

BACP Course Accreditation Scheme

Eligibility Guide - Criteria A1 to A10

This guide is based on the Eligibility Criteria for course accreditation, to start you thinking about the course's suitability for application. The criterion is shown first, followed by some clarification about what further information is required by the application process.

Please bear in mind that BACP will assess the course that you deliver as a training provider. They are not assessing any awarding body's course or paperwork; they are assessing the course as you deliver it, including your staff team and own documentation.

BACP is unable to accept applications from courses which have not yet graduated a cohort of students, i.e. the course seeking accreditation must have run through from its first to final year.

Summary of the Eligibility Criteria

The course seeking accreditation must:

- Ensure the course provider has current organisational membership of BACP
- Provide an in-depth training in counselling/psychotherapy to practitioner level
- Consist of least 400 hours of face-to-face training (classroom-based learning)
- Require students to complete a practice placement of least 100 hours client work as an integral part of the course
- Require the client work to be supervised to BACP course accreditation standard as a minimum
- Require the majority of its staff team to be accredited with BACP / equivalent standard with another body
- Require all course staff to be members of a counselling/psychotherapy professional body that has a complaints procedure.

PART A: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A1

The training provider must be an organisational member of the BACP and thus subject to the current BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions (Ethical Framework).

If you need to make a membership application, please make sure that it has been processed and that your membership is current before submitting your application for course accreditation.

You can find out more about joining BACP as an organisational member on our [website](#). Alternatively, please contact Customer Services Team on Tel. 01455 883300 or email bacp@bacp.co.uk

To be eligible for membership, the organisation must offer training to counsellors and/or psychotherapists and be a legal in its own right rather than a subsidiary or a

department within a larger organisation (although these departments may act as the contact point).

A2

The training provider must deliver an in-depth course offering professional practitioner training. There must be a minimum of 400 hours of direct teaching or instruction time.

We do not accredit distance learning, online or home study courses. Courses may include blended learning elements but these must be in addition to the minimum 400 hours of face-to-face teaching hours for the course to be eligible. The 400 hours cannot include supervision, client work, self-directed study or assignment writing, optional workshops or non-timetabled tutorial time.

The 400 hours requirement is for the actual course wanting accreditation, not the overall duration of a longer programme of training that sits around it or alongside it.

A3

Students must undertake a minimum of 100 hours of supervised practice exclusive of missed sessions.

The placement must be integrated into the course rather than being completely separate, optional or adjunct to the course. That is, it must be monitored and assessed by the course as a part of it and not expected to start after the teaching element has ended.

The work must be undertaken with real clients (i.e. not role play and not with life partners, family members or fellow students), but must not be private practice.

All placement work must be congruent with the course, i.e. have the same theoretical and client orientation. This means that a psychodynamic course must have psychodynamic placements and courses about counselling adults should not permit work with children/adolescents.

All cases must be presented for supervision. The supervision must be at least fortnightly in frequency, not fall below an overall amount of 1.5 hours per month and require at least one hour's presentation per for eight hours client work. A mix of individual and group supervision is recommended. The supervision must be in the same orientation as the course. For further information see B4.11 to B4.13 of the [Criteria for accrediting training courses](#).

It is up to the course to decide whether to allow CYP placements. Any counselling hours a trainee undertakes, that are not approved by the course and are therefore not included in the course assessment strategy, cannot count towards the course, BACP membership or BACP individual accreditation. Courses are reminded that the requirements of student membership state that placement hours should be:

- in an appropriate setting with appropriate clients. Counselling services are an ideal setting as they are likely to assess whether clients are suitable for your level of competence. Your training provider should not allow placement hours through private practice or with client groups that have not been pre-assessed as suitable - such as children and young people or those with complex mental health needs.
- assessed (or marked) as an integral part of your training

Please see full guidance on Student Placements with CYP:

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/membership/organisational-membership/course-accreditation/student-placements-with-children-and-young-people/>

A4

The course must have at least two core members of staff who have substantive involvement in admission, assessment, course management and decision making, in addition to teaching.

