bacp collective mark | Accredited Progression Course

BACP accredited progression course scheme (SCoPEd framework columns B and C)

Eligibility guide – criteria A1 to A12

This guide is based on the Eligibility Criteria for BACP's Accredited Progression Course scheme (aligned to the SCoPEd framework columns B and C), 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 for the application process.

Please bear in mind that we'll assess the course that you deliver as a training provider. We're not assessing any awarding body's course or paperwork; we're assessing the course as you deliver it, including your staff team and own documentation.

Summary of the eligibility criteria

The course seeking accreditation must:

a. Ensure the course provider has current organisational membership of BACP.
b. Provide an in-depth progression training in counselling and/or psychotherapy.
c. Consist of at least 240 guided learning hours.
d. Ensure that teaching delivery is a mix of face to face (in the same room) and online training, but only synchronous 'live' online teaching can be counted towards the minimum hours of direct teaching or instruction time.
e. Require students to complete 100 hours of supervised client work as an integral part of the course.
f. Require the client work to be supervised to a minimum of 1.5hrs per month.
g. Require all course staff to be members of a counselling or psychotherapy professional body that has a complaints procedure.
h. Require the majority of its staff team to be BACP senior accredited or be accredited at SCoPEd framework column C with a SCoPEd partner organisation.

BACP will accept applications once the course has started, but course accreditation cannot be awarded until the course has completed at least one run i.e. after at least one student cohort has graduated.

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's 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 entity 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 over two years at Ofqual Level 6 in year one (aligned to SCoPEd framework column B) and Level 7 (or above) in year 2 (aligned to SCoPEd framework column C). There must be a minimum of 240 hours of direct teaching or instruction time.

The course must be delivered over at least two academic years. The first year should be taught and assessed at Ofqual Level 6 (or equivalent) and the second year at Level 7 (minimum).

Where the course is not formally validated by a university or external awarding body the course will need to evidence that the final qualification awarded is equivalent to Ofqual Level 7. There must be robust procedures in place to ensure Level 7 equivalency. Please see criterion B5.10 in Part B.

The 240 hours of direct teaching or instruction time cannot include supervision, client work, self-directed study or assignment writing, optional workshops or non-timetabled tutorial time.

The 240 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.

Please send us a clear calculation of the direct teaching hours as part of your calculation.

A3

Teaching delivery should be a mix of face-to-face (in the same room) and online, but only synchronous, 'live' online teaching can be counted towards the minimum hours of direct teaching or instruction time.

There must be some face-to-face teaching delivery throughout the course to ensure:

a. **Student relationships are developed sufficiently to undertake the personal development/reflective elements of the course.**
b. **Tutors can safely hold experiential elements of the course.**
c. **Students can practice column B and column C competences in the same room.**
d. **Tutors can make robust decisions about fitness to practice.**

Students and staff should also have the opportunity to meet face-to-face at the start of the training to enable the development of student/staff relationships.

We don't accredit distance learning, fully online or home study courses. Courses may include blended learning elements, but only synchronous 'live' online teaching can be counted towards the minimum hours of direct teaching or instruction time.

There are no set proportions of face-to-face vs online synchronous teaching delivery time however, it's important that there is some face-to-face teaching to allow students and staff to develop relationships, undertake experiential elements safely and practice skills associated with working in the same room.

For courses wishing to deliver the qualification fully face to face, there must be some provision for students to practice online and/or phone therapy (OPT) skills to support the development of the SCoPEd framework competences and their safe and ethical application when working remotely. This only applies to students who are already familiar with OPT practice, unless the centre is also including taught content and assessment specifically for OPT which aligns with BACP's online and phone therapy training curriculum. https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/competences-and-curricula/online-and-phone-therapy/

A4

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's developed for delivery.

If you're considering applying for accreditation of more than one course, or if you would like to extend your accreditation to an additional running of a course then please contact the BACP accreditation team to discuss this. You can see more information in our *Additional Delivery Procedure*.

A5

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

If the course includes a placement, it 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). Students can gain client hours in multiple setting/contexts.

Working in private practice is acceptable where the student has sufficient support and suitable supervision in place to enable them to work safely and ethically with more complex clients. The course must ensure that students working in private practice have all necessary parameters and support in place that are equivalent to an agency setting, including but not limited to adequate insurance supervision. Please see criterion B3.1 in Part B for more information.

For working with more complex clients which require application of column C competences, some face-to-face hours will be required. Working online and /or over the phone should only be allowed with clients who have been assessed as suitable for working remotely and if the student is competent in OPT. It's up to the course to ensure students have sufficient OPT competence for safe and ethical remote practice.

The suitability of complex clients for remote working needs to be carefully considered. The supervisor may play and important role, particularly for students working in private practice to ensure the client has been appropriately assessed for their suitability for remote working.

