



Programme Specification

COU-HNC-2024: Counselling and Applied Psychology

Pearson Higher National Certificate awarded by Pearson (FHEQ Level 4)

Programme Status: Draft | Version: 1

Introduction

This programme specification provides a summary of the main features of the Counselling and Applied Psychology programme and includes the learning outcomes that you as a student are expected to have achieved on successful completion of the programme.

Further detailed information related to this programme and the College can be found in the following resources:

- Programme Handbook
- B&FC Admissions Policy
- Work based and placement learning handbook (for foundation degrees)
- Student guide to assessment and feedback

When undertaken as part of a Degree Apprenticeship additional information is available in the following resources:

- The Programme Delivery Plan
- The End Point Assessment Guide
- B&FC Mentor Guide
- B&FC Apprenticeship Strategy

Key Programme Information

Programme Code	COU-HNC-2024
Programme Title	Counselling and Applied Psychology
Teaching Institution	Blackpool and The Fylde College
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) Accreditation	None
UCAS Code	
Language of Study	English
Version	1
Approval Status	Draft
Approval Date	Not yet approved
JACS Code	
Programme Leader	Mandy Pritchard

Programme Awards

Award	Award Type	Level	Awarding Body
Pearson Higher National Certificate	Higher National Certificate	Level 4	Pearson

Programme Overview

The B&FC HNC/D Counselling & Applied Psychology provide exciting opportunities for you to study to enable you to progress to or within a role in counselling and applied psychology. This programme provides you with a platform to begin or enhance your career and incorporate both practical elements and theoretical concepts that are highly desirable in a range of roles in the sector but also gives you a strong range of transferable skills, relevant to many employment opportunities eg family support, school-based pastoral support, business etc.

You will benefit from the expertise of the curriculum team who have excellent experience in these sectors and are also actively involved in developing you in both personal and professional

terms as the workforce of the future. Class sizes are normally small and again this is very beneficial, affording the opportunity for a tailored personal learning situation and plenty of help and support.

This programme is designed to develop you as a professional, self-reflecting individual able to meet the demands of employers and adapt to a constantly changing world. The structure of the programme includes mandatory core units which are designed to underpin your professional development. Specialist units also allow you to explore theoretical concepts and develop practical skills related to the pluralistic (integrative) counselling and applied psychology.

Admission Criteria

Entry requirements

- a Level 3 qualification in a related subject, such as Level 3 Certificate/Diploma in Counselling Skills or
- other related Level 3 qualifications in relevant subjects such psychology, mental health or care or
- an Access to Higher Education Diploma in Humanities or Science

And

- You must have a counselling placement for 4-6 hours per week in place before commencement of the programme
- You will be required to provide the details of 2 referees and also a recent DBS check

You will be invited to an interview with a member of the counselling team to ensure your suitability on the programme and to check that you meet the BACP approval requirements outlined below;

The programme is closely aligned and matches the standards laid down by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). The BACP is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority, committed to protecting the public by providing high quality, evidence-based standards of ethical practice for the counselling professions. It is for this reason that there will also be rigorous selection process that ensures successful applicants have or have the potential to:

- develop self-awareness, maturity and stability.
- reflect on life experience.
- cope with the emotional demands of the qualification.
- cope with the intellectual and academic requirements.
- be aware of issues of difference and equality.
- recognise the need for personal and professional support.
- Be able to demonstrate values, principles, personal moral qualities and ethical stances.

This selection process will include a prep-prepared written piece, and individual and a group interview. Full details will be provided following application. Students who are not yet ready will be signposted to suitable opportunities which will enable them to develop so that they can achieve the above.

By successfully completing the HNC Certificate and HND Diploma, students will:

Meet the training requirements for professional accreditation as a counsellor.

Have met the Scope of Practice and Education (SCoPEd) framework requirements for a column A therapist.

The opportunity to progress to Level 6 study (which is planned for a September 2026 start as a B&FC top up).

The programme will enable you to be equipped with the attitudes and behaviours required to succeed in counselling practice, have the enhanced employability prospects and 'work readiness' of graduates within the profession, and be ready to take part in CPD and lifelong learning for personal and professional development.

