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run by counsellors
for counsellors

Updated 4th August 2021

Dear Centre Staff and Tutors,

Re: The Future of CPCAB Qualification Delivery and External Assessment formats

We at CPCAB wish to thank you for your continued dedication and flexibility during these difficult times of the pandemic, and for continuing to support learners through their studies. We are optimistic that some end to the restrictions may be in sight, but have been working hard behind the scenes to be able to offer you more stability and consistency going forwards regardless of the changing circumstances of the pandemic. Being able to offer a safe, high-quality, and enjoyable learning experience for every CPCAB learner, and maintain a supportive framework for centres is currently our top priority.

You will have read in our April News update, and hopefully participated in one of our recent consultations, about our review of the future style of our External Assessments. We have also been reviewing the potential for our qualifications to be delivered online after the impact of the pandemic. We are now in a position to inform centres of our plans.

While the VCRF (Vocational and Technical Qualifications Contingency Regulatory Framework – yes, it is a mouthful!) continues to remain in place all our previously agreed permissions also remain in place. This means that centres who currently have CPCAB agreement to run courses online can continue to do so, and for qualifications where the External Assessments have been adapted during the pandemic will also continue to remain in place. However, it is hoped that at some point in 2021 the country will be in a position where the risks of the pandemic are reduced and the VCRF will be ‘switched off’ by the regulators. This would enable centres to return to face-to-face delivery and for previous versions of our External Assessments to be reinstated.

Online and Face-To-Face Delivery Opportunities

However, this year CPCAB have been in the fortunate position to learn from the adapted approaches we have put into place, and have seen the immense success of centres where online delivery has been embraced and has enhanced the learning environment for many learners. We have therefore, sought guidance from our regulators and consulted with staff, centres, and learners on the best way forward.

CPCAB are therefore updating our previously held position on the suitability of high-quality online counselling training delivery. In the past CPCAB have held fast that nothing compares to the relational experience of being in a classroom with other learners and that the skills practice of helping and counselling work is best done face-to-face. This year you have shown us that online training delivery, when offered by dedicated and enthusiastic tutors, and with a commitment to

upholding the relational and academic standards expected of a CPCAB course, can not only replicate the learning experience in the classroom, but in many cases offer something quite extraordinary.

This has enabled an increase in accessibility for learners who may have otherwise struggled to attend a face-to-face course, and may potentially have been limited to buying poor-quality distance learning training, which often misrepresents the competences it provides and drives down training standards.

In making this positional shift CPCAB are mindful of the responsibility we hold in terms of ensuring that any online delivery done in our name is of the highest standard and is held in professional regard as well as our face-to-face delivery. We have consulted with several of the professional associations and ensured that our new permissions do not affect any candidates potential career or membership opportunities.

What does this mean for centres?

Our aim is to provide greater choice and accessibility to learners, as well as giving centres the ability to plan future delivery, not only during the pandemic timeframe but beyond. We are therefore, giving permissions for some of our qualifications to be offered in an online or blended format (see permissions document below), for centres who wish to apply to us for this offer.

Centres however, who wish to return to face-to-face delivery after the pandemic are of course still able to do so if that is their preferred delivery method. Indeed our ideal vision is a blended landscape where learners have a variety of training methods to choose from, and centres are able to opt for their preferred method (or methods) of delivery that best suit their learner groups, their training modalities, and their tutors' skillsets and competences.

In order to maintain the standards of delivery, CPCAB require two things from centres interested in offering online training post-pandemic:

- Centres must gain online delivery approval from CPCAB using a new application form. This will ask for details of a centre's intention and ability to deliver high-quality online or blended training. This will be made available from CPCAB shortly.
- Centres and tutors must review the new *CPCAB Quality Framework for Online Delivery*. They will then need to commit to working within its values and competences throughout the provision of all future online delivery that takes place at the centre. Centres must agree to CPCAB reviewing this commitment through its regular Quality Assurance checks, and to provide evidence of it where necessary.

The new *CPCAB Quality Framework for Online Delivery* is intended as a multi-purpose framework. It is designed to oblige centres to pay due consideration to the additional competences required when delivering online, but also to encourage tutors and centre staff to positively engage with the potential of online delivery methods and foster best practice. It should also be considered an indication of the 'quality stamp' on qualification delivery that a learner can expect when studying a CPCAB qualification online, in comparison to many other online or distance offerings which may not hold themselves to such best practice guidelines.

We at CPCAB hold ourselves to account when taking this step and will continue to use our own training platforms and resources to support centres to upskill their staff, and lift their online delivery

to the next-level whereby learners can truly feel they have gained the best quality learning experience wherever it is based.

External Assessment Adaptations

Alongside this move to permit online delivery, CPCAB have also reviewed the format of every External Assessment offered for our regulated qualifications. We thank those centres and learners who participated in the survey in April 2021 asking about your experiences of the adapted External Assessments.

