



## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information

**Unit title:** Counselling: Supervised Practice (SCQF level 8)

**Unit code:** HL9K 35

**Superclass:** PS

**Publication date:** May 2017

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This unit is designed to enable learners to link the theories taught in the other mandatory units of the HND in Counselling with their practice in a supervised placement. Completion of this unit will ensure that learners complete 100 hours of placement with a minimum of 1.5 hours of clinical supervision per month in accordance with BACP Ethical Framework requirements. Compliance is required to access the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Certificate of Proficiency (BACP CoP). This content of this unit is underpinned by the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions.

Prior to beginning therapeutic work on placement, learners **must** have obtained BACP Student membership and personal indemnity insurance to ensure the safety of clients.

### Outcomes

On successful completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Explain the character and purpose of effective counselling supervision.
- 2 Evaluate theoretical models and approaches to counselling supervision.
- 3 Demonstrate own readiness to practice.
- 4 Engage in a professional supervisory relationship.
- 5 Demonstrate professional development as a practicing counsellor.

### Credit points and level

3 Higher National Unit credits at SCQF level 8: (24 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8)

## Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

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### Recommended entry to the unit

Although entry is at the discretion of the centre learners must have completed the unit *Counselling: Professional Standards*, *Counselling: Psychopathology* and *Counselling: Values and Principles of Practice* and have obtained BACP Student membership and personal indemnity insurance prior to undertaking any practice with clients.

### Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes for this unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this unit.

### Context for delivery

If this unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

This unit is mandatory within the HND in Counselling.

### Equality and inclusion

This unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## **Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Counselling: Supervised Practice (SCQF level 8)

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

### **Outcome 1**

Explain the character and purpose of effective counselling supervision.

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Nature and purpose of counselling supervision
- ◆ Values, principles and personal moral qualities relative to counselling supervision and competent practice
- ◆ Ethical issues relevant to codes of practice and legislation
- ◆ Ethical issues in a counselling supervision context

### **Outcome 2**

Evaluate theoretical models and approaches to counselling supervision.

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Theoretical approaches to counselling supervision
- ◆ Impact on supervisory relationship of approach chosen

### **Outcome 3**

Demonstrate own readiness to practice.

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Importance of the application of theory to professional practice
- ◆ Safe working in a therapeutic relationship
- ◆ Boundaries of own capabilities

### **Outcome 4**

Engage in a professional supervisory relationship.

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Effective participation in an individual supervisory relationship
- ◆ Effective participation in group supervision
- ◆ Limits of own competence in terms of the therapeutic relationship

## Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Counselling: Supervised Practice (SCQF level 8)

### Outcome 5

Demonstrate professional development as a practising counsellor.

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Importance of identifying, developing and using professional support networks
- ◆ Use of CPD to recognise strengths and areas for development
- ◆ Skills necessary to manage the administrative process of professional practice
- ◆ Working with therapeutic outcome measures

#### Evidence requirements for this unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes. Given the nature of this unit, the importance of maintaining confidentiality and responsibilities relating to disclosure on issues emerging should be stressed to learners. Learners should adhere to a nationally recognised professional ethical framework. Learners must not be working therapeutically with clients until they are assessed and deemed safe and capable to maintain a professional counselling relationship. Criteria for this assessment should be clear and specific with regard to learner competency.

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can:

#### Outcome 1

- ◆ explain the nature and purpose of counselling supervision.
- ◆ describe the values, principles and personal moral qualities relative to counselling supervision and competent practice.
- ◆ identify ethical issues relevant to codes of practice and legislation.
- ◆ identify ethical issues relevant to the counselling supervision context.

#### Outcome 2

- ◆ investigate theoretical approaches to counselling supervision.
- ◆ evaluate the impact on supervisory relationship of one approach.

#### Outcome 3

- ◆ explain the relationship between theory and professional practice.
- ◆ explain the importance of safe working in a therapeutic relationship.
- ◆ identify the boundaries of own capabilities.

#### Outcome 4

- ◆ participate in an individual supervisory relationship in line with BACP guidelines.
- ◆ participate in group supervision.
- ◆ identify limits of own competence in terms of the therapeutic relationship.

## Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Counselling: Supervised Practice (SCQF level 8)

### Outcome 5

- ◆ explain the importance of identifying, developing and using professional support networks to professional practice.
- ◆ reflect on use of Continued Professional Development (CPD) to recognise own strengths and areas for development.
- ◆ identify the skills necessary to manage the administrative process of professional practice.
- ◆ reflect on own ability to work with therapeutic outcome measures.



