

**Programme Specification for Foundation Degree Counselling
with Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College**

This document applies to Academic Year 2023/24 onwards

Table 1 Programme Specification for FdSc Counselling

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College (HLNSC)
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award or awards	FdSc
5.	Programme title	FdSc Counselling
6.	Pathways available and/or Linked Honours Degree progression route/s	BSc (Hons) Integrative Counselling Top Up
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Standard taught programme at Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College
8.	Mode of attendance and duration	Full Time over 2 years or Part Time, normally over 4 years
9.	UCAS Code	B941
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement (QAA 2020)
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). Revised March 2017 (new modules added and updated template) August 2017 AQU amendments and updates September 2017 remapping of some Learning Outcomes following module review and update of QAA benchmark statement August 2018 AQU amendments and updates February 2019 AQU amendments to template (sections 19 and 21 removed, renumbering) for 2019/20 August 2019 AQU amendments to Section 19, minor updates. August 2020 QAA benchmark statement links updated August 2020 – AQU amendments to Section 19. August 2021 – AQU amendments. August 2022 – AQU amendments July 2023 – annual updates

12. Educational aims of the programme

The Educational Aims of the Course are based on the principles of the QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement (2020) 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 Characteristics Statement (2020). 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.

Table 2 knowledge and understanding outcomes and which module/code they relate to

Knowledge and Understanding		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Show knowledge of and demonstrate a critical understanding of person-centred approaches to counselling as a core theoretical model (1)	FDCP 1001, 2003
2.	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)	FDCP 1003
3.	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)	FDCP 2001
4.	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the law related to counselling, the principles and values of BACP Ethical Framework and current government initiatives relating to mental health, including Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) (12)	FDCP 2004
5.	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the dominant models used in mental health settings and ability to apply these to counselling practice (13)	FDCP 1005

6.	Understand the limits of their knowledge and how this may influence analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge in the workplace (14)	FDCP 1007, 2006.
7.	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)	FDCP 2901

Table 3 cognitive and intellectual skills outcomes for module code/s

Cognitive and Intellectual skills		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
8.	Demonstrate effective and fluent written, oral and visual communication to convey ideas and research findings to specialist and non-specialist audiences (8)	FDCP 2001
9.	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)	FDCP 1002, 2002.

Table 4 learning skills and capabilities related to employability outcomes for module code/s

Skills and capabilities related to employability		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
10.	Successfully apply in the workplace, the range of knowledge and skills learnt throughout the programme (3)	FDCP 1007, 2006.

Table 5 transferable/key skills outcomes for module code/s

Transferable/key skills		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
11.	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)	FDCP 1008
12.	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)	FDCP 1003
13.	Demonstrate team working skills through awareness and sensitivity to the contextual and interpersonal features of group work (13)	FDCP 1004

Learning Teaching and Assessment

The FdSc Counselling makes use of both experienced core teaching staff and subject 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 ample opportunities are provided for shared learning. 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.

Teaching methods include lectures, seminars, discussions and debate, the use of case studies, experiential work, group work, reflective practice opportunities, guided independent learning, recording of practice. Formative assessment will include preparation for assignment writing, peer and tutor feedback on skills work, group process work, reflective practice opportunities, experiential work and observations.

14. Assessment Strategy

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 [University's Assessment Policy](#)

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 Counselling (FdSc)

Table 6 award map for each level of the course

Level 4		
Module Code	Module Title	Credits
FDCP 1001	Person-Centred Approaches in Counselling	15
FDCP 1002	Personal and Professional Development, Part 1	15
FDCP 1003	Comparative Theoretical Approaches	15
FDCP 1004	Human Growth and Development	15
FDCP 1005	Social, Political and Cultural Context of Counselling	15
FDCP 1008	Counselling for Loss and Grief	15
FDCP 1007	Independent Work-Based Learning (1)	30

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
FDCP2001	Introduction to Counselling Research	30
FDCP2002	Personal and Professional Development (2)	15
FDCP2003	Developing the Skills of Person-Centred Counselling	15
FDCP2004	Introduction to Counselling Ethics and the Law relating to Counselling	15
FDCP2006	Independent Work-Based Learning (2)	30
FDCP2901	Professional Practice	0
FDCP 2007	Counselling Children and Young People	15

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.

Additional expenses to budget for throughout the programme (current sums, will be subject to change) are:

- BACP Membership: All students are required to be members - £80 per annum (£40 reduced rate)
- Personal therapy: approximately £40-£50 per hour (there are also counselling agencies in the area that ask clients to pay what they can afford)
- Supervision: if not paid for or supplied by your placement, approximately £30-£60 per 1.5 hours for monthly individual supervision; approximately £20 per hour for group supervision.
- Enhanced DBS Certificate (DBS means Disclosure and Barring Service, previously known as the Enhanced CRB): £44. Checks for eligible volunteers are free of charge. Please see CRB/DBS website for details.
- Personal insurance: £50 - £90 per year; discounts available from some insurers for BACP members; monthly payment options usually available (a list of insurers is available).

16. QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

This award is located at Level 5 of the [OfS sector recognised standards](#) and the QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement 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 Characteristics Statement (2020). 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 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;
- 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.

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 and North Shropshire 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 FdSc.

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/index.htm>
<https://www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia>

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 normal minimum entry requirement for Foundation Degree courses is the possession of 4 GCSEs (Grade C/4 or above) and 1 A level (or equivalent Level 3 qualification).

The minimum entry requirement for this 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).

See [UW Admissions Policy](#) for other acceptable qualifications.

The current UCAS Tariff requirements for entry to this course are published on the University website: <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/courses/counselling-fdsc.html#section-2>

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements

At selection, students are informed that a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is necessary before counselling practice can begin. Students are generally responsible for meeting the cost of their DBS, though some employers may assume responsibility for payment. 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 UW Registry (Admissions) with any queries about DBS.

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.

Details of acceptable level 3 qualifications, policy in relation to mature students or applicants with few or no formal qualifications can be found in the prospectus or on the University webpages. 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>

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.

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.

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

Satisfactory Occupational Health clearance is also required.

See Section 20 of the Programme Specification for information regarding the admissions arrangements for progression to the linked Honours Degree(s)/Top-Up Degree(s).

19. 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.
- 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 7 days (one week) 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 7 days (one week) 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.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped 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). The module grade for a re-taken module is capped at a D-.
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with the reassessment.

Requirements for Progression

- A student will be permitted to progress from Level 4 to Level 5 if, by the time of the reassessment Board of Examiners, they have passed at least 90 credits at Level 4. Outstanding Level 4 credits must normally be studied in the following academic year.
- A student who, by the time of the reassessment Board of Examiners, has failed 90 credits or more (after exhausting all reassessment opportunities) during the academic year, will have their registration with the University terminated
- If a student has not passed at least 90 credits by the reassessment Board of Examiners, the student is not permitted to progress to the next level and will be required to either complete outstanding reassessment or retake the failed modules the following academic year. Students will be able to carry forward any passed 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

Table 7 requirements for awards

Award	Requirement
Cert HE	In order to be eligible for the exit award of Certificate in Higher Education a student must have passed 120 credits in total including mandatory modules for level 4 of the award as specified on the award map
Foundation Degree (FdSc)	Passed 120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5 as specified on the award map

These awards are not classified.

20. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

Recent graduates from the counselling programme at Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire 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 (BACP).

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 associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications.