

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
Foundation Degree in Counselling

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	Herefordshire & Ludlow College (HLC)
3.	Programme accredited by	NA
4.	Final award	FdSc
5.	Programme title	FdSc Counselling
6.	Pathways available and/or Linked Honours Degree progression route/s	BSc Top-up Counselling
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Taught programme at Herefordshire & Ludlow College
8.	Mode of attendance	Full Time or Part Time
9.	UCAS Code	B941
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	QAA Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark Statement, 2010 , BACP course accreditation criteria, Gold Book 2009.
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	July 2009, updated Jan 2011, Sept 2013 August and October 2014 (Regulations) Revised Sept 2015 (revised requirements for progression and professional practice)

12. Educational aims of the programme

The Educational Aims of the Course are based on the principles of the QAA Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark Statement (2010) and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) course accreditation criteria (2009). These are to:

1. Facilitate the acquisition and development of specific knowledge, skills and ethical and moral values relevant to the context of counselling in a manner that encourages their critical evaluation.
2. Provide opportunities for students to develop key skills to prepare for further study and/or employment and lifelong learning.
3. Promote critical reflection and reflective practice and ongoing personal and professional development.
4. Enable students to make sound judgements in the delivery of counselling in accordance with the BACP Ethical Framework.
5. Facilitate student development of an analytical and critical approach to problem solving.
6. Critically engage students in appreciation of the social, cultural, legal, political and moral context of counselling.
7. Raise awareness of the importance of maintaining knowledge and appreciation of mental health issues, including policies, practice guidelines and requirements for continuing professional development.
8. Raise awareness of the value and importance of research for counselling practice and facilitate the development of basic research competencies in undertaking a small counselling research project.
9. Further develop skills and strategies necessary for partnership working with a range of counselling clients, counselling agencies, related services and other professionals.
10. Provide appropriate learning experiences to ensure the development of a range of transferable skills.
11. Implement the University of Worcester Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and Herefordshire & Ludlow College's Mission Statement by providing an academically

and vocationally rewarding, personally fulfilling student experience in order to meet the diverse needs of students, employers and society.

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

The programme uses a set of learning outcomes shaped by the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy's current Course Accreditation Requirements (May 2009) and the QAA Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark Statement (2010). The programme is also cognizant of the learning outcomes of the University of Worcester's BSc Counselling Top-Up.

The learning, teaching and assessment methods of the course provide students with a wide range of learning and teaching experiences. The bracketed numbers in the following sections refer to the General Learning Outcomes as listed in the Course Handbook.

Knowledge and Understanding.

On successful completion of the course the students will be able to:

- Show knowledge of and demonstrate a critical understanding of Person-Centred approaches to counselling as a core theoretical model;(1)
- Demonstrate knowledge and a critical understanding of the historical development and key principles of counselling and the way in which counselling has developed as a discipline;(2)
- Demonstrate an ability to initiate, design, conduct with appropriate supervision, and report on an ethical, empirical research project based on work experience in the field of counselling, recognise its methodological and ethical limits and reflect on how the project's findings may inform their practice(9)
- Knowledge and understanding of the Law relating to counselling, the principles and values of the BACP Ethical Framework and current Government initiatives relating to mental health, such as the IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) (12)
- Knowledge and understanding of dominant models used in mental health settings and ability to apply these in counselling practice.(13)
- Understand the limits of their knowledge and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge in the workplace (14)
- Show an ability to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information and propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis in the field of counselling and when working as a counsellor (15)

Cognitive and intellectual Skills

On successful completion of the course the students will be able to:

- Demonstrate effective and fluent written, oral and visual communication to convey ideas and research findings to specialist and non-specialist audiences (8)
- Show an ability to utilise opportunities for independent lifelong learning through self-reflection, the evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, self-directed study and self and task management to meet set objectives and assume responsibility within organisations (10)

Practical Skills relevant to employment.

On successful completion of the course the students will be able to:

- Successful application in the workplace of the range of knowledge and skills learnt throughout the programme (3)

Transferable/ key skills

On successful completion of the course the students will be able to:

- Show an ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, and the application of those principles in a work context (4)
- Demonstrate an ability to make informed comparisons between the core theoretical model studied on the course and other theoretical approaches to counselling and ability to critically evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches when working with diverse client issues and populations (5)
- Demonstrate team working skills through awareness and sensitivity to the contextual and interpersonal features of group work (13)

Learning Teaching and Assessment

The FdSc Counselling makes use of both experienced core teaching staff and invited specialist staff in the teaching and learning on this programme. HLC is a professional learning community which values the experience and knowledge students bring to and acquire during the programme, and provide ample opportunity for the shared learning opportunities this presents.