Career Options and Progression Opportunities

Progression

By the end of Level 4 HNC, you will have sound knowledge of the foundation concepts of counselling and psychology. You will be competent in a range of subject-specific skills as well as general skills and qualities relevant to key areas of these professions and will be able to work in a structured environment. At HNC level you can work as an assistant counsellor in a work setting in healthcare and non-healthcare settings including voluntary working.

The Pearson Level 5 HND in Counselling and Applied Psychology Level 5 units give you the opportunity should you wish to, to set up in independent practice and to progress to degree-level study. Following HND completion you can apply to BACP to become an accredited counsellor and you can work independently, refer and have clients referred.

Progression is planned to level 6. It is envisaged that this will be a top up degree in counselling supervision and/or counselling & applied psychology through B&FC from September 2026.

Career Opportunities

Whilst most students will progress to a career in counselling, there are many other options available to you, including working in the care or education sector, particularly in pastoral or social care, HR, people services, marketing or other relevant business roles.

Programme Aims

(based on Pearson published aims)

1. To provide an academically challenging and vocationally relevant programme which develops knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to careers in counselling and applied psychology.
2. To provide an insight into the principles, concepts, perspectives, core values, cultural, social and legislative understanding of the operation and management of counselling and applied psychology at level 4/5.
3. To build upon these at level 5 by specialising in an area and developing the professional skills and attributes to work independently at this level
- 4 To develop effective interpersonal, digital, technical, entrepreneurial and communication skills which are readily transferable to employment in this evolving area of work.
5. To provide students with the context in which to consider professional ethics and their relation to personal, professional and statutory responsibilities.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Level 4

Upon successful completion of this level, students will be able to:

1. Explain and demonstrate the core themes in counselling & applied psychology

2. Consider the diversity of roles, recognising the importance of communication at all levels
3. Examine the challenges and opportunities of working within culturally diverse organisations, cross-cultural issues, diversity and values
4. Evaluate evidence-based practice
5. Consider professional ethics and their relation to personal, professional and statutory responsibilities within the counselling & applied psychology

Programme Structure

Module	Level	Credits	%	Category	Description	Length/Word Count	Grading Method
Stage 1							
D/650/4724/UNIT2: Developing Empathic Communication for Effective Therapeutic Relationships (Mandatory)	4	15	-	Coursework: Literature Review	n/a	1500	Pass/Fail
			-	Coursework: Evaluative/ Reflective Report	n/a	1500	Pass/Fail
F/650/3564/UNIT1: Personal & Professional Development Through Inclusive Practice (Mandatory)	4	15	-	Practical: Practical Skills Assessment	n/a	30	Pass/Fail
			-	Coursework: Evaluative/ Reflective Report	n/a	1500	Pass/Fail
J/650/3566/UNIT3: Preparing for Research (Pearson-set) (Mandatory)	4	15	-	Coursework: Research Portfolio	n/a	3000	Pass/Fail
K/650/3567/UNIT4: Ethical Frameworks in Counselling (Mandatory)	4	15	-	Coursework: Essay	n/a	2000	Pass/Fail
			-	Coursework: Evaluative/ Reflective Report	Presentation	1000	Pass/Fail
L/650/3577/UNIT7: Individual Differences (Mandatory)	4	15	-	Practical: Presentation	n/a	15	Pass/Fail
			-	Coursework: Literature Review	n/a	1500	Pass/Fail
M/650/3569/UNIT5: Self- awareness and Reflective Practice in Counselling (Mandatory)	4	15	-	Coursework: Evaluative/ Reflective Report	Self awareness reflection	2000	Pass/Fail
			-	Coursework: Plan	Personal development plan	1000	Pass/Fail
M/650/3578/UNIT8: Digital Approaches in Caring Professions (Mandatory)	4	15	-	Coursework: Report	n/a	1500	Pass/Fail
			-	Practical: Presentation	n/a	15	Pass/Fail
Y/650/3570/UNIT6: Theoretical Perspectives in Counselling (Mandatory)	4	15	-	Coursework: Critical Review	n/a	1500	Pass/Fail
			-	Coursework: Case Study	n/a	1500	Pass/Fail

Study Workload

As an academic level 4 & 5 qualification, this programme will require substantial time to complete the assessments to ensure successful completion. You should plan for this to be around 6-8 hours per week. In addition, you will need to complete your counselling placement hours, with related documentation as required by both the programme and your placement provider. Full details are available in the placement handbook.

