they do not.

The unit is centre assessed, with external verification by AQA.

Unit results are reported as Pass (P) or Referred (R); no other grades are available.

Assessors are to be suitably qualified and experienced in counselling skills, such that their judgement is reliable.

6.8 Assessment Processes

The assessment regime for each candidate includes both formative and summative components.

e.g. Candidates are formally assessed:

1. Formatively on a regular basis during the learning process
2. Summatively at least twice before completing the unit; and once on or near the conclusion of study for the unit.

6.9 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment provides essential feedback to candidates. It comprises information necessary to direct and reinforce their learning from the course.

It is expected that the unit will take a predominantly practical approach to learning, with students engaging in a range of learning activities. Centres will find that this approach gives ample opportunity for them to monitor candidates' performance and to give informal feedback. However, centres should also devise a formal system of providing written feedback for quality assurance (verification) purposes.

Formative assessment is not included in the final unit result.

6.10 Summative Assessments

The unit has two formal summative assessments. The first is one to test the candidates' conceptual knowledge and understanding and their ability to communicate effectively. The second is to test the candidates' ability to conduct core theory counselling safely, ethically and proficiently.

6.11 Assessment Exercise 1

Assessment 1 is to be administered approximately two thirds into the unit.

The exercise.

Produce a discussion paper, present the paper to a peer group and participate in resulting discussions. Debrief and evaluate the exercise.

The topic for the discussion paper is to be:

Practical considerations for the incorporation of core theory skills into my counselling practice.

Assessment criteria

1. Paper of 1000 to 2000 words.
2. The paper addresses the following:
 - key concepts of the core theory
 - skills whose roots are from the core theory

- skills which are inappropriate or should be used with caution
 - ethics and safety
 - practical issues.
3. In discussion:
- subject introduced coherently
 - discussion managed effectively
 - main points summarised
 - questions managed effectively.
4. Self-evaluation

Candidates are to write an evaluative debrief of the session, which identifies:

- strengths and weaknesses of the exercise
- key points where the exercise had influenced their understanding or knowledge
- other conclusions.

6.12 Assessment Exercise 2

Assessment 2 is to be completed at the conclusion of the unit.

The exercise is in two parts:

- (a) to counsel a client in a **simulated** counselling session which addresses a range of complex and difficult client presenting issues
- (b) formally to evaluate the practical exercise in a written report.

Assessment criteria

1. The counselling session.

The counsellor:

- (a) establishes a therapeutic relationship
- (b) works consistently to the core theory
- (c) uses responding skills
- (d) uses intervention
- (e) works ethically and safely for the benefit of the client

- (f) addresses the client's issues
- (g) concludes appropriately.

2. Written report and self-evaluation.

- (a) An accurate account of the session
- (b) Use of appropriate terminology and technical language
- (c) Identifies and describes the client's issues
- (d) Relates the process to a core theory and identifies specific counselling skills and strategies attempted and the client's responses
- (e) Critically evaluates the session from a core theory perspective
- (f) Makes appropriate conclusions and defines a helping strategy for the client.

6.13 Delivery Guidance (Please also refer to Section 4)

Essentially, this unit is intended to provide candidates with a platform of experiential learning. They should be encouraged to work with each other in developing and refining and practising their core theory counselling techniques and in experimenting with new and original ideas through trial and error in a safe but controlled environment.

Teaching /learning strategies for this unit will necessarily involve a substantial amount of simulated counselling, discussion and analysis. Tutors must emphasise and reinforce links between theory and practice. Centres may find it is helpful to structure courses: for example, by addressing the basic phases of a counselling relationship as follows:

- Assessing the suitability of a range of clients, presenting different and sometimes complex difficulties, for counselling
- Engaging a range of different clients in counselling
- Developing and sustaining a therapeutic relationship with a range of different clients
- Ending or concluding a therapeutic relationship with different clients.

Candidates must be given ample opportunity to experiment with, to discuss and to practise the use of counselling skills, techniques and interventions relevant to each of these phases. They will learn to analyse these skills, techniques and interventions with particular regard to:

- a core theoretical approach

- the nature of the contract and the context in which the counselling will take place
- complex and/or unusual counselling issues.

There are clear links with the theory unit and this should be emphasised in the teaching of the unit.

Whilst candidates are “working towards” their Core Model, they should also learn from other theoretical approaches – this will help to reinforce the essential link between counselling skills and core theory.

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Unit 3

Counselling in Practice

7.1 About this Unit

This unit is designed to address the practicalities of incorporating core theory and learning from Units 1 and 2 into the candidates' counselling; it therefore links in with the learning from these units and addresses the reality of counselling for core theory counsellors.

This is essentially a form of action research unit, in which candidates conduct a formal descriptive inquiry into their own core theory counselling practice and client work. The study is in two parts. In part one, the candidates will learn about the main methods of inquiry used in counselling and then make use of them to analyse at least 50 hours of their own core theory work with clients. Part two addresses the acquisition of and demonstration of essential business knowledge, including finance and law, pertaining to the lawful operation of counselling practices in the UK.

The unit is predicated on the premise that research informs practice, and practice reinforces research.

