Cork Counselling Services Training Institute

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK

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1. Introduction

1.1   Cork Counselling Services CLG (CCS)

Cork Counselling Services CLG (CCS) is a company limited by guarantee and governed by a Company Board. The company was registered in 1985 (Company Registration 110910) and granted charitable status in 1989 (Charity Number CHY8911). It is a social enterprise, registered with the Charities Regulator (20022327). It is registered as an Employer with Revenue (4656395V).

CCS provides trusted therapy and professional training services to the South of Ireland. It was one of the first centres in the country to provide a professional counselling service to members of the community regardless of their financial means, religious beliefs, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or educational background. From its foundation the counselling services were in demand, and in 1989 it was granted charitable status. Out of this history Cork Counselling Services Training Institute was born.

1.2   Cork Counselling Services Training Institute (CCSTI)

The early training programmes of CCSTI included a two-year Certificate programme in basic counselling and communication skills, and a full-time internship in counselling. The Institute also delivered a series of seminars for a GP training scheme and seminars for a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Applied Psychology. In addition, the Institute provided practice placements for students from University College Cork's Masters in Counselling, and CQSW (later becoming Bachelor and Masters) in Social Work.

In the 1990s The Institute began to work with the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) and developed its own Diploma course in Counselling. This Diploma course was one of the first to receive IACP Course Recognition in 1996 and is now the longest running such Diploma in the country. Over time, interest in the programme flourished. Consequently, the Institute expanded its training into the comprehensive range of courses in counselling and psychotherapy that we offer today.

CCSTI designed and runs its own Foundation Programme in Counselling Skills. It has recently run a top-up degree programme in collaboration with Coventry University. Other developments have seen the Institute design the format for practice hour placements so that students have the option of completing their practice hours by placement at CCS or at placements around the country. This has provided ease of access to students who travel long distances to training. The Institute is also running a two-year certificate programme for qualified counsellors who wish to become trainers.

1.3 Cork Counselling Services CLG Organisational Diagram

Board of Directors

Administration and Fundraising Teams

Management Team

Hugh Morley
Head of Business

Laura Maybury Head of Clinical practice

Karen Walsh
Head of Training

Clinical Team

CCSTI Training Team
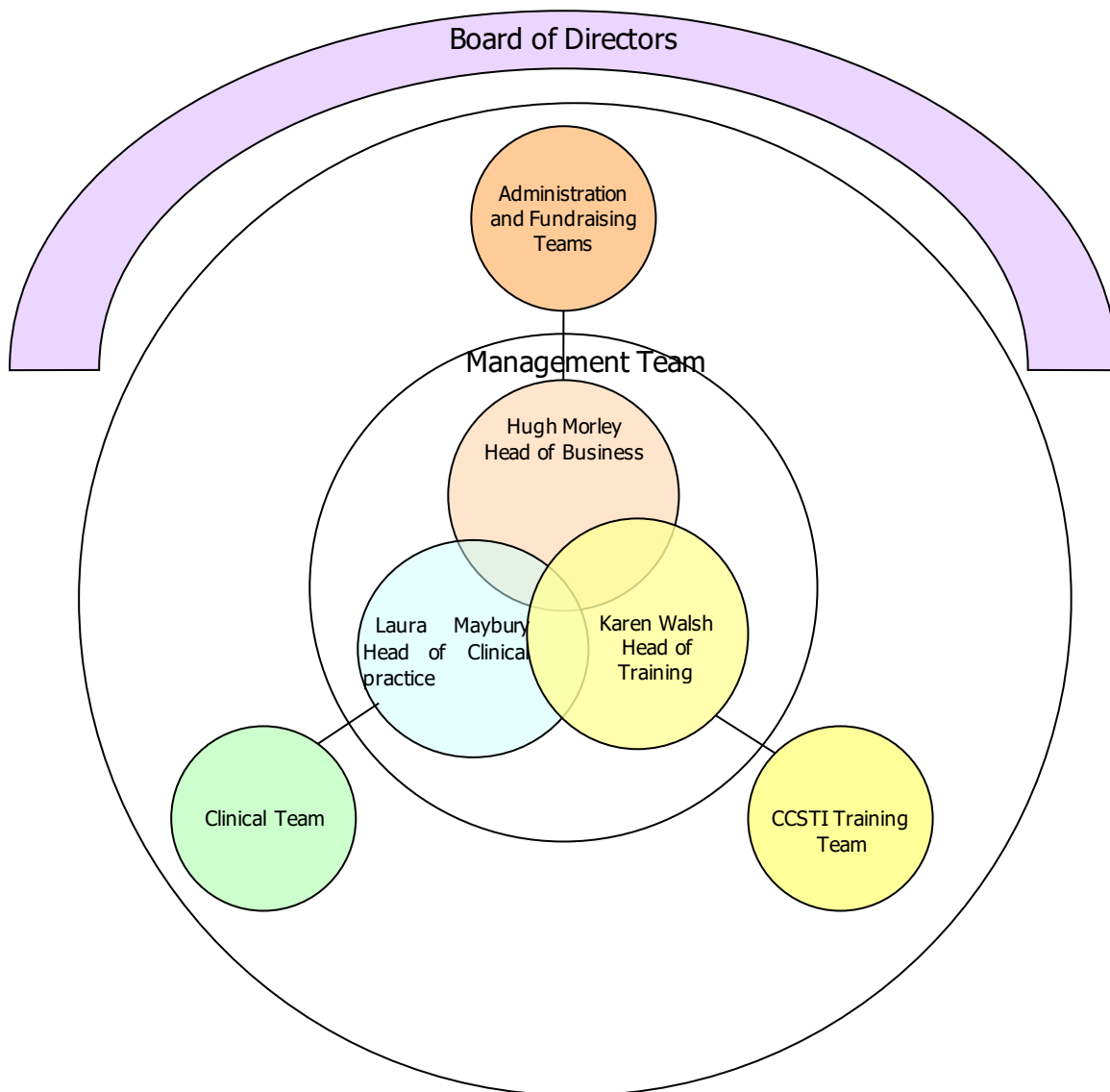
1.4 Board Of Directors

The role of the Board of the Company is one of governance. It is concerned primarily with formulating the policy and strategic direction of CCS; its development, fundraising, control and management. The Cork Counselling Services Board Handbook outlines Board duties in full and is available on request.

The Board is charged with the responsibility to oversee the governance of the charity in accordance with its mission statement and objectives as laid out in its Constitution - these are the rules by which the association is governed and managed.

There are a number of legally binding obligations which directors must ensure they comply with in the running of the charity.

The Board is required to:
- File an annual return with the national registrar of companies, including balance sheet, income and expenditure accounts, directors' report and auditor's report.
- Report annually to the Charities Regulator and ensure compliance with the Charities Acts.
- Maintain a Register of Members and Directors.
- Hold an Annual General Meeting.
- Keep minutes of all meetings.

Furthermore,
- The Board has authority for, and is accountable to, the members and the public at large for ensuring that the charity carries out its charitable purposes for the public benefit and manages its assets appropriately. It also ensures its operation is managed and achieving the strategic objectives agreed by the Board. To this end the Board employs a management team.
- The Board discharges its responsibilities through the management team by supervising the overall budgetary planning and strategies. Members of the Board are also active ambassadors for the charity and seek opportunities to raise funds for the charity's mission.
- The Board reviews the charity's internal controls and risk management policies and approves its governance structure. It further appraises and approves major financing, investment and contractual decisions in excess of defined thresholds.
- In addition to these, the Board evaluates and monitors the performance of the charity as a whole.
- This includes engaging at Board Meetings with the management team on the financial and operating performance of the charity and external issues material to the charity's prospects.
- The Board must also monitor the key significant risks facing the charity.
- At all times the Board acts collectively. The Board gives the management team broad authority to operate the business of the charity; the management is accountable for and reports to the Board on business performance.
- Boards of Directors meet regularly (between four to twelve times a year).

The Board will also ensure that the charity operates and is compliant with legal and regulatory requirements in the following areas:

- Charities Act 2009
- Best practice in fundraising
- Health and Safety Legislation
- Data protection legislation
- Employment and Equality Legislation

1.5   Management Team

The management team is responsible for overseeing the day to day activities of Cork Counselling Services CLG. The management team has three members each of who represent their areas at Board level.

The Head of Training provides oversight on the development, implementation, execution and quality monitoring of CCSTI training programmes. She promotes ownership of training in the training team and works as part of the team to ensure the ongoing design and delivery of quality assured training programmes.   She also works with clinical and training teams and other staff from external agencies in oversight and facilitation of training placements for students.

The Head of Business is responsible for the facilitation of the administration and fundraising teams including accountancy, payroll and marketing. He directs and facilitates the operation of the business, with responsibility for Human Resources, legal affairs and insurances.

The Head of Clinical Practice is responsible for the facilitation of the clinical team and ensuring through and with them that the provision of a high standard of counselling to all clients is maintained. She ensures that there is adequate clinical supervision, clinical staff reviews and works in conjunction with the clinical team and training organisations to oversee all student counsellors on placement with clients. She leads the clinical team in reviewing clinical work, community prevention work and risk management.

1.6   CCSTI Training Team

The training team which includes the Head of Training currently has 8 trainers who meet once a month. There are three Primary trainers and three are IACP Core Trainers. In addition to the training team there are four trainers who deliver some training components to students. The Head of Training ensures the team is adequately supervised and responds to risks

promptly and appropriately. The team works to provide training and to review and evaluate standards of training outlined in the quality assurance guidelines. Different team members take posts of responsibility for specific elements of the training programme and report back to the team. Training decision making reflects the interests of students and the maintenance of standards and aims to be constructively independent of commercial considerations.

In addition to its trainers, the Training Team also is committed to consulting an Independent Evaluator and Advisor to provide independent advice to the Training Team, Management, and to the Board of Directors on matters of training and training quality evaluation. Specifically, the Independent Evaluator and Advisor provides an unbiased perspective, free of business or reporting constraints in the areas of programme review, validation, evaluation and new programme design. The designated person will be a person of good standing in the counselling profession who is adequately qualified and experienced to perform this role – ideally in counselling/ psychotherapy, counselling psychology and counselling/ psychotherapy training. The person will also work with CCSTI's Validating Partners.

1.7   CCSTI Teaching and Learning Methods

Trainers teach students, using methods which reflect the model in which they are training, namely the Integrative Humanistic model. The characteristics of this model are:

An emphasis on relationships

As the counselling relationship is considered one of the key agents for change in counselling, (Cooper, 2008[1]) training emphasises students' abilities to form and hold lasting relationships. We expect our trainers to help to form mutually created professional training relationships with the students and help them to explore and to further enhance their ability to be with themselves and others.

Experiential work

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[1] Cooper, M. (2008). Essential research findings in counselling and psychotherapy: The facts are friendly. Los Angeles: Sage.

People learn from experience. "If a picture is worth a thousand words then an experience is worth a thousand pictures." (Wolds, 2005, p. xvii[2]). The training is strongly based on the student's experience. In order to be able to form, develop and maintain relationships, counsellors need to be self-aware and to engage in self-reflective learning. There is an emphasis on the students further developing the capacity to be self-aware and self-reflective. Although this type of work is very rewarding, work on students' self-awareness and experiences is also personally demanding and challenging. Students, prior to embarking on the course, are given information by trainers around experiential learning so that they make an informed choice about the learning model of the course to which they are applying (see application form and student contract). The aim of this awareness and reflection is to be able to offer open authentic and honest communication with their clients. Trainees also learn about what blocks awareness and how to manage these blocks in themselves and others. Trainers need to be able to work with individual and group process as well as present material didactically and encourage skill development.

Social and cultural awareness and personal responsibility

Self-awareness is accompanied by a strong focus on awareness of the students own social, cultural and political contexts and that of others. In addition, trainees are expected to become self-directing and personally responsible for their learning and their behaviour. Trainers foster independence and mature teaching relationships with students. Trainers expect this also of themselves and fellow trainers.

Creativity

As well as being a hallmark of the Humanistic approach, creativity and flexibility are prerequisites for the counsellor. Being able to respond empathically and communicate with their clients in many different ways is important. Creativity allows counsellors to develop flexibility, spontaneity and the ability to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty; all features of effective counselling experiences. It also allows the counsellor and client access to explore and heal implicit Right Brain processes often the seat of early trauma. Trainers need to be able to design exercises and facilitate trainees in further developing this creativity.

Theory and ethical awareness

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[2] Woldt, A. (2005). Gestalt pedagogy: Creating the field for teaching and learning. In A. Woldt & S. Toman (Eds.), Gestalt therapy: History, theory and practice. Ohio: Sage.

Trainers are also required to encourage students to critically explore the theory behind their practice and to further develop their ethical awareness. Through the setting of assignments, facilitation of group discussion, and critical debate we hope to foster in students a spirit of lively interest, appreciation of complexity, and challenge of both written material and the professional codes of ethics.

Personal and Professional Development

Students are assessed on their personal and professional development. They receive detailed criteria of what is being assessed in these areas. Students engage in self-assessment and also receive feedback from their peers and their trainers. All students receive feedback on their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the criteria for personal and professional development. Students who are at risk of failing are given clear and explicit feedback that this is a possibility. The behaviour and experiences upon which this assessment is based are outlined and the changes that are required from the student are made explicit.

Student Consultation re: Assessment

Students are encouraged to engage in their own self-assessment. This is particularly emphasised as students have a professional responsibility to develop their ability to act as their own "internal supervisor." In cases where feedback from others does not match the students own sense of their work, students are encouraged to take time to consider the assessment. As always they may seek further clarification or indeed disagree with it. They may also seek academic support and clarification around assessment of assignments from their tutors. Finally, students may also request to consult with the trainers around the feedback. At all times students have access to the student complaints and appeals procedures, where appropriate.

1.8   Regulatory Framework & Quality Assurance Handbook

This document is our Regulatory Framework & Quality Assurance Handbook which enables a systematic approach to matters relating to regulation and quality. Quality assurance is embedded, maintained and resourced on a cross organizational basis with involvement of all staff. Through process and procedure, we lay out lines of authority and guidelines, clearly assigning responsibility and recommending lines of action. Senior management have a particular duty to develop and maintain a quality culture, creating a culture where people are empowered, participate, trust each other and perform to meet agreed objectives.

CCSTI training programmes are carefully regulated, monitored and reviewed to ensure quality. On an on-going basis we are committed to external review and self-assessment. A quality assurance system is in place which requires the involvement of all staff because, in line with humanistic values of active participation, quality is everybody's job. "Everybody" includes the Board of Directors, management, administration, support staff, teaching staff and students. This process of involvement is to safeguard the integrity of academic processes and standards.

With its Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures, CCSTI sets out a framework for a high quality system of training. This framework ensures that decisions reflect the interests of students and remain independent of commercial considerations or undue influence. All decision makers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Consideration is given at all times to the findings of internal and external evaluation and self-monitoring processes, with appropriate plans being developed to implement recommendations. In particular, CCSTI:

- manages risk to ensure that academic integrity is not compromised by academic or other fraud, looking to provide the capacity to provide adequate services to students at all times. Suitable procedures are in place to this end.

- seeks to be open about the rights and obligations of students and ensure that appropriate information is accessible at all times.

- creates performance metrics by which to monitor quality. These are assessed in the most appropriate forum and actions taken as a result. We gather student, supervisor and employer feedback on our education programmes.

- has assessment practices in place that are fair and consistent and valid in assessing progress against learning outcomes. Students receive information at the outset by means of a course handbook.

- ensures students receive an appropriate mix of learning methods. Students receive regular progress-feedback.

- ensures its human and physical resources are sufficient in number and suitability to support its training mission.

1.9   Partners in Regulation & Quality Assurance

CCSTI offers programmes in line with the content and regulatory requirements of our accrediting professional body (currently IACP) and validating university (currently Coventry

University), alongside a system for monitoring, evaluating and continuously improving the programmes.

Our students study on a course that is designed, taught and assessed by CCSTI, which is accredited by our accrediting professional body and which is validated by our validating university. Two nominated members of the trainers of the Degree programme act as the Programme Leaders for the programme. These leaders liaise with the validating university and the Training Team in line with responsibilities outlined in a Collaborative Framework Document which sets out the responsibilities of both parties.

Regular visits by the validating university and the accrediting professional body staff to audit our programmes ensure high standards of quality in line with their academic quality assurance procedures. The validating university is in turn subject to periodic audit by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the latest being February 2015. The University met expectations in all areas of the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards, the quality of student learning opportunities, the quality of the information about learning opportunities and the enhancement of student learning opportunities. (see www.qaa.ac.uk).

2. <u>CCSTI Academic Regulations</u>

2.1 Introduction

The Institute's Academic Regulations, and the procedures and principles that underlie them, are intended to ensure that:

a) the outcomes set out in the mission statement are attained;

b) there can be public confidence in the quality of the Institute's courses, research and scholarship, and in the standards of its academic awards and other distinctions;

c) students and staff have a proper framework for the management of programmes and courses of study leading to the Institute's academic awards.