The feedback from centres and learners was overwhelmingly positive and therefore we have made the decision to **keep the adapted format of the External Assessments** for:

The Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills (CSK-L2),

The Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Studies (CST-L3),

The Level 3 Certificate in Life Coaching Studies (LCS-L3),

The Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling (TC-L4); beyond the end point of the VCRF.

Centres running these qualifications can therefore expect to see a confirmed External Assessment timetable for the upcoming year which includes the longer timeframes of the submission windows for these assessments. Once the VCRF is switched off the contingency guidance and 'adaptation' headings on all EA paperwork will also be removed and this guidance will become a standard part of the Tutor Guides and Candidate Guides for these qualifications. Centres should continue to appraise themselves of the guidance on these External Assessments contained within the [Covid-19 Mitigation for Regulated Qualifications - Guidance for Centres for 2021](#) until such guidance becomes part of the core documentation.

Our data review of the use of these adaptations over the period of the pandemic has shown that they yield assessment outcomes which have parity with those of the previous formats. It is, however, vital that centres fully understand their ongoing role in the facilitation of these assessments and in checking the validity of submissions.

Please see the detailed tables in Appendix A for information on the decisions and permissions that will become standard at the close of the pandemic. Centres with any queries regarding any of the above are welcome to contact us at molly@cpcab.co.uk

Yours sincerely



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Appendix A –

CPCAB Permissions Document

Where centres wish to continue to deliver qualifications online after the pandemic, they can do so¹ in accordance with the table below. This is by no means an expectation from CPCAB, and centres wishing to return to face-to-face delivery can also do so. Centres can also opt for a blended option with some courses running online and some face-to-face.

It is important to note that all online delivery must be fully synchronous. CPCAB acknowledges the benefits of asynchronous delivery but notes that this must be counted as TQT (self-study) and not GLH (guided learning hours).

Online Delivery Permissions		
Qualification Code	Maximum % of GLH which can be delivered online	Notes
ELSK-L2, USM-L2, ICSK-L2 CSK-L2, CST-L3, LCS-L3	100% online	Centres can deliver ‘up to’ 100% of the GLH online. or Centres can also offer these qualifications in a blended format, e.g. 50% in the classroom and 50% online. or Centres can opt to deliver these qualifications fully face-to-face.
TC-L4 LC-L4	75% face-to-face, 25% online Placement hours: maximum of 49% online/telephone ²	Centres can deliver ‘up to’ 25% of the GLH online. But no more than 25%. or Centres can opt to deliver these qualifications fully face-to-face. These qualifications ARE NOT suitable for full online delivery. Centres cannot deliver more than 25% online.
PC-L5, CBT-L5, TCSU-L6	100% online Placement hours: the maximum % of placement hours which can be done online will depend on the individuals own practice methods. No CPCAB limit is set.	Centres can deliver ‘up to’ 100% of the GLH online. or Centres can also offer these qualifications in a blended format, e.g. 50% in the classroom and 50% online. or Centres can opt to deliver these qualifications fully face-to-face.

¹ Centres must have gained CPCAB approval for post-pandemic online/blended delivery

² Updated 04/08/21 to reflect requirements in the field

CYP-L5	50% face-to-face, 50% online Placement hours: maximum of 49% online/telephone ³	Centres can deliver 'up to' 50% of the GLH online. But no more than 50%. or Centres can opt to deliver this qualification fully face-to-face. This qualification IS NOT suitable for full online delivery. Centres cannot deliver more than 50% online.
CPCAB Tailormade Qualifications	Removal of CPCAB requirement for TMQs to be face-to-face. No online proportions set as each case to be considered on its own merits.	High level of synchronous delivery expected, and centres should work within the Quality Framework and will only be approved if upholding CPCAB Quality Framework standards.
CPCAB CPD Endorsement Programmes	Removal of CPCAB requirement for CPD to be face-to-face. No online proportions set as each case to be considered on its own merits.	Some delivery may be asynchronous, though should be considered in light of the Quality Framework and will only be approved if upholding CPCAB Quality Framework standards.

External Assessment Format Decisions		
Qualification Code	EA Decision	Notes
ELSK-L2, USM-L2, ICSK-L2	No External Assessment	N/A
CSK-L2, CST-L3, LCS-L3, TC-L4	External Assessment adaptation formats, used during Covid restrictions will remain in place once the current contingency regulatory framework is 'switched off'.	Centres should continue to refer to CPCAB's contingency guidance instructions until core documentation changes are made.
LC-L4, PC-L5, CBT-L5, TCSU-L6	No adaptations were utilised and the format currently in use will remain.	Core documentation is accurate and should be referred to.
CYP-L5	New qualification – EA format is available in core documentation	Core documentation is accurate and should be referred to.

³ Updated 04/08/21 to reflect requirements in the field