The subject of enquiry is the candidates' own counselling practice as it takes place, and as the candidate attempts to incorporate learning from Units 1 and 2 into his/her client work.

At least 50 hours of client work are required to provide sufficient data for the purpose.

Candidates must also fulfil the requirements of appropriate clinical supervision and personal therapy to support them in their client-based practice work. These will also provide them with further opportunities to gather additional information and data.

7.2 Unit-Specific Entry Requirements

AQA Units VC41 (any from A to D) and VC42

Candidates will be expected to be already engaged in supervised counselling placement/practice and to be supported by personal therapy.

7.3 Aims

The unit aims are that on completion of the unit:

1. Candidates will have the ability to use established techniques to analyse and critically abstract concepts which will support their attempt to implement, sustain or improve core theory counselling in practice; this will include effects on the processes, use of skills, therapeutic relationships, clients and outcomes;
2. Candidates will have developed a thorough knowledge and understanding of all non-counselling aspects of operating a professional therapeutic counselling practice, including business practice and law, and attendant issues relating to employment and self-employment.

7.4 Objectives (Learning Outcomes)

Candidates who successfully complete this unit will have:

1. acquired sufficient understanding of qualitative research methods and of participant – observer techniques to be able to conduct a meaningful enquiry into candidates' own counselling practice;
2. defined and isolated the problem(s) for investigation, directly related to core theory counselling. (N.B. The word 'problem' here means 'something which requires investigation');
3. gathered appropriate data, organised it and analysed it;
4. developed their understanding of theory and its application to counselling practice;
5. shown knowledge of UK and EU business systems, procedures and criminal law for the efficient, effective, ethical and legitimate functioning of a counselling practice.

7.5 Scheme of Assessment

The unit is centre assessed and externally verified by AQA.

Unit results are reported as Pass (P) or Referred (R).

The following coursework assessments are defined by AQA as being sufficient and appropriate instruments for assessing candidates' achievement in this unit.

Centres are responsible for marking candidates' work and reporting the unit results to AQA on or before the examination series deadline.

Centres must produce schemes of work and assessment plans for the unit which shows clearly when students' work is to be submitted for marking.

An assessment plan must be available to students at an early stage in the unit.

AQA's external verifier will require a copy of both the schemes of work and the assessment plans.

The subject of enquiry will be counselling hours that have been confirmed as having taken place during the lifetime of the course only.

It is, of course, acceptable to make references to other counselling experience in analysis or in drawing conclusions, etc.

AQA reserves a right of access to candidates' written work for a period of up to 2 years after the unit has been completed in the event of an enquiry upon results.

Formative assessment

It is important that candidates' progress is monitored throughout the programme of study and that, where necessary, feedback is given to keep them on track. Formative assessment does not count towards the unit mark.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment takes place when candidates have completed each of the following assessment tasks. Centres are to set appropriate deadline dates based on the guidelines given below.

1. Upon completion of the unit, candidates must present a portfolio of evidence to confirm that at least 50 hours' supervised counselling practice has taken place during the lifetime of the course. The portfolio should comprise a log of client meetings, supervisor's reports and evidence of personal therapy.
2. At one third of the unit, candidates must present a paper and participate in a discussion with peers on the subject of appropriate research methodology for conducting enquiries into counselling practice.
3. By the end of the unit, candidates must present a completed research project of **2000 to 2500** words presenting findings which analyse the candidates' practice in terms of problems and other issues concerned with a core theoretical approach to counselling.
4. By the end of the unit, candidates must present an essay of **2000 to 2500** words which describes business and legal considerations for proprietors of counselling practices in general and for the counsellor's own counselling practice in particular.

7.6 Subject Content

The following list of subjects is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive. There is scope in this unit for both the centre and the candidate to widen their study to cover other appropriate and relevant material as they find necessary in order to achieve the assessed outcomes. It is expected that the topics listed below will feature strongly in the centres formal learning strategy.

Throughout and wherever it is appropriate to do so, reference should be made to core theory and its influences on the subject matter.

- BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice
- Health and Safety
- Use of case notes
- Research methodology: e.g. qualitative and quantitative
- Collecting data

- How to compose a research-based report
- Purposes and aims of counselling
- Expectations of counselling
- Counselling techniques used and why?
- Self-awareness and self-exploration
- Client reactions and resistance to counselling
- Skills and techniques from the application of ‘core’ theory
- Integrating core theory into practice
- Structuring the counselling process
- Evaluating counselling processes
- The impact of supervision and personal therapy
- Contemporary developments in counselling theories
- Cultural diversity
- Ethical and moral issues involved in counselling practice
- UK and European Legislation.
- Contract Law
- Personal and professional liability/Indemnity Insurance
- Protection and discrimination law
- Regulation and control
- Case notes and the law
- Referral networks

7.7 Additional Learning

CAMPAG Level 4 counselling NVQ Units

Unit 7: Assist clients to decide on a course of action

Unit 8: Assist clients to plan the implementation of a course of action

Unit 9: Assist clients to review their achievement of a course of action

Unit 20: Evaluate and develop own contribution to the service

Unit 41: Employ a theoretical framework in counselling

Unit 42: Engage in a counselling process with clients

Unit 43: Assess clients for counselling

Unit 44: Explore clients' issues during the counselling process

Unit 45: Conclude counselling with clients

Unit 46: Reflect own counselling practice

Key Skills (Level 4)

Communication:

C4:1. Evidence of the development of a strategy for using communication skills over an extended period (at least 3 months)

C4:2. Evaluate and synthesise information from various sources. Monitor progress of personal performance, and present evidence of outcomes

C4:3. Evaluation of overall strategy, including an in-depth consideration of the factors that affected the outcomes.

Improving own learning and performance:

LP4.2: Monitor progress and adapt strategies to achieve the appropriate outcomes.

Working with others:

WO4.1: Developing a strategy for using skills when working with others over an extended period of time (at least 3 months)

WO4.2: Monitor progress and adapt strategies to achieve appropriate outcomes.

7.8 Essential Information for Tutors

The unit is designed to develop candidates' ability to analyse and evaluate essential aspects of their counselling practice in order that they will better understand how clients respond and how counselling processes can be managed.

Some knowledge and understanding of structured methods of enquiry are likely to be a useful addition to the candidates' learning skills now and in the future. Teachers should emphasise the personal and professional developmental advantages of this knowledge for students.

The ideal teaching and learning strategy for this unit will feature methods which encourage independent study and provide ample opportunity for learners to consolidate their learning, although some structured input on basic research methods is called for in the early stages, in particular for candidates with little or no knowledge research methods. It is important that contact with students is maintained throughout and that their independent study is monitored frequently.

Where possible, candidates should be introduced to examples of research in the social science field

Although independent study is likely to feature strongly, it is expected that candidates will be afforded frequent and appropriate opportunities to share their plans and thoughts with their peers as well as with tutors. Group work, presentations and tutorials would feature strongly in the ideal delivery model for this unit.

In the interest of client safety, it is expected that candidates will have a sound working knowledge and understanding of the BACP Ethical Framework, which should be a significant point of reference for their work with clients.

7.9 Recommended Reading

BACP: *Ethical Framework in Counselling and Psychotherapy*

BACP: *Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*

Berry, R: *The Research Project: How to write it*. Pergamon Press, 1996

Dillon, I: *Learning from Mistakes in Clinical Practice*. Brooks Cole, 2002

Dryden, W (Ed): *Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy*. Sage, 1996.

Dryden, W (Ed): *Hard Earned Lessons for Counselling in Action*. Sage, 1992

Dryden, W (Ed): *Key Issues for Counselling in Action*. Sage, 1989

Feasey, D: *Good Practice in Psychotherapy and Counselling: The Exceptional Relationship*. Whurr, 2000

Herbert, M: *Planning a Research Project*. Cassell, 1990

Howe, D: *On Being the Client: Understanding the Process of Counselling*. Sage, 1993

Jenkins, P (Ed): *Legal Issues in Counselling and Psychotherapy*. Sage, 2002

Kazdin, A E (et al.): *What works for whom? A Critical Review of Psychotherapy Research*. Guilford Press, 1998.

Lenson, E S: *Succeeding in Private Practice*. Sage, 1994.

MacMahon, G: *Setting up in your own Private Practice: In Counselling and Psychotherapy*. National Extension College, 1994

McLeod, J: *Doing Counselling Research*. Sage, 1994.

McLeod, J: *Practitioners' Research in Counselling*. Sage, 1999.

McLeod, J: *Qualitative Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy*. Sage, 2000

Palmer, S (Ed) & McMahon, G (Ed): *Client Assessment*. Sage, 1997

Syme, G: *Counselling in Independent Practice*. OUP, 1994

Thistle, R: *Counselling and Psychotherapy in Private Practice*. Sage, 1998

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Unit 4

Counselling in Context

8.1 About this Unit

This unit involves an analytical research approach which requires candidates to investigate and evaluate in some depth the application of therapeutic counselling in specific counselling contexts, which are normally outside the locus of their own experience. Candidates will examine the importance of knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts in which specialised counselling occurs, and evaluate how this contributes to the development of a responsible, reflective and ethical practice.

The unit will challenge candidates to examine and evaluate contextual factors which inform and shape counselling process and practice.

Candidates will show how the informed and systematic application of the research – practice model of counselling enables in-depth analysis of the different contextual arenas for counselling, and will examine the relevant and appropriate skills needed by a professional counselling practitioner to function within these different contextual areas.

8.2 Unit-Specific Entry Requirements

Candidates will be expected to be already engaged in a supervised counselling practice/placement.

8.3 Aims

The unit aims are that on completion of the unit:

1. Candidates will have developed extensive knowledge of a range of different contexts in which counselling operates, and of the impact of context upon a professional therapeutic counselling practice.
2. Candidates will have been challenged to develop their own awareness of the importance of diversity, social and cultural contexts for their counselling practice; to work within an ethical framework, and have enhanced self-awareness and the ability to appraise and reflect on their own practice.
3. Candidates will be cognisant of the need to develop skills, knowledge and values in order to work effectively with clients from a diverse range of backgrounds, while understanding and respecting the impact of difference and diversity upon their own professional counselling practice.
4. Candidates will have been equipped with the skills needed to relate their counselling practice to real life issues, and with the tacit knowledge and practical wisdom derived from working within a range of differing contextual settings.