The framework has been designed to combine enough flexibility to encourage responsiveness to the changing needs of society with the necessary safeguards for the management of the Institute's affairs as an academic and professional practice community. All information relating to the regulatory processes and to the aims, intended learning outcomes, content and assessment of modules, courses, and programmes shall be freely available to all the Institute's students and staff.

2.2 Objective

2.2.1 The overall objective of the Institute shall be the advancement of professional practice, knowledge and learning by teaching, practice, research and study in the areas of Counselling and Psychotherapy

2.2.2 It shall also be a primary object that the Institute shall promote and maintain high academic and ethical standards in education, learning and knowledge at third level.

2.2.3 The Institute shall conduct its affairs in line with the humanistic principles of its foundation, promoting equality, inclusiveness, experiential learning, creativity, personal responsibility and accountability.

2.3 Powers

2.3.1 The Institute, in collaboration with its validating partners where appropriate, shall have the following powers:

a) to determine the requirements for the admission of persons to the Institute or to any particular course or programme of supervised practice operated by the Institute, and to make Regulations therefore;

b) with its validating partners to grant and confer Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other academic awards and distinctions on persons who shall have pursued courses of study or other work approved by the Institute and shall have passed such assessments as required by the Institute;

c) to determine the terms and conditions, and to prescribe the Regulations for the granting and conferment of such academic awards and distinctions;

d) to grant and confer, in association with its validating partners, subject to such conditions as the Institute shall from time to time determine, Honorary Degrees and distinctions on persons approved by the Institute;

e) to deprive any persons of any Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates or other academic distinctions and to revoke any Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates or other academic distinctions granted to them under 2.2.1 b) and d) on any grounds which the Institute shall from time to time determine to be good cause;

f) to provide workshops, tutorials and other forms of instruction or supervision in such branches of learning and scholarship as the Institute shall deem appropriate, and to make provision for practice, research, scholarship and the advancement and dissemination of knowledge in such manner as the Institute shall from time to time determine;

g) to provide such training and other forms of instruction or supervision to persons not members of the Institute as the Institute shall from time to time determine;

h) to approve and review, on such conditions as the Institute shall from time to time determine, courses of study or programmes of supervised practice, research or other work pursued by persons to qualify for the Institute's academic awards and other distinctions;

i) to accept in partial fulfilment of the study and assessment requirements for awards of the Institute such periods of learning and such assessments as shall be recognised by the Institute to have been successfully completed by persons otherwise than on courses approved and reviewed under b), g) and h) above;

j) to collaborate, associate or affiliate with other institutions/organisations or branches or faculties/ schools or departments thereof and to recognise such members of the staff thereof as trainers, teachers or supervisors of the Institute and to admit such persons to any privileges of the Institute, and to accept attendance at courses and

programmes of training, supervised practice, supervised research or other work in such institutions/ organisations or branches or faculties/ schools or departments thereof in place of such part of the attendance at courses of training, supervised practice or programmes of supervised research or other work in the Institute and upon such terms and conditions and subject to such Regulations as shall from time to time be determined by the Institute. Such arrangements shall include the possibility of awarding Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates or other academic awards (and revoking them under 2.2.1 e) above) jointly with another institution;

2.3.2 To ensure that no religious, racial or political test shall be imposed on any person as a condition of admission to the Institute or of receiving any Degree, Diploma, Certificate or other academic award or distinction from the Institute.

2.4 Responsibilities

2.4.1 In meeting its objects and exercising its powers, the Institute shall ensure that:

a) the Institute's Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other academic awards meet the standards required of education at 3rd level Institutes and other levels as appropriate;

b) in respect of each course or programme of supervised research or other work, as appropriate, regard has been paid to:

i) the curriculum and syllabus (or programme of study as appropriate) including any arrangements for practical training and experience;

ii) the qualifications and experience of the teaching staff, or staff supervising practice and research;

iii) the facilities and resources available;

iv) the quality of teaching and scholarship;

v) the achievements of the students;

vi) the arrangements for student assessment and for the appointment of external examiners;

vii) the arrangements for monitoring, sustaining and developing the standard of student performance and the quality of learning, teaching and scholarship.

2.5 The Standard of Awards

2.5.1 The standard of each award of the Institute must be defined in terms of attainments by a student who has acquired the appropriate knowledge and skills, against a benchmark which is generally recognised by universities and other institutions of higher education in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

2.5.2 The definitions, however, must be regarded as benchmarks only: the possession of the necessary knowledge and skills needed for admission to a programme of study leading to a particular award of the Institute may be demonstrated by means other than the possession of the qualifications used in the definitions; and the period of study may be shorter or longer than the norm depending on whether individual students enter with knowledge and skills greater or less than those specified in the definitions and on their rate of progression through the programme of study.

2.6 Mode and Structure of Courses

2.6.1 The advancement of education and the widening of educational opportunities call for the provision of a variety of modes of study, attendance and course structures.

2.6.2 Wherever possible all Regulations and courses shall operate in the same way regardless of mode of study.

2.6.3 The assessment requirements for a course and its constituent modules must normally be made available to the students at their enrolment on the module or course. The assessment scheme must give details of any general requirements for the assessment of students as well as of the assessment regulations specific to the particular programme.

2.7 Undergraduate Credit Framework

2.7.1 All courses leading to the award of a higher education qualification shall normally be named and assigned credit values in line with the QAA FHEQ credit framework such that:

    (i) A Bachelors Degree with Honours has a credit value of 360 FHEQ credits, a minimum of 90 of which are at Level 6,

    (ii) A Top-up Bachelors Degree with Honours represents the final stage of a Bachelors Degree and has a credit value of 120 FHEQ credits, a minimum of 90 of which are at Level 6,

(iii) A Diploma of Higher Education has a credit value of 240 FHEQ credits, a minimum of 90 of which are at Level 5,

(iv) A Certificate of Higher Education has a credit value of 120 FHEQ credits, a minimum of 90 of which are at Level 4.

(v) A Certificate has a credit value of 90 FHEQ credits at Level 4.

2.7.2 Courses shall normally be designed on a mandatory module basis, with limited options.

2.7.3 For courses at undergraduate level, a standard size module shall represent 200 hours of notional total student effort and carry 20 credits.

2.7.4 Modules may be delivered in 10, 20, 30, 40, 60 and 80 credit units.

2.7.5 Each module credit value shall be divided in half to determine its European Credit Transfer And Accumulation System (ECTS) equivalent (e.g. a 20 credit module equates to 10 ECTS credits).

2.7.6 Each module shall be assigned a single designated level (as mapped against the appropriate FHEQ level descriptor) where Level 6 corresponds broadly to the final stage of an honours degree.

2.7.7 A course and a module must each have stated aims and intended learning outcomes which the curriculum, structure, teaching and learning methods and forms of assessment are designed to fulfil.

2.7.8 Each module shall be assessed according to the CCSTI's Assessment Strategy.

2.8 Approval and Review of Courses

2.8.1 The Institute shall ensure that it promotes and maintains high academic standards through a rigorous course and module approval and review process.

2.8.2 The overall objective of the approval and review of courses shall be to ensure the quality and standards of all courses and modules which lead to any academic award or other distinction of the Institute.

2.9 Approval of Work-based Learning

2.9.1 The principles which are applied to learning undertaken in a workplace which forms part or the whole of a course leading to an academic award or distinction, are the same as those applied to any other course of the same level and standard offered by the Institute.

2.10 Programmes of Study Leading to Research Degrees

2.10.1 The research and training undertaken by each research degree student shall be regarded as an integral part of the Institute's work as an academic community, contributing to the research and scholarship of the subjects area(s) concerned, and not isolated from the other academic activities of the institution.

2.11 Language of Instruction

The medium of instruction shall be English. Applicants whose first language is not English are required to provide evidence of a recent qualification in English at the level notified at the time (for example, IELTS 6.5 or equivalent for Degree).

2.12 Admission of Students

2.12.1 CCSTI is committed to the promotion of equal and inclusive training opportunities. We welcome applications from people with disabilities/specific learning difficulties, with all places offered solely on the basis of merit. The code of practice for students with disabilities/ specific learning difficulties is detailed in the Resource Document.

2.12.2 The admission of any student to the Institute shall be based on the reasonable expectation that each student will be able to fulfil the intended learning outcomes of the programme of study concerned and achieve the standard required for the particular academic award(s) to which the programme of study leads.

CCSTI ensure that:

2.12.3 Marketing and promotional materials are accurate and responsible.

2.12.4 All candidates are treated fairly and equally.

2.12.5 The admissions process is transparent. Candidates are given information about admission before, during and after the procedure. Specifically candidates are informed of:

- The evidence being sought by assessors.
- The link between the evidence required and training in counselling.
- Information about the course, including its experiential emphasis.

2.12.6 The admissions procedures are appropriate to the task of selecting students who are ready and able to study at Certificate and Degree level of counselling and psychotherapy. A number of areas are examined in order to begin to ascertain

professional suitability and Fitness to Practise (See Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Policy).

2.12.7   Care is given to the design of interviews at group and individual level so that assessors are consistent and both assessors and candidates gather appropriate and necessary information in helping them arrive at a decision.

2.12.8   Assessors provide information and support to candidates with special learning needs or disabilities.

2.12.9   CCSTI believes that assessment is a two way process. There are a number of training courses available and we encourage students to consider their reasons for choosing to work at our Institute. Candidates are encouraged to take time after the assessment procedures to consider whether they wish to progress with their applications.

2.12.10   Timely notification of the outcome of applications by the Institute is provided.

2.12.11   Notwithstanding any specific requirements the Institute at its absolute discretion may admit students to any of its courses who do not clearly fall within the stated categories. For any such non-standard application to courses validated by an external university the Link Tutors of the validating university shall be consulted.

2.12.12   Any applicant who has previously been a student at the Institute and who has been expelled from a course or whose training was terminated (not withstanding unredeemed failures) is not eligible to apply as a student without express permission of the Head of Training through the procedures notified.

2.12.13   All courses shall normally provide for entry at various levels with the maximum valid credit being given for appropriate prior knowledge and skills and previous learning, subject to the Institute's general requirements. However, for each award there is a minimum requirement for which neither general nor specific credit shall be given. Credit shall not be given for more than two thirds of any course and credit shall not be given for more than one third of an IACP-accredited course.

2.13 Acceptance of Prior Learning (APL)

2.13.1   In recognising the education, training and experience gained in employment and in other institutions of learning for the purposes of academic credit towards awards at undergraduate level, the following shall apply:

a)   general credit shall be assigned in terms of a number of credit points at one or more levels;

b)   any student who has been awarded general credit shall be required to apply to convert that to the specific credit available for the Institute's course concerned.

2.13.2 Provided that it is clear that individual applicants have fulfilled some of the progression and assessment requirements of the course concerned by means other than enrolment, and that they will be able by completing the remaining requirements to fulfil the intended learning outcomes of the course and attain the standards required for a particular award, such applicants may be admitted as students to any approved appropriate point in the course concerned subject to any over-riding requirements of the Regulations. Rigor must be exercised in complying with the Institute's requirements relating to the standards of particular awards.

2.13.3 Although admission assessors shall seek to accredit prior learning, credit shall not be given for more than two thirds of any course and credit shall not be given for more than one third of an IACP-accredited course.

2.13.4 Each exempted APL student must undertake a minimum of 100 hours of supervised client work whilst on the course.

2.13.5 For each applicant accepted on grounds of prior learning to courses validated by an external university the Link Tutors of the validating university shall be consulted.

2.14   Enrolment and registration

2.14.1 Students' enrolment and registration for a course takes place in accordance with the arrangements set out by the Institute. For each course, course documentation (also included in the student manual) specifies which modules a student must take.

2.14.2 All modules are subject to timetable and resources constraints as well as constraints imposed by regulating bodies.

2.14.3 The Institute reserves the absolute right to withdraw a module on resource grounds and will ensure other modules are available to enable students to complete the course on which they are registered. Under such circumstances, the students involved shall be required to choose an alternative.

2.14.4 Mode of Attendance

a)   Registration as a full-time or a part-time student is subject to individual course stipulations and requirements.

b) Where an option is available, students are required to declare their mode of attendance as either full-time or part-time at enrolment.

c) A full-time student shall normally be defined as a student registered for 120 credits (6 single-sized modules or equivalent, or 1200 hours of notional student effort) in an academic year with the attendance requirements, placement requirements and notional student effort requiring full-time attendance of approximately 30 hours per week. A full-time student may register for an absolute maximum of 150 credits or equivalent to redeem failure in a previously failed module only where progression and reassessment regulations allow.

d) A part-time student shall normally be defined as a student registered for 100 credits (5 single-sized modules or equivalent, or 1000 hours of notional student effort) or less in an academic year with the attendance requirements, placement requirements and notional student effort allowing for part-time attendance by block release or fewer than 30 hours per week. A part-time student may register for an absolute maximum of 120 credits or equivalent to redeem failure in a previously failed module only where progression and reassessment regulations allow.

e) Any student registered for fewer than 100 credits (5 single-sized modules or equivalent, or 1000 hours of notional student effort) shall normally be eligible for certification as part-time; this excludes modules registered for resit or deferred assessment, but includes modules being repeated.

f) Students who wish to change their mode of attendance from part-time to full-time or vice versa during the course of their training should apply to the Institute to request such a change. Changes shall normally only be granted where course structures allow for such a move, with due regard for compulsory attendance and assessment components and timetabling constraints. If granted such a move will normally be effective from the date of such approval

2.15 Duration of Registration

a) There are set and agreed durations of registration for all courses run by CCSTI. These are normally as follows:

Duration of course (either full-time or part-time)	Maximum period of registration
1 year	3 years
2 years	5 years
3 years	6 years
4 years	7 years

b) These timeframes indicate the maximum duration of registration on any given course and include all repeat attempts, sabbaticals, interruption to studies and periods of suspension.

c) Failure to complete within these timescales will require the student to withdraw from training.

d) Students who enter training with an advanced standing or with accreditation of prior learning will have their timeframes altered accordingly.

2.16 Interruption to Studies

a) In certain circumstances a student may not be in a position to follow the timeframe outlined for a given course. Generally, these situations are those where the student experiences long term difficulties arising from changes in their personal, medical and/or work circumstances. In these circumstances it is the responsibility of the student to make a formal written request to the Training Team to take time out. This request for an interruption to studies needs to outline clearly the reason for the time out as well as a clear deadline for the return to training.

b) The maximum amount of time allowed for an interruption to studies is one year (12 months). The period of interruption shall be included within the maximum registration period for the award. Only one interruption to studies is possible per course.

c) Failure to apply for an interruption to studies after an absence of six weeks or failure to adhere to a return date will result in termination of training, and the student will not be able to graduate.

d) Readmission to training following time out is subject to an assessment meeting and the agreement of the trainers. A student returning from a period of interruption of

studies shall be subject to the Regulations that apply to the cohort being joined. Marks obtained up to the point of interruption shall stand.

2.17 Sabbaticals on learning pathways

a) CCSTI programmes leading to Higher Education Qualifications are normally set on learning pathways whereby students earn credits and attain awards in smaller units of learning.

b) Upon successful completion of all modules leading to a named interim award students are expected to make a formal written application to the Training Team to request progression to the next stage. Alternatively, students may choose to terminate their training in line with 2.19 below.

c) In exceptional circumstances students may request a sabbatical from training prior to application for the next stage. Grounds for a sabbatical include personal, professional and/or academic development needs which cannot be met whilst simultaneously continuing with training, and/or difficulties arising from changes in personal, medical and/or work circumstances. Requests for a sabbatical from training needs to outline clearly the reason for the time out. Failure to request a sabbatical from training after an absence of 6 weeks will result in termination of training.

d) The maximum amount of time allowed for a sabbatical from training is one year (12 months). The period of sabbatical shall be included within the maximum registration period for the award. Only one sabbatical from training is possible per parent course.

e) Failure to return to training in the subsequent academic year or to apply for an interruption to studies will result in termination of training.

f) Readmission to training following time out is subject to application to the next stage of training, an assessment meeting and the agreement of the trainers. A student returning from a sabbatical from training shall be subject to the Regulations that apply to the cohort being joined. Marks obtained up to the point of the sabbatical shall stand.

2.18 Re-application

2.18.1 Any student leaving the Institute with an interim award may apply at a later date to upgrade to a higher award on the same course, where such procedures exist within the structure of the course concerned. A student may not return in this way within 12 months of leaving the original course. The application will be subject to intake assessment.

2.18.2 If the application is accepted the date of re-enrollment must not be more than two years from the date of leaving and the original maximum duration of registration will apply less the time already enrolled and less the period of absence.