Programme Delivery: Learning and Teaching

This programme will have its roots embedded in the B&FC Inclusive Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy to ensure that it offers high quality technical education and clear connections to roles within the sector. This programme will be delivered on one day and evening a week face to face with online support at other times during the week.

You will be engaged in a dynamic, interactive and reflective learning experience. This experience will effectively prepare them to successfully engage in the assessments, which will measure depth, as well as breadth, of knowledge. Teaching will stimulate academic engagement, develop challenging yet constructive programme and encourage you to develop your counselling skills and reflect on your own performance.

The range of learning methods will include.

Case studies to illustrate how a range of concepts, theories and perspectives can be applied in the explanation and evaluation of real-life examples.

Peer learning workshop sessions will be facilitated in order to foster collaborative active social learning, the sharing of good practice and allow you to practise and develop your counselling skills in triad practice which will be both peer and tutor-assessed.

Lectures will be used to provide current developments in counselling and applied psychology practices and processes, theory, and the wider social-political context in which these are located. Lectures will aim to promote an understanding of a range of perspectives that influence the nature of counselling and applied psychology.

As a student at B&FC, you will have access to the Partners for Success team, which includes a safeguarding team, HE learning mentors, welfare support and learning support. In addition, you will be allocated a personal tutor who will manage your pastoral support and academic progress in college. In addition, there are a number of roles connected to your placement who will oversee this, and support you to meet the programme requirements.

You will need to meet the requirement for your workplace practice which is also essential to enable you to develop your counselling skills. You will be required to find a suitable counselling placement 4/6 hours per week, which will then be monitored by the College workplace co-ordinator throughout the programme. Within your placement you will be required to have an identified supervisor throughout the duration of your placement to ensure that you operate safely and meet the required standards of the setting. Your workplace co-ordinator will ensure that you find an effective placement and gain experience in terms of the maintenance of communication between tutors, supervisors and the workplace. Prior to the onset of your placement checks will be made on your readiness, whether the placement will help you to meet the programme outcomes, and importantly, safeguarding of both you and clients.

Programme Delivery: Assessment

The Higher National Certificate and Diploma are assessed using a combination of internally assessed Centre-devised internal assignments (which are set and marked by Centres) and internally assessed Pearson-set assignments (which are set by Pearson and marked by Centres).

Higher Nationals recommend a variety of forms of assessment evidence to be used, provided they are suited to the type of learning outcomes being assessed. For many units, the practical demonstration of skills is necessary and, for others, you will need to carry out their own research and analysis, working independently or as part of a team. Summative assessment will be used

to ensure all outcomes have been met for each unit, in line with Pearson regulations. The forms of summative assessment across the programme consist of essays, reports, case studies, presentations, posters and are used to support the development of cognitive skills and abilities. The principal rationale for selecting these methods of assessment and feedback are that they are supporting your development to progress within and to their career with a range of skills. Case studies will be used to enable you to critically appraise and examine real life situations and link these to theory. The application of conceptual and theoretical knowledge and perspectives to real life situations will allow you to critically analyse and evaluate material, produce findings and make further recommendations.

You will use Onefile to store all assessments and to create your professional portfolio. You will also log your completed counselling hours on Onefile. You must successfully completed the required placement hours to be awarded the qualification.

Programme Delivery: Work Based and Placement Learning

You will be required to complete 100 hours of placement during the HNC and a further 70 hours whilst undertaking the HND. These hours are closely managed and regulated, with full details being described within the Placement Handbook which you must read before enrolling to the programme as it contains important information about the placement requirements. You will be made aware of the ethical requirements towards your clients and complete workplace documentation. The supervisor may be one provided by the placement, or you may need to finance this yourself. In all cases, the workplace coordinator will closely oversee the programme in order to ensure all professional ethical guidelines are met. All placement hours must be completed in the UK, with clients based in the UK.

