



SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES

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**NEW PROGRAMME VALIDATION REPORT**

**Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling and Psychotherapy  
(Programme TU197)**

**Higher Certificate in Arts In Counselling  
(Programme TU198)**

**Certificate in Introduction to Counselling Skills (Minor Award)  
(Programme TU5957)**

Technological University Dublin,  
Blanchardstown Campus,  
Blanchardstown Road North, Dublin 15,  
D15 YV78 | <http://www.tudublin.ie/>

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**VALIDATION PANEL DATE: April 29, 2021**

## Introduction

Ireland's first Technological University, The Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin), was designated on January 1, 2019. With three campuses located at Grangegorman, Blanchardstown and Tallaght, TU Dublin's programmes are underpinned by inclusive and open learning experience, offering pathways to education and training from Level 6 (Apprenticeships/Higher Certificate) to Level 10 (Doctorate) awards in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ<sup>1</sup>). Technological University Dublin is a Designated Awarding Body, with the authority in law to make awards under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2012<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of this document is to report on the findings of the Peer Review panel that was convened to validate the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling and Psychotherapy* (including the embedded awards), against the criteria for the validation of programmes as stipulated in the University's Policy Document 2MP01<sup>3</sup>.

## Programme Overview

The proposed programme(s) in Counselling and Psychotherapy are the result of ongoing consultation and partnership with stakeholders in this area. The proposed programmes are not a conclusion, rather a step in the development of opportunities to reach out and reach in to connect people, to share competencies, join ideas and meet societal needs. More specifically the proposed programmes are driven by the introduction of requirements that programmes in Counselling and Psychotherapy are validated through Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), or through an awarding body such as Technological University Dublin. The proposed programmes have also been designed in anticipation of the approach of the regulation of this area by CORU the health and social care regulator.

In meeting our commitment to creating transformational educational opportunities that inspire, support and develop the individual to reach their full potential, we are educating and preparing people to contribute to society by meeting a caring need to provide advice and support at times of vulnerability and distress, whatever the cause. Linked to themes of People, Planet and Partnership the proposed programmes address pressing problems in society and put TU Dublin to the forefront in championing the needs of people in a sustainable and balanced way, protecting and helping people and providing people with the skills and competences to address these needs. We can, we will, we do.

The proposal consists of an NFQ level 8 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling and Psychotherapy (240 ECTS) with embedded programmes at NFQ level 6 Higher Certificate in Arts in Counselling (120 ECTS) and an NFQ level 6 Minor Award Certificate in Introduction to Counselling Skills.

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<sup>1</sup> QQI. 2018. [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, [No. 28]. 81 pp.

<sup>3</sup> 2MP01 Design, Validation and Accreditation of New Academic Programmes

## Validation Panel Composition

Chair: Prof. Margaret Linehan BBS, MBS, PhD  
Head, School of Humanities  
Munster Technological University - Cork Campus

Member(s): *Academic*

Dr Gillian Rayner  
Reader/Associate Professor Counselling and Psychotherapy  
University of Central Lancashire, UK

Dr Patricia Moriarty  
Head of School of Business and Humanities  
Dundalk Institute of Technology

Dr Geraldine Sheedy BA, MA, DCPsych  
Lecturer, Munster Technological University

Member(s): *Business/Industry*

Mr Eamon DeLacey  
13 Riverside Crescent, Clonshaugh, Dublin 17

Mr Gillford D'Souza MSc Counselling and Psychotherapy, BA (Hons.) Psychology  
Awakenings Counselling and Psychotherapy Services  
3 Dodder Park Drive, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14

In attendance:

Dr Larry McNutt, Registrar, TU Dublin Blanchardstown Campus

Dr Philip Owende, Academic Quality Manager, TU Dublin Blanchardstown Campus  
(Panel Secretary)

Date of Panel Meeting: April 29, 2021.

## Consultation

Management Team consulted during the panel meeting:

Dr Pat O'Connor	Head of School of Humanities, Blanchardstown Campus
Dr Lavinia McLean	Head of Department of Humanities, Blanchardstown Campus
Dr Damien Roche	Head of School of Business & Humanities, Tallaght Campus
Helena Doody	Head of Department of Humanities, Tallaght Campus

Academic staff contributing to programme development and consulted during the panel meeting:

Dr Martina Coombes	Senior Lecturer in Humanities (Programme Lead)
Dr Aiden Carthy	Lecturer in Humanities
Dr Nigel Vahey	Assistant Lecturer in Psychology
Dr Gael LeRoux	Lecturer in Humanities
Karl Tooher	Northside Counselling Service

The programme development process has been supported by the following Heads of Function:

Dr Larry McNutt	Registrar, TU Dublin Blanchardstown Campus
Dr Philip Owende	Academic Quality Manager, Blanchardstown Campus

## Validation Panel Findings

In evaluating the appropriateness, quality and proposed operation of this programme the following criteria were considered and are hereby reported upon:

### Strategic planning

The submission outlines TU Dublin Strategic Intent (see Appendix 1 of Programme Submission Document, pp. 53-55). The panel was satisfied that the programme and the design are in keeping with the university's mission and will contribute to key Strategic Objectives outlined in Strategic Intent to 2030. These are such as, Teaching and Learning and Student Experience, Graduate Employability, Research, Engagement, TU Criteria, and Internationalisation.

### Evidence of consultation

The consultation process undertaken during the development of this programmes was as described in Section 6.3 of the programme submission document. The impetus to the development of the programme followed the introduction of a requirement that Counselling and Psychotherapy degrees must follow the QQI validation process or be validated through a HE institution with delegated authority from QQI, or by a Designated Awarding Body such as TU Dublin. Further structural changes in the profession are anticipated following the establishment of The Counsellors and Psychotherapists Registration Board by the Health Regulator CORU, in February 2019.

The establishment of the registration board signals the statutory regulation of counselling and psychotherapy services and those practicing in the field. Consequently, the programme was developed in partnership with Target Counselling Services (TCS) of Donaghmede, Dublin 13 and Northside Counselling Services (NCS) of Coolock, Dublin 17. Both the TCS and NCS have a long history of delivering professionally accredited Counselling and Psychotherapy programmes and their experience and knowledge informed the development of the new programme. Both have also delivered training in Counselling and Psychotherapy that are accredited by UK based universities. The programme development process also gained insights and considered inputs from the Counselling and Psychotherapy programme team at Munster Technological University, and upon which they adapted own vision and roadmap for a new programme that would meet statutory and professional standards and requisites. Insights into the development of the introductory certificate and the higher certificate was gained at this meeting. The development team also met with the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) for discussion on professional requirements and standards.

Through the structured discussions with the Programme Team during the validation sessions 2 and 3 per the *Validation Panel Agenda and Guidelines* for the meeting, the panel established evidence that comprehensive research/consultation efforts had been undertaken with both internal and external stakeholders to validate the rationale and the adopted structure, entry criteria, pathways and characteristics of the proposed programme. The panel was also notified of the ongoing consultation process, at the time of validation, for the university organisation design process for definition of academic faculty size and scope. The panel was also notified that that programmes under the School of Humanities on the Blanchardstown campus (including this new programme) will be considered under the proposed Faculty of Arts and Humanities and within the Social Sciences disciplines.

### Graduate employment potential

There is increasing awareness of the prevalence and impacts of mental health issues, hence, the increasing need for engagement of professional help. The programme development team also considered that the stigma associated with mental health challenges has declined, leading to more people affected seeking professional help through counselling and psychotherapy services and professional practitioners. The associated need for qualified professionals in the programme areas has therefore never been greater.

Graduates of the BA (Honours) in Counselling and Psychotherapy will have opportunities for employment in diverse areas such as the caring professions, Department of Education and Skills (as counsellors in primary and secondary schools, and HEIs), human resources, voluntary organisations, youth and community work, addiction services, family support services, counselling services and private practice. The programme also has embedded awards after Years 1 and/or Year 2 of study, for those people working in the caring, educational, and allied professions who wish to develop their personal and professional skills to enhance their practice. Examples of organisations that employ Counsellors and Psychotherapists are HSE, TUSLA, Govt Departments, Pieta House, Women's Aid, and Community Counselling and Psychotherapy organisations such as Northside Counselling Service, Target etc.

### **Protection of enrolled learners**

Part 6 Section 65(1) of the Act<sup>4</sup> does not apply to TU Dublin.

### **Provisions for quality assurance**

The panel was provided with the university policy document covering *Design, Validation and Accreditation of New Academic Courses (2MP01)* and the programmes' *Placement Policy* document. The validation document also outlined the rationale and how the programme submission had been proposed, developed and approved internally, in compliance with the university's quality assurance policies and procedures (Validation Document Section 6 and Section 7). The panel noted that the university's policies and procedures for programme development, monitoring and continuous improvement complied with its guidelines.

The panel commended the programme team for the clarity, organisation and depth of the documentation received for the validation exercise.

### **Programme title and award title**

The panel was satisfied that the title of the proposed programme is clear, accurately reflects the coverage, and therefore will be able to accurately inform prospective learners and other stakeholders about programme. However, the panel noted a need to draw emphases on the focus of the programme to support the marketing communication (see Recommendation 2 under the *Decision of the Panel* later).

### **Ethics**

Key Programme Learning Outcomes (Specialised Skills and Tools) require graduates of the programmes to demonstrate a broad knowledge of ethics and ethical practices and be able to consistently act in ethical manner, with actions guided by the requisite knowledge of relevant codes of ethics and legislation specific to counselling and psychotherapy practices. Graduates must demonstrate comprehension of principles of ethics, value systems, equality and inclusive practice and reflect upon these as integral to practice and research. They must demonstrate a high level of professional and ethical behaviour commensurate with designated levels of competency claimed, and consistently abide by professional codes of ethics.

Underpinning the programme and embedded across the modules is the recognition of the importance of ethical policy and practice frameworks within the Counselling and Psychotherapy fields of practices with specific coverage of *Ethics and Professional Values* in module COPS H2017. Other modules contributing to meeting ethics related learning outcomes are spread through different stages of the programme and include modules such as: COPS H1016 Counselling Skills; COPS H2013 Professional Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy; COPS H3016 Practice Placement 1; COPS H3011 Application and Integration of Theory and Practice (part 2); COPS H4016 Practice Placement 2. The panel was satisfied that the university has internal policies and procedures in place to ensure appropriate ethical oversight in respect of teaching, learning, and research activity across all programmes at the designated NFQ levels of the programmes presented for this validation.

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<sup>4</sup> Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012

## Consistency

The panel found evidence of progressive development of learner knowledge, skills and competence from Semester 1 through Semester 8, commensurate to Year 1 through Year 4 of study. Therefore, the panel was satisfied that there will be progressive development of the learners' standards of knowledge, skill and competence throughout the individual modules and the integrated programme outcomes to meet the designated award standards.

The development of the proposed programme was cognisant of the transformed contexts of counselling and psychotherapy and related professional services, arising from intervention measures during the Covid-19 pandemic but which will apply into the future. A hybrid of face-to-face and remote service delivery have developed to meet clients and clinicians needs; often referred to as a 'blended service'. Though the essential principles of counselling and psychotherapy remain the same, new competencies are required for both trainees and seasoned practitioners. For in-person appointments, these include (among others): adjusting to safety protocols for face-to-face sessions; enquiring into a client's current health or travel status including any possible legal implications; conducting therapy while wearing personal protection equipment; working effectively in spaces that likely contain screens or other such physical barriers etc.

Although remote working may have been new experience for many practitioners, there is a long history of the delivery of remote mental and emotional support to people through such organisations as Samaritans, Child-line, Women's aid. Consequently, related experiences in the remote delivery of counselling and psychotherapy services provided critical knowledge base required for integration of relevant. These include protocols for: building therapeutic relationships remotely; pragmatic use of different technologies, balancing their respective advantages and disadvantages; handling challenges and practicalities of working from 'Home'; adjusting clinician skills to different delivery platforms, including their use of information, gathering and communication (modality and sub-modality sensitivity); safeguarding and managing boundaries and associated ethical practices. Standards and recommendations for the delivery of therapeutic services remotely have been well established by multiple professional bodies, including the Association for Agency-based Counselling in Ireland (AACPI), Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP), Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP), Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI). All the above will be considered to further underpin the requirements in the programmes considered for validation.

## Teaching and learning

During the module level discussions, the panel explored with the programme development team about the range of interactions and learner engagement practices that will be deployed in the course of programmes delivery. The panel observed clear evidence of planned structured interactions with learners and comprehensive academic and technical support arrangements for learning. Evidence of commitment to learner needs were articulated in both the validation documents and in the copious panel discussions with programme team, including (but not limited to): applications of a range of teaching and assessment methods/styles; well-developed placement policy document submitted; formative teaching and learning resources such as course handbooks and links to relevant electronic resources; adherence to timely feedback on assignments, and; appropriate course management strategies.

The panel expressed that a proper balance of reflective and theoretical learning contributes to proficiency in practice and therefore essential to be adopt throughout the programme. Learning from artefacts developed elsewhere, e.g., videos, and critically analysing the learning from such will integrate professionalism when graduates go out to practice counselling and psychotherapy. The panel also noted that modules LOs on the 10 ECTS credit modules were slightly out of kilter with the norm, e.g., in some cases, the LOs were considered too many (up to nine LOs in a number of cases). Therefore, the panel recommended for review of all such modules, consider adding electronic link to learning material, and prescribe most current resources in the reading lists.

### **Learner assessment**

The learner assessment strategies within each module in the programme schedule are to be conducted in accordance with TU Dublin assessment policies and procedure covering continuous assessment, summative examinations and assessment in placement and work-based environments. Section 10 of submission document outlined the *Assessment of Student Performance*, covering; the underpinning assessment policies and procedures, assessment methods, assessment of practice placement, supervision of practice placement, and assessment strategies deployed by constituent modules in the programme. Practice placement programme was underpinned by a comprehensive *Counselling & Psychotherapy Placement Policy* document that was submitted as part of the validation process. Through the module-by-module considerations and copious discussions with the programme design team, the multiple modes of assessment to be employed were articulated. Specifically, the programme team articulated the procedures and challenges to capturing learning outcomes through a variety of means to ensuring that all learners have rigorous but fair opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the relevant learning outcomes.

### **Standards of knowledge, skill and competence**

Having reviewed the syllabi and assessment methods as proposed, the panel was of the opinion that learners would be capable of attaining the standards of knowledge, skill and competences relevant for the award of *BA (Honours) in Counselling and Psychotherapy* and the embedded *Higher Certificate in Arts in Counselling* (120 ECTS Credits) and the *Certificate in Introduction to Counselling Skills* (60 ECTS Credits Minor Award).

The panel noted that the programme will be seeking for accreditation and CORU Registration in the future, and that this will require that at least two of the core staff to be accredited with IACP. The programme will also need to have an accredited supervisor in place, to develop strategy and provide inhouse group supervision requirements. It was the panel's considered view that, having these core staff in advance of the rollout of programme will assist the accreditation process.

### **Access, transfer and progression**

The panel confirmed that the programme incorporates appropriate procedures for management of access, transfer and progression. The programme is open to applicants over 25 years of age and with a requirement for all applicants to engage in individual and group interviews prior to being offered a place on the programme. The interview and discussion will focus on the content and delivery of the programme to ensure that applicants will be aware of the full implications of the programme, details of the expected levels of engagement and expected personal commitments. Arising from the potential impact of the content of the programme and the modes/methods of delivery, it is important that all applicants will be fully aware of the nature and requirements of the programme, i.e., in terms of disclosure and engagement in personal therapy etc. It was the panel's considered view that student coming onto the programme will benefit from clear outline of costs. The nature of the programme means there may be some hidden costs, e.g., clinical supervision, undertaking own personal therapy and insurance costs. Initial meeting with applicants should be able to clarify costs and make applicants fully aware of such.

There are a number of Counselling and Psychotherapy programmes in existence in Ireland, therefore, it will be possible for students of the proposed programme to transfer to these programmes subject to meeting the relevant admission criteria. It is expected that students may transfer to undergraduate programmes such as Dublin Business School – BA (Honours) Counselling and Psychotherapy, Griffith College - BA (Honours) Counselling and Psychotherapy, or the Munster Technological University – BA (Honours) Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Graduates of the programme will be qualified to progress to further study in cognate disciplines at both Masters and Doctorate levels. Example programmes include: MSc Psychotherapy and Doctorate in Counselling Psychology of Dublin City University (DCU); MSc Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, MSc Cognitive



Behavioural Psychotherapy and Doctorate in Counselling Psychology of Trinity College Dublin (TCD); and University College Dublin's (UCD) diverse range of MSc, Graduate Diploma, and Higher Diploma programmes.

### Other salient observations from module-specific discussions

COPS H1011 Introduction to the Origins of Counselling and Psychotherapy (Part 1 of 2)— Noted that having nine Learning Outcomes was rather unusual for a 10 ECTS module, and suggested to consider reducing these to achieve depth of subject rather than purely breadth of content. Also, the proportion of assessment that is assigned to terminal examination was considered high. Also, high proportion in terminal exams will not capture the requisite learning and skills development. Continuous assessment based on reflective journals, essays and reflection on counselling and training should be preferred to the terminal examination. Otherwise module is excellent with good book resources. Text on introduction to counselling by Windy Dryden was recommended.

COPS H1012 Holistic Wellbeing— Good module, but should consider addition of 'Psychological Disorders' to the title to have it has 'Holistic Wellbeing and Psychological Disorders' or a similar description.

COPS H1013 Personal & Professional Development— Programme team had attempted to comprehensively address stakeholder requirements, but panel noted that 9 LOs were rather high for a 10 ECTS Credits module. Programme Team outlined the planned delivery of module as series of Workshops, on Thursdays evening and Friday and every second Saturday of each month to accommodate part time students. The allocated contact hours align to the ECTS, but delivery will combine blended learning with face-to-face sessions for what cannot be delivered online. Inbuilt development of report-writing skills was well noted. Panel also noted that the module was sensitive to the unique background of students who may enrol to the programme, and that there was need to introduce reflective practice logs/journal and building into assessment for this module.

COPS H1014 Equality and Anti-discriminatory Practice— Panel noted that this is an ever changing area, therefore, there was need for continuous review of recommended texts (the listed texts were predated to 2006 therefore may be outdated). Module should include current anti-discriminatory perspectives, and specifically, the statutory provision of the nine ground for discrimination as spelled by the equality legislation ([Employment Equality Act, 1998](#)). Also, consider title change to '*Embracing Difference and Diversity*' or in similar line. Although it is an introductory module that other modules will build upon, it should include gender and diversity, and more explicit handling of reflective practice not just coverage of theoretical knowledge. Assessment also to incorporate reflective practice (what are my values?). Comprehensive themes in follow-on modules and building on this module were noted and well received by the panel.

COPS H1015 Group & Personal Processes 1— Recommended that module should ensure that CA schedule allow for application of feedback throughout the year. Reading resources should include appropriate texts/resources/reference on group dynamics (e.g. Yalom's, Forsyth etc.) since this is covered in the contents.

COPS H1019 Substance Misuse & Addictive Behaviour— There is need for collaborative delivery with practitioners with expertise in addiction and other practice-led modules. Programme team outlined that from Year 1 to 4, programme will ensure constant engagement with professional practitioners to contribute to lectures and workshops. Connections with addiction counselling community centres will also be used.

The panel inquired if the introduce it in year 1 is too early, but it was highlighted that the development considered stakeholder feedback that addiction is prevalent in all areas therefore students need good grounding, even at the initial stage of the course. Potential collaborations between different services and community diversion groups was highlighted and noted as of positive benefit if implemented for module.

COPS H1016 Counselling Skills— Need to incorporate formal mock assessment on counselling skills to the existing assessment strategy. Reading list should consider:

Carl Rogers (2015), *On becoming a person: a therapist's view of psychotherapy*;

Gerald Egan & Robert Reese (2018), *The Skilled Helper*;

Richard Nelson-Jones (2015), *Basic Counselling Skills: A Helper's Manual*.

Richard Nelson-Jones (2013), *Practical Counselling and Helping Skills*

Richard Nelson-Jones (2012), *Introduction to Counselling Skills: Texts and Activities*.

COPS H1017 Meeting People in Context— Noted that it is a good module but title does not do the content justice. Consider reviewing title to make content and purpose clearer, e.g., '*People in Context*', '*Connecting People with Context*', or similar.

COPS H1018 Interventions for Wellbeing — Panel were concerned that, since the module is about mindfulness, why not call it Mindfulness? Reported that the original title was mindfulness. Reported that the current title emanated from stakeholder feedback that it was probably much more than just mindfulness and covers equipping students also with practical skills, but team will address concerns. Suggested title, '*Mindfulness as an Intervention for Wellbeing*'. From CBT perspective, content such as relaxation is important, focus on mindfulness seems restrictive and should be reviewed.

COPS H1020 Group and Personal Processes 2 — There is opportunity for essay looking at core beliefs and reflecting on that, thereby linking theory to practical self-appraisal. Link to counselling skills module to ensure that, where feasible, the essay and simulations in assessment strategies are complementary.

COPS H2011 Translating Theory into Practice ( Part 1 of 2 ) — Module considered adequate as presented.

COPS H2012 Lifespan Development— Module needs to focus more on the application. Therefore, rather than the assessment weighted on the formal exam at the end, module should aim for more of applications-to-self, e.g., carry out adult attachment interviews for readiness to apply attachment theory and developmental theory to self before going to work with clients. Noted that at this point, student must be able to consider the impacts of learning so far on themselves and in attachments.

Noted that there were no assessment connected to LO 4. The panel further noted that there are four other modules where LOs are not covered in the assessment (*viz.*, H2012, H2014, H3014, H4013). All modules to be reviewed to ensure that all LOs specify compatible assessment elements and strategies. Noted that Erickson is implicitly covered in the indicative contents but needs more explicit handling in the module.

COPS H2013 Professional Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy— Reported that assessment in this module was based on skills demonstration is simulated practice in dyads and triads. Module is intended to further develop students' counselling skills using standard and non-standard assessments. Module considered adequate as presented.

COPS H2014 The Neuroscience of Talking Therapies — Panel was generally pleased with module. However module needs more application to self as part of CAs rather than the current heavy reliance on end of semester exams. Handling of how students apply theory to themselves is important, e.g., how are they think about neuroscience of trauma applied to themselves or as put into practice, or relating this to the other skills that they will be learning. Also, consider introducing *Neuroscience of Trauma*, and more leading books to be included, e.g., *Healing Trauma* by Peter Levine. Noted that there were no assessment connected to LO 2.

COPS H2015 Mental Health Provision: Context — It was unclear why the term 'Context' is included in the title. Noted that the module title needs to connect to content and be crystal clear. Also, noted the heavy weighting of the terminal examination, whereas there is scope for group projects as part of CAs.

