

Pre-course FAQs

If you are considering applying for the Certificate in Counselling Skills then here are answers to some questions which may be of interest in informing your decision.

Acronyms

COSCA – COSCA Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland

CLL - Centre for Lifelong Learning

SAAS - Student Awards Agency Scotland

PTFG – Part-time Fee Grant (SAAS)

BACP – The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

What is COSCA?

COSCA Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland is Scotland's professional body for counselling and psychotherapy.

Do I need prior qualifications to apply for the Certificate in Counselling Skills?

No, this is an introductory level qualification intended as continuing professional development, or for personal development, or as a foundation for further study. No prior qualifications are needed.

It can be used to support onward learning if applying for a Diploma in a counselling modality or an MSc in Counselling & Psychotherapy. Other educational qualifications are required for progressive study, as stipulated by each provider.

Is this a Strathclyde University course?

No, the Certificate in Counselling Skills is COSCA's course, designed and owned by COSCA. The Centre for Lifelong Learning is validated to deliver the course on COSCA's behalf. On completion of the course student results are registered with and certificated by COSCA.

Why should I choose the University of Strathclyde?

The University is a leading provider of the COSCA Counselling Certificate course. All our tutors are qualified counsellors who have all been on the same journey you are starting on.

They have all completed the COSCA certificate and have studied across a mix of modalities, from Person-centred, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Acceptance Commitment Therapy and Solution Focused Brief Therapy.

Who can apply for the course?

Any adult with an interest in enhancing their listening skills for personal or professional use. Anyone working with or managing people in a workplace setting, involved in the charity sector, volunteering in communities etc.

All applicants must be resident in the UK and, if non-UK nationals, must have leave to remain for the duration of study.

Non-UK students already studying in the UK on a Student Visa cannot complete the course as it is out with the terms of this visa type. Students on a Graduate Route Visa can apply so long as the course falls within the duration of the visa.

Training to be a counsellor can be challenging and it is important that you make sure you are ready to start the training.

What should I expect from the course?

It is important to remember that the COSCA counselling certificate is foundation level professional training. However, it is not a course you can coast; it demands a lot from you emotionally in self-reflection and in sharing your personal experiences, so it is important to make sure you are ready for this and have a good support network in place.

The course is designed to develop:

- Your listening skills through real play and not role play (you share aspects of your life journey which are related to the various topics covered on the course such as bereavement, trauma, discrimination etc).
- Introduce you to the core counselling theories/modalities of Person-centred, Cognitive Behavioural, Psychodynamic, Transactional Analysis and Gestalt.
- Bring to your awareness aspects of yourself through self-awareness/development activities.

Are all class meetings in person?

We offer either on-campus or online courses. We do not offer hybrid (a mixture of both modes of delivery). Class meetings are synchronous with tutor and students present in the same space, whether virtual or face-to-face.

What is the attendance requirement?

The minimum attendance requirement for each module is 85%, which is stipulated by COSCA. Each unit within a module is a single attendance at 2.5 hours. You can afford to miss *no more* than two units; otherwise, you cannot progress with the course. Condensed courses comprise two units per day. If you miss one or two units then your tutor will request an additional piece of work or skills practice from you to evidence your understanding of the missed topics or your progress in skills practice. Each module consists of twelve units.

The attendance requirement is in place for several reasons:

- It is COSCA's stipulation, that no more than two units are missed in a module and as a provider we observe this requirement.
- Much of the learning in each module is experiential and you miss valuable interaction if absent.
- Learning is important for onward progression. We do not repeat the material at any point so it leaves students who miss the sessions at a real disadvantage, especially when it comes to skills development. Three units missed equates to 25% of the module, which is significant for an experiential course.
- Participant absence disrupts group process and bonding.

Please note that persistent late attendance or leaving early would count towards your attendance.

Can I make up missed units by joining another group?

No, students remain with the same group for the course duration and have a confidentiality agreement that binds them to that group. There is no transference as this would be disruptive for the group.

I have recently suffered a traumatic event. Should I still apply for the course?

You should consider carefully if you have reached an equilibrium in dealing with your trauma. If it is very recent or unresolved then you may need more time to adjust or other professional assistance. The course may trigger memories of past experiences that can still affect you. You will discuss some sensitive topics and in skills practice students speak about past issues using their personal life experiences, these are not scripted, although there are boundaries recommended in skills practice. It can be an emotional journey and it is important that you have personal support in place i.e. close family members and/or friends.

As this is a foundation level course there is no supervision so it is recommended that you have your own support network in place.

Please also note that any personal experiences shared with you are confidential and are not to be shared with anyone else.

How do I participate within my home environment when online?

All meeting attendance takes place online via Teams for online classes but on-campus classes will also use Zoom for skills practice when required.

Therefore, it is recommended that you have:

- A suitable device e.g. PC, laptop, iPad or tablet (*a mobile phone is not suitable for large groups*).
- Broadband with a reliable wi-fi connection.
- Private space to engage in Teams or Zoom meetings and skills practice, free from interruption and to maintain group/triad confidentiality.
- The Zoom app (free 40-minute version) for skills practice – installed on your device.

How do I find out about advanced study?

CLL organises an online *marketplace event* of local providers and students are invited. Diploma providers are invited to deliver a short presentation of their course with a short Q&A session after each speaker. A representative for the MSc in Counselling & Psychotherapy at Strathclyde is also invited to speak. These online sessions take place over two evenings and students enrolled on the course are notified of the itinerary in advance.

Can CLL give me information on the MSc in Counselling & Psychotherapy at Strathclyde University?

No, we would refer you directly to the PGT Support Team as the MSc is not administered by CLL. Please contact HaSS PGT Admissions at hass-pgt-admissions@strath.ac.uk or online at [MSc website](#).

Can I practice as a Counsellor/Therapist on completion of the Certificate in Counselling Skills?

No, you would need to complete a Diploma or an MSc and fulfil all the necessary criteria to practice as a Counsellor/Therapist.

You can view more information at [BACP](#) or [COSCA](#)