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The only awarding body  
run *by* counsellors  
*for* counsellors

2021-2022

# Specification

## Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Studies (CST-L3)

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This RQF qualification is regulated in by Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland.

Qualification/learning aim number: 600/5104/8

Sector endorsement: Skills for Health

Sector subject area: 1.3 Health and Social Care

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Counselling & Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB)

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# 1. Qualification Information

<b>Purpose Statement</b>	<p>This qualification is intended for candidates who have already acquired a recognised qualification in counselling skills and want to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take the next step in training to become a counsellor.</li> <li>• Learn more about counselling theory, ethics and mental health.</li> <li>• Be prepared for work as a professional counsellor in an agency setting.</li> </ul> <p>This qualification does not lead to employment. It is designed as a pre-practitioner training for professional counselling qualifications, but it could also lead to employment in a related field.</p> <p>See below for progression opportunities.</p>
<b>Funding</b>	<p>The qualification is eligible in England for Advanced Learner Loans (19+). Candidates in England may also be able to access funding if aged 19-23. See the <a href="#">CPCAB Website</a> for guides to funding.</p>
<b>Level</b>	3 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Guided Learning Hours (GLH)</b>	90 (minimum)
<b>Total Qualification Time (TQT)</b>	196
<b>Credit value</b>	20
<b>Minimum Age</b>	19 years <sup>2</sup> .
<b>Entry Requirements</b>	<p>CPCAB Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills (CSK-L2) or the Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) equivalent of at least 75 GLH.</p> <p>Please see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">CPCAB Candidate Entry Requirements</a> for criteria considered important in selecting applicants for a programme leading to CST-L3.</li> <li>• CPCAB's <a href="#">RPL Guidance</a>.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to level 4 on the European Qualification Framework (EQF).

<sup>2</sup> This age requirement is linked to Ofqual's system for categorising qualifications.

<sup>3</sup>

<b>Assessment</b>	<p>Proficient (Pass)/Not Proficient (Fail)</p> <p>Candidates must be Proficient in both internal and external assessment to achieve the qualification.</p> <p><b>Internal assessment:</b> tutor assessment of candidate portfolio evidencing minimum assessment requirements and verified by CPCAB.</p> <p>See CPCAB's <a href="#">Minimum Assessment Requirements</a>.</p> <p><b>External assessment:</b> See CPCAB'S <a href="#">Covid – 19 Mitigation for Regulated Qualifications – Guidance for Centres</a> for current External Assessment Adaptation information.</p>
<b>Additional Qualification Requirements</b>	None required.
<b>Staffing and Resources</b>	<p>At least <b>one</b> tutor-assessor must be involved in all aspects of internal candidate assessment.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Tutor-Assessor Qualifications and Experience</a> for further details of CPCAB requirements.</p>
<b>Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)</b>	<p>Centres are required to have robust IQA (internal moderation and verification) processes that are verified by CPCAB.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Guide to Internal Moderation and Verification for Centres</a>.</p>
<b>Progression</b>	<p>Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills (CSK-L2) <b>and</b> CPCAB Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Studies (CST-L3) – or their RPL equivalent – may progress to CPCAB Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling (TC-L4).</p> <p>Tutors can allow progression to the first year of TC-L4 for candidates who have not yet completed their assessment for CST-L3. However, such candidates must successfully complete the qualification prior to entry into the 2nd year of TC-L4.</p> <p>See <a href="#">CPCAB's Progression Route</a> for details.</p>
<b>Candidate Registration Fee</b>	£171
<b>Centre Application for CPCAB Approval to Offer the Qualification</b>	<p>Centre application fee: £204 (one-off fee).<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Centres are expected to design their own training programmes.<sup>4</sup> Sample schemes of work are available from CPCAB on request.</p>
<b>Online Delivery Options</b>	This qualification is now eligible for post pandemic online delivery. Please see <a href="#">CPCAB's online delivery permissions letter</a> for more information.