## Higher National Unit Support Notes

**Unit title:** Counselling: Supervised Practice (SCQF level 8)

Unit support notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory; however centres supporting learners who wish to access the BACP register must adhere to the extensive guidance given in the following sections.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 120 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this unit

Outcomes 1–3 of this unit is designed to allow learners to build up a knowledge and understanding of the nature and requirements of supervised practice prior to entering into practice with clients within a supervised placement. Outcomes 4 and 5 cover the workplace practice which should provide opportunities for the learner's further learning and skills development as identified with their tutor. Reference is made throughout the support notes to publications, websites and legislation. These are all current at the time of publication however centres should ensure that learners are signposted to the most up to date versions when teaching the unit.

#### Outcome 1

This outcome introduces the nature and purpose of counselling supervision in relation to the maintenance of safe boundaries for practice. Supervision is a requirement, whereby counsellors engage in a professional relationship with an experienced and competent counsellor for professional and personal development. The range, importance and relevance of personal and professional values, principles and moral qualities will be explored in the context of clinical supervision.

Values are a useful way of expressing general ethical commitments that underpin the purpose and goals of our actions.

BACP fundamental values include a commitment to:

- ◆ respecting human rights and dignity.
- ◆ alleviating symptoms of personal distress and suffering.
- ◆ enhancing people's wellbeing and capabilities.
- ◆ improving the quality of relationships between people.
- ◆ increasing personal resilience and effectiveness.
- ◆ facilitating a sense of self that is meaningful to the person(s) concerned within their personal and cultural context.
- ◆ appreciating the variety of human experience and culture.
- ◆ protecting the safety of clients.
- ◆ ensuring the integrity of practitioner-client relationships.
- ◆ enhancing the quality of professional knowledge and its application.

- ◆ striving for the fair and adequate provision of services.

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Values inform principles. They become more precisely defined and action orientated when expressed as a principle. Principles direct attention to important ethical responsibilities.

BACP core principles are:

- ◆ Being trustworthy: honouring the trust placed in the practitioner
- ◆ Autonomy: respect for the client's right to be self-governing
- ◆ Beneficence: a commitment to promoting the client's wellbeing
- ◆ Non-maleficence: a commitment to avoiding harm to the client
- ◆ Justice: the fair and impartial treatment of all clients and the provision of adequate services
- ◆ Self-respect: fostering the practitioner's self-knowledge, integrity and care for self

Ethical decisions that are strongly supported by one or more of these principles without any contradiction with the others may be regarded as well-founded. However, practitioners may encounter circumstances in which it is impossible to reconcile all the applicable principles. This may require choosing which principles to prioritise. A decision or course of action does not necessarily become unethical merely because it is controversial or because other practitioners would have reached different conclusions in similar circumstances.

A practitioner's obligation is to consider all the relevant circumstances with as much care as possible and to be appropriately accountable for decisions made.

Personal moral qualities are internalised values that shape how we relate to others and our environment. They represent a moral energy or drive which may operate unconsciously and unexamined. This moral energy or drive is ethically more beneficial when consciously examined from time to time and used to motivate our ethical development or shape how we work towards a good society.

Personal moral qualities are a contemporary application of 'virtues' from moral philosophy. The practitioner's personal and relational moral qualities are of the utmost importance. Their perceived presence or absence will have a strong influence on how relationships with clients and colleagues develop and whether they are of sufficient quality and resilience to support the work. High levels of compatibility between personal and professional moral qualities will usually enhance the integrity and resilience of any relationship.

Key personal qualities to which members and registrants are strongly encouraged to aspire include:

- ◆ Care: benevolent, responsible and competent attentiveness to someone's needs, wellbeing and personal agency
- ◆ Diligence: the conscientious deployment of the skills and knowledge needed to achieve a beneficial outcome
- ◆ Courage: the capacity to act in spite of known fears, risks and uncertainty
- ◆ Empathy: the ability to communicate understanding of another person's experience from that person's perspective



## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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- ◆ Identity: sense of self in relationship to others that forms the basis of responsibility, resilience and motivation
- ◆ Humility: the ability to assess accurately and acknowledge one's own strengths and weaknesses
- ◆ Integrity: commitment to being moral in dealings with others, including personal straightforwardness, honesty and coherence
- ◆ Resilience: the capacity to work with the client's concerns without being personally diminished
- ◆ Respect: showing appropriate esteem for people and their understanding of themselves
- ◆ Sincerity: a personal commitment to consistency between what is professed and what is done
- ◆ Wisdom: possession of sound judgement that informs practice

The relationship between ethical issues, professional codes of practice and relevant legislation includes a range of aspects relevant to current practice.