COPS H2016 Experiential Group Process 1 (Part 1)— considered adequate as presented.

COPS H2017 Ethics and Professional Values— should consider both practice and research in cognate areas. Assessment to cover reflections and group presentations.

COPS H2018 Cognitive Behavioural Therapy— Consider scope practical work, i.e., applying theory on top of the planned simulations.

COPS H2019 Family Systems Theory— There is need for alignment between LO5 and assessment strategy as currently it does not mention/provide scope for reflections.

COPS H2020 Bereavement and Loss— There seems to be over-reliant on the end of semester exam for assessment and contents reads like theory heavy. This probably misses opportunity for skill techniques rather than theory of grief and loss and should be reviewed in this context.

COPS H2011 Translating Theory into Practice (Part 2)— Noted that 10 LOs may be excessive and needs revisiting and review.

COPS H2016 Experiential Group Processes 1 (part 2) )— considered adequate as presented.

COPS H3012 Research Methods in Counselling and Psychotherapy — Module should Include indicative titles of dissertations as guidance to what will be expected.

COPS H3013 Therapeutic Models of Recovery— From the LOs, it is clear that module is focused on addictions, therefore title needs to depict the same. However, content was missing and should be presented with the response to panel report. There is need for indicating assessment of addiction, and is essay are to be used, then indicative titles should be provided as guidance. Module also to consider model preparation of students for placement. For this particular module, there is need to outline protocol/assessment to approve the movement to placement. Noted that some of this may have been covered under Fitness to Practice policy that normally covers bureaucratic issues such as garda vetting.

COPS H3014 Managing Professional Practice 1)— Noted that there were no assessment connected to LO 6. Otherwise module considered adequate as presented.

COPS H3015 Group Collegiate Processes (Part 1)— considered adequate as presented.

COPS H3016 Practice Placement 1)— considered adequate as presented. The Counselling & Psychotherapy Placement Policy document presented as part of the validation process was considered to be well written. Noted that supervisors report is based on Pass/Fail criterion. However, there is need to adopt the in-group supervision requirements per IACP guidelines

COPS H3017 Managing Professional Practice 2)— considered adequate as presented.

COPS H301 Application and Integration of Theory and Practice (Part 2) )— considered adequate as presented.

COPS H3015 Group Collegiate Processes (part 2) )— considered adequate as presented.

COPS H4011 Advanced Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Part 1)— considered adequate as presented.

COPS H4012 The Community Reinforcement Approach— Should the title add.....”.....in Addiction”? It was recommended that assessment to be more clearly described, and should reflect reflection on practice, i.e., applied science rather than heavy weighting on the final examination.

COPS H4013 Preparation for Dissertation— The LO4 (*“Outline the stages in the lifecycle of a research project”*) is unclear on how it addresses the standard at the assessment level. Also, it should be clarified how ethical approval will be dealt with in the course. The programme team explained that ethical approval is part of the learning in the programme and student will be expected to liaise with staff on research idea. Where ethical approval required, then it will follow process. It was reported that at undergrad, students are typically steered away from projects with sensitive ethical implications. Panel suggested the need to have both a school-specific ethics committee, in addition to the institutional/university level ethics committees.

Noted that there were no assessments connected to or specified for LOs 1, 3, 4 in the module description.

COPS H4014 Professional Identity Development— Noted that the module is intended to allow for building of personal-identity, i.e., to define Who am I as a Professional? However, it is vague and needs review, e.g., ‘Integrating Profession Identity’.

COPS H4015 Group Exploration and Development)— considered adequate as presented.

COPS H4016 Practice Placement 2)— considered adequate as presented.

COPS H4017 Dissertation)— considered adequate as presented.

COPS H4011 Advanced Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Part 2) )— considered adequate as presented.

Overall, the panel expressed that the scope of practice in counselling and psychotherapy has now extended, therefor need to consider possibility for practice in different modes. Programmes needs to clearly articulate how students and eventually graduates will be prepared to work online. A module about working online would be helpful with addressing the new circumstances.