8.4 Objectives (Learning Outcomes)

In meeting each of these objectives, candidates must show that they are aware of the risks to health and safety, and of the well-being of both counsellor and client, with particular reference given to managing aggressive, violent and emotional clients.

On completion of this unit, candidates will have:

1. shown critical knowledge and understanding of counselling within a multiplicity of counselling contexts;
2. acquired a thorough knowledge and critical understanding of the ethical and legal implications for counsellors working within different professional counselling contexts;
3. acquired a critical conceptual understanding of the practical issues of contextual counselling on the counselling process;
4. analysed at least one counselling context which would not be considered part of the candidates' normal counselling practice;
5. evaluated a range of counselling skills required for working with clients in different professional counselling contexts;
6. shown how reflective and analytical evaluation of counselling in different contexts can inform and develop the candidates' own practice.

8.5 Scheme of Assessment

This unit is entirely centre assessed and externally verified by AQA.

Unit results are reported as Pass (P) or Referred (R); there are no other grades available for candidates.

The following coursework is defined by AQA as being a sufficient and appropriate instrument for assessing candidates' achievement in this unit.

The AQA centre is responsible for confirming whether or not each candidate that they enter for the unit has achieved the learning outcomes at Level 5 and has therefore passed, or not passed, the unit by a deadline date for unit results set by AQA. Candidates for whom results are not submitted to AQA on or before the results deadline date will be designated a refer (R).

AQA will require the centre to provide substantial evidence that candidates have been reliably assessed. AQA also reserves the right of access to all candidates' written work for a period of up to 2 years after the unit has been completed in the event of an enquiry upon results.

8.6 Assessment Processes

1. Essay of **2000 to 2500** words, critically evaluating therapeutic relationships in a range of counselling contexts, from a conceptual and methodological understanding.
2. A paper presentation to a group, or lead seminar or discussion group on the subject of contextual counselling, the counselling process, and its impact on the counsellor.
3. An evaluation paper of **2500 to 3000** words, to describe and analyse a specific counselling context which is different from the candidates' normal experience of counselling practice.

8.7 Subject Content

In order to achieve the Learning Outcomes, the candidates should cover all of the following topics.

- BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice
- Health and Safety
- Ethical dilemmas inherent in the practice of counselling within a multiplicity of contextual settings
- Trans-cultural perspectives in counselling practice
- Identity, culture and ethnicity
- Counselling in healthcare settings
- Educational counselling
- Gender counselling
- Sexual orientation counselling
- Anti-discrimination practice
- Counselling in the workplace
- Bereavement and grief counselling
- Counselling in the voluntary sector
- Counselling victims of major disasters
- Economic, social and political issues
- Group counselling
- Counselling the elderly
- Drugs and substance abuse

8.8 Additional Learning

CAMPAG Level 4 counselling NVQ units

Unit 15: Liaise with other services

Unit 20: Evaluate and develop own contribution to the service

Unit 42: Engage in a counselling process with clients

Unit 43: Assess clients for counselling

43: 2 Review the suitability of counselling with clients

Unit 44: Explore client issues during the counselling process

Unit 46: 1 & 2 : Reflect on own counselling practice

Key Skills (Level 4)

Communication:

C4:2. Monitor progress and adapt strategies to achieve required outcomes

C4:3. Evaluate strategies and present outcomes from counselling work.

Improving own Learning and Performance:

LP4: 1. Develop a strategy for improving own learning and performance, by finding strategies to improve performance

LP4: 2. Monitor progress and adapt strategy to improve performance through support, feedback and clinical reflection

LP4: 3. Evaluate overall strategy and present outcomes from at least two differing learning outcomes.

Working with others:

WO4: 1. Developing a strategy for using skills when working with others

WO4:2 Monitor progress and adapt strategies to achieve appropriate outcomes.

8.9 Essential Information for Tutors

This unit is intended to extend the candidates' knowledge and understanding of a range of different contexts and purposes for counselling services, in particular where the counselling is specialised and outside of the candidates' normal field of experiences.

The learning process is likely to be focused on the candidates' ability to research and evaluate their knowledge and understanding of the differing contextual settings for counselling practice (within the UK), with the tutors providing pedagogical and facilitative support.

The unit's aim is also to broaden and enrich the candidates' learning from other course units and from their prior experiences of supervised counselling practice. On completion of the unit, candidates will be equipped to draw their own conclusions and will be better able to take advantage of their extended knowledge of the application of therapeutic counselling practice within different counselling contexts, to the benefit of their clients and to inform and improve their own practice.

At the start of the unit, the tutor should concentrate on ensuring that the candidates know and understand what is required of them to enable them to succeed. As each candidate will have his/her own unique experience and background, the unit will present different learning challenges. The tutor's input will facilitate, inform and support the candidates' study.

It is expected that all candidates will have frequent and appropriate opportunities to share their learning and analytical experiences with peer candidates and tutors. Group work and one-to-one tutorials feature strongly in the ideal delivery model for this unit.