2.18.3 A student who has not succeeded in redeeming previous failure via reassessment and whose training was terminated may apply to repeat the course. The application will be subject to intake assessment.

2.19 Termination of Training

a) <u>By Student</u>

(i) A student who at any stage during the training course terminates his or her training, of his/her own free will and volition, must submit a letter of resignation to the Training Team. It is the student's responsibility to inform the Institute of the withdrawal through the procedure notified.

(ii) The date of withdrawal shall be taken as the date on which the Head of Training receives this formal written notification. Retrospective withdrawal dates shall not be accepted.

(iii) All marks attained up to the time of withdrawal shall stand, and the student may apply to re-enrol for the course in later years if appropriate.

(iv) In the case of student withdrawal, the remainder of student fees will be forfeited.

b) <u>By the Institute</u>

The Institute reserves the right to require a student to withdraw for academic failure, where the student has not fully engaged with the course or has failed to meet standards for Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise. Examples (not exhaustive) include non-attendance at course components and/or not taking part in (formal or informal) assessments and/or engaging in behaviour confirmed to be damaging or dangerous to clients, other people, other students, trainers or supervisors. A student may submit an appeal, within ten working days of the date of the letter confirming the withdrawal. The procedure for appeal is the Training Complaints and Appeals Procedure beginning at Stage 3: Formal.

2.20 Assessment Strategy

2.20.1 Fulfilment of the intended learning outcomes of a course

a) The purpose of assessment must be to enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the intended learning outcomes of their course and that they have achieved the standards required for the particular awards they seek.

b) All courses will have approved regulations that relate the assessment requirements of the course to its intended learning outcomes; it is within those course regulations that the markers, trainers and external examiners must make their judgements on each student's performance.

2.20.2 Confirmation of standard

a) Assessment must reflect the achievement of individual students in fulfilling the course intended learning outcomes and must also relate that achievement to a consistent national standard of award in general and to the Institute's specific requirements for the standards of its awards.

b) Assessment must be carried out by competent and impartial markers, using methods that enable them to assess each student fairly. To that end, External Examiners must be associated with all assessments which may count towards a particular award; awards recommended at Assessment Boards where attendance by the External Examiner is not normally required, must be confirmed by the appropriate External Examiner. Their particular role is to ensure that justice is done to individual students and that the standards of the Institute's awards are maintained and are comparable to courses in other institutions of higher education in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

2.20.3 Assessment of individual modules must be regarded as a matter involving judgement. The academic judgement of the markers and examiners may not in itself be questioned or overturned as part of the review and appeal process.

2.20.4 These Regulations should be read in conjunction with the Quality Assurance guidelines, which sets out the Institute's quality assurance framework.

2.21 Assessment Board

2.21.1 An Assessment Board is responsible for student assessment and consists of at least one Training Team representative for each of the training modules, a Link Tutor from the validating university or accrediting Professional Body (where relevant) and an External Examiner. The Chairperson is appointed by CCSTI. The Assessment Boards shall be responsible for determining all assessments that contribute to the granting of

an award. No body other than an Assessment Board shall have the authority to recommend to the Institute the conferment of an academic award for a taught course. The Assessment Board is responsible for oversight of security and integrity of the assessment processes including assessment materials, processes, student work and records of student assessment maintained appropriately by CCSTI.

Each course leading to an award of the Institute shall be the responsibility of the Assessment Board, which shall include the External Examiners(s) appointed by the Institute and (where relevant) its validating partners.

2.21.2 Chairing an Assessment Board

It shall be the responsibility of the Institute to specify the person to chair each Assessment Board within the particular Board's constitution and terms of reference. The Chair's responsibility must not be delegated except to the designated Vice-Chair.

2.21.3 Membership of an Assessment Board

a) The membership of the Assessment Board consists of at least one representative from each of the training modules on the Training Team, the Link Tutor from the validating university (where relevant) and the External Examiner. (The External Examiner and/or the Link Tutor may attend via secure video link.)

b) No student may be a member of an Assessment Board, or of any subsidiary examination committee appointed by it, or attend any markers' or examiners' meeting other than as a candidate for assessment.

c) If, however, a person who is otherwise qualified to be a trainer, marker or examiner for a course, such as a member of staff or an approved External Examiner, is also registered as a student on another course either in the Institute or in another institution of higher education, that shall not in itself disqualify that person from carrying out normal examining/ assessing commitments unless there should be a conflict of interests. Where there is any unavoidable potential clash of interests the procedures under d) below must be followed.

d) If a member of an Assessment Board is aware of any potential conflict of interest, for example being related to or a close friend of a student under consideration, this must be declared and recorded in the minutes of the meeting, and the person involved shall not take part in any discussion covering the areas or students concerned.

e) Any examiner who has a potential conflict of interest as described in Regulations c) or d) above, must declare that interest to the Chair of the appropriate Assessment Board(s) as soon as the possibility arises, and should not normally be expected to be the sole examiner for the student concerned on any individual module.

2.21.4 Authority of an Assessment Board

Assessment Boards shall be responsible for determining all assessments that contribute to the granting of an award. No body other than an Assessment Board shall have the authority to recommend to the Institute the conferment of an academic award for a taught course. Similarly, no other body shall have the right to amend the decision of a properly constituted Assessment Board acting within its approved terms of reference and in accordance with the Institute's Academic Regulations and the regulations for the particular course, other than when the outcome of a review leads to an annulment of the decision by Assessment Board or results are modified as a result of cheating.

2.21.5 Scope of Discretion

a) Assessment Boards have the discretion to alter marks awarded to a group of candidates on a module assessment as part of their moderation of the process, in order to assure the standards of academic assessment. For example, an Assessment Board may consider any exceptional circumstances that affected all candidates, such as disruption of an assessment for all candidates in a particular location, or any issues relating to the delivery or assessment of the module that affected all students. Such changes may not be questioned or overturned as part of the review and appeal process.

b) Assessment Boards may vary assessments for students with disabilities.

c) Assessment Boards have discretion in reaching progression decisions for individual candidates taking into account the relevant regulations and any course regulations.

d) Assessment Boards have discretion to award a posthumous award as appropriate.

e) Assessment Boards do not have the discretion to vary prescribed maxima or minima or mandatory course requirements or to consider extenuating circumstances, except where authorised to do so by the Appeals Panel. This panel is comprised of the Marking Coordinator and one other independent marker.

f) In exceptional cases the Appeals Panel may recommend to an Assessment Board that the results of any or all assessments which the student has taken in the current year's programme be declared void if there is satisfactory evidence that the result was so affected by extenuating circumstances as to render it inequitable to treat it as an attempt. If the student subsequently fails the assessment(s), the Assessment Board shall have the discretion to reinstate the previous marks.

2.21.6 Students with disabilities

a) When a candidate cannot, through disability, be fairly assessed by the methods prescribed for the course concerned, the relevant Assessment Board may vary those as they deem appropriate, bearing in mind the intended learning outcomes of the programme of study and course and the need to assess each candidate on equal terms with other candidates.

b) In determining the nature of any variation in the methods of assessments, full account must be taken of the Institute's policies in respect of students with disabilities.

2.21.7 Delegation of responsibility for assessments

a) Assessment Boards, including any External Examiner(s) serving thereon, shall be responsible for the judgements of any subsidiary assessment committee and for the reassessment or deferred assessment of students.

b) However, the Assessment Board has power to determine arrangements for delegating the responsibility for reassessment and deferred assessment to a sub-group of itself, which must include at least one External Examiner, except that:

(i) such arrangements must be determined with the full agreement of all approved External Examiners prior to the sub-group acting under any delegation;

(ii) agreement of all the approved External Examiners must be obtained for the granting of any award.

2.21.8 Written records

Detailed and accurate written records of the proceedings of each Assessment Board must be maintained. The Institute shall appoint a person to act as secretary to each Assessment Board for that purpose.

2.21.9 Assessment and reassessment

Information must be made available to individual students about the grounds on which they may request that an Assessment Board be asked to review its decision(s) and about the arrangements for dealing with any such request(s). These procedures are set out in this document. If coursework is not tendered for submission by the required deadline (taking into account procedures for granting extensions for extenuating circumstances), that work cannot be taken into account in any review or appeal.

a) Course Assessment Regulations must accord with the Institute's General Regulations

b)

(i)   No reassessment of a module or component shall be allowed for a student to improve upon a mark or grading which is already above the pass level required for a module or overall for the award for which the student is a candidate.

(ii)   Reassessment of a failed module solely in order to achieve a pass for the requirements of a Statutory or Professional Body shall be permitted at the discretion of the Head of Training, but the result shall not form any part of the student's profile or classification; reassessment of a failed module for other personal reasons is not permitted.

c) The regulations for reassessment for undergraduate awards can be found at 2.29 & 2.30.

2.22 External Examiners

2.22.1 External Examiners must be appointed to oversee all awards. All External Examiner appointments made by a validating university or accrediting professional body (where applicable) must be approved by the Institute.

2.22.2 The role of the External Examiner is to provide impartiality to the Institute and students in the area of assessment and standards. The External Examiner has no other relationship with the Institute other than this role. The specific responsibilities of External Examiners shall be to ensure equity and fairness in the decisions reached in respect of each student being assessed and that the standards of the Institute's award are maintained.

a) (i) A sample of work from each module is sent to the External Examiner/(s) each year and they comment on same. In addition, all assignments that have received a fail grade are automatically sent to them.

(ii) The External Examiner/(s) attend the Institute at least annually and conduct meetings with markers and trainers.

(iii) Each year they meet with the students of the Institute. They provide a report on their meetings with students.

(iv) They also furnish a yearly report to the Institute on marking & standards and comment on whether

    a. the Institute is maintaining threshold standards in accordance with the framework for Higher Education Qualifications and applicable subject benchmarks; this gives credibility to the assessment procedures

    b. the assessment processes measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the course(s) and is conducted in the line with the Institute's policies and regulations;

    c. the academic standards and achievements of students are comparable with those in other Republic of Ireland and/or UK higher education institutions of which the External Examiner has experience.

(v) Finally they make comments and recommendations on:

    a. good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment;

    b. opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.

b) Both the minutes from External Examiners' meetings and their yearly reports are studied by the Institute in the maintenance of standards. Changes to the curriculum, marking etc. are implemented. They are also informed of what changes have been made.

2.22.3 Rights and responsibilities

a) To enable External Examiners to fulfil their role and carry out their responsibilities, they must:

(i) be able to judge each student impartially on the basis of the work submitted for assessment, without being influenced by previous association with the course, the staff, or any of the students;

(ii) be able to compare the performance of students with that of their peers on comparable courses in other institutions of higher education in the Republic of Ireland and/or the United Kingdom;

(iii) approve the form and content of the proposed assessment tasks, the marking criteria and coursework assignments, and sample any assessment that counts towards any particular award, in order to ensure that each candidate will be assessed fairly in relation to the course syllabus and Regulations and in such a way that the External Examiner/(s) will be able to judge whether each student has fulfilled the intended learning outcomes of the course and reached the required standard;

(iv) be consulted about, and agree to, any proposed changes to the Assessment Regulations which will directly affect students currently on the course;

(v) attend such Assessment Boards as are prescribed, and where decisions are made, ensure that these are in accordance with the Institute's requirements and the normal practice in higher education institutions in the Republic of Ireland and/or the UK;

(vi) have the right to see all the work of all the candidates in order to ensure that each candidate is fairly placed in relation to the whole of the cohort;

(vii) have the right to moderate the marks awarded by the markers;

(viii) ensure that the assessments are conducted in accordance with the Institute's Academic Regulations and the relevant course regulations;

(ix) endorse the outcomes of the assessment process they have been appointed to oversee;

(x) participate as required in reviews of decisions about individual students' awards;

(xi) have access to any candidate or group of candidates to seek their views regarding their experience of the module or course as practicable, in consultation with the Head of Training or Programme Leader(s).

(xii) report annually to the Institute on the assessment process as part of the Institute's annual quality assurance procedures;

(xiii) report to the Head of Training and the Programme Leader(s), on any matters of serious concern arising from the assessments, which put at risk the standard of the Institute's awards.

2.22.4 Appointment

a) No External Examiner shall be appointed by any means other than those approved by the Institute.

b) The criteria for appointment must be applied.

c) Newly appointed External Examiners must take up their appointments on or before the retirement of their respective predecessors. External Examiners are required to remain available until after the last assessments with which they are to be involved in order to deal with any subsequent review(s) of decisions.

d) In order to protect their independence, External Examiners must not concurrently act as a consultant to a course team on course design, or be members of any panel(s) established to review the course(s) they examine.

e) In exceptional circumstances the appointment of an External Examiner may be terminated where there is good cause, such as failure to fulfil their obligations or if a conflict of interest arises which cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

2.22.5 Criteria for appointment

a) Person Specification

(ii) The Institute will appoint, or in the case of the university, approve External Examiners who can show evidence of the following:

   a. The qualifications and subject area of the External Examiner should be in a discipline that is related to the counselling and psychotherapy course to be examined.

   b. In particular the External Examiner is required to have expertise in Humanistic and Integrative models of counselling.

   c. In addition to an academic and/ or scholarly background the External Examiner is required to be a professional practitioner.

   d. An understanding of the use of creative media in counselling and psychotherapy is advantageous.

(iii) The Examiner's expertise and experience will be indicated by his/her:

   a. present employment, involvement in research, professional activities and practice in a related field and,

b. range of experience in higher education and, in particular, in counselling training.

(iv) Experience in external examining is desirable but not a prerequisite. Examiners who do not have previous experience in the role of External Examiner will be expected to have relevant other experience which is likely to support the position.

(v) Former trainers or supervisors are not eligible to become an External Examiner until they have left the Institute for three years.

(vi) It is the External Examiner's responsibility to name a conflict of interest if one arises.

b) Conflicts of interest

(i) The Institute will not appoint or approve as External Examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances:

b. member of a committee of the Institute or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the Institute or one of its collaborative partners;

c. anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study;

d. former staff or students of the Institute unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the External Examiner have completed their programme(s);

e. a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution;

c) Terms of Office

(i) The duration of an External Examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity. An External Examiner's period of appointment may be terminated by either side at an earlier stage, subject to adequate notice.

(ii) An External Examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.

(iii) External Examiners will normally hold no more than two substantial external examiner appointments for taught programmes at any point in time.

2.22.6 Reports

a) The purpose of an External Examiner's report is to enable the Institute to judge whether the courses and modules are at an appropriate standard and meeting their stated aims and intended learning outcomes and to make any necessary improvements, either immediately or at the next review of the course.

b) External Examiners are required to report annually to the Institute on the conduct of the assessments just concluded and on issues relating to assessment and to their meeting with students, including:

Module-related issues

(i) whether students who pass the assessment for the module(s) demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes for the modules(s);

(ii) the overall performance of students on the module(s) and the standard of their achievement in the national (Republic of Ireland and UK) context;

(iii) the quality and standards of the learning and teaching environment as indicated by the performance of students on the module assessments, and on the reports of students at the External Examiner's meeting with them;

(iv) whether assessments have been carried out rigorously with equity of treatment of students, and fairly conducted within regulation and guidance;

(v) whether the quality and quantity of feedback given to student on assessed work is satisfactory;

(vi) whether module-related issues raised in previous External Examiners' reports have been dealt with satisfactorily.

Course-related issues

(i) whether the standards set are appropriate for the award(s)

(ii) the extent to which course meets its aims and intended learning outcomes

(iii) the overall performance of the students, the standards of their achievements in a national context, and any noteworthy points relating to pass rates and the distribution of results;

(iv) key characteristics of the course(s) including notable strengths and distinctive or innovative features, areas that may be improved to enhance the student

experience or risks that should be addressed in order to maintain confidence in standards on the course(s);

(v) the general course organisation and administration, including the conduct of Assessment Board meetings;

(vi) whether course-related issues raised in previous External Examiners' reports have been dealt with satisfactorily.

c) The report must not contain any reference to a named individual student or member of Institute staff. Such issues must be raised in confidence with the relevant Programme Leaders and Head of Training.

d) An External Examiner has the authority and the responsibility to report directly to the Head of Training when there is concern about standards and performance, particularly if it is considered that assessments are being conducted in a way that jeopardises either the fair treatment of individual students or the standards of the Institute's awards.

e) A newly appointed External Examiner shall be given a copy of the final report of the previous External Examiner for the modules/courses concerned.

f) The annual report must be sent to the Training Institute within one month of the final meeting of the Assessment Board and shall be circulated to appropriate Institute committees.

2.22.7 Approval and review

The crucial role of External Examiners in maintaining standards and in providing information on the outcomes for use when reviewing courses must not be confused with the function of approval and review. It is for the Institute together with any validating partners to determine what changes should be made as a result of the implications for course design and delivery emerging from an External Examiner's report.