Programme Delivery: Graduate Skill Development

Upon completion of your programme of study not only do we want to ensure that you have achieved your qualification but it's important to us that you are fully ready to embark on a rewarding career and join our successful graduates. To ensure this, we place an enormous focus on developing and refining graduate attributes through teaching, learning, assessment and engagement with a wide range of peers, employers and other stakeholders. We call these graduate attributes and they are designed to help you prepare for employment and succeed throughout your career.

As a B&FC graduate, you'll benefit from these graduate attributes:

A commitment to lifelong learning and career development

You will be expected to continue their professional journey in the workplace, as continuing professional development is a requirement of your ongoing BACP registration.

Collaborative teamwork and leadership skills

This will be underpinned through the annual team-building events where you will experience opportunities to lead and be led. This is important as counsellors as you need to work with others, both clients and professionals from many agencies.

Personal and intellectual autonomy

This is essential as you must be reflective and reflexive in the workplace, to ensure ethical and purposeful counselling takes place, utilising the 9 core skills.

Ethical, social and professional understanding

These are embedded in all counselling practices and must be understood to enable you to work as an accredited counsellor.

Communication, information, and digital literacies

The rise in digital counselling is evident and this is specifically taught and assessed in unit 8. You will learn about the benefits and the drawbacks of this modality, which is a process very much in its infancy. Digital approach must be used appropriately to maximise benefits and reduce risks. This will be examined in great detail within the unit.

Global citizenship

Counselling needs to be culturally sensitive activity and therefore an awareness of global issues is essential for you to offer appropriate counselling. Global awareness is about caring, embracing cultural diversity, promoting social justice and sustainability, and a sense of responsibility to act. This unit focuses upon this wider agenda to enable you to truly embrace equality and diversity.

Research, scholarship and enquiry skills

This is underpinned in all units to enable you to consider a range of perspectives to support your counselling practice. Research is important to the counselling professions and is a vital part of therapeutic practice. Within the pluralist approach, it is important to identify a range of therapies which may be beneficial to a client. You will learn how to carry out and evaluate effective interventions thus increasing your effectiveness as a counsellor and outcomes for your client.

Enterprise and entrepreneurial awareness and capabilities

Many counsellors will become self-employed and therefore support for this is embedded in the guest speaker programme through tutorials, academic research, issues around ethics and health and safety and so forth. This will ensure you have a toolkit to support independent practice which is both effective and ethical. You will be made aware of issues concerning setting up a private practice, managing the process, developing your role, and understanding the challenges that counsellors may face.

Study Costs: Equipment Requirements

NA

Study Costs: Additional Costs

As this programme leads to a professional qualification in counselling, you will need to ensure that you have the following in place, prior to starting the programme. These costs may be supported through B&FC Access Fund, depending on your personal circumstances.

Further details are included in the Placement Handbook. Approximate costs identified for guidance.

Student membership of the British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy, or equivalent (must be regulated by the Professional Standards Body), £86

Personal Indemnity Insurance £30

DBS check £46

You will need to have a supervisor in place when you are on placement which costs approx. £30-£60 per session. If your placement provides supervision this will need to be vetted by your work-place coordinator. This should be 12 hours for the HNC and a further 9 hours for the HND.

Approximate total additional costs for the programme (assuming supervision at £40 per hour) would therefore be

HNC (year 1) £642

HND (year 2) £522

Related Courses

The College offers a range of Higher Education programme in complementary disciplines such as Adult Social Care, Mental Health & Resilience, Working with Children, Young People & Families. These connections are at the heart of our higher education provision and it is something that truly enhances your experience whilst you study; your ability to develop connections, internal and external to the college, and your prospects of gaining the employment that you seek. In addition, upon completing the programme you can continue with further study in this field or a related discipline.