<sup>3</sup> In order for your application to be processed the application fee will need to accompany your application. This is non-refundable. Payment can be made by cheque payable to CPCAB or via Bacs payment. Please contact [finance@cpcab.co.uk](mailto:finance@cpcab.co.uk) for more information.

<sup>4</sup> All centre-designed courses must be approved by CPCAB before candidates can be registered. Although the delivery of courses may differ from centre to centre, all delivery must enable the candidates to achieve the learning outcomes of the qualification.

## 2. Qualification Summary

### Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria (CST-L3)

Learning outcomes ( <i>skills, knowledge, understanding</i> ) The learner will/will be able to:	Assessment criteria ( <i>to assess learning outcome</i> ) The learner can:
1. Prepare to work within an ethical framework for counselling	1.1 Apply understanding of an ethical framework to counselling practice sessions. 1.2 Explain the importance of working within limits of proficiency. 1.3 Describe the ethical, legal and procedural framework in which an agency operates. 1.4 Demonstrate understanding of client assessment and referral in an agency setting.
2. Understand the counselling relationship	2.1 Explain the nature and constraints of the counsellor role within different settings. 2.2 Establish and sustain the boundaries of the counsellor role in counselling practice sessions. 2.3 Explain how the counselling relationship contributes to the counselling work. 2.4 Manage the stages of the counselling relationship.
3. Understand difference and diversity issues to develop empathic understanding	3.1 Identify and reflect on diversity within personal relationships. 3.2 Identify and reflect on a range of diversity issues in the wider social context. 3.3 Apply awareness of diversity issues to enhance empathic understanding.
4. Work within a user-centred approach to counselling	4.1 Establish the client's needs and expectations when agreeing to work together. 4.2 Maintain the focus on the client's agenda and needs.

5. Use counselling theory to develop self-awareness in counselling practice	<p>5.1 Use counselling theory to understand own personality.</p> <p>5.2 Use counselling theory to understand own personal history.</p> <p>5.3 Use counselling theory to understand own relationships.</p> <p>5.4 Evidence how self-awareness contributes to the ability to empathise with others.</p>
6. Understand theories of counselling and mental health	<p>6.1 Explain why theory is important in counselling work.</p> <p>6.2 Describe the main theoretical approaches to counselling.</p> <p>6.3 Use counselling theory to understand the client.</p> <p>6.4 Explain the nature of common mental health problems.</p> <p>6.5 Describe how counselling can promote positive mental health.</p> <p>6.6 Explain why research findings are important in counselling work.</p>
7. Use feedback, reflection and supervision to support counselling studies	<p>7.1 Use feedback from others to develop understanding of counselling.</p> <p>7.2 Give constructive feedback to other counselling trainees.</p> <p>7.3 Describe the nature and use of clinical supervision.</p> <p>7.4 Use supervisee skills to contribute to, and learn from, case discussion.</p>

See the [CST-L3 Tutor Guide](#) for candidate guidance to criteria and notes for tutors.

### 3. Minimum Assessment Requirements

To achieve the qualification, candidates must be internally assessed as **Proficient** in all 7 learning outcomes of the qualification and must be **externally** assessed (by CPCAB) as **Proficient**.

Candidates must give **two** pieces of evidence for each criterion. In addition, the Candidate Learning Record (CLR), when complete, must include references to all three assessment methods (documents, tutor observation and testimony).