2.23 Student Progression

2.23.1 To progress from one stage of a course to a subsequent stage, whether by full-time or part-time study, a student must pass all modules required by the previous stage, which includes meeting any pre-requisite or any other requirement set out in the course definitive documentation, and apply for and be accepted onto the next stage.

2.23.2 Students who fail to attain sufficient modules to progress may, at the discretion of the Assessment Board:

(i) be required to repeat the year, in whole or part, which may include proceeding on a further year of study at the same stage on a "mixed diet" of modules at different levels; or

(ii) be recommended to withdraw from the course; or

(iii) have their course terminated

2.23.3 Where a student commences studying new modules before having received the confirmed results from the previous term/academic year, this continuation/progression is deemed to be provisional until the results have been confirmed by the Assessment Board. If the Assessment Board has determined that a student's course has been terminated, the student will be required to cease studying with immediate effect. If the Assessment Board has determined that a student may not progress to the next stage of the course, the stage on which a student is enrolled must be amended with immediate effect.

2.24 Fixed Point Scales

Module components which are eligible for numerical grades will be assessed on a fixed point scale. The use of this scale facilitates standardisation and should make clear to students the ordinal position of their work. Marks within each award classification category should be interpreted as high, average or low for that category. Where the marking criteria in a given band are well met this would tend to indicate the highest mark in that category, if not a higher category. Where several criteria are not met this would tend to indicate a low mark within the band, if not a lower band. All marking criteria statements need not apply for an assignment to be awarded a grade within a given band.

The following table is a Fixed point scale for the Degree qualification.

Grade	Classification	Band
95 90 85 80 75 72	First class honours	70% and above. The work will be exceptionally good. To obtain marks of 85%, 90% or 95% the work would need to contain original insights, valid suggestions for further research, and other outstanding relevant merits.
68 65 62	Second class honours grade 1	60% - 69%. These answers will be very competent.
58 55 52	Second class honours grade 2	50% - 59%. These answers are basically competent in the area set.
48 45 42	Third class honours	40% - 49%. These answers are acceptable but display marked weaknesses.
38 35 30 20 10 0	Fail	0% - 39%. These answers do not meet the requirements of the marking guidelines or the intended learning outcomes. Work at the lower end (20% or 30%) may display characteristics such as being overly brief, containing few relevant points, displaying little accurate or relevant theory/research and/or being very difficult to follow. This may include work which covers substantially irrelevant material but is otherwise of an acceptable standard. Very poor work (0% or 10%) may contain virtually no accurate / relevant material within the subject area.

The following table is a fixed point scale for DipHE, CertHE and Certificate qualifications.

Grade	Classification	Band
95 90 85 80 75 72	Pass with distinction	70% and above. The work will be exceptionally good. To obtain marks of 85%, 90% or 95% the work would need to contain original insights, valid suggestions for further research, and other outstanding relevant merits.
68 65 62	Pass with merit	60% - 69%. These answers will be very competent.
58 55 52 48 45 42	Pass	40% - 59%. These answers are basically competent in the area set. Marks at the lower end (42% or 45%) might display a small number of marked weaknesses or deficiencies in knowledge or understanding.
38 35 30 20 10 0	Fail	0% - 39%. These answers do not meet the requirements of the marking guidelines or the intended learning outcomes. Work at the lower end (20% or 30%) may display characteristics such as being overly brief, containing few relevant points, displaying little accurate or relevant theory/research and/or being very difficult to follow. This may include work which covers substantially irrelevant material but is otherwise of an acceptable standard. Very poor work (0% or 10%) may contain virtually no accurate / relevant material within the subject area.

2.25 Attendance Requirements

2.25.1 Students must pass the attendance requirements.

2.25.2 It is important to note that for all courses run by CCSTI one hundred percent attendance is expected at all module components. This expectation is in line with the professional requirements for counsellors to fulfil the professional obligations they have undertaken with clients.

2.25.3 Attendance will be assessed by students' attendance record taken at workshops, discussion groups and seminars.

2.25.4 In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Module Leader a student may miss a workshop or group session. For each component not attended students will be required to undertake the repeat criteria specified for the relevant module component in order to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes covered during the missed component.

2.25.5 For some modules, attendance at all or part of a module/ module component is an essential requirement. In such cases, this is expressly specified in the module descriptor. Repeat criteria are also detailed which specify the opportunities for recovery from failure, where applicable.

2.25.6 In all circumstance, attendance of below 60% across all modules will result in an automatic fail and training will be deemed to be terminated.

2.25.7 If a student fails to attend a compulsory component or to submit work for any assessment, the student will be deemed to have failed the assessment concerned, unless s/he has been granted a deferral under the extenuating circumstances procedure. If a student's request for deferral is not granted, it will be deemed that an attempt has not been made. Where an attempt has not been made or a deferral granted, students may normally be required to withdraw.

2.26 Deferrals for extenuating circumstances

2.26.1 There are set and agreed deadlines for all module components and students are expected to operate within the agreed timeframe for any given component.

2.26.2 Students who attend course components or present themselves or submit work for assessment are declaring themselves fit to be assessed and no subsequent claim for extenuating circumstances shall normally be accepted.

   a)   If students experience exceptional circumstances that will prevent and/or impair them in attendance at workshops, workshop sessions or group sessions, and/or the submission of an assignment, they are required to inform the Training Institute of these circumstances and to apply for deferral of the module component.

   b)   Exceptional circumstances include personal (bereavement/family crisis etc.) medical and/ or work situations which seriously impair the student's ability to fulfil the course requirements.

c) The process for applying for a deferral is that the student verbally informs one of the trainers, and also makes a written request outlining the reasons for the required deferral. Applications for deferral must be accompanied by verifiable third party evidence of the extenuating circumstances.

d) Work submitted after the specified deadline without formally negotiating an extension will be awarded a mark of 0% or a fail grade as appropriate.

e) Simply not attending a scheduled workshop/ group session and /or not submitting an assignment is grounds for losing one's place on the course.

f) Only one re-negotiation of a deadline for each assessment is possible.

g) Deferred first assessments shall be treated as a first attempt. Deferred repeat attempts shall be treated as a repeat attempt.

2.27   Student Assignments

Assignment guidelines and marking criteria for each individual assignment will be approved by the External Examiner and the Link Tutor at the pre-moderation stage. These documents will relate to the module aims and intended learning outcomes and will specify the criteria to be met within each marking band. These assignment guidelines and marking criteria will be provided to students. Assignments will be assessed in line with these criteria, with each piece of work being considered on all criteria listed.

2.28   Refused submission of a student assignment

2.28.1 An assignment will be refused for marking if:

a) It fails to meet professional standards of delivery, formatting, layout, spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence construction, paragraph construction, and/or referencing.

b) The assignment topic is not addressed and/or the guidelines are not adhered to.

c) The assignment deviates by more than 10% from the designated word count for written assignments or time allocation for presentations.

2.28.2 Each assignment can be refused for marking once only. If upon re-submitting the assignment professional standards of presentation are again not achieved the assignment will be awarded a fail grade.

2.28.3 Resubmission of an assignment previously refused for marking on the first attempt will be treated as a first attempt. Resubmission of an assignment previously refused for marking on the repeat attempt will be treated as a repeat attempt.

2.29 Reassessment

2.29.1 Any student who fails an assignment will receive their grade and feedback as standard. Students will be invited to contact the markers if they require further clarification or support. In exceptional circumstances the markers may offer to meet with the student to provide additional guidance and support around the assignment.

2.29.2 A student who has failed a module by failing to obtain an overall pass grade for the module, and/or by failing assignment/(s) and/or compulsory element/(s) will be allowed to undertake reassessment without re-registration, except where repeat criteria are explicitly disallowed.

2.29.3 The reassessment criteria for each module component are specified in the descriptors for each module.

2.29.4 If a module is failed, all components with a mark below 40% or with a fail grade must be reassessed; the mark in the other component/(s) shall stand.

2.29.5 Reassessment of a module shall be restricted to one attempt. This must be completed within an agreed deadline, normally within the repeat timeframe associated with the academic year in which the module was studied and failed.

2.29.6 Any students who passes a module, assignment or compulsory element is not permitted to repeat that module or component in order to attain a higher grade.

2.29.7 Any module component failed at the first attempt and passed at the second attempt shall be awarded the higher mark to a maximum value of 40%. Students achieving a grade higher than 40% at reassessment will see the mark they actually achieved alongside an indication that their grade will be capped. They will be awarded 40%.

a) Any module component failed at the first attempt and failed at the second attempt shall carry the higher mark of the two attempts.

b) Where a student has failed to pass a module component at reassessment the module will be considered to be failed and no further attempts will be permitted. Training will be deemed to be terminated. The student may however appeal the decision in line with the Complaints' and Appeals' Procedures of CCSTI.

2.30 Student Assignments Appeals Procedure

Students may seek a review of the result of an assignment once the results have been formally notified. A review may be sought of:

a) the overall result of a final assessment including the classification of the degree or qualification of the award; or

b) where the results of an assessment, is not a final assessment, a review may be sought where that result prevents the student's continuation on the course or progression to the next stage of the course, or where the result requires the student to repeat an assessment.

Assessment Board Decision Reviews

The grounds upon which a student may request a formal review of an Assessment Board decision are limited to the following:

a) The assessment was not conducted in accordance with the regulations for the course or there was an administrative error or some other significant procedural irregularity that prejudiced the student's performance;

b) There is evidence of unfair or improper assessment on the part of one or more of the markers, although the student shall not be permitted to question the academic judgement of the markers.

c) If there is evidence that the student had extenuating circumstances which were so severe that they prevented the student from making an informed decision at the time as to whether to attempt an assessment or to apply for a deferral.

Please note that disagreement with the academic judgement of an Assessment Board in assessing the merits of an individual piece of work or in reaching a decision on a student's progression or on the final level of an award, based on the marks, grades and other information relating to the student's performance, cannot in itself constitute grounds for a request by a student for an appeal. Any alleged inadequacy of supervision or in other arrangements during a period of registration as a CCSTI student is not admissible grounds for review.

To request a formal review:

a) Within fifteen working days of the release of confirmed results, the student must inform the Marking Coordinator of their intention to request a review of the decision of the Assessment Board. The student must then submit full supporting documentation, where appropriate, no later than ten working days after this notification. This documentation should include medical certificates and any other third-party evidence that is available.

b) The review request shall be reviewed by the Appeals Panel (Marking Coordinator and one other independent marker). If further information is required from the student, then the Panel may seek to meet with them. In exceptional circumstances, the student, upon request, may meet and be interviewed by the Appeals Panel.

c) The Marking Coordinator shall notify the Assessment Board and the External Complaints Person of a pending formal appeal.

d) The Appeals Panel will verify that:
    i. the student's written submission, including any supporting documentation is complete
    ii. any persons named by the student are consulted, provided that they can be reached and their views are relevant to the issues
    iii. there are grounds for review

The Appeals Panel will identify in writing upon what grounds the appeal is being sought, they will request that the Assessment Board re-examines the work and may also provide guidance on good practice in similar circumstances.

In conducting a formal review:

The Chairperson of the Assessment Board (or nominee) shall ensure that:

a) the Assessment Board notes the decision conveyed to them by the Appeals Panel

b) consideration will be given to the relevant scripts or work

c) The grounds upon which the Assessment Board reached its original decision will be reconsidered.

d) the final decision of the appeal by the Assessment Board is sent to the External Complaints Person for ratification

The Assessment Board can:

e) confirm the original decision of the Assessment Board, or

f) make a different decision, setting conditions as appropriate to the assessment or the assignment

g) Where the Assessment Board wishes to have further evidence of the student's performance, it may require a (further) viva voce examination or other form of assessment appropriate to the student's circumstances and the requirements of the programme of study, before reaching its final decision.

The Marking Coordinator (or nominee) shall be responsible for confirming in writing to the student the decision of the Assessment Board, normally within 20 working days of the consideration of the review by Appeals Panel.

If an Assessment Board requires a (further) viva voce examination or other form of assessment appropriate to the student's circumstances and the requirements of the programme of study, this requirement should be notified to the Marking Coordinator within the deadline specified and the assessment carried out as soon as practicable.

Note:
- Working days are weekdays, Monday to Friday, and do not include Bank Holidays or holiday times when CCSTI is closed to business.
- Term time for the Training Team is September to June. The External Complaints Person may also be on holidays. If this should occur, the student will be informed by letter immediately.

2.31   Conditions of award

2.31.1 After the results of module assessments have been confirmed, an individual student shall automatically be entitled to the award achieved, subject to satisfying any specific requirements of the course on which the student is registered.

2.31.2 To be eligible for consideration for the BSc (Hons) Counselling and Psychotherapy award, by the end of the course, students need to have passed all compulsory course modules, amounting to 120 credits at FHEQ Level 6 (including any additional constraints imposed by a Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body or other external agency)

2.31.3 To be eligible for consideration for the Certificate in Introduction to Counselling & Psychotherapy Studies, by the end of the course, students need to have passed all compulsory course modules, amounting to 90 credits at FHEQ Level 4

2.31.4 Students on learning pathways who successfully met the award criteria for an interim Certificate as part of a course leading to a Degree will be conferred with the Certificate as appropriate after successful completion of the required number of credits.

2.31.5 Students who fail or withdraw from a Degree course with embedded interim qualifications and fallback awards will be eligible for the conferral of any interim qualification and fallback award achieved at the point of failure or withdrawal.

2.32 Award and classification

2.32.1 Classification Calculation

Module Components

a) Module components which are eligible for numerical grades will be assessed on a fixed point scale (as per this document) in line with the assignment guidelines and marking criteria for each assignment. These fixed marks are for individual pieces of work only. When averaged, a module or component assessment may take any intermediate value.

b) Module components which are not eligible for numerical grades will be assessed as pass/ fail. The grade awarded will be determined in line with the assignment guidelines and marking criteria for each assignment.

Modules

c) In deriving a mark for a module the mark shall be based on performance in all compulsory module components as specified in the module descriptor. The module mark shall be based upon the average mark of the compulsory, numerically-graded module components, duly weighted.

d) Compulsory module components which are not eligible for numerical grades must be passed but do not contribute the module mark.

Award Classification

e) The modules that are used for determination of an award classification shall be all those compulsory modules eligible for a numerical grade at the award FHEQ level.

    a. BSc (Hons):   all compulsory, numerically-graded modules at FHEQ Level 6

    b. DipHE: all compulsory, numerically-graded modules at FHEQ Level 5

    c. CertHE: all compulsory, numerically-graded modules at FHEQ Level 4

    d. Certificate: all compulsory, numerically-graded modules at FHEQ Level 4

f) The classification for a named award to be made to each student shall be based on performance in modules as specified in 2.32.1. The classification shall be based upon the average mark of the compulsory, numerically-graded modules, duly weighted.

g) In deriving a mark for classification, marks shall carry a weight according to the credit rating of the module.

h) Compulsory modules which are not eligible for numerical grades must be passed but do not contribute to the award classification.

i) The Honours Degree classification boundaries for First Class, Upper Second Class, Lower Second Class and Third Class shall be 70%, 60%, 50% and 40% respectively.

j) The Certificate classification boundaries for Pass with Distinction, Pass with Merit and Pass shall be 70%, 60% and 40% respectively. The same will apply for CertHE and DipHE fallback awards, where they apply.

k) A student shall automatically be entitled to the class of an award determined by the classification calculation achieved.

l) Downgrading of an award to a lower classification shall not be permitted, except in the circumstances set out in the Assessment Regulations above and 2.36 below.

2.33 Modification of Results

Any entitlement to a classification may be set aside by an Assessment Board following a case of misconduct and/or failure to adhere to professional suitability and Fitness to Practise criteria; the Board may also fail a student who has otherwise passed the course concerned. A student penalised for misconduct shall not normally have the right to be assessed or reassessed to improve their award or classification.

2.34 Conferment of Awards

2.34.1 All stages leading to the conferment of an academic award shall be subject to well-defined procedures and Regulations.

2.34.2 Proper security of records shall be maintained at all times.

2.34.3 Great care shall be exercised in making certain that each student's personal details and academic record are accurate.

2.34.4 Students must formally apply for graduation. This application includes a checklist for successful completion of each section of the course.

2.34.5 For students undertaking courses run by CCSTI and validated by the validating university, conferment will be by the University following the procedures and regulations of the University. A celebration will be held by CCSTI.

2.35 Posthumous awards

Awards may be made posthumously on the basis of work completed by a student. Any evidence submitted in support of a case must be such as to make it clear that the candidate had been or would have been likely to have been successful in the full set of assessments for the award. All work completed by students who have died must be marked, submitted and considered in the normal way. An award conferred posthumously shall normally be indicated as such, where possible, in the lists of students presented to an Awards Ceremony, but shall not be indicated on the student's certificate.

2.36 Cheating

If a student is found to have cheated or to have attempted to gain an unfair advantage, the Assessment Board shall have authority to deem that student to have failed part or all of the assessments, and it shall be empowered to determine whether or not the student should be permitted to be reassessed. The Board shall also have the authority to vary a student's classification or award, and may fail a student who has otherwise passed the course concerned. It is important to note that in cases of cheating the Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Procedure may also be invoked.

2.37 Plagiarism Policy

Definition
Plagiarism is an attempt to put forward someone else's work as your own. This can be done intentionally or unintentionally. Plagiarism, however, is judged by the hard evidence of the text rather than considering the person's intentions. Examples of plagiarism include using paragraphs, sentences, ideas, and concepts from someone else's work without referencing them explicitly; using downloaded text from the internet; and copying other students' work. Pictures and diagrams can also be plagiarised. Other people's work includes work by published authors, other students, someone who does an assignment for the student, or authors on the internet. Plagiarism of published work indicates a breach of copyright and can be followed by civil and or criminal proceedings.

Response

Our response to plagiarism is firstly a teaching one. We believe that students need to understand the academic standards that are required for any adult studying at third level. We also believe that educationally it is important for students to put forward their own work and ideas. The Institute will respond to all allegations of plagiarism and seek to establish if there is evidence to support them. We believe that some students are not fully aware that they are involved in a deceptive or fraudulent process. We want students to become aware of the seriousness of plagiarism and to learn from their past behaviour. We also believe, that from a counselling standpoint, they need to be aware that plagiarism is a breach of the ethical code of the IACP for practising counsellors (See Principle 4.0). All assignments must be submitted with an anti-plagiarism declaration signed by the student. In addition, detailed notes on referencing, quoting from other sources, and presenting a bibliography will be given to each student.

Grounds for an investigation of alleged plagiarism can include, but are not limited to,

- Direct observation of the student plagiarising someone else's work
- The discovery of already existing written material which the student either presents as one's own and/or uses in one's work while failing to acknowledge the original author
- A high degree of similarity between the submitted work of the student and that of another student
- A significant discrepancy between the writing style of the student in relation to spelling and grammar in comparison to other sections of the student's work or in comparison to the student's previous work

Plagiarism will have two graded responses.

Informal 1st Response

1) The student will be informed of the concerns of markers/trainers. The student may choose to respond to these concerns in writing.
2) A meeting will be set up with the student, trainers/markers, and/or the Head of Training. At this meeting the trainers'/markers' reasons for believing that plagiarism has occurred are outlined and time is given to consider the students written and other responses.
3) If it is agreed that plagiarism occurred and that this 1st response is agreeable to all parties, then the following sanctions can be applied.
   - A reduction in the grade for an assignment
   - A fail grade for the assignment

- The student is required to resubmit the assignment
- A report is made, detailing the plagiarism, the evidence and the sanction imposed. This report is kept on file in order to monitor repeat offences. The report will not be used for any other purposes. It will not be used in references and will be destroyed when the student completes the course.

It is hoped by the Institute that most cases of plagiarism will be resolved at this first informal level. An allegation of plagiarism will proceed to the 2nd formal level response if
- The first level informal response does not reach a conclusion
- The student fails to attend scheduled meetings of the first level informal response
- The student has engaged in plagiarism before
- The incidence of plagiarism is so serious that a formal response is required

Formal 2nd Response

The student will be required to attend a plagiarism hearing. This hearing will be conducted by the Head of Training, the markers/trainers concerned, a member of the Board, the appropriate student representative, the student concerned and the student's support person. The student's support person may be a family member, or a friend. The procedure will be as follows:
- The marker/trainer will make a formal written submission to the plagiarism hearing committee. This submission details the evidence that is available to substantiate the allegation that plagiarism has occurred.
- The student will receive a copy of this document and will have the right to make further written submissions of his/her own.
- The student will also receive details of who will be present at the hearing. The student will inform the committee who will accompany him/her at the meeting.
- The date for the hearing will be decided within 14 working days after the formal written submission has been received by the Institute.
- All documents will have exchanged hands one week prior to the hearing.
- Minutes will be taken to record the meeting.
- Time will be given to the student and marker/trainer to outline their case. Members of the committee may ask questions of both the student and the marker/trainer in relation to the evidence presented.

- When the presentations have completed and both trainer and student have left, the panel will remain to deliberate their conclusions. The standard of proof used at the plagiarism hearing is based on the balance of probabilities.
- A report will be drawn up by the chairperson and findings will be voted on by the panel. A majority vote will hold.
- The decision of the panel will be given 14 working days after the hearing. The student and the marker/trainer will be informed.

If the committee finds that no plagiarism has taken place then the grade for the assignment will be given to the student and the matter will be concluded. If the committee concludes that plagiarism has occurred, then the following sanctions can be applied.

Sanctions

These can be multiple as outlined in the level of informal 1st response

- A reduction in the grade for an assignment or a fail grade for the assignment
- The student is required to resubmit the assignment

In addition

- The student can be suspended from training for a period of time, or
- The student can be expelled from the Training Institute
- The report and findings of the hearing committee will be kept on file until the student has graduated. The plagiarism finding will not normally be mentioned in references. However, for cases of serious plagiarism and when students repeatedly offend an exception may be made to this policy. In this case giving references for particular posts without mentioning the plagiarism findings would mean that CCSTI would be failing in its duty of care.

Appeals

The student has the right to appeal the findings of a plagiarism hearing. This appeal must be lodged within fourteen days of the notification of the findings of the plagiarism hearing. In accordance with the Student Counsellor Complaints and Appeals Procedures, the appeal begins at the formal stage-part 4 and the student appeals to the External Complaints Person. The findings of the External Complaints Person in this appeal process are final.

Acknowledgements

This plagiarism policy has based its responses on that of Waterford Institute of Technology with notable changes to suit the context of CCSTI.

Bibliography

University College Cork, (2001). UCC plagiarism policy. Cork.

Waterford Institute of Technology, (2008). Anti-plagiarism policy. Waterford.

Anti-plagiarism Declaration

Please include the following signed commitment on all written assignments submitted to CCSTI. *I hereby certify that this assignment is entirely my own work, except where I cite* differently or acknowledge sources in the text itself or in the list of reference

Student signature   Date

3. **Quality Assurance**

3.1 **Programme Review, Monitoring, and Approval**

CCSTI continuously improves its programmes by ensuring they meet their aims and remain current. This is done through the gathering of student feedback on content, delivery and assessment methods and through the assessment of student learning outcomes. Both are correlated within a framework of systematic periodic reviews. The Head of Training along with the Training Team has responsibility for annually reviewing training and to decide what changes are to be introduced in the next delivery. Validation and accreditation bodies may need to be consulted in this regard.

A regular meeting of the Training Team (at least once each term) reviews the programmes to identify strengths and weaknesses. Management, organisation, resources and services are all open to scrutiny at these meetings. The Head of Training together with the Training Team takes whatever steps are required to implement resulting actions. To maintain standards of teaching we include reviews of work:

By Students

At the midway point and end of each year students provide feedback to their trainers. This feedback details the strengths and weaknesses of their facilitators. It also includes a clear indication of the quality of the trainer's teaching. Students are required to participate in all parts of this feedback process. Once every year the External Examiner also meets with students in order to review the course. This review includes teaching standards.

By Students through Their Student Representatives

Student Representatives from each year meet with representatives from the Training Team at least once a year. Their job at these meetings is to present any problems for the students with the training programme and or teaching methods. Students are also encouraged to propose solutions or changes which may be needed to the programme. These meetings are recorded.

End Of Course Detailed Written Feedback

Written feedback is given to the Institute including administration, staff and the trainers. Students also comment in detail on the course content and give suggestions about future improvements. The written feedback is then collated and presented as an overall report to

the Training Team at the end of each year. Changes are proposed and a timetable for their implementation is drafted at planning days. Students then receive a letter which outlines some of the changes that will be implemented.

By Peer Co-facilitators
Each module is facilitated by a number of facilitators. Trainers spend time examining their work as a team. They also receive feedback from each other.

By Staff Annual Review
High quality of teaching is crucial to the attainment and maintenance of academic standards and to the motivation of students and must therefore be maintained and enhanced. The training staff shall be appropriately qualified and experienced, and their training of students shall be invigorated and informed by their participation in counselling practice along with applied research and/or related scholarly or professional activities. Trainers also review their training work annually. At the annual review day all trainers first of all engage in self-assessment of their work and hear feedback on their work with students, with other trainers, with administrative staff and with the training and clinical teams. Strengths and weaknesses are identified. Their job description is examined and changes proposed. Support received and required is explored, as is a plan for the year ahead. Continuous professional development is reviewed and special interests explored and identified for future study. Fulltime trainers also present this review to management. The review is then written up by the staff member and co-signed by trainer and management.

Feedback from Supervisors and Trainers
Throughout the year supervisors and trainers are experiencing the programme "Live" and monitor its ongoing influence on students. Feedback and problems with aspects of the course are identified in ongoing supervision and are placed on the training agenda at each meeting. Changes that are required are collected and recorded for next year's training manual. Trainers will assume responsibility for implementation of these changes at planning days. Any changes will then be designed and implemented, usually in the summer months.

External Examiner
Students are invited to spend time with the External Examiner once every year. Time is spent listening to students' feedback and a report is drawn up by the External Examiner and presented to the Training Team. Trainers take time to study the report and this report is then

discussed at the next meeting of the Examiner and proposed changes to the course are introduced. Some design and implementation of the changes take place immediately and some in the summer months. An update on changes implemented is given at the next External Examiner's meeting.

IACP Course Accreditation

Cork Counselling Services Training Institute's has run an IACP-recognised Diploma from 1996 to 2018. In 2017 Cork Counselling Services Training Institute applied for and was awarded IACP accredited status for a BSc (Hons) Counselling & Psychotherapy Programme. This accreditation is valid for six years and is subject to an Annual Quality Monitoring process.

Curriculum Development

Curriculum Development originates from feedback from students, trainers and supervisors, counsellor employers and may also be implemented from the strategic plan, input from validating bodies, the Independent Evaluator and Advisor, input following market research and/or information from the professional body. Changes are proposed at annual planning days. At planning days input is invited from administrative and clinical teams. Generally, teams of trainers (Programme Leaders) work on the proposed section of development and produce a working draft which is presented to the Training Team. Over a series of meetings changes to the draft curriculum are worked out as all trainers have input into the draft. Students are further consulted. Practical planning is then carried out in conjunction with the administration/business team and a starting date for the new curriculum is set. The first run through of the new development is seen as important. Teething problems are expected and the Training Team assesses and resolves them. Sections of the course are also continually updated.

3.2 Periodic Formal Programme Evaluation

In addition to ongoing monitoring and to ensure that CCSTI continues to meet professional, academic and market / societal needs, there will be regular periodic evaluation every five years or as stipulated by the relevant validating bodies. This comprises of a self-evaluation (with a plan for the next five years and a revised programme specification) and an external evaluation (where the Independent Evaluator and Advisor reviews the self-evaluation and conducts their own evaluation). The evaluations concentrate on whether the programme meets stated aims and on whether learning outcomes are met by students. The programme is evaluated in terms of:

- aims,
- marketability,
- entry requirements,
- student access and interview criteria,
- progression and transfer arrangements,
- learning outcomes,
- fees and costs,
- scheduling,
- training staff and their qualifications and experience,
- physical location,
- technical support,
- learning methods,
- content syllabus,
- student services,
- student care,
- placement practices,
- assessment.

These may be revised as a result of the evaluation or the programme may be stopped. Evaluation and revision is done in conjunction with stakeholders in a transparent manner. A formal report is prepared by the Independent Evaluator and Advisor with input and assistance from the Training Team. The report will include statistics (e.g. student attendance, student transfers, withdrawals, performance etc). The review must integrate internal and external perspectives in order to be effective. Clear revision proposals are presented in the report which goes to the Board of Directors. The Board considers any recommendations especially those that have wider implications. The Board actions changes for the next five years as appropriate. This report will be available upon request.

3.3   Design and Validation Of New Programmes

Internal validation comes first. The originator submits an outline of the proposed course to the Training Team for approval prior to course development, outlining title, target audience, aims, likely demand, admission criteria, learning outcomes, modes of delivery, contact hours, hours of independent study, client work or therapy requirements, assessment methods, course design, schedule, resources, award level etc. The Training Team will consult with the Independent Evaluator and Advisor for an external perspective prior to documenting the proposal.

On behalf of the Training Team, the Head of Training will bring the proposal to the Management Team, who may further consult with the Training Team before recommending for final approval to the Board of Directors. Factors in decision-making will include current resources, staffing implications, demand levels, admission policy, potential pricing,

compatibility with mission and values, potential impact on other courses and on other validating bodies.

In planning to implement a new programme the following points are usually considered by the various parties:

- Is there satisfactory rationale for providing the programme, including student demand and employment opportunities?
- Does the programme meet statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements?
- Is CCSTI eligible to apply for validation of the programme?
- Are objectives and outcomes clear and are module learning outcomes specified?
- Does the title comply with any statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements?
- Are programme concepts, implementation strategy and standards well informed?
- Have stakeholders been consulted?
- Has the programme accepted social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives?
- Are there are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders?
- Are programme access, transfer and progression arrangements satisfactory?
- Has programme information for students been provided in plain language?
- If the programme is delivered and assessed in English, then is the level of proficiency in English language specified in order to reach the required standard?
- Is prerequisite learning specified?
- Are procedures and criteria in place for the recognition of prior learning for the purposes of access?
- Is the programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose?
- Are there sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement?
- Are there arrangements for the performance of the programme's staff to be managed?
- Is there a medium-term plan for the programme which addresses planned intake?
- Are there sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned including information technology, suitable specialist equipment and administrative support?
- Are there plans for the learning environment to be monitored/supervised and supported?
- Are there plans for timely formative feedback to be regularly provided to enrolled students?
- Are sound assessment strategies in place in line with the award body standards procedures?

- Are there plans for enrolled students to be informed, guided and cared for?
- Does the programme makes reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities?
- Do the plans for this programme functionally interface with the CCSTI general or institutional procedures?

External validation comes second. When the programme has been approved by the Board of Directors, an external accrediting or validating body will be asked to examine the programme with a view to having it validated in line with their criteria.

If this application is successful, the Head of Business prepares budgets to cover the cost of running the course. Marketing of the course then commences.

In communicating about new and established programmes, Cork Counselling Services only publishes information that is clear, accurate, objective and easily accessible. Quality assurance procedures are published on our website as is information relating to accreditation/validation of programmes, procedures for access, transfer and progression and information for enrolled students. Programmes are mapped to the Irish National Framework for Qualifications (NFQ) and to the U.K. Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). Information on the protection of enrolled learners is provided for relevant programmes. Reports emerging from formal quality evaluations and resulting actions will be made available in a timely fashion and in an easily accessible format.

3.4   Complaint against a Student Counsellor

Stage 1 (informal)
If a complaint is made about a student counsellor, the student and their supervisor if appropriate will be informed. The complainant should attempt if it is possible to resolve the issue with the student counsellor directly, on a local level.

Stage 2 (informal)
If this is not possible or is unsatisfactory the complainant should then request a meeting with members of the Training Team. The complainant is supplied with a copy of the IACP code of ethics and CCSTI's complaints procedure. The Training Team will nominate two members to meet with the complainant to hear the complaint. The student will be informed of this. If

possible the trainers will suggest that the complainant, the student and a third party meet to process the issues involved and attempt to resolve them.

Stage 3 (formal)

If this fails or is unsatisfactory the complainant will be invited to put the complaint in writing and the student counsellor will receive a copy of this. The student will be invited to make an initial response in writing to the team. Separate interviews with the complainant and student counsellor will follow. This will be carried out by two members of the Training Team. The interviewers will make a report to the Training Team. The Training Team will meet within 15 working days to decide if there is a case to answer and will make recommendations. The student counsellor and complainant are informed as to the recommendations within 5 working days of this meeting. Recommendations that the Training Team may make include; that the student complained against seeks counselling or therapy, and/or the student takes time out from training to complete this; the team may also recommend a period of supervision with a designated supervisor and or pre and post session supervision. The Training Team also has the right to warn, to suspend training or in certain cases of gross misconduct, to terminate training (see below). A person whose training is terminated can reapply to the course after a designated period. Re-entry decisions however remain with the Training Team. Finally, the Training Team will also review its own training work and if necessary implement any changes to the course that will support student counsellors in avoiding similar situations.

Stage 4 (formal)

If the student is still not happy with the outcome he / she may appeal to the External Complaints Person. This appeal must be lodged in writing within 21 working days of the Training Team decision.

Gross Misconduct by a Student Counsellor

Certain conduct may be such as to justify immediate suspension, and/or the enactment of the professional suitability and Fitness to Practise policy and procedure which may be followed by termination of training. The Head of Training will meet with the student in cases of gross misconduct. See below for example of gross misconduct.