The course must have two main staff members who are well-involved throughout the course, not just there for programme management or teaching.

A5

All course staff must be members of an appropriate professional body with a complaints procedure to which they are subject.

This means current membership of BACP or equivalent. There must be a complaints or professional conduct procedure in place by which the members are held accountable to the body's code of ethics, ethical framework or similar code of conduct.

'Course staff' - who do you need to consider?

Please include:

- All core staff
- Main teaching staff
- Teaching staff taking relatively few sessions (not guest speakers)
- Course employed supervisors (not including placement or private supervisors)
- Personal development group facilitators

Don't include:

- Guest speakers
- Purely administrative staff including placement coordinators
- Head of Centre/Course Director, provided that their role is administrative or managerial and they do not teach except as a guest speaker. In universities this might be the Head of Department.
- Volunteers/teaching assistants (often recent course graduates) NB we would suggest that these work towards accreditation
- External examiner/verifier

A6

The majority of the course staff should have current BACP counsellor / psychotherapist accreditation or be registered with an appropriate professional body to an equivalent level and should be in current, supervised practice.

This means more than 50% of course staff should have BACP counsellor/psychotherapist accreditation, or its equivalent with another professional body, which must be current.

*Do not count staff members who may be eligible for accreditation, are working towards accreditation, have applied for accreditation, have a deferred application, have lapsed their accreditation or have retired. Staff members applying for individual BACP accreditation should bear in mind that the assessment process takes a number of months and accreditation applications cannot be prioritised or fast-tracked. Registered Members of BACP cannot satisfy this A6 unless they are **Registered Accredited Members of BACP** (i.e. basic Registration is not equivalent to Accreditation). For further information about individual accreditation, please see our [website](#).*

It is essential that courses wanting accreditation bear this criterion in mind when replacing staff or expanding the size of the course staff team.

For who to consider as 'course staff', see **A5**

A7

It must be demonstrated that the training provider is submitting a specific course for accreditation, rather than a network of courses.

The scheme recognises each course for accreditation on a one-by-one basis. It cannot assess a network or range of courses together or whole confederations. Neither can it accredit all courses based on a shared curriculum or within the same institution or awarding body. A franchisor can't apply for accreditation of the course it has developed for delivery.

Under its [Additional Delivery Procedure](#), BACP may agree to accredit more than one delivery of a course once one delivery has been accredited.

A8

The course must submit evidence to demonstrate the accountability of the training provider for the course. This will include published policy and procedures on:

- i. admission**
- ii. fees**
- iii. placements**
- iv. assessments**
- v. appeals**
- vi. complaints**
- vii. quality assurance and enhancement**

The above list is the minimum requirement and is not necessarily exhaustive.

A9

The course must provide evidence of its staffing structure that clearly demonstrates lines of responsibility.

We need a clear picture of the hierarchy or structure of the organisation, showing the management lines for the team that delivers the course. We need to see the course staff members and the line manager for each staff member, right up to the person or governing body which has overall responsibility for the organisation.

A10

If the course seeking accreditation admits students after the start of the course via Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) procedures, the procedure/s must be submitted for assessment as part of the application. Please see criterion B9.

Some courses admit students after the first year provided they have gained a relevant qualification, training or work experience already. If a course admits any students after it has started, it must include details in its application for accreditation. For example, a candidate with a certificate in counselling skills might join a three-year diploma course at the start of year two because their certificate covers the material to be taught in year one.

A10 is not about the entry requirements for recruiting first years to the course; it is concerned specifically with students being permitted to 'miss out' initial stages in the training because of something they have done elsewhere.

Please note that this information sheet is not a complete guide to getting your course accredited. Training providers must read the full scheme requirements, especially all guidance and the accompanying application form carefully before making an application.

There is further guidance available on our [course accreditation homepage](#) for each section of the 'Part B: Course Delivery Criteria'.

Self-assessment is a useful way to get started but it cannot guarantee that your course is eligible or will ultimately gain accreditation with BACP. Self-assessment should not be used to promote the course or to guarantee its standard against BACP requirements.

(Last reviewed April 2019)