The learning and teaching on this programme has a focus on being up-to-date and relevant to professional practice today.

There is a significant focus on acquiring learning through work based activities throughout the programme. This ensures that theoretical learning is applied to current professional practice, and students develop a professional resource network.

The University of Worcester Information and Learning services ('The Hive') include an array of online information which is available to FdSc students. Resources Online provides access to numerous online databases as well as numerous full text journals. Most modules on the programme have an online presence via Blackboard. The Summon facility allows searches across all university library resources. Students will make use of the VLE (Blackboard) and e-portfolio (Pebblepad).

Teaching methods include Lectures, seminars, handouts, discussion, debate, case studies, experiential work, group work, reflective practice opportunities, guided independent learning, recording of practice. Formative assessment includes assignment writing; peer and tutor feedback on skills work; group process work; reflective practice opportunities; experiential work; observations.

Summative assessment methods include essays; oral exams and interviews; written assignments; professional portfolio (work based learning and placement); case presentation and discussion; poster/exhibition; counselling skills work and recordings; journal-based reflective writing.

14. Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategies adopted in the FdSc in Counselling reflect course aims, the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy course accreditation criteria, 2009, the descriptors for Intermediate level / Foundation Degree study as well as the University of Worcester descriptors for undergraduate level study which, together, make a significant contribution to learning.

The assessment strategy is designed to help students develop the knowledge, skills and competence to practise as competent and professional counsellors on completion of the

programme. Assessments provide opportunities to critically analyse and evaluate evidence and current practice in counselling and apply this knowledge within their own developing practice.

The team are committed to developing and enhancing students' professional competence by providing opportunities to demonstrate skills of self-reflection, evaluation of existing evidence and critical application of that learning to new practice situations. Students will be assessed in both theoretical and practical components of the course.

Each assessment has specific marking criteria contained in the relevant module guide, which is given to students at the beginning of the module. These are based on the generic assessment criteria contained within the Undergraduate Grade Descriptors: [UG](#).

A grid showing assessment methods and weightings mapped to modules at each level is included in the assessment section of the programme handbook.

Submission dates are module-specific, and located in the Module Guide provided at the beginning of each module.

The course operates under the [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#) which sets out the full regulations for passing modules, grading of modules, retrieving failed modules, progression from one academic level to the next, requirements for awards, and how the degree is classified.

The course is fully compliant with UW regulations for assessment, mitigation, appeals and complaints. For further details on any of these areas please follow this link to the [Registry Services website](#) or see the [UW Student Handbook](#)

15. Programme structures and requirements

Award map for Foundation Degree in Counselling (FdSc)

Level 4				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status	Pre-requisites
FDCP 1001	Person-Centred Approaches in Counselling	15	Mandatory	None
FDCP1002	Personal and Professional Development, Part 1	15	Mandatory	None
FDCP1003	Comparative Theoretical Approaches	15	Mandatory	None
FDCP1004	Human Growth and Development	15	Mandatory	None
FDCP1005	Social, Political and Cultural Context of Counselling	15	Mandatory	None
FDCP1006	Counselling Children & Young People	15	Mandatory	None
FDCP1007	Independent Work-Based Learning (1)	30	Mandatory	None

Requirements at Level 4

Students must take the mandatory modules, as shown above. Students must successfully complete 120 credits in total at level 4.

Level 5				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status	Pre-requisites
FDCP2001	Introduction to Counselling Research	30	Mandatory	FDCP1007
FDCP2002	Personal and Professional Development (2)	15	Mandatory	FDCP1002
FDCP2003	Developing the Skills of Person-Centred Counselling	15	Mandatory	FDCP1001
FDCP2004	Introduction to Counselling Ethics and the Law relating to Counselling	15	Mandatory	None
FDCP2005	Counselling for Loss and Grief	15	Mandatory	None
FDCP2006	Independent Work-Based Learning (2)	30	Mandatory	FDCP1007 FDCP1002
FDCP2901	Professional Practice	0	Mandatory	FDCP1007 FDCP1002 FDCP2006

Requirements at Level 5

Students must take the mandatory modules, as shown above. Students must successfully complete 120 credits in total at level 5.

