



COSCA Certificate in Counselling Skills

Handbook for Students 2026/2027



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Introduction

Welcome. This course booklet is designed to provide essential information for those considering enrolment in the Physis Scotland Certificate in Counselling Skills, offered in partnership with COSCA.

Physis Scotland has a strong reputation for delivering high-quality, accredited Counselling and Psychotherapy training, based in the heart of Edinburgh. We offer specialised qualifications in Transactional Analysis, Counselling and Counselling Supervision. In 2025, we were pleased to introduce the COSCA Certificate in Counselling Skills to our range of courses. This training aims to provide a quality, introductory training that equips students with the essential concepts, skills, and knowledge to support an interest or career in counselling.

The Certificate course comprises 120 hours teaching, delivered by experienced tutors with extensive teaching and counselling practice. Completion of the course provides a professionally recognised qualification in counselling skills which has 40 SCQF credits, at [SCQF level 8](#).

Students on this course can expect to learn through a mixture of experiential learning, group discussions, and oral and written assignments. Students will develop stronger communication and interpersonal skills for use in many contexts, and an understanding of counselling skills as opposed to a counselling approach.

We hope you find all the information you need in this booklet to consider

whether this is the right course for you. If you find you still have questions, please contact our team on enquiries@physisscotland.co.uk.

Who is the Certificate in Counselling Skills aimed at?

This course is ideal for anyone looking to begin training as a counsellor or psychotherapist. It serves as a solid foundation for those seeking to pursue a career in counselling, introducing participants to some of the key concepts, modalities and skills in counselling and psychotherapy practice. In addition, completion of this Certificate course is often recognised as part of the entry requirements for further higher education or undergraduate counselling and psychotherapy training programs.

However, the course is not limited to aspiring counsellors. It is also highly beneficial for individuals working in a variety of fields where effective communication is essential, such as nursing, teaching, mental health, social work, human resources, legal services and many more.

Are there any formal pre-requisites to training?

This course is open to all and there are no formal entry requirements.

Please note though that a good standard of written and spoken English is required to undertake the course; please enquire to the Physis Scotland Team if you would like more information about this.

As part of the learning experience, students on this course will be asked to bring

personal examples and share real-life experiences when practicing counselling skills. As this process may evoke challenging emotional responses, students are asked not to bring traumatic content and to take personal responsibility for what they choose to share. While our tutors do their utmost to provide a safe and supportive environment for all, it is important to remember that you will be practicing with fellow students, not with qualified counsellors. As such, we ask that all applicants carefully consider their emotional wellbeing before deciding to take part. If you have experienced recent trauma, grief or are experiencing unresolved emotional issues, it may be that this course is not suitable for you at this time.

Course Structure

The Certificate in Counselling Skills is comprised of four modules, with each module consisting of 30 hours of tuition. In addition to the taught component, students are recommended to allow for at least 3 hours per week additional private study time.

What will I learn?

Throughout the Certificate course, you will learn about key approaches and considerations in counselling and counselling ethics. You will learn to support others by developing practical listening skills and increasing your self-awareness. You will also develop your ability to build rapport, attune to others, improve communication skills, and actively listen.

Each of the four modules that make up the Certificate contain elements of skills,

knowledge and self-awareness. The modules are divided into four key themes.

Please note – below is a guide to what will be covered, but some aspects of the course content may change and develop periodically, in line with COSCA recommended updates.

Module One: Beginnings

Aims:

- To introduce participants to the theoretical concepts of a counselling approach and to the use of counselling skills.
- To present basic attending and responding skills to the participants.
- To provide participants with the opportunity to practise these skills in a safe and supportive environment.
- To set these skills within the essential ethical framework of a counselling approach.
- To introduce participants to the concept and experience of self-awareness and personal growth in the context of counselling skills training.
- To provide a suitable foundation for possible further training in the areas of counselling skills and the use of a counselling approach.

Module Two: Exploration and Expansion

Aims:

- To consolidate and expand the learning of Module 1 in the areas of knowledge, skills, self-awareness, self in-context and ethics.
- To place the practice component within a structure of beginnings,

middles & endings.

- To explore the processes and elements of a beginning phase in the counselling approach.
- To introduce participants to some experiences, tasks and skills of a middle phase in the counselling approach.
- To deepen participants' understanding of a middle phase in the counselling approach with particular reference to the process of change, the process of negotiating goals and the skills of challenging.
- To introduce participants to the idea of endings as a necessary and important phase in the counselling approach.
- To encourage participants to become more aware of the influence of their motives and values in the context of the helping process.
- To explore the concept and importance of boundaries as the ethical framework for safe practice.
- To enable participants to integrate the learning in this Module, practise it and evaluate their practice.

Module Three: Review and Reflection

Aims:

- To review the content of Module 2 and to encourage each participant to take responsibility for identifying their personal learning aims for Module 3.
- To set the training in a counselling approach within a context of emotional and cognitive self-reflection, with a view to identifying what is important in our interaction with others.
- To introduce participants to different theoretical counselling perspectives in understanding human development, behaviour and relationships.
- To acquaint participants with the basic tenets of Humanistic,

Psychodynamic and Cognitive Behavioural theories by exploring relevant issues in participants' experience.