Importance should be placed on aspects such as personal limitations, contracting anxiety, resistance, challenge, being issue-focused, etc.

Relevant legislation might include, but is not restricted to:

- ◆ Data Protection Act (1998)
- ◆ Freedom of Information (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2013
- ◆ Mental Health Care and Treatment (Scotland) Act 2003
- ◆ Equality Act 2010

### Outcome 2

This outcome informs the learner of different methods of supervision to prepare them for the effective use of supervision as a professional requirement throughout their working life. The strengths and potential weaknesses of each should be considered. This outcome includes the following key aspects:

- ◆ Educational: to stimulate critical thinking about the relationship between theory and practice
- ◆ Reflective: a) to consider how the therapist's own values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours impact on the therapeutic process and b) reflection on and evaluation of practice
- ◆ Developmental: to facilitate the learner development as ethical competent and accountable practitioners
- ◆ Supportive: to consider learner personal and professional well-being with respect to client work
- ◆ Managerial: to have due regard to the needs of the client, the learner, the course, the placement, the profession and society at large in accordance with the BACP Ethical Framework

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Reference may also be made to alternative approaches such as prescriptive, informative, confronting, cathartic, catalytic, supportive, etc.

Learners should be made aware of the Supervision Competences  
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology/competency-maps/supervision.html>

### Outcome 3

All learners must demonstrate their ability to work safely prior to entering into placement experience. The term for this is 'Readiness to Practise'. An assessment of readiness to practice must include the following aspects:

- (i) Self-awareness, maturity and stability
- (ii) Ability to make use of and reflect upon life experience
- (iii) Capacity to cope with the emotional demands of the course
- (iv) Ability to cope with the intellectual and academic requirement
- (v) Ability to form a helping relationship
- (vi) Ability to be self-critical and use both positive and negative feedback
- (vii) Awareness of the nature of prejudice and oppression
- (viii) Awareness of issues of difference and equality
- (ix) Ability to recognise the need for personal and professional support
- (x) Competence in, or the aptitude to develop generic professional skills, including:
  - ◆ literacy
  - ◆ numeracy
  - ◆ information technology
  - ◆ administrative skills
  - ◆ self-management skills
  - ◆ communication
  - ◆ interpersonal skills

A pro forma checklist for use in a readiness to practice assessment is available to download from the Counselling HND page of the SQA website. Once a learner has demonstrated their readiness to practise, the following criteria will be required to be met whilst on placement to ensure safe working practice with clients. Learners are required to establish a clear framework for the therapeutic work, including:

- (a) Awareness of the limits of confidentiality and other ethical and professional boundaries.
- (b) Clear procedures for pre-assessment communication with clients about services on offer.
- (c) Clear information about the process of therapy and the process of therapeutic change.
- (d) A description of the responsibilities of each party to the contract.
- (e) The negotiation of appropriate outcomes with clients.
- (f) The negotiation of all details of the practical arrangements including the number of sessions available.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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- (g) Apply a body of knowledge, informed by contemporary research, consistently and effectively during the course of the therapeutic process.
- (h) Apply and monitor a range of therapeutic interventions consistent with the rationale and philosophy of the course.
- (i) Work with difference and diversity as it impacts on the therapeutic relationship or the process of therapy.
- (j) Be aware of the potential power imbalance in the therapeutic relationship.
- (k) Reflect on and manage the therapeutic process and to work with the unexpected nature of life and of the therapeutic relationship.
- (l) Review and evaluate the initial assessment decisions and if necessary modify the work with the client or conduct a referral.
- (m) Conduct an ending.

### Outcome 4

Learners must participate in both an individual supervisory relationship and in group supervision in line with the BACP ethical framework.

According to BACP Information sheet *What is Supervision?* by Sally Despenser, the purpose of supervision is:

- ◆ to assist in the development of the reflective practitioner.
- ◆ to support the therapist.
- ◆ to maximise the effectiveness of the therapeutic relationship.
- ◆ to monitor/ safeguard the interests of the client.
- ◆ to maintain ethical standards as set out in the Ethical Framework.

There is a range of ways of providing group supervision (Houston 1990, 1995; Proctor 2008). At one end of the continuum, the supervisor acts as leader, taking responsibility for apportioning the time between the therapists, then focusing on the work of individuals in turn. At the other end of the range, the therapists will allocate supervision time between themselves using the supervisor as a technical resource. The group can be a rich source of ideas, different perspectives, varied experience and parallel process. In group supervision, the total time in the group must be apportioned between each of the supervisees in order to comply with BACP requirements for minimum supervision hours.

The focus of supervision is the therapy. This might include some or all of the following:

- ◆ what made the client come for therapy now
- ◆ the background (history, recent events)
- ◆ what the client wants and all the feelings that arise from the therapy (which may also appear in the relationship between supervisor and supervisee — parallel process)
- ◆ the therapy process
- ◆ theory and ethical considerations in the setting
- ◆ boundaries n managing risk
- ◆ the suitability of both the therapist and the setting for working with this client at this time
- ◆ organisational issues
- ◆ the supervisor's reactions, comments and challenges

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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### Supervision criteria

The centre must have specific criteria for the selection of supervisors. They must work within the BACP Ethical Framework. Their rationale and philosophy should be compatible with that of the course being delivered.

Supervisors must work to the explicit contract with the course and placement provider, which clarifies accountability for the client work, reporting and assessment requirements, issues of confidentiality and practical issues such as meetings and finance.

The boundaries of supervision on the course and supervision at the learner's placement provider must also be specified. This contract must include provision for the supervisor to report concerns about any aspect of the student's practice.

Further information on placement criteria is provided in the group award Specification. A pro forma Placement Contract is also available to download from the SQA Counselling HND web-page.

### Outcome 5

The learner must acknowledge the importance of professional support networks in relation to their professional practice and provide evidence of their identifying, engaging with and using appropriate, local groups. These should be relevant to the client group but must be related to counselling. Active engagement with one or more professional networks will provide context, allowing the learner to reflect on their use of CPD and to recognise their own strengths and areas for development.

The role and importance of administrative processes relating to professional practice might include but are not restricted to:

- ◆ competent use of a booking system.
- ◆ managing appointments.
- ◆ keeping detailed, timely client records.
- ◆ storage and data protection.
- ◆ ICT skills.
- ◆ awareness of importance of current paperwork.
- ◆ taking responsibility for own records in accordance with systems at placement.
- ◆ formal and informal methods of communication within a team.
- ◆ outcome measures.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

Learners must reflect on their own ability to work with therapeutic outcome measures. Outcome measures vary depending upon the service, so learners should have an awareness and basic understanding of several prior to engaging with their placement. Learners might be encouraged to complete the relevant MindEd unit which is free and provides 30 minutes basic overview. The session is located at <https://www.minded.org.uk/LearningContent/LaunchForGuestAccess/447343>

This Supervised Practice unit is designed to be delivered over one year, allowing the time and opportunity for the learner to achieve 100 hours of practice, which must be supervised in line with BACP requirements. This currently stands at a minimum of 1.5 hours per month and is a requirement for access to the BACP professional register.

Delivery of this unit must adhere to rigorous standards in line with professional, ethical and legal requirements. The unit requires learners to engage in supervised practice (exclusive of missed sessions), taking note of the following:

- ◆ For safety reasons, before starting client work, students must be assessed individually for their readiness to take clients. Therefore Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 should be completed first.
- ◆ It is not appropriate for learners to take other students on the course as clients, whether from their own or a different cohort.
- ◆ The client work undertaken by learners should be congruent with the rationale and philosophy of the course.
- ◆ Inexperienced learners in training should not gain their client work experience through private/independent practice.
- ◆ The course has an obligation ethical responsibility to ensure that placement providers indicate trainee status to their clients.
- ◆ Details of the client work must be included in a professional log which the learner maintains and presents at assessment as evidence of competence to practice. Client confidentiality must be maintained in the log.
- ◆ The centre must have a procedure in place for students to extend the training period in order to complete the required practice hours:
  - The centre must indicate clearly under what circumstances an extension is permitted and;
  - Over what time period this is allowed and;
  - How learners are being supported during that period.
- ◆ The centre will have clear written and published procedures for practice placements.
- ◆ The centre must demonstrate how it approves its placement providers as appropriate for the particular course.
- ◆ There must be an explicit written agreement/contract between learners, the placement provider and the course, which is available to all. This must include:
  - A description of the course including its rationale and philosophy, procedures and resources and the requirements of learners for client work and assessment, eg supervisor reports, electronic media recording.
  - A confirmation from the placement provider that its aims, orientation and philosophy are congruent with that of the course.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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- Details of where accountability lies for:
  - The client work
  - Reporting relationships
  - Supervision arrangements
  - Limits of confidentiality
  - Complaints procedures
  - Health and safety issues
- A contract between the course and placement provider that details the requirements for reports on learners, reciprocal feedback, meetings, etc.
- Details of the placement providers' professional practice such as the initial assessment of clients, methods of referral to students, note taking/record keeping requirements.
- Details of the type and range of client work undertaken by the placement provider, the kinds of client work contracts offered and any limits upon these in relation to learner experience or other factors.
- Details of how clients are assessed for suitability to work with trainees.

### Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Evidence for Outcome 1 and 2 may be holistically assessed. Information may be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the unit. Evidence could be gathered in a learner portfolio.

Evidence for Outcome 3 is generated by individual interview between assessing team and learner. Evidence could be gathered by checklist and reflective account. Learners should adhere to the BACP ethical framework. Learners must clearly demonstrate that they are safe and capable of maintaining a professional counselling relationship and must not be working therapeutically with clients until they are assessed and deemed safe and capable to do so. Criteria for this assessment should be clear and specific with regard to learner competency.

To generate evidence for Outcome 4, the learner must engage and reflect upon individual and group clinical supervision. The learner must present all their work in supervision not less than fortnightly. The ratio to be maintained is no less than one hour's presenting time to eight hours client work, subject to an overall minimum of 1.5 hours per month. The occurrence should be guided by the nature and complexity of the client work relative to the experience of the learner.

This will be assessed by completion of a reflective journal verified by a witness statement from the supervisor/s.

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Evidence for Outcome 5 will be assessed by reflective professional journal maintained by the learner throughout placement which clearly identifies:

- (a) attended counselling appointments.
- (b) hours of professional supervision.
- (c) areas of strength.
- (d) areas for development.
- (e) ethical and legal considerations.
- (f) professional support network.
- (g) communication issues within multidisciplinary team.
- (h) management of safe boundaries.
- (i) administration skills.
- (j) time management.
- (k) use of assessment tools and outcome measures.
- (l) regular attendance and use of supervision.

### Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the evidence requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at [www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment).

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

In this unit, learners will be involved in an investigation of clinical supervision, engagement in professional practice and reflection and evaluation of their professional engagement in a range of areas. There will be opportunities in placement to develop effective *Communication* and interpersonal skills. Learners will have opportunities to develop skills in *Working with Others* in seeking and responding to feedback from others in the review and evaluation of their therapeutic relationships.

Learners must take responsibility for their own performance and in the review and evaluation of their professional practice. This will allow them to develop the three components of *Problem Solving* — Critical Thinking, Planning and Organising and Reviewing and Evaluating. If the learner uses a computer while undertaking any part of this unit, eg for research, they will also have the opportunity to develop *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* skills.

## History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for learners

### Unit title: Counselling: Supervised Practice (SCQF level 8)

This section will help you decide whether this is the unit for you by explaining what the unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This unit is designed to allow you to put your knowledge of counselling theory into practice whilst undertaking a supervised placement. Prior to undertaking this unit you should complete the HNC Counselling plus the following units; *Counselling: Professional Standards*, *Counselling: Psychopathology* and *Counselling: Values and Principles of Practice* and have obtained BACP Student membership and personal indemnity insurance.

The content of the unit is underpinned by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling. (BACP)

The unit is designed to be delivered over one year, allowing you the time and opportunity to achieve 100 hours of practice, with a minimum of 1.5 hours of clinical supervision per month in accordance with BACP Ethical Framework requirements. This is a requirement for access to the BACP professional register. For reasons of client safety, the content of the unit has been written to adhere to rigorous standards in line with professional, ethical and legal requirements.

You will complete five outcomes to achieve the unit.

- 1 Explain the character and purpose of effective counselling supervision.
- 2 Evaluate theoretical models and approaches to counselling supervision.
- 3 Demonstrate own readiness to practice.
- 4 Engage in a professional supervisory relationship.
- 5 Demonstrate professional development as a practicing counsellor.

Assessment is varied and will be comprised of a portfolio of evidence; assessor checklist, reflective accounts, and a reflective professional journal verified by a witness statement.