<b>INTERNAL ASSESSMENT – must include all three methods of assessment</b>		
<b>Course activities</b>	<b>Assessment method<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Types of evidence</b> (2 references for each assessment criterion)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional discussion and workshops</li> <li>Seminars, personal development workshops and group work</li> <li>Projects and presentations</li> <li>Review of skills work</li> <li>Review of learning</li> </ul>	<b>Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 assignments<sup>7</sup></li> <li>1 self-review<sup>8</sup></li> <li>Learning review (throughout programme)<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessed simulated counselling practice</li> <li>Assessed case presentations</li> <li>Assessed workplace simulations</li> </ul>	<b>Tutor observation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 tutor-observed counselling practice session</li> <li>1 practice case presentation<sup>10</sup></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simulated counselling practice</li> <li>Group work</li> <li>Case presentations</li> <li>10 hours simulated group training supervision</li> <li>Seminars and workshops</li> <li>Tutorial</li> </ul>	<b>Testimony<sup>11</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer feedback</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT</b>		
Please see CPCAB's <a href="#">Covid – 19 Mitigation for Regulated Qualifications – Guidance for Centres for 2021</a> for Information on Adapted External Assessments. Applicable until further notice.		
<b>MARKING SCHEME</b>		
<b>Internal assessment:</b>	Candidates must achieve all seven learning outcomes of the qualification.	
<b>External assessment:</b>	Please see CPCAB's <a href="#">Covid – 19 Mitigation for Regulated Qualifications – Guidance for Centres for 2021</a> for Information on Adapted External Assessments. Applicable until further notice.	

<sup>6</sup> Proforma and guide sheets for internal assessment can be downloaded from the CPCAB website.

<sup>7</sup> Suggested assignments are available on the CPCAB website.

<sup>8</sup> Self-evaluation of learning, goals, progress, learning needs and completion of the learning tasks (criteria).

<sup>9</sup> This is an on-going review of learning during the course (also called a "learning journal").

<sup>10</sup> For example, case presentation to training supervision group.

<sup>11</sup> Testimony can include tutorial records and direct questioning.

## 4. Tutor-Assessor Qualifications and Experience

Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Studies (CST-L3)					
Tutor	Minimum qualification	Personal therapy + professional accreditation	On-going Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	Minimum practice experience	Minimum experience as a tutor
Tutor	420 hours therapeutic counselling qualification at level 4 or above.  e.g. TCL4	10 hours personal therapy  And Member of a professional association for counselling.	30 hours per year CPD activities.	Current supervised counselling practice  And Supervision qualification or experience of supervising groups or individuals in a counselling setting.	Teaching qualification or be working towards one  And 6 months teaching and assessing at level 2 or above.

## 5. Candidate Entry Requirements

This qualification is not suitable for those who are currently in a state of severe emotional difficulty and/or severe psychological distress. Centres need to ensure that all potential candidates are made aware of the nature of the course, and in particular that the course involves experiential elements that will involve some personal disclosure and associated personal developmental activities.

Title	Age	Entry requirements / RPL	Criteria considered important for selecting candidates
CST-L3	19 or over	CSK-L2 or equivalent / RPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ability to translate intra-personal experience into language</li> <li>✓ Able to benefit from self-development</li> <li>✓ Emotional stability</li> <li>✓ Evidence personal insight</li> <li>✓ Ability to form a counselling relationship</li> <li>✓ Awareness of difference and diversity</li> <li>✓ Able to cope with course content</li> <li>✓ Identify reasons for training beyond just personal development</li> <li>✓ Be motivated towards developing as a counselling practitioner</li> <li>✓ Provide references (centre option)</li> </ul>

## 6. Fit for Purpose

This qualification has been designed to take account of the latest research findings on what makes counselling effective and is underpinned by the CPCAB model of practitioner development.

This qualification is mapped to the Counselling and Mental Health National Occupational Standards.

The assessment strategy maintains a focus on practitioner skills and qualities as well as on written evidence. The combination of tutor assessment and separate external assessment by CPCAB values both objective independent assessment and the relational knowledge of the candidate and their work. The qualification is reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose

Centres have to meet robust centre approval requirements before they can deliver this qualification. All tutors are approved and standardised by CPCAB and centres are visited twice a year by a CPCAB external verifier.

## 7. Progression Routes

The CSK-L2 qualification is one step in a series of CPCAB qualifications. Once the candidate has completed this qualification they can continue training to become a counsellor by doing CPCAB Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Studies (CST-L3) or move into the area of life coaching by doing the Level 3 Certificate in Life Coaching Studies (LCS-L3).

For details of all CPCAB qualifications please click on one of the qualifications below.