Whilst candidates must be encouraged to experiment in the use of newly acquired knowledge and understanding, and to analyse the effects in some detail, client safety is essential, and, therefore, radical departure from normal practice should be thoroughly examined and restricted to use in simulation exercises before exposure to clients. Candidates should be encouraged to try out new ideas in the comparative safety of simulated interviews or role play exercises at the Centre before attempting to experiment with real clients.

The primary role of the centre/tutors for this unit is to facilitate the development of reflective counselling practitioners. Tutors should be given regular team support/supervision within the Centre to assist their own functioning.

8.10 Recommended Reading

- Aldridge, S: *Counselling Skills in Context*. Hodder & Arnold, 2001.
- Barwick, N: *Clinical Counselling in Schools* (Clinical Counselling in Context Series). Francis Books, 2000
- Brearley, J: *Counselling in Social Work*. Open University Press, 1994.
- Bubbenzer, D L & West, J D: *Counselling Couples*. Sage, 1993
- Coles, A: *Counselling in the Workplace* (Counselling in Context Series). Open University Press, 2004.
- Daines, B, Gask, L, Usherwood, T: *Medical and Psychiatric Issues for Counsellors*. Sage, 1997.
- Dryden, W (Ed): *Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy* (Practical Applications). Sage, 1996
- Dryden, W (Ed): *Handbook of Counselling in Britain* (2nd edition). Routledge, 1997
- East, P: *Counselling in Medical Settings* (Counselling in Context Series), Open University Press, 1995.
- Etherington, K: *Counsellors in Health Settings*. Jessica Kingsley, 2001
- Lees, J (Ed): *Clinical Counselling in Context – An Introduction*. Routledge, 1998.
- Lees, J (Ed): *Clinical Counselling in Primary Care*. Francies Books, 1999
- Lees, J & Vaspe, A (Eds): *Clinical Counselling in Further and Higher Education*. Routledge, 1999.
- Mabey, J & Sorenson, B: *Counselling for Young People*. (Counselling in Context Series). Open University Press, 1995.
- Murgatroyd, S & Woolfe, R: *Coping with Crisis*. Open University Press, 1982.
- Perry, J: *Counselling for Women* (Counselling in Context Series). Open University Press, 1993.
- Terry, P: *Counselling the Elderly and their Carers*. MacMillan, 1997.
- Tudor, K: *Group Counselling*. Sage, 1999
- Tyndall, N: *Counselling in the Voluntary Sector* (Counselling Context Series) Open University Press, 1993.
- Worden, J.W: *Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy* (3rd Edition). Brunner-Routledge, 2003

Unit 5

Counselling Supervision and Principles of Continuing Professional Development

9.1 About this Unit

Counselling supervision and continuing professional development are generally accepted as being essential ethical and professional requirements for counselling practitioners. They are also important factors which can have a significant influence on the quality of counselling. This unit will enable students to study these important activities and, in so doing, develop an extensive and informed knowledge and understanding of the underpinning theory and practical issues involved.

Learning for counselling supervision in this unit will combine study of both traditional and modern theoretical teachings with an empirical analysis of the candidates' ongoing experiences of counselling supervision. It will challenge candidates to examine the role of counselling supervision in the wider processes of developing and maintaining a responsible, reflective and ethical counselling practice.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) should represent approximately 30% of study for the unit. It will address both personal and professional aspects of the concept. It will also introduce candidates to the more practical aspects of appraising or assessing training/learning needs, both in others and in themselves, and planning for CPD.

The unit will require a structured approach to learning which involves a range of learning activities and independent study.

Candidates are required to make good use of their own experiences of contracted supervision whilst studying this unit, to establish an experiential learning base, and to complement the more theoretical study on the course.

9.2 Unit-Specific Entry Requirements

AQA Units VC41 and VC42

9.3 Aims

On completion of this unit, candidates:

- will have developed a critical understanding of the purpose and function of both Supervision and personal therapy for counselling practitioners;
- will have a critical understanding of the purpose and functions of continuing professional development for counselling practitioners.

9.4 Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit, candidates will:

1. **Demonstrate a substantial knowledge and understanding of counselling supervision, and be able to:**
 - 1.1. evaluate ethical dimensions of counselling supervision
 - 1.2. understand counselling supervision as a ‘developmental’ rather than a ‘deficiency’ model for the practitioner
 - 1.3. show conceptual knowledge of different forms, styles and models of Supervision
 - 1.4. identify and apply a Supervision model, reflecting own core theoretical model and practice.
2. **Show a critical knowledge and understanding of a range of processes of counselling supervision, and its effect on:**
 - 2.1. the supervisor – supervisee relationship?
 - 2.2. the counsellor’s therapeutic relationships with clients, especially with regard to ethical and Health and Safety issues
 - 2.3. the counsellor’s counselling process with clients, including contract, goals and outcomes
 - 2.4. the counsellor’s self – e.g. formative, normative, restorative and perspective elements of Supervision; feedback and challenge to practice
 - 2.5. clients – e.g. the ‘Parallel Process’.
3. **Show knowledge and understanding of continuing professional development with particular reference to methodology, and be able to both:**
 - 3.1. analyse professional development needs for individual counsellors, and
 - 3.2. develop a strategy for continuing professional development.
 - 3.3. In meeting each of these objectives, candidates must show that they are aware of the risks to the health and safety and well-being of both the counsellor and the client. with particular reference given to managing aggressive, violent and emotional clients.