- To examine how the Listener's own life events can influence the process of working with others.
- To explore the nature of power and vulnerability when using counselling skills. To consolidate the skills practice within a structure of beginnings, middles & endings by concentrating on the characteristics of middles and endings.
- To integrate the learning in this Module and bring it to bear on the use of a counselling approach and apply it.

Module Four: Integration

Aims:

- To establish learning which has taken place by participants in Modules 1-3 and encourage each participant to identify their personal learning aims for Module 4.
- To introduce some basic concepts of the Gestalt approach and experience as an example of the humanistic/ existential perspective.
- To continue the exploration of power and vulnerability within the helping relationship and identify contributing factors, to and consequences of, boundary violations from Speaker and Listener perspectives.
- To explore current definitions of the concepts of belonging, social inclusion and social exclusion.
- To introduce some basic concepts of the Transactional Analysis approach and experience as an example of a model which draws on both humanistic and psychodynamic perspectives.
- To explore positive and negative effects of stress on the individual.

- To explore and clarify the nature and importance of professional responsibilities such as supervision for the counselling relationship.
- To consolidate counselling skills practice within the structure of Beginnings, Middles & Endings.
- To reflect upon the ending of working with this group and to explore the participants' experience of self and others in the group setting.
- To review the personal development of each participant in relation to the content of this Module, specifically in the areas of: knowledge; counselling skills; self-awareness; self-in-context; and attitudes appropriate to the counselling relationship.

How will I be Assessed?

Each module on the Certificate in Counselling Skills Course is assessed through three components:

- **Skills assessment:** Evaluated based on performance criteria demonstrated in listening practices.
- **Oral assessment:** An individual presentation.
- **Written assessment:** Completed at the end of each module.

The oral and written assessments attached to each module allow tutors to determine whether participants have achieved an appropriate level of understanding of the course content, as well as providing insight into the participant's self-awareness and progress. The Skills assessments will demonstrate student's developing application of practical counselling skills.

Online Course Requirements

Online participants will be emailed a Zoom link in advance of each module.

Please note that online participants will need to have access to the following to participate on the course:

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

Attendance

There is a requirement for at least an 85% minimum attendance on each *module* of the course, in order to progress towards completion. Therefore, if a student misses more than two units of the twelve units offered for each module, then you will not meet this minimum requirement to complete the course.

A student who misses two units on any of the modules may be asked to complete additional written work to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the course content missed.

In addition to formal teaching/class sessions each week, students should be able to commit at least 3 more hours of personal study per week, to meet the requirements of the course.

Course dates, location and fees

November 2026

The November 2026 course will be delivered online, on **Mondays from 6pm - 9pm**. The course tutor for this cohort will be Norma McKinnon Fathi, PTSTA (P).

Module 1
• 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 November 2026 • 7, 14 December 2026 • 4, 11, 18 January 2026
Module 2
• 8, 15, 22 February 2027 • 1, 8, 15, 22 March 2027 • 5, 12, 19 April 2027
Module 3
• 10, 17, 24, 31 May 2027 • 7, 14, 21, 28 June 2027 • 5, 12 July 2027
Module 4
• 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 August 2027 • 6, 13, 20, 27 September 2027 • 4 October 2027

May 2027

The May 2027 course will be delivered online, on Wednesdays from 2.30pm - 5.00pm and 5.45pm - 8.15pm. The course tutor for this cohort will be Sheila Beare, TSTA (P).

Module 1
• 12, 19, 26 May 2027 • 2, 9, 23 June 2027
Module 2
• 25 August 2027 • 1, 8, 15, 22 September 2027 • 6 October 2027
Module 3
• 27 October 2027 • 3, 10, 17, 24 November 2027 • 8 December 2027
Module 4
• 2, 9, 23 February 2028 • 1, 8, 22 March 2028

If you would like to attend the course but cannot make the scheduled course dates, please let us know and we can add you to our mailing list for future course information.

Location

This course will be delivered online.

Fees

The fee for this course is £1,400 (inc. VAT) for the complete certificate. A £200 non-refundable deposit is required to secure your place on the course. The remaining balance is payable prior to the commencement of module 1, or may be paid in instalments of £300 (inc. VAT) per module, prior to the commencement of each module.

How to apply

Please submit your application form, available to complete online. Please ensure you include the following information in your Supporting Statement, answering each question in full:

- Why you are seeking to undertake this course, at this time
- What you hope to achieve from undertaking this course
- Any experience you have of using counselling skills
- What additional qualities and skills you bring
- What resources and supports you will put in place to support you with the emotionally challenging aspects of this course
- How you will make time for the personal study hours required (minimum 3 hours per week)

All applications will be reviewed as they are submitted, and you may be invited to attend a short informal interview with the Directors of Training if additional information is needed.

An offer of a place will be made if your application meets the necessary criteria and where there are available places.

From the date of an offer being made, successful applicants have **5 calendar days** in which to pay the £200 non-refundable deposit to secure their place on the course and provide any supporting documentation that is required e.g. evidence of English proficiency or residency in the UK where applicable.

If you have questions or would like to discuss the course any further, please contact one of our team – enquiries@physisscotland.co.uk

The deadline for applications for the **November** online cohort is **Monday 19th October 2026** and the deadline for applications for the **May** online cohort is **Wednesday 28th April 2027**.

Contact Information

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