Please note that FDCP2901 is not credit bearing but is mandatory in providing evidence of completion of the required work-based learning hours.

16. QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

The FdSc is designed with reference to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), which provides details of the academic level expected within each year of the programme.

The programme is designed in compliance with the University of Worcester Taught Courses Regulatory Framework and the QAA Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark (2010). In addition, the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Counselling and Psychotherapy (2013) was instrumental in shaping the Learning Outcomes for this programme.

The BACP Gold Book (2009) standards have been integrated throughout. This means that the Programme has a syllabus which provides a grounding for the student in a core theoretical model – the Person-Centred model – and that this model is reflected throughout the course, informing the theoretical input, skills training, supervision and client work of all students and providing course coherence and internal consistency. The course also provides opportunities for comparisons with other approaches to counselling and ensures that the academic, personal development, skills and client work components of the course are consistent with the core theoretical model. The course assists students to develop as reflective practitioners and also encourages students to acquire and demonstrate awareness of research findings in counselling and to reflect on how these may inform their practice.

17. Support for students

Support for students on the Foundation Degree in Counselling course derives from Person-Centred philosophy, which promotes student-centred learning. Examples of specific support given include the opportunity for students to attend the standard Induction programme offered to University of Worcester Undergraduate students. Other support strategies are outlined below and these are intended to provide

a supporting infrastructure appropriate for students. They also include measures to promote a distinctive course culture, guided by the BACP Ethical Framework, for students on this programme.

For example:

- A dedicated induction and ice breaking session;
- Dedicated skills study sessions at the commencement of the course and opportunities for further sessions throughout the programme where necessary;
- Encouragement of exchange of personal information to promote self help groups and mutual study support;
- Ongoing support from teaching staff through the tutorial system;
- An online student messaging system (Moodle);
- Course handbook with all staff contact details.

In common with other University of Worcester courses, all students have a Personal Academic Tutor who guides completion of assignment and personal development work and offers support when requested by the student. In addition, all students will be offered three dedicated personal tutorials each academic year.

Furthermore, students on this programme will be allocated a Counselling Practice Tutor, who will oversee each student's work-based learning and counselling practice. Collaborative working with employers and managers at counselling agencies is particularly important and informs the philosophy of the Foundation Degree learning experience.

The FdSc Counselling will make use of Herefordshire & Ludlow College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and the VLE at UW. The VLE utilizes both Moodle and Blackboard facilities and is fully integrated into modules across the course, but especially at level 4, to ensure students have a strong foundation in how to maximise their use of this resource and enhance their independent learning. Blackboard also ensures that students studying Level 4 at Herefordshire and Ludlow College have access to the same resources and support as those studying at the University of Worcester campus.

Information and Learning Support Services will be available to students at both the partner College and the University. This includes First Point which provide Equal Opportunities, Careers Guidance, Counselling and Professional Advisers.

The University has an Equal Opportunities Policy, together with equality schemes and action plans promoting equality in relation to race, disability, gender, age and sexual orientation. Progress in implementation is monitored by the Equality and Diversity Committee. The Disability Service within Student Services provides specialist academic and other support on a one to one basis, makes recommendations for reasonable adjustments to teaching and assessment based on individual need and works with disabled students to allow them to manage their own learning development.

Herefordshire & Ludlow College provision will be delivered on one day per week, thus enabling students to combine work, work-based learning and self-directed study whilst studying for their FD.

18. Admissions

Admissions Policy

The Admissions Policy for the FdSc Counselling is to encourage access to higher education through a policy of equal opportunity regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or age.

Applicants can be offered advice and guidance interviews prior to application.

Students are entitled to use student support services at the University of Worcester or at Herefordshire & Ludlow College, whichever is most convenient or practicable.

Entry requirements

The minimum entry requirement for the course is a Level 3 qualification in Counselling Skills or equivalent. Prior training must have included tuition in both theory and skills (minimum 120 hours tuition).

Passes at A-C in 5 GCSE subjects including English Language (or equivalent) are required.