3.5   Student Complaint Procedure

3.5.1   Introduction

It is important to note that the training model of Cork Counselling Services Training Institute (CCSTI) and the clinical practice model of Cork Counselling Services (CCS) are relational. CCSTI believes that the first port of call in expressing dissatisfaction or in making a complaint is to engage in a relational approach, which is collaborative and engages all the people involved.

This document opens with the guiding principles that are at the heart of this process and it will explain how students may make a complaint about services or people within the organisation. It tells the student who can make complaints and it details the different definitions used regarding complaints. It will direct students to alternative avenues, which may be more appropriate for their concerns. The different stages for the Complaint Procedure are laid out with relevant time limits and there is an emphasis throughout for an informal resolution where possible. There is a clear statement regarding confidentiality. The roles and responsibilities of the people involved in the different stages of this process are described.

Finally, at the end of this section is the complaints form. This form is important as full completion is required for any complaint to be processed.

3.5.2   Definitions & Role Descriptions

Complaint "An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about the organisation's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the organisation" (from Good Practice Framework for handling complaints and appeals)

Complainant The student who raises the complaint about fellow students or staff members or services or facilities within the auspices of the organisation.

Complaint Liaison Officer This role is only necessary in formal complaints. The Complaints Liaison Officer is nominated by the Quality Assurance Officer in conjunction with the Head of Training and the Training Team.

Completion of Complaints Form This is a form signed, on completion of the different parts of the complaints procedure, by the complainant and other relevant people. The content of the form will reflect each different part of process. For example, at the informal processes the complainant will write up an account of what happened and how it was resolved; this will be co-signed by the people involved once all agree with the written account.

External Independent Complaints Person (EICP) The EICP is experienced in complaints processes and in the governance, ethics and fitness to practice in counselling and psychotherapy. The EICP is a senior counsellor / psychotherapist who has knowledge, skills

and experience in investigating professional conduct and ethical complaints up to and including appeal panels; they hold no other roles for CCSTI.

Quality Assurance Officer The Quality Assurance Officer, in relation to the complaints procedure, is responsible for the administration of the procedure in working alongside the Head of Training and the Training Team in appointing the individuals for the various roles involved in the complaint.

Respondent The fellow students or staff member(s) who are the subject of the complaint or hold responsibility for the service that is the subject of the complaint.

Working Day Does not include Saturday, Saturday, Bank Holidays, or any other periods of closure. NB Any formal complaint received after 30th June will be examined at the start of the next academic year.

3.5.3   Guiding Principles and Parameters

The guiding principles for the complaints procedure are that the process:

- Is treated seriously with fairness and impartiality
- Is transparent and easy to access
- Is flexible and timely ensuring concerns and complaints are dealt with as quickly as possible
- Is simple and dealt with at the appropriate level;
- Uses clear communication of: processes, decisions and reasons behind those decisions.
- Has both an informal process and, if required a formal process.
- Ensures decisions are taken without actual or perceived conflicts of interest
- Ensures appropriate levels of confidentiality
- Includes support for the complainant and the respondent
- Uses the information gathered to improve services for students, members of the public and administrative and training staff
- Expects all involved to behave appropriately and not allow CCSTI procedures to be misused.
- Is without prejudice to a complainant's right to pursue external remedies outside of the institute once they have exhausted the organisation's internal complaints procedure

The parameters include:

- A complainant's right not to experience harassment or victimisation in raising and / or submitting a complaint, as covered under both the staff and student conduct procedures.

- The qualification that a complaint does not have to be found justified in order to be valid; it has simply to be raised in good faith, the complainant believing it to be valid. On the other hand, a complaint is judged as malicious where the complainant does not believe it to be valid and raises the matter regardless. Malicious complaints result in disciplinary actions for the complainant.
- CCSTI's right to protect its staff against any behaviour from students, service users, or members of the public that is unacceptable, such as behaviour that is abusive, offensive or threatening. Students, service users or members of the public can, of course, expect the same courtesy.

Reference to these general complaints procedures should only be necessary in exceptional circumstances since most complaints, other than ones related to persistent problems, should be dealt with using the feedback processes below. Please note there are many ways for students to provide feedback or express their dissatisfaction, or concerns. For example, through:

- The spaces provided to students at the beginning and close of each workshop. This space asks students to identify their unmet needs the midway and end of year feedback processes
- Student representatives at academic council meetings
- The tutorial system
- The academic appeals procedure.

Students are welcome to discuss informally, with any staff member, their concerns or dissatisfaction.

3.5.4   Complaints, Confidentiality and Training

Informal Resolution within the Group – if the complainant opts to resolve their complaints or concerns within the group it will be governed by the confidentiality agreement therein. This is accordance with the ongoing dynamic and systemic relational process in which students participate and is therefore addressed through group processes.

Informal Mediation / Formal Complaint – if the complaint is addressed through informal mediation or formal complaint, the details of the complaint will be kept confidential, but it will be acknowledged in the group that there is a complaint. On resolution of the complaint or escalation, the fact will also be acknowledged within the group.

The complainant's privacy will be respected. However, the respondent(s) will be informed and will normally receive an appropriately redacted copy of the concern or complaint, along with any associated evidence. This is to enable the respondent(s) to have the chance to reply. In dealing with the complaint, information may need to be shared with other people during the course of investigation. Names and personal details will not be shared unless absolutely necessary and will be kept to a 'need to know' basis in line with Data Protection.

Precautionary interruption and temporary suspension of training at the informal mediation or formal complaint part may be necessary. If the complainant has to work with the respondent and the respondent directly trains, supervises or assesses the complainant's work, then the training team may need to temporarily suspend / interrupt this aspect of the complainant's training. This is done to ensure beyond doubt that the complainant will not be victimised as a result of making a complaint. Furthermore, CCSTI has to balance the needs of the group and the individuals involved in order to avoid further disruption to the training.
Strict provision shall be made so that the complainant's outstanding training requirements can be completed once the complaint is resolved.

3.5.5 Scope

It should be noted that these complaints procedures are not designed to deal with problems such as: missing course work; unexplained absence of a trainer; late return of work, except in so far that such concerns are not resolved through simpler procedures or recur persistently.

These complaints procedures and any decisions made under them are not intended to give rise to legal rights or obligations on the organisation to pay compensation either in respect of a decision made pursuant to the procedures or for a breach of these procedures. These procedures are intended to facilitate the CCSTI resolution of complaints. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.

Specific procedures exist already for dealing with the following issues. These include:
- Alleged harassment
- Alleged inequality of opportunity.
- Alleged doubts regarding fitness to practice
- Freedom of information or data protection issues
- Academic Appeals

<u>What can a student complain about?</u>

A student can complain about things like:

- The quality and standard of the service provided by CCSTI.
- The quality and standard of CCSTI facilities
- The quality and standard of the service provided by someone on CCSTI's behalf

<u>What issues are not covered?</u>

There are some things CCSTI cannot deal with through its complaints procedure. These include:

- Issues which are the subject of litigation
- A request under Freedom of Information or Data Protection legislation
- A complaint issued on behalf of someone else.
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or have a complaint reconsidered.

<u>Who can complain?</u>

A complaint can be made by:

- An individual student or a group of students
- A member of staff
- A service user
- Members of the public
- The representative of a complainant who does not have the capacity to make a complaint themselves, as long as they are seen to be acting in the interests of the service user.

When a group of students raise a complaint, they will be asked to nominate a spokesperson for the group. All correspondence will be through that spokesperson and only that representative will be invited to any meetings. In informal mediation it is at the discretion of the person complained against if they meet one, or all of the group.

<u>Complaints about placements</u>

If a complaint is related to a placement, placement mentor or placement supervisor, not directly under the auspices of CCSTI, the placement mentor and / or the supervisor will be contacted by the placement liaison trainer or the head of placements. It should normally be referred to the placements own complaints procedure.

CCSTI has no power to implement change within an external placement and so recommendations can only relate to CCSTI; but CCSTI has the power to continue to employ placements as they consider appropriate.

<u>Complaints about admissions</u>

Complaints about the admissions procedure are welcome. However, complainants are reminded that complaints will not be considered if it is an appeal against being offered a place in CCSTI. A decision about a place being offered will only be changed when there has been an irregularity of procedure or when there is new information that was not available at the time of decision.

<u>How do I complain?</u>

To make a complaint, informal or formal, it is compulsory that a complainant completes all aspects of CCSTI's complaint form, found at the end of this section. A complainant needs to tell CCSTI:

- Which complaint process he/she wants to follow: Informal resolution within the training group, informal mediation or formal complaint process
- Complainant's full name and address
- Details of the earlier attempts made to resolve this
- Information about the complaint
- What will resolve the complaint

<u>Time limits</u>

Complaints should normally be received within 21 working days of the incident or issue in question taking place. If the informal processes have failed to find a resolution, the formal process will be initiated within 14 working days of the close of the informal complaints process. Please note that these 14 working days must be within term time. When the complaint falls outside of these time limits valid reasons as to why this has happened must be submitted. It is at the discretion of the training team for these to be considered.

Please note the time limits that are specified within the section on the Formal Complaint.

3.5.6   Procedure

On receipt of a completed complaint form, the Quality Assurance Officer and Head of Training will consider whether the complaint can be adequately dealt with under the procedure requested by the complainant. If the complaint is rejected at this stage the student will be communicated with by letter as to why this has happened. The reasons a complaint may be rejected include the following:

- It falls under a different procedure (in which case the student will be informed);
- It falls outside the time boundaries;
- There is insufficient information regarding the complaint on the form;
- The complaint is significantly complex it may be escalated directly to the formal complaint level.

There may be times where the communication between complainant and organisation is sufficiently poor as to merit escalation to part 3 Formal Complaint.

The complaints procedure is divided into four parts:

- Part 1: Informal Resolution (within training group). This is a local and overall preferred process where concerns are addressed as quickly as possible for the complainant and will involve the respondent and their group.
- Part 2: Informal Mediation. If the complainant is dissatisfied with, or believes that, informal resolution in the group setting is impossible they will be offered informal mediation with the respondent and an external mediator.
- Part 3: Formal Complaint. If the complaint is complex or serious or is not resolved at the informal stages or if the complainant requests it, the formal complaint procedure shall be followed.

- Part 4: Independent Review. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Formal Complaint, a review of the formal complaint can be requested. There are limited categories for this appeals procedure.

Part 1: Informal Resolution (within the group)

This consists of looking at the complaint in the context of the training group with the complainant, respondent and other training staff and group members exploring the issues. It will be looked at systemically and a co-created resolution will be reached. At the end of this process the complainant and respondent will sign a completion of complaints form.

Part 2: Informal Mediation

This is where the complainant meets with the respondent and the Quality Assurance Officer will appoint the most appropriate member of staff, as mediator, to handle the complaint. The mediator will be someone who has not been involved in the process of the complaint. Please note that if the person who is chosen has a conflict of interest in the complaints process an alternative member of staff will be found. Both complainant and respondent will work with the mediator to create a resolution. At the end of this process the complainant and respondent will agree a written statement of events as part of a completion of complaints form. At this time, the complainant and respondent will decide what they are taking back to the group.

Part 3: Formal Complaint

The Quality Assurance Officer will receive the completed complaint form. This form will document how the informal processes failed to progress or this process will commence at part 3. The complaint will be evaluated as per the procedure outlined earlier. If the complaint is going ahead the Quality Assurance Officer will nominate a senior trainer to act as the Complaints Liaison Officer. The Complaints Liaison Officer will provide a copy of the complaint to the person complained about and request a written response; they may also meet with the person complained against if required. The Complaints Liaison Officer will speak with the complainant as to whether there is any additional information, required for documentation. The Complaints Liaison Officer and the Head of Training will to assess the achievability of the complainant's proposed outcomes. If the proposed outcomes are unreasonable the Complaints Liaison Officer will communicate this to the complainant as soon as possible. Once the material is complete the Complaints Liaison Officer will convene a Panel meeting within 20 working days of receipt of the formal complaint. The Panel comprises:

- a chairperson, who is also a trainer.
- a member from the board of CCS;
- a secretary
- a student representative (not from the complainant's class).

The members of the Panel Hearing must free of any bias.

The complainant and the respondent will be invited and provided with the following information:

- The date, time and venue of the Panel Hearing;
- How to access advice and support;

- Informing the complainant of the right to be accompanied by a friend to the Panel hearing;

- To request the complainant to provide the name of any friend who will accompany them at the hearing at least 48 hours prior to the hearing (informing the complainant that it is their responsibility to notify such friends and witnesses of the hearing). The support person cannot be a member of the group nor a member of the legal profession.

- Requesting the complainant to provide details of any reasonable adjustments that may need to be made for the hearing to accommodate if they have a declared disability.

- The Complaints Liaison Officer will circulate all the information received to the Panel and parties involved at least two working days before the date of the hearing.

If the complainant does not appear at the date and time scheduled for the hearing, the Panel shall consider whether any reasons advanced for non-attendance are valid, and:

- If Panel members so judge adjourn to a later hearing date; only one adjournment is possible

- If no reasons are advanced, or if they are judged invalid, or on second proposed cancellation, the Panel will proceed in the complainant's absence.

Members of the Panel will come to a decision on the complaint which will be final. Where unanimous agreement cannot be found, the majority will prevail. Where it is split equally between the Panel members, the chairperson will have the casting vote. Normally the complaint will be either upheld or rejected; the following possible outcomes may be viewed:

- To dismiss the complaint

- To find the complaint justified and suggest conditions of redress for the complainant. For example, an apology, changes to aspects of the service.

- To suggest an amicable outcome to the complainant.

- When a complaint has been raised against a respondent who is a member of staff and has been upheld, this will be communicated to the complainant. Any disciplinary or employment action will not be shared with the complainant. If appropriate, measures will be taken to ensure that the complainant is not disadvantaged by any staff disciplinary procedures.

- If a complaint has been upheld against respondent who is a fellow student the details will not normally be shared with the complainant, particularly where student conduct concerns or professional suitability procedures have been activated as a result.

The outcome of the Panel should be made available to the complainant within 14 working days. The complainant will receive a letter of completion of the complaint; this letter will include a description of the nature of the complaint, the formal complaints process and the Panel's findings. Where relevant, dates for restorative action will be given and the people responsible for those actions will be identified. If the complainant is unhappy regarding the decisions made by the Panel, they need to notify the Quality Assurance Officer in writing within 7 days of receipt of the letter of completion.

Part 4: Independent Review

The Independent Review is undertaken by the External Independent Complaints Person. The Independent Review will not ordinarily look at new material unless it was specifically unavailable it the time of the Panel hearing. Generally, the review will evaluate how and whether the complaints procedure was followed.

The External Independent Review Person will:
- Review the documents pertaining to the complaint and interviewing people if it is required.
- Ascertain if the correct procedure was followed
- Ascertain if all the information was available at the time
- Consult experts if required.

The External Independent Complaints Person will decide whether reinvestigation is appropriate or if the original complaints process stand. They will submit a report which:
- Summarises the nature of the complaint
- Describes the formal complaints process and its findings
- Offers an opinion of the outcome of the complaints process and offer reasons on which the opinion is based.
- Recommends any remedial action to be taken, a time period with in which it will take place and identify the person who will undertake it.

Students will receive a letter of completion of the complaint. This letter will state that internal complaints process is exhausted. The findings of the Independent Review are final.

3.5.7   Formal Complaint Form

This form can be used by any student wishing to make a formal complaint about any service or lack of service provided by the organisation in relation to a course on which they are a student to which a response is expected.

This form cannot be used for the following categories of complaint, for which separate procedures exist:

- Appeals against the decision of the Exam or Assessment Boards;
- Appeals against the decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel;
- Applicants that did not enrol on a course
- Complaints from clients of the organisation
- Complaints from members of staff, unless they are also a student
- Appeals against the decisions taken under disciplinary procedures
- Appeals against professional suitability procedures.

All forms must be completed electronically and returned by mail to the Quality Assurance Officer. If you would like to have an informal discussion with the Quality Assurance Officer before making your complaint, please contact him / her.

Formal Complaint Form - Section One: Your Details

Surname		Title	
Forename(s)			
Address for Correspondence			
Postcode			
Email			
Telephone number			
Course			
Module			
Preferred complaints process?	Please tick one from list below: - *Informal resolution within my training group* - *Informal mediation* - *Formal process* Failure to choose from the above list will result in the complaint being rejected.	

Formal Complaint Form - Section Two: Your Complaint

Name of individual / service you are complaining about

Have you attempted to resolve this matter through any other means?

If yes, please provide details of who you raised this matter with and the date you did so.