9.5 Assessment

This unit is centre assessed and externally verified by AQA.

Unit results are reported as Pass (P) or Referred (R); there are no other grades available for candidates.

AQA centres are responsible for marking candidates’ coursework and assigning each with a P or R grade for the unit by the series deadline date.

Centres must provide substantial evidence to show that candidates have been reliably assessed when requested to do so.

AQA reserves a right of access to candidates' assessed written coursework for a period of up to 2 years after the unit is completed.

Assessment process

The following coursework represents the minimum required to assess:

1. Learning Outcome 1. Essay of **2000 to 2500** words to show that the candidate achieved knowledge and understanding of counselling supervision at Level 5
2. Learning Outcome 2. Essay of **2000 to 2500** words to show critical knowledge and understanding of a range of processes of counselling supervision
3. A portfolio of evidence of counselling supervision: e.g. copy of a contract or agreement, Supervision Log Book and supervisors' reports (Some of these may have been evidenced in Unit 3.)
4. Learning Outcome 3. Presentation of a Professional Development Plan.

AQA reserves the right of access to all candidates' written work for a period of up to 2 years after the unit has been completed in the event of an enquiry upon results

9.6 Subject Content

In working towards the Learning Outcomes, candidates should cover all of the following topics.

- Theories of counselling supervision
- Forms, Styles and Models of counselling supervision
- Personal qualities and skills needed for counselling supervision
- Supervision and BACP/Professional Accreditation
- Health and Safety
- The effects of counselling supervision on counselling processes
- The effect of counselling supervision on client – counsellor relationships
- Relationship issues between supervisor – supervisee
- Group and one-to-one Supervision.

- Contracts
- Issues relating to self: formative, normative, restorative and perspective elements of supervision
- Analysing supervision in practice to determine its effect on clients
- The need for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Personality and human characteristics
- Social and economic factors
- CPD and BACP/Professional Accreditation
- Appraisal/assessment
- Training needs and training needs analysis
- The role of psychometric testing
- Planning for CPD

9.7 Additional Learning

Links with other qualifications

This Unit maps the learning aims to **CAMPAG Level 4 counselling NVQ units:**

Unit 18: Manage personal case load

Unit 20: Evaluate and develop own contribution to the service

Unit 21: Provide other support for practitioners

Unit 42: Reflect on own contribution to the counselling process

Unit 46: Reflect on own counselling practice with clients

Key Skills (Level 4)

Throughout this unit, candidates will have opportunities to develop Key Skills in the following Level 4 Key Skills units:

C4:1 Developing a strategy (e.g. Personal Development Plan) for using communication skills over an extended period of time (at least 3 months)

C4:3: Make one formal oral presentation that presents the outcomes of your work, using at least two images to illustrate complex points.

Improving own Learning and Performance (Level 4)

LP4.1: Develop a strategy for improving own learning and performance, by finding strategies to improve performance

LP4.2: Monitor progress and adapt your strategy to improve performance through support, feedback and critical reflection

LP4.3: Evaluate your overall strategy and present outcomes from your work, from at least two differing learning activities.

9.8 Delivery Guidance (Please also refer to Section 4)

This unit is intended to broaden and enrich the candidates' knowledge and understanding of the function and purpose of both clinical supervision and professional development for counselling practitioners. The unit is also intended to complement and to build upon the candidates' learning from other units.

At the start of the unit, tutors should ensure that candidates know and understand what is required of them to succeed, and this calls for a clear scheme of work and scheme of assessment to be made available to them.

In common with other units at this level, it is desirable to make good use of a range of different learning methods with the aim of developing each candidate's confidence and ability to work independently, to think strategically and to make rational decisions.

Where study requires candidates to address their own unique experiences and/or background, the unit will present different learning challenges to each candidate. The teaching/learning approach should accommodate this.

In general, it is expected that candidates will have a great deal of opportunity to share their learning and experiences with peer candidates and tutors. Group work and one-to-one tutorials feature strongly in the ideal delivery model for this unit, together with role-play practical sessions.

Candidates should be encouraged to try out new ideas in the comparative safety of simulated interviews or role play exercises at the centre before attempting to experiment with real clients. The primary role of the centre/tutors for this Unit is to facilitate the development of reflective counselling practitioners. Tutors should seek regular team support/supervision within the centre to assist their own functioning.

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Unit 6

Synoptic Assessment in the Practice of Counselling

10.1 About this Unit

This assessment unit provides stakeholders with independent assurance that the universal standards of the qualification are being upheld.

The synoptic assessment tests all candidates on essential aspects of their knowledge, understanding and know-how from the five coursework units.

Unit 6 is available only to candidates who have completed Units 1 to 5.

10.2 Assessment

A conventional 3 hour examination in the form of a question paper, which is both set and marked by AQA.

The assessment is available biannually in January and June from June 2005.