Applicants must be working for a minimum of 2 days per week in a paid or voluntary environment where they can utilise counselling skills.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Given the wide experience of potential applicants to this course, applications for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) are welcomed in accordance with the University of Worcester's Admissions Policy. Information on eligibility for recognition of prior learning for the purposes of entry or advanced standing is also available from the University webpages or from the Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111).

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm>

Students with disabilities are encouraged to disclose this disability on application in order that their needs are met appropriately.

Admissions procedures

Selection interviews take place during the summer prior to Course commencement. Selection involves group and written work and one-to-one interviews. Students will be notified of the outcome of the selection process within one month.

At selection, students are informed that Disclosure and Barring Service and checks are necessary before counselling practice can begin and that they will need to declare any convictions, bind over orders or cautions, whether current or spent. Students are generally responsible for meeting the cost of their own (DBS) though some employers assume this responsibility. Students need to be aware that their continuation on the course may be in jeopardy if the result of a DBS check is adverse. Students are advised to contact Student Admissions with any queries about DBS checks.

Admissions/selection criteria

Selection is based on meeting the admissions requirements and demonstration at interview of the relevant experience and an interest in working with people.

See Section 22 of the Programme Specification for information regarding the admissions arrangements for progression to the linked Honours Degree(s)/Top-Up Degree(s).

19. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

The course will be subject to the University of Worcester's Quality Assurance Processes.

There are a number of methods used by the course team in order to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality and standards of teaching and learning:

- Annual evaluation report;
- External Examiners reports;
- Module evaluations by students;
- Course management committees consider student and staff feedback on modules;
- Ad hoc surveys;
- Peer observation of teaching;
- Feedback from professionals involved with students on counselling practice;
- Regular staff meetings have a standing item on sharing good practices, including teaching and learning;
- The college's Integrated Quality Enhancement Review process.

20. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#).

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Some modules have attendance requirements.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 5 days of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 5 days but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations see the [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#)

Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade, unless the failure was due to non-attendance.
- Reassessment items that are passed are graded at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module).

Requirements for Progression

- Students at Level 4 may be permitted to progress to Level 5 when they have passed at least 90 credits at Level 4.
- A student who fails 90 credits or more due to non-submission will be required to withdraw from the University.
- Students who pass less than 90 credits but have submitted all items of assessment will be required to retake modules.

Requirements for Professional Practice

- Students must complete the required number of professional practice hours and all associated requirements of the Professional Practice module in order to be eligible for the FdSc award.
- Subject to the confirmation of the Exam Board, a student may extend the period of study to complete the professional practice hours after all other modules have been successfully completed
- Students are not eligible to progress to a 'top-up' award until all requirements are met

- The Exam Board will monitor progress in relation to completion of the practice hours

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
CertHE	120 credits at Level 4 or higher
Foundation Degree FdA/FdSc	120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5

These awards are not classified.

21. Indicators of quality and standards

In March 2011 the University was audited by the Quality Assurance Agency. The audit confirmed confidence in the University's management of the quality of its academic programmes and the standards of its awards. The QAA particularly commended the University's supportive ethos and range of departmental and central services provided to students and staff in support of its mission to deliver an excellent inclusive higher education.

22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

Recent graduates from the counselling programme at Herefordshire and Ludlow College have been employed as school counsellors and within counselling agencies that specialise in working with young people and their families. Others have gained employment with generic counselling agencies as counsellors, service co-ordinators and administrators. Links with employers and counselling agencies, both in the statutory and voluntary sectors continue to develop.

Progression to Linked Honours Degree(s)/Top-Up Degree(s)

The course provides a route for students who demonstrate the required skills and competencies, to progress to a one-year top-up BSc (Hons) Degree in Counselling and professional status as a Member of the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy.

This progression opportunity further enhances students' future employability, in that it enables students to acquire graduate status and progression to further postgraduate study, which offers scope for continuing professional development. Students who successfully complete the Foundation Degree will meet the training requirement of the BACP to apply for individual counsellor accreditation.

Student employability

The range of opportunities for qualified counsellors is increasing and possession of counselling and counselling skills qualifications are increasingly recognised for their value in the workplace. The Foundation Degree will therefore support future employment in a range of settings.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module outlines and the course

handbook. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Key sources of information about the course can be found :

On the Herefordshire & Ludlow College website www.hlcollege.ac.uk
On the HLC Freephone enquiry line – 0800 032 1986
In HLC Higher Education Prospectus & marketing leaflets
In the Course Handbook