If not, please outline why you have chosen to move directly to a formal complaint

The completed complaint for should be lodged with the Quality Assurance Officer within the time specified in the complaints procedure. Consideration of a complaint outside these parameters will only made in exceptional circumstances. If your complaint has been made outside of these time limits, please detail below the reason for this.

Please use the space below to provide the specific details of your complaint. Please do provide the details of your complaint in chronological order.

Date	Individuals involved	Nature of your complaint

Please state what would represent a satisfactory outcome for your complaint (Please note failure to complete this section will result in the complaint not being accepted.)

Formal Complaint Form - Section Three: Your Declaration

In accordance with current Data Protection Legislation 2018 CCSTI is required to obtain your consent for the following:

a) To hold some elements of the information that you have provided on a Quality Assurance electronic database;

b) To disclose data, you have provided to authorise persons from the CCSTI and their legal advisors.

I hereby acknowledge that the data provided by me in relation to this complaint is true and accurate and presented in good faith

Signed………………………………………………………. Date………………………………………….

Have you a complaint? Read the Student Complaint Procedure for information regarding complaints. Can you talk it through with someone in the organisation?

```
Yes ───────► Resolved

No

Yes
 │
 ▼
No resolution ───────► Submit a completed Student
                        Complaint Form to the Quality
                        Assurance Officer (QAO)
                             │
                             ▼
                        Complaint Form reviewed by
                        QAO and Head of training
            ┌────────────────┼────────────────┐
            ▼                ▼                ▼
    Complaint rejected   Complaint accepted   Complex complaint
    letter out to student     │
                              ▼
                    Follow Student's chosen process
       ┌──────────────────────┼──────────────────────┐
       ▼                      ▼                      ▼
  Informal resolution    Informal Mediation    Formal Complaint Process
  (within the group)
       │                                              │
       ▼                                              │
   Resolved    Not resolved                           │
       │                                              ▼
       ▼           Resolved   Not resolved      Hearing Panel
  Completion letter                                   │
  out                │                                ▼
                     ▼                      Completion letter out with
            Completion letter               outcomes and actions
            out                                       │
                                                      ▼
                                            Student dissatisfied with outcome
                                                      │
                                                      ▼
                                            Independent External Review
```

NB please use this flow chart in conjunction with Student Complaint Procedure Form

3.6   Complaints / Appeals to The Validating University

Students studying on a course leading to an award from The validating university may if they wish submit their complaint/appeal to the Registrar & Secretary of The Validating University if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the process at Cork Counselling Centre Training Institute. In order to qualify for consideration by the validating university, details of the compliant/appeal and full supporting documentation should be sent to the validating university within ten (10) days of completing the internal process at Cork Counselling Centre Training Institute.

The Registrar & Secretary (or nominee) shall consider the referred matter **on the grounds of procedural irregularity only.**

The Registrar and Secretary shall endeavour to complete the review within thirty (30) days of receipt of the complaint. However, given the requirement to investigate the case thoroughly with Cork Counselling Centre Training Institute some additional time may be required, in which case the student shall be informed accordingly.

At the end of the Registrar and Secretary's review, the student will receive a letter setting out the findings and outcome, and will additionally be issued with a "Completion of Procedures" letter to enable the student to take their complaint to the UK Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education if appropriate.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education ("OIA") operates an independent student complaints scheme pursuant to the UK Higher Education Act 2004.

Students or former students may only take their complaint relating to a final decision reached under the University's review and appeal process to the OIA once all internal processes have been exhausted. The OIA cannot look at complaints relating to matters of academic judgement. The "Completion of Procedures" letter will therefore only be issued from the office of the Validating University's Registrar & Secretary when it has been determined that all internal processes at Cork Counselling Centre Training Institute have been completed. The OIA must receive a completed Scheme Application Form within three months of the date of Completion of Procedures Letter.

3.7   Professional Suitability And Fitness to Practise Policy And Procedure

3.7.1   Introduction

This Policy and Procedure applies to the all students enrolled on professional training programmes with CCSTI.

All professional counselling training courses delivered within CCSTI prepare students to provide counselling and/or support to individuals in a wide variety of practice settings. Practice is undertaken in a society of complexity and diversity and the majority of people to whom counselling/ support services are provided are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in society.

All training makes high academic and personal demands on students. Students are required to demonstrate not only academic ability but also personal suitability, fitness to practise and commitment to their chosen profession at the point of admission and throughout their training programme.

The responsibilities in relation to professional suitability and fitness to practise are not confined to the process and content of the training programme but have a broader scope and application. They also apply to behaviour outside the academic or placement setting which may reflect negatively on the counselling profession, on CCSTI or on the Training Institute.

Suitability and fitness for professional work includes qualities such as patience, honesty, integrity, and the ability to help people face difficult situations. Evidence of clear thinking, sound judgement, sensitivity and tolerance is required, together with the ability to establish and maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries. This demands sound interpersonal and communication skills as well as both physical and mental ability to carry out the role appropriately.

However, on occasions, students will be the subject of concerns about their professional suitability and fitness to practise in one or more of these criteria. It must be clear to all parties what kinds of concerns or information will trigger formal action on behalf of the Training Institute, the formal action that will be taken and the possible outcomes.

There is a clear professional obligation laid down by the regulating bodies to have robust processes that encourage the disclosure of matters that may affect professional suitability and fitness to practise (see Code of Ethics and Practice of the IACP and the Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy of the B.A.C.P.)

Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise procedures are considered to be a subset of the policies and procedures that govern student conduct and that potentially impose disciplinary sanctions. In cases where CCS's complaints and/or plagiarism policies and procedures have been invoked and the alleged misconduct is deemed by the Head of Training, in consultation with the Training Team, to have satisfactorily resolved the matter in question, the current procedures will not be invoked. There may be situations, however, where complaints and/or plagiarism procedures and the current procedures are utilised to consider the Training Institute's position and the professional implications of a student's behaviour or fitness to practise.

3.7.2   Background to these procedures

CCSTI is committed to ensuring that students attain professional counselling standards that reflect best practice nationally and internationally (CCSTI's mission statement). The B.A.C.P.'s Ethical Framework for Good Practice states that all training in counselling and psychotherapy should model standards and practice consistent with those expected of practitioners in the role for which the training is being provided (B.A.C.P., 2010, 29).

A fundamental and essential aspect of entry to the counselling profession is acceptance and internalisation of the professional code of conduct. All students enrolled on a training course with CCSTI are required to sign a contract to study and uphold the Code of Ethics and Practice of the IACP and the Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy of the B.A.C.P.

The B.A.C.P. state that practitioners have a responsibility to monitor and maintain their fitness to practise at a level that enables them to provide an effective service (B.A.C.P., 2010, 40). The Health Professions Council (HPC) state that "Fitness to Practise refers to someone having the skills, knowledge, character and health to practise safely and effectively" (HPC, 2010, p. 3).

In brief, students of CCSTI are required to:

- maintain confidentiality;
- monitor and develop their professional competence;
- act within their limits of knowledge and skills;
- maintain safe standards of practice;
- actively engage in self-care;
- monitor their personal functioning and provide any important information about their conduct, competence or well-being to the Training Institute;
- stop training if their performance or judgement is adversely affected;
- communicate effectively with clients, the Training Team, supervisors, and placement staff;
- demonstrate high standards of personal conduct;
- be honest, trustworthy and behave with integrity;
- Ensure that their behaviour does not undermine public confidence in CCS or the counselling profession.

The responsibilities in relation to professional suitability and fitness to practise are not confined to the process and content of the assessment schedule but have a broader scope and application. They also apply to behaviour outside the training or placement setting.

3.7.3 Termination of training

A student's training may be terminated if his/her behaviour is confirmed to be damaging or dangerous to clients, other students or facilitators, if it creates an unacceptable risk for themselves and/or others, or if it brings CCS' reputation into disrepute.

A student who is considered unsuitable or unfit for a professional qualification under these procedures may not be allowed to continue in training.

3.7.4 Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise at Admission

Professional suitability and fitness to practise at admission is tested by a variety of mechanisms as part of the selection procedure, for example, scrutiny of qualifications, personal statements and personal references. In addition, three specific checks are made:

i. All applicants accepted for admission are required to declare all criminal conviction, including any that may be pending at the time of application. Before commencing

clinical placement all students will be required to provide a copy of their personal data held within An Garda Síochána.

ii. All students accepted for admission are required to declare all medical conditions, disabilities/specific learning difficulties, mental health issues and/or drug or alcohol problems.

iii. All students' educational qualifications are checked at the point of enrolment.

Where any condition is disclosed during the admissions process students are required to provide documentation from an appropriate professional (e.g. G.P., Educational Psychologist, etc.) certifying the nature of the difficulty. CCSTI will then decide if the student is fit for practice. The rights and responsibilities of the student and the Training Institute will be taken into account, including whether reasonable accommodations can be made if necessary.

If a student fails to disclose any of the above, the offer of a place on the designated course will be withdrawn. This decision of the Training Team is final.

3.7.5   Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Once Enrolled on the Programme:

The Grounds for Invoking Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Procedures are as follows:

> Where it is considered that a student may be in breach of the requirements to maintain professional suitability and/or fitness to practise (as defined above) then these procedures will be initiated.

The current procedure applies irrespective of the setting in which the issue occurs or the person who is raising the concern. If any member of the Training Team is informed or becomes aware of student behaviour that may be considered damaging, dangerous or creates an unacceptable risk then the current procedure will be immediately enacted.

A wide range of cases would raise the issue of professional suitability and fitness to practise while a student is in training. These could include:

- severe and/or unstable physical illness or disability or psychological distress;
- abuse of alcohol or drugs;
- any criminal convictions not disclosed at the time of applying and entry to the course, or gained whilst on the course;

- allegations of inappropriate behaviour for a qualified professional, such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, inappropriate sexual behaviour, oppressive remarks, bullying, harassment, lying, or falsification of records;
- any activity which is unsafe to the student, clients, or others.
- deliberate damage, sabotage, theft or destruction of company property or property belonging to employees or clients on the company's premises
- any behaviour that brings CCS or the counselling profession into disrepute;
- serious difficulties in managing appropriate demands made of the student;
- unexplained absence or sickness records which would threaten employment if a student was in work;
- allegations of repeated failures to achieve competence despite opportunities to learn and rectify faults. Whilst each individual incident may be less serious on its own a pattern may emerge which calls into question overall competence;
- not recognising accountability to the supervisor;
- breach of confidentiality;
- other serious issues covered by CCSTI's regulation, policies and procedures.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Whenever a student's behaviour raises issues of professional suitability or fitness to practise, whilst on placement, the Placement Mentor of the placement agency should contact the Placement Tutor or the Programme Leader of CCSTI.

Any complaint against a student being taken under a placement agency's complaints procedures should be reported by the Placement Mentor of the placement agency to the Placement Tutor of CCSTI. Any enactment of the current Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Procedure by the Training Institute would be put on hold until the placement agency's procedures had been completed. However, certain conduct may be such as to justify immediate interim measures, such as possible suspension from training, until an investigation is completed.

Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise procedures are considered to be a subset of the policies and procedures that govern student conduct and that potentially impose disciplinary sanctions. In cases where CCSTI's complaints and/or plagiarism policies and procedures have been invoked and the alleged misconduct is deemed by the Head of Training, in consultation

with the Training Team, to have satisfactorily resolved the matter in question, the current procedures will not be invoked. There may be situations, however, where complaints and/or plagiarism procedures and the current procedures are utilised to consider the Training Institute's position and the professional implications of a student's behaviour or fitness to practise.

3.7.6 Assessment of Grounds for Enacting the Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Procedure

Where there is a concern that a student is failing to maintain standards appropriate to professional suitability or there are concerns about fitness to practise, these should be reported, in the first instance, to the Programme Leader. Written details of the alleged issue/(s) will be requested from the person/(s) referring the concern.

An initial informal meeting will be arranged between the student and the Programme Leader at which the student will be informed that concerns have been raised and will be provided with details of these concerns. The student will be invited to respond to these concerns in writing and will be encouraged to seek support from their personal counsellor and from the Student Support Officer.

If appropriate the student's supervisor will be informed that concerns have been raised about the student's professional suitability and fitness to practise.

A Documentation Assessment Committee, consisting of two independent members of the Training Team, will be formed to evaluate the information received. This committee will consider if the concern falls within

   a. the criteria described above, and/or
   b. the remit of the assessment criteria, and/or
   c. the remit of the complaint against a student counsellor procedure.

If it is deemed that there are no grounds to enact the current professional suitability and Fitness to Practise procedure then the case will be referred or dismissed as appropriate. The student and the supervisor, if appropriate, will be notified accordingly.

If it is deemed that there are grounds to enact the current professional suitability and Fitness to Practise procedure then the Documentation Assessment Committee will record, in writing, the identified grounds. Two graded responses, detailed below, will follow.

The Documentation Assessment Committee will also consider whether the student's alleged conduct constitutes gross misconduct. In cases of gross misconduct the Head of Training will meet with the student. The student may be suspended from training with immediate effect pending the outcome of the enquiry. This suspension may be followed by the termination of training.

3.7.7 First Informal Response

The student, and the supervisor if appropriate, will be informed that the professional suitability and fitness to practise procedure has been enacted.

A meeting will be set up with the student, the Programme Leader and an independent member of the Training Team. At this meeting the concerns regarding the student's professional suitability and fitness to practise will be outlined and time will be given to consider the student's written and other responses.

There may be circumstances in which it is not possible to meeting the student at the time a concern is registered. If this emerges, then the meeting will be arranged for the earliest possible opportunity.

If it is deemed that there are no concerns about the student's professional suitability and fitness to practise, then the case will be dismissed. The student and the supervisor, if appropriate, will be notified accordingly and training will resume from the point of interruption to studies.

If it is agreed that there are concerns about the student's professional suitability and fitness to practise, and if this first level informal response is agreeable to all parties then the following actions may be applied in the following circumstances:
   a. There is agreement there has been minor student misconduct which raises questions about their professional suitability and fitness to practise. However, this is such that the student will be permitted to continue on the course under a formal warning and

the proviso that there will be no recurrence of the behaviour which gave rise to the current concern.

b. There are sufficient grounds to conclude that the student is currently unsuitable or unfit for professional practice, but there are strong reasons for believing that after a period of time has elapsed, and/or after specific actions have been taken, the student could be deemed no longer unsuitable or unfit. The student will, therefore, be suspended from training, for a specified period of time and/or until the appropriate actions have been taken. Re-entry to training will be subject to an assessment meeting and agreement of the Training Team.

In addition to the sanctions outlined above the Training Team may also require the student to:

    i. attend additional counselling, and/or

    ii. attend additional supervision with a designated supervisor, and/or

    iii. submit a written document on the issue, and/or

    iv. fulfil other sanctions as deemed appropriate by the Training Team.

c. There are sufficient grounds to conclude that the student is unsuitable or unfit to become a professional counsellor. Training will therefore cease.

A written account, detailing the student's conduct, the evidence and the sanction imposed will be prepared by the trainers involved and kept on file in order to monitor repeat offences. The report will not be used for any other purposes. It will not be used in references and will be destroyed when the student completes the course.

It is hoped by the Institute that most concerns regarding professional suitability and fitness to practise will be resolved at this first informal level.

3.7.8 Second Formal Response

Issues of professional suitability and fitness to practise will proceed to the 2nd formal level if

- The first level informal response does not reach a conclusion
- The student fails to attend scheduled meetings of the first level informal response
- The student fails to fulfil the sanctions imposed at the first informal level within the agreed timeframe

- The student has been found to be unsuitable or unfit for professional practice previously
- The student's conduct is so serious that a formal response is required

The student, and the supervisor if appropriate, will be informed in writing by the Documentation Assessment Committee that a formal Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Panel hearing is going to be convened, along with the reasons for proceeding to this second formal response.

3.7.9 Membership of the Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Hearing Panel

Membership of the Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Panel will include the Head of Training, an independent member of the Training Team, a placement mentor/supervisor of student counsellors, a member of the Board of CCSTI, and the appropriate student representative. The membership may be varied if deemed appropriate by the Documentation Assessment Committee. Additional members may be co-opted as appropriate for their expertise or to secure a wider range of relevant interests.

A chairperson will be nominated from within the panel.

The panel should not normally include the Programme Leader or trainer(s) involved in the first informal level response, the student's own placement mentor, or clinical supervisor.

An administrator will be present to take minutes of hearing proceedings and all decisions made by the Panel.

The student will be required to attend to attend the professional suitability and fitness to practise hearing.

Students may want to be accompanied by a support person with whom they feel comfortable. This support person may be a friend or family member. (S)/he cannot be a current student of CCSTI.

The student is not entitled to legal representation.

The Documentation Assessment Committee will be responsible for ensuring that the Panel is convened in accordance with these procedures.

3.7.10 Preparation for Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Panel Hearing

The person/(s) referring the concern along with the course team will make a formal written submission to the Panel. This submission will detail concern along with the evidence that is available to substantiate the concern about the student's professional suitability and fitness to practise.