## Decision of the Panel

The panel recommends validation of the following programmes with ~~Conditions~~<sup>5</sup>/Recommendations<sup>6</sup>:

**Programme title:** Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling and Psychotherapy

**Programme code:** TU197

**Award Title:** Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

**NFQ level:** 8 (240 ECTS credits)

**Programme title:** Higher Certificate in Arts in Counselling

**Programme code:** TU198

**Award Title:** Higher Certificate in Arts

**NFQ level:** 6 (120 ECTS credits)

**Programme title:** Certificate in Introduction to Counselling Skills (Minor Award)

**Programme code:** TU5957

**Award Title:** Certificate in Arts (Minor Award)

**NFQ level:** 6 (60 ECTS credits)

### Conditions

None

### Commendations

The panel made the following observations on the proposed programmes and the documentation assessed, and which are worthy of commendation:

- (1) The clear and well-presented documentation received for the validation exercise.
- (2) Openness of the programmes team to criticisms and accommodation of feedback from validation panel, towards enhancement of the proposed courses.
- (3) Active engagement of programme team with validation panel in all sessions was enjoyable for all panel members.

### Recommendations

- (1) The programme will be seeking for accreditation and CORU Registration in the future. This requires at least two of the core staff to be accredited with IACP. Programme also needs an accredited supervisor to develop strategy and provide for inhouse group supervision requirements. Therefore having these core staff in place as soon as possible will assist the accreditation process.
- (2) There is need for clarity in how the course is described to potential students. The panel offered the following two possible options for considerations:
  - 2.1 That this is an integrative course with a person-centred focus on CBT;

<sup>5</sup> A condition is an action, which in the opinion of the validation panel, must be undertaken prior to the commencement of the programme. Conditions are mandatory for programme approval.

<sup>6</sup> A recommendation is a proposed action, which in the opinion of the validation panel, must be given serious consideration.

## 2.2 Counselling & Psychotherapy course integrating person-centred CBT.

Both to elaborate the person-centred focus in the related advertising to help students conceptualise their training course.

- (3) There is need for handling of emotions and feelings in the course. Also review the layout of modules in terms of outlines, titles and aptness to where they are currently positioned.
- (4) Students will be looking for courses leading to accreditation, which makes the proposed TU Dublin course attractive. The more the components are accredited with IACP or CBPI or any other body, the better will be the marketing of the course. A panel member working with CBPI offered that their organisation, if invited by TU Dublin, will review modules and offer stamp of approval towards such accreditation including possible links to IACP. There is need to build external engagement with guest lecturers and facilitators to cover key course aspects such as bereavement. For example, *Hospice Foundation* and *Addiction Services* run specialised modules and may provide intensive courses at reasonable cost, and which could be used for betterment of the programme.
- (5) A considered balance of reflective and theoretical learning will enhance proficiency in practice, therefore it is essential to adopt appropriate balance throughout the course. Learning from artefacts developed elsewhere, e.g., videos, and critically analysing the learning from such will integrate professionalism when graduates go out to practice counselling and psychotherapy.
- (6) Student coming onto the programme will benefit from clear outline of costs. The nature of the programme means that, there may be some hidden costs related to course requirements such as clinical supervision, undertaking own personal therapy and insurance costs etc. Initial meeting with applicants should be used to make applicants fully aware of such and/or clarify on any uncertainties.
- (7) Modules are excellent, but to make them even better, the LOs in the 10 ECTS credit modules should be reviewed as they are slightly out of kilter with the norm, e.g., in some cases, the LOs may be considered too many. Also, to consider adding electronic link to learning material for students and use more current resources such as reading lists.
- (8) All modules should have some web-based links for student access to material.

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## Validation Report Sign-off

### Chair

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Prof. Margaret Linehan

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Date

### Secretary

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Dr Philip Owende  
(Panel Secretary)

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Date