Key Skills and Other Issues

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Key Skills

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| 11.1 | Introduction | Opportunities for students to address key skills are identified and mapped to each unit. |
| 11.2 | Mapping to the National Occupational Standards | There are clear links between the AQA programme and CAMPAG Level 4 S/NVQ Units. See the additional learning section for each unit. |

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

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| 12.1 | Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and Cultural Issues | <p>It is expected that all courses leading to AQA's Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice are conducted with due regard to the values set down in BACP's "<i>Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy 2002</i>", or some other moral ethical code for therapeutic counselling which reflects similar values.</p> <p>Spiritual, Social, Cultural and other issues are to be considered as and when it is appropriate to do so. Such issues are likely to feature strongly in client work and in studies relating to counselling processes.</p> <p>Tutors are required to emphasise the importance of these issues when it is appropriate to do so.</p> |
| 12.2 | European Dimension | AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community in preparing this specification. European examples should be used where appropriate in the delivery of the subject content. Relevant European legislation will be identified within the specification if applicable. |
| 12.3 | Environmental Issues | AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the Report " <i>Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for Further and Higher Education</i> " 1993 in preparing this specification. |
| 12.4 | Health and Safety | It is expected that all teaching and learning activities will take due regard of relevant Health and Safety issues where appropriate. |

12.5	Citizenship	This specification will assist with the development of candidates' reflection on and sense of social and moral responsibility. Opportunities will be available for the development of knowledge and understanding of responsibilities. The specification will assist with the development of the skill of enquiry and communication of topical issues.
12.6	Avoidance of Bias	AQA has taken great care in the preparation of this specification and associated specimen paper to avoid bias of any kind.
12.7	Issues for Centres in Wales and Northern Ireland	Terms, legislation or aspects of government that are different from those in England should not disadvantage candidates in Wales or Northern Ireland. Where such situations might occur, the terms used have been selected as neutral, so that programmes can be developed to reflect local and regional circumstances.

Centre-Assessed Components

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Guidance on Setting Centre-Assessed Components

13.1	Advisors	AQA Advisers will be available to assist centres with any matters relating to the delivery and assessment of the coursework units.
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Supervision and Authentication

14.1	Supervision of Candidates' Work	Candidates' work for assessment must be undertaken under conditions which 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.
14.2	Guidance by the Teacher	Candidates' work submitted for assessment must be solely that of the candidate concerned. Any assistance given to an individual candidate that is beyond that given to the group as a whole must be reported to AQA.

14.3 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 any 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 AQA. The penalties for malpractice are set out in the AQA Regulations.

14.4 Authentication of Candidates' Work

Both the candidate and the tutor are required to sign declarations confirming that the work submitted for assessment is the candidate's own. The teacher declares that the work was conducted under the specified conditions, and records details of any additional assistance.

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Standardisation

15.1 Standardisation

It is important that national qualifications are assessed to common standards, as far as it is practical to do so. To achieve this, centres are required to ensure that tutors who are teaching and assessing candidates for this qualification are trained to assess this qualification. **All tutors must attend an AQA assessment standardisation training session.**

AQA will also monitor assessment standards both within and across centres and may require centres to adjust their standards.

15.2 Standardising Meetings

AQA arranges standardising meetings for assessing tutors, as required, usually in the autumn and spring terms of each academic year. Details are available from AQA's Subject Office.

All tutors with responsibility for assessing AQA candidates at Level 5 for the first time must attend the first available standardisation training meeting. Thereafter, it is anticipated that the assessors will require re-standardising every two years.

Compulsory tutor / assessor standardisation is a requirement of the qualification in each of the following circumstances:

- All tutors that have not previously assessed at AQA Level 5
- All tutors from centres where an external verification reports shows that the assessment standards at the centre are out of line with AQA's national assessment standards
- Any tutor whose marks need to be significantly adjusted to bring them in line with AQA's national assessment standards.
- All tutors, more than 2 years having elapsed since he or she was last standardised.

15.3 Internal Standardisation of Marking

In all centres where two or more tutors at a single centre mark Level 5 units simultaneously, one of them must be designated as being the person responsible for internal standardisation.

Centres must develop and implement procedures for standardising its tutors' Level 5 assessments.

Confidentiality is an important issue for counselling students, and confidential or sensitive written coursework must be managed with great care. Access to such written work must be strictly controlled and limited to people who are qualified counsellors and are bound by BACP's Ethical Framework.

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Administrative Procedures

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- 16.1 Recording Assessments within each Unit** All AQA centres are required to keep secure records of the grades and assessment details of all of their candidates work while the course is in progress.
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- 16.2 Submitting Grades and Sample Work for Verification** At the completion of each unit centres submit final unit grades of P or R to AQA. An official AQA centre mark sheet is provided for this purpose.
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- 16.3 Problems with Individual Candidates**
- Tutors should be able to accommodate the occasional absence of candidates by ensuring that 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 candidates' coursework 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, which goes beyond normal learning support, is given to any candidate, AQA must be informed so that such help can be taken into account.
- Candidates wishing to move from one centre to another during a course can only do so if the destination centre is willing to take their previous work into account.
- If the proposed move occurs early in a course, the new centre should take full responsibility for assessing the candidate. If it were to occur late in a course, the destination centre may exercise its discretion and if it is appropriate to do so accept assessments made by the previous centre. Centres should contact the AQA subject office or their external verifier for advice about the appropriateness of any such arrangements.
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- 16.4 Retaining Coursework** Centres must make secure arrangement to store candidates' coursework during the marking process.
- All centre assessed coursework must be available to AQA to inspect for a minimum period of two years following publication of the results for the unit.
- If an enquiry upon result is made, the candidates' coursework which is the subject of the enquiry must be held at the centre under secure conditions until it is requested by AQA, or until the enquiry is resolved.