International working with client's outside of the UK is not acceptable. Where centres recruit international students who are residing and practicing in another country outside of the UK, an exception may be made, provided certain requirements are met. These are specified in criterion B3.2 in Part B.

All supervised client work must be congruent with the theoretical approach(es) taught on the course.

Any counselling hours a trainee undertakes that are not approved by the course cannot count towards the 100 practice hours requirement and are therefore not included in the course assessment strategy.

Supervision must be at least 1.5 hours per month. A mix of individual and group supervision is recommended. The supervision must be congruent with the theoretical approach(es) taught on the course. For further information see criteria B4.1 to B4.6 in Part B.

A6

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.

A7

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 of staff are held accountable to the professional body's code of ethics, ethical framework or similar code of conduct.

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

Please include:

a. All core staff.
b. Main teaching staff.
c. Teaching staff taking relatively few sessions (not guest speakers).
d. Course employed supervisors (not including placement or private supervisors).
e. Personal development group facilitators.

Don't include:

f. Guest speakers.
g. Purely administrative staff including placement coordinators.
h. Head of Centre or 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.
i. Volunteers/teaching assistants (often recent course graduates) NB we would suggest that these work towards accreditation.
j. External examiner or verifier.

You will be asked to submit details as part of your 'Part A: Eligibility' application.

A8

The majority of the course staff should have current BACP senior accreditation or be accredited at SCoPEd column C with a SCoPEd partner organisation, and should be in current, supervised practice.

This means more than 50% of course staff should have BACP senior accreditation, or its equivalent with a SCoPEd partner professional body, which must be current.

Do not count staff members who: may be eligible for senior accreditation, are working towards senior accreditation, have applied for senior accreditation, have a deferred application, were awarded senior accredited prior to 2023 and are now BACP accredited members as they haven't applied for the revised senior accredited membership category, have lapsed their senior accreditation or have retired.

Staff members applying for BACP senior accreditation should bear in mind that the assessment process takes a number of months and accreditation applications cannot be prioritised or fast-tracked (unless there are exceptional circumstances).

Registered Members or Registered Accredited Members of BACP cannot satisfy this A8 criterion unless they are **Registered Senior Accredited Members** of BACP (i.e. Registration or Individual Accreditation is not equivalent to Senior Accreditation). For further information about senior 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.

Please note: As the progression training course accreditation schemes are new, until February 2028 we will accept applications from courses where the majority of the course staff are BACP accredited members (or equivalent with a SCoPEd partner organisation) as long as those staff are eligible for BACP Senior accreditation and have committed to attaining senior accreditation (or equivalent with another SCoPEd partner) by the end of the first cohort.

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

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

1. **admission**
2. **fees**
3. **equality, diversity and inclusion**
4. **placements**
5. **assessments**
6. **appeals**
7. **complaints**
8. **quality assurance and enhancement**
9. **OPT appropriate data protection policies and procedures**

The above list is the minimum requirement and isn't exhaustive. Although a separate EDI policy is required it's expected that all policies and procedures take account of issues of Equality Diversity and Inclusion within them (for example, how recruitment and admissions procedures adhere to EDI policy in practice, how the complaints procedure is accessible to all students regardless of their background or individual needs).

A11

Training providers need to ensure all elements of the course are accessible for students including online and face-to-face (in the classroom) teaching delivery.

The course should consider the accessibility of all modes of teaching delivery and student assessment and implement reasonable adjustments as required for students with specific needs. This includes the accessibility of the accommodation used for in-person training as well as for any online teaching delivery.

A reasonable adjustment can be defined as '*any change to remove or reduce the effect of any barriers for individuals with disabilities so that they can access services and resources*' https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-us/edi/edi-strategy/

However, as practitioner training involves the development of core competences, any adjustments that impact the development or assessment of professional standards would not be considered reasonable. This includes the ability to work with more complex clients in-person and so changing the mode of delivery for the course is not considered a reasonable adjustment.

Reasonable adjustments made to student assessments will need to meet the same learning outcomes and equivalence in assessment weighting.

Courses will need to consider a broader accessibility strategy for student support and engagement which will include how other services are being utilised to improve accessibility for students with specific needs e.g. how students are supported to claim Disability Students' Allowance (DSA) and any other support offered by the training provider to help students meet academic standards such as essay writing.

A12

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 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 PG Diploma in Counselling that was BACP accredited and aligned to column B of the SCoPEd framework might join a two-year Masters course at the start of year two because their PG Dip covered the material to be taught in year one.

Alternatively, a student who only completed the first year of a two-year accredited progression training course (aligned to SCoPEd framework columns B and C) could be enrolled onto year two at a later date, or onto year two of another BACP accredited progression training course.

A12 is not about the entry requirements for recruiting first years to the course; it's concerned specifically with students being permitted to 'miss out' initial stages in the training because of something they've done elsewhere.

Please note that 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 shouldn't be used to promote the course or to guarantee its standard against BACP requirements.