Verification

17.1 Verification

AQA external verifiers are allocated to centres immediately following the registration of the course with AQA.

External verifiers are responsible for monitoring quality assurance matters to do with the teaching and assessing of coursework at AQA centres. Verifier reports are provided for centres.

17.1 Verification Procedures

External verification of the quality of counselling course provision and candidates' assessment at AQA centres involves the following activities; these are normally arranged by mutual agreement:

- an annual visit to and report on the centre
- verification of the centre's internal assessment of written coursework by postal inspection of samples of candidates' marked coursework
- visits to the centre to verify practical coursework assessments
- final approval of the centre's marks.

17.2 Post-Verification Procedures

A copy of the external verifier report form is sent by post to a contact person nominated by the centre.

Centres must comply with all instructions detailed in an AQA external verifiers report.

External verifiers may also give out advice or recommendations which is not mandatory

In all cases where actions are required of a centre by an external verifier report. A second report is needed to clear the centre.

Appeals against an external verifier's report must be made in writing and addressed to the Subject Officer, Department A17 within 14 days of receiving the external verifiers report.

Awarding and Reporting

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Grading, Shelf-Life and Re-Sits

18.1 Grading System

Two grades are available;

P – Pass and R – Refer.

Each coursework unit has several assessed components. Each component is assessed separately by the centre and awarded a grade of either P or R.

When all of the assessed components for a unit are graded P the candidate has passed the unit. The unit mark is therefore P.

If any component of a unit is graded R, the unit is also graded R.

18.2 Marking of Each Unit

Each coursework unit is separately assessed by the centre and the details of the assessment process are found in the specification for the unit.

18.3 Qualification

Candidates must pass all six units Higher Diploma Units to qualify for the AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice.

18.4 Shelf-Life of Unit Results

The shelf-life of individual unit results, prior to certification of the qualification, is limited only by the period of accreditation for the specification.

18.5 Unit Re-Sits

Coursework marks must be reported to AQA by an examination series deadline. Prior to the deadline, centres may allow candidates a second opportunity to achieve the pass standard for any internally assessed coursework. After the examination series deadline, there is no provision for extra time to be allowed. Candidates may, however, enter for the unit again in a later examination series.

18.6 Quality Assurance

AQA centres are required to manage courses leading to the AQA Higher Diploma in Counselling Practice systematically and to set internal quality standards that at least comply with the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework (for inspecting post-16 education and training) and with the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

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READING LIST

CORE TEXT BOOKS

Dryden, W (Ed): *Handbook of Individual Therapy* (3rd Edition). Sage/London. ISBN 0-7619-6943-8

Woolfe, R & Dryden, W: *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-8039-8992-X

Feltham, C & Horton, I: *Handbook of Counselling and Psychotherapy*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-7619-5688-3

Corey, G: *Theory and Practice of Counselling and Psychotherapy*. Wadsworth. ISBN 0-5343-4823-8

Lapworth, P, Sills, C & Fish, S: *Integration in Counselling and Psychotherapy*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-7619-6712-5

O'Brien, M & Houston, G: *Integrative Therapy – A Practitioner's Guide*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-7619-5385-X

PERSON-CENTRED THEORETICAL APPROACH

Mearns, D & Thorne, B: *Person-Centred Counselling in Action* (2nd Edition). Sage/London. ISBN 0-7619-6317-0

Mearns, D: *Developing Person-Centred Counselling*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-8039-8939-3

Mearns, D & Thorne, B: *Person-Centred Therapy Today*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-7619-6561-0

Thorne, B & Lambers, E: *Person-Centred Therapy (A European Perspective)*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-7619-5155-5

Rennie, D L: *Person-Centred Counselling (An Experiential Approach)*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-7619-5345-0

PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORETICAL APPROACH

Jacobs, M: *Psychodynamic Counselling in Action*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-7619-6301-4

Stewart, I: *Developing Psychodynamic Counselling*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-8039-8980-6

Jacobs, M: *The Presenting Past*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-335-20196-2

COGNITIVE – BEHAVIOURAL THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Dryden, W: *Rational Emotive Behavioural Counselling in Action* (2nd Edition). Sage/London. ISBN 0-7619-6303-0

Trower, P, Casey, A & Dryden, W: *Cognitive – Behavioural Counselling in Action*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-8039-8048-5

Scott, M J, Stradling, G & Dryden, W: *Developing Cognitive – Behavioural Counselling*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-8039-7894-4

Wills, F & Sanders, D: *Cognitive Therapy*. Sage/London. ISBN 0-7619-5083-4