The student will receive a copy of this submission and will have the right to make a written statement to the Panel in reply. The student may also submit statements from people he/she considers relevant. The student will be reminded that he/she remains responsible for presenting the case to the Panel and for ensuring that any statements made by his/her supporters are accurate.

Along with their written statement the student will be required to inform the committee of the name of his/her support person and the official designation of this person. If such details are not provided the Panel has the right to refuse that person entry to the hearing.

The Document Assessment Committee will be responsible for arranging the time, date and venue of the hearing in consultation with members of the panel. The Document Assessment Committee will be responsible for circulating all documentation.

The date for the hearing will be decided within 14 working days after the formal written submission have been received by the Institute.

All documents will be provided, in confidence, to all relevant parties one week prior to the hearing. All parties will receive details of who will be present at the hearing.

If the student does not attend the hearing, without advanced explanation, the hearing will proceed in their absence. A student who is not able to attend the set Panel can request in writing, beforehand, that an alternative hearing be arranged, giving reasons and providing third party evidence to support this request, and a new date will be arranged if deemed appropriate and feasible by the Document Assessment Committee. The student can indicate that the hearing should continue without them present if they wish.

3.7.11 Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Panel Hearing Procedure

The process of the Panel hearing will be as straightforward and transparent as possible, bearing in mind the seriousness of possible implications for the student who is the subject of the enquiry.

An administrator will take minutes of hearing proceedings and all decisions made by the Panel.

The hearing will normally comprise the following elements:
   a. Welcome and introductions by the Panel Chair.
   b. Confidentiality commitments.
   c. Outline of the hearing process.
   d. Overview of the process thus far including a description of the concerns/allegations, the results of the preliminary discussion with the student involved, and the reasons for proceeding to a formal Panel hearing.
   e. Time will be given to the person/(s) referring the concern to outline their case.
   f. The student who is the subject of the hearing will then have an opportunity to present his/her case in response to the concerns/allegations made and to submit whatever they consider to be relevant information.
   g. The Panel, the course team, and the student will have the opportunity to challenge any evidence presented.
   h. Members of the Panel may ask questions of all those who attend the hearing in order to gain as clear a picture as possible of the circumstances involved and of their relevance to the student's professional suitability and fitness to practise.
   i. Concluding statements.

When the presentations have been completed everyone but members of the Panel, and the administrator will withdraw, and the Panel will deliberate and arrive at its decision. A majority vote will hold.

The content of the deliberations and the individual votes of panel members will remain confidential.

A report detailing the findings and recommendations will be drawn up by the Panel Chairperson and agreed upon by the Panel. The report will be sent to the student and the course team 14 working days after the hearing.

3.7.12 Possible Recommendations of Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Panel Hearing

If it is deemed that there insufficient grounds to conclude that the student is unsuitable or unfit for practice then the case will be dismissed. Training will resume from the point of interruption to studies. Recommendations may be required on how to meet both the requirements of the programme and the student's learning needs given the interruption.
If it is agreed that there are concerns about the student's professional suitability and fitness to practise, then the following actions may be applied in the following circumstances:

a. There is agreement there has been minor student misconduct which raises questions about their professional suitability and fitness to practise. However, this is such that the student will be permitted to continue on the course under a formal warning and the proviso that there will be no recurrence of the behaviour which gave rise to the current concern.

b. There are sufficient grounds to conclude that the student is currently unsuitable or unfit for professional practice, but there are strong reasons for believing that after a period of time has elapsed, and/or after specific actions have been taken, the student could be deemed no longer unsuitable or unfit. The student will, therefore, be suspended from training, for a specified period of time and/or until the appropriate actions have been taken. Re-entry to training will be subject to an assessment meeting and agreement of the Training Team.

In addition to the sanctions outlined above the Training Team may further require the student to:

    i. attend additional counselling, and/or

    ii. attend additional supervision with a designated supervisor, and/or

    iii. submit a written document on the issue, and/or

    iv. fulfil other sanctions as deemed appropriate by the Panel.

If the above sanctions are not adhered to, an escalation in sanctions may be imposed.

c. There are sufficient grounds to conclude that the student is unsuitable or unfit to become a professional counsellor. Training will therefore cease.

If the recommendation is for terminating the student's training or expelling the student from the Institute, the decision is subject to agreement by the External Complaints Person.

If the student's training is terminated and if the referral to the Panel arose from a practice setting, the relevant placement organisation will be informed of the progress and outcome of the case. The Head of Training may further need to ensure that the relevant professional body is notified of the decision.

The report of the panel detailing the student's conduct, the evidence, the findings and the sanction imposed will be prepared and kept on file in order to monitor repeat offences. The report will not normally be mentioned in references. However, for cases of serious misconduct, repeated offences, or where the student is found to be unsuitable or unfit to become a professional counsellor, an exception may be made to this policy. In this case giving references for particular posts without mentioning the findings of unsuitability or unfitness would mean that CCSTI would be failing in its duty of care.

3.7.13 Appeals

A student may appeal against the decision of the Panel only on the basis of material or procedural irregularity.

The appeal must be made in writing to the Documentation Assessment Committee within five working days of the student receiving written notification of the Panel's decision. The Documentation Assessment Committee will investigate the circumstances and decide whether or not to grant the appeal. If the case for appeal is considered proven, the Documentation Assessment Committee shall be empowered to set aside the Panel's decision and convene an ad hoc Panel to re-consider the evidence.

If the Documentation Assessment Committee decides there are no grounds to grant the appeal, their decision will be final and will conclude the Institute's procedures.

Students have recourse to the complaint procedures of the IACP at all times.

3.7.14 Confidentiality

All issues will be handled in confidence and without fear of recrimination. However, it may be necessary for the information to be made known to a third party or parties in order to progress the matter.

Documentation relating to the process will be confidential to the relevant parties involved in each stage. Documents relating to the process will not be held in the student's personal file, but in a secure file created specifically for the professional suitability and fitness to practise process.

Any documentation held by members of the Panel will be returned at the end of the process to the Documentation Assessment Committee and surplus copies will be destroyed confidentially. Whilst documentation relating to decisions of the Panel will not be generally used for references, information about a student who has been found unsuitable for professional counselling practice will normally be made available by the Course Director to prospective employers. In all cases where the student's place on the programme has been terminated or the student expelled, the relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body may be notified by the Head of Training.

References

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. (2010). Ethical framework for good practice in counselling and psychotherapy. Leicestershire: Author.

Coventry University, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences. (2011). Professional suitability and Fitness to Practise policy and procedure. Coventry: Author

HPC (2010) Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students. (http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002D1BGuidanceonconductandethicsforstudents.pdf)

Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (2005). Code of ethics and practice for counsellors/ psychotherapists. Dublin: Author.

4. General Regulations

4.1   General statement on regulations

All students are expected to conduct themselves with due regard for their legal responsibility as adults. Students are also expected to conduct themselves with due regard for the reputation of the counselling profession and Cork Counselling Services. Students undertake to abide by all the policies, regulations, procedures and codes of practice of CCSTI upon accepting a place on a course. All students undertaking sit-ins and counselling practice with clients are required to familiarise themselves with the clinical policy documents and practices of Cork Counselling Services and/or their placement agency as appropriate.

4.2   Relevant information

4.2.1   Failure to disclose all relevant information

Students who fail to provide all relevant information, who provide false or misleading information, or who cannot provide evidence of qualifications or other information will be subject to immediate suspension and/or termination of their training. In the interest of maintaining boundaries neither trainees nor their family members/ loved ones may attend CCS as clients for counselling for the duration of the student's training.

4.2.2   Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a person has competing interests or relationships, and serving one interest or relationship involves working against another. If students are aware of a conflict of interest/relationship issue, they are asked to bring it to their training/supervision group. Such action facilitates best practice and explores possible boundary issues; it also allows the group to work through the matter in an open, educative and transparent way.

In the interest of maintaining boundaries neither trainees nor their family members/ loved ones may attend CCS as clients for counselling for the duration of the student's training.

4.3   Fees payment

4.3.1   All fees and other charges (for example, such as photocopying, printing (including computer printouts), study materials, inter-library loans, remote computer access,

copies of certificates, replacement of lost items such as library books, accommodation costs for workshops, personal therapy and supervision costs, registration with professional bodies) incurred as a student of CCSTI are the responsibility of the student. Students who are sponsored by a third party are liable for all fees and other charges in the event that their sponsor defaults. Non-payment of fees incurred by a student may result in the termination of their course.

4.3.2 The training fee payable covers, the tuition fee for the Training Institute, the registration fee for the validating university and the protection of the enrolled learner insurance premium. Course fees do not include travel expenses, accommodation costs for workshops, study materials, supervision costs, or cost of personal counselling.

4.3.3 Fees may be paid in instalments in accordance with such provisions as are notified to students and subject to written agreement with the Training Team

4.3.4 All training fees are non-refundable except where students are asked to leave the course, in which case the Training Institute will refund part of the fees.

4.3.5 In exceptional circumstances, where training may need to be extended due to the personal or professional needs of students, it will be necessary to charge an additional fee.

4.4 Discharging financial obligations

4.4.1 The place deposit becomes due on acceptance of a place. The remainder of fees become due two weeks prior to enrolment. Students will not be permitted to progress to the next stage of the course, or to enrol on another course, while previous debts to the Institute remain outstanding.

4.4.2 Students are required to settle all outstanding obligations to the Institute before leaving at the conclusion of their courses. The Institute has the right to defer the conferment of an award, until such time as all outstanding obligations to the Institute have been met.

4.5 Cancellation of Courses

4.5.1 Decisions to continue or discontinue the training course rest solely with the Institute. Courses may need to be discontinued in exceptional circumstances, e.g. insufficient numbers to continue the course.

4.5.2   CCSTI Training Team reserves the right to modify course structure, content, duration, requirements and assessment criteria, in accordance with training needs and the course recognition criteria of validating bodies.

4.5.3   CCSTI Training Team reserves the right to appoint facilitators and other training staff in accordance with the needs of the Training Institute and the course recognition criteria of validating bodies.

4.6   Attendance

4.6.1   It is important to note that for all courses run by CCSTI one hundred percent attendance is expected. This expectation is in line with the professional requirements for counsellors to fulfil the professional obligations they have undertaken with clients.

4.6.2   For some modules, attendance at all or part of a module/ module component is an essential requirement. In such cases, this is expressly specified in the module descriptor. Repeat criteria are also detailed which specify the opportunities for recovery from failure, where applicable.

4.6.3   In all circumstance, attendance of below 60% across all modules will result in an automatic fail and training will be deemed to be terminated.

4.7   Progress on course

4.7.1   Progress onto the next stage of a course is dependent upon:

a)   Fulfilling the conditions laid down by procedures authorised by the Assessment Board, and/or by external examining and validating bodies, together with such Other Regulations as may have been decided,

b)   Satisfying all relevant course regulations - see the programme specification each particular course.

c)   Satisfying all relevant engagement and attendance requirements.

d)   Application and assessment.

4.7.2   Students failing to meet the relevant academic requirements will be required to leave their course.

4.8   Change of address

The Institute needs to be immediately informed by the student in writing of any change of permanent or temporary address. Any notice or correspondence sent to an address held by the Institute as the student's address will be deemed to have been received.

4.9   Change of name

Students must inform the Institute, in writing, immediately of any change of name. This name change must be accompanied with appropriate evidence.

4.10   Notification of absence

Students must inform the Institute if they are absent from training through sickness or other reason.

4.11   Termination of training

4.11.1 By Student

   a) A student who at any stage during the training course terminates his or her training, of his/her own free will and volition, must submit a letter of resignation to the Training Team. It is the student's responsibility to inform the Institute of the withdrawal through the procedure notified.

   b) The date of withdrawal shall be taken as the date on which the Head of Training receives this formal written notification. Retrospective withdrawal dates shall not be accepted.

   c) In the case of student withdrawal the remainder of student fees will be forfeited.

4.11.2 By the Institute

   a) The Institute reserves the right to require a student to withdraw on the grounds of academic failure, where the student has not fully engaged with the course or has failed to meet standards for Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise. Examples (not exhaustive) include non-attendance at course components and/or not taking part in (formal or informal) assessments and/or engaging in behaviour confirmed to be damaging or dangerous to clients, other students, trainers or supervisors.

   b) A student may submit an appeal, within ten working days of the date of the letter confirming the withdrawal. The procedure for appeal is the Training Complaints and Appeals Procedure beginning at Stage 3: Formal.

4.12   Confidential information

4.12.1 As a student of the Institute individuals will come into contact with confidential information (for example, as a student in the training groups, as a student representative on course committees, working with clients on placement, or sitting in on supervision). Any unauthorised disclosure of confidential information pertaining to

clients, other students and/or staff of the Institute will be deemed a breach of the Code of Conduct for which the disciplinary procedures may be invoked.

4.12.2 Social Media

The use of social media websites for sharing any and all content relating to clients, the training programme, students and/or staff of the Institute is strictly prohibited without explicit prior consent from the training team.

4.13 Ownership of Intellectual Property Rights

During their period of enrolment it is possible that students of the Institute may generate work via, for example, a report, project, dissertation or thesis which may require protection by a Patent, Trademark, Registered Design or other form of protection. This work is known as Intellectual Property (IP). Although students may be the creator or inventor of this IP, they may not necessarily be the owner. The Institute's policy regarding ownership and exploitation of student intellectual property is available below.

4.14 Institute's Liability

4.14.1 The Institute shall not be deemed to be in breach of contract by reason of any delay in performing, or any failure to perform, any of the Institute's obligations in relation to the provision of courses and related services, if the delay or failure was due to any cause beyond the Institute's reasonable control.

4.14.2 More specifically, the following shall be regarded as causes beyond the Institute's reasonable control:

a) act of God, explosion, flood, tempest, fire or accident;

b) war or threat of war, sabotage, insurrection, civil disturbance or requisition;

c) acts, restrictions, regulations, bye-laws, prohibitions or measures of any kind on the part of any governmental, parliamentary or local authority

d) import or export regulations or embargos;

e) strikes, lock-outs or other industrial actions or trade disputes (whether involving employees of the Institute or of a third party);

f) difficulties in recruiting staff with appropriate specific expertise;

g) difficulties in obtaining fuel, parts or machinery, equipment;

h) power failure or breakdown in machinery, I.T. or other equipment;

i) closure for epidemics, pandemics and other public health reasons.

4.15 Data Protection, Confidentiality & Storage of Student Info

4.15.1 General

Each student has a student record. The data in this record is compliant with the Data Protection Acts of 1988 and 2003 and GDPR 2018. Our policy then is governed by the following principles:

1. Information is obtained and processed fairly.
2. Information is kept only for the specified, explicit and lawful purposes of training and assessment.
3. Information is used and disclosed only in ways compatible with these purposes.
4. Information is safe and secure. All waste papers printouts etc are disposed of carefully.
5. Information is accurate complete and up to date.
6. Information is adequate, relevant, and not excessive.
7. Information is retained for no longer than seven years as necessary for the purpose or purposes of retaining student records in accordance with IACP guidelines.
8. Students are entitled to a copy of his /her personal data. This request is in accordance with the policy on provision of student files.

4.15.2 Introduction to Data Protection Policy of Cork Counselling Services

Cork Counselling Services will protect and respect your privacy.

As a professional counselling organisation, there is little in our work that we take more seriously than your privacy.

This policy explains when and why we collect personal information about people, how we use it, the conditions under which we disclose it to others and how we keep it secure. It outlines how you can access the information we hold about you or how you can have it updated or, if you wish, erased. We are fully committed to protecting and respecting your privacy in compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 (as amended), and GDPR.

We will change this policy from time-to-time and the most up-to-date version will be on our website; please check to ensure that you are aware of any changes. Any questions regarding this Statement and our privacy practices should be sent to our Data Controller:

By email: info@corkcounsellingservices.ie
By phone: 021 4274951
Or by writing to: Data Controller, Cork Counselling Services, 7, Fr Mathew St, Cork

4.15.3 Who exactly we are

Cork Counselling Services is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation (Charity Number CHY 8911, Registered Charity Number 20022327, Company Registration Number 110910) with registered offices at 7, Fr Mathew St, Cork.

Since 1982 we have provided professional counselling, psychotherapy and training services in the south of Ireland. All profits made in training go to ensuring counselling is available regardless of the clients ability to pay.

4.15.4 How do we collect information from you?

We may obtain information about you for example, when you apply for employment, or for a volunteering opportunity, when you are referred or refer yourself for counselling or support services, when you apply to train with Cork Counselling Services Training Institute, when you request a school visit by our ACT Now Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Programme, when you attend an educational or fundraising event organised by us or when you make a donation via our website or as a result of a mailing or in person.

4.15.5 What type of information do we collect from you and how is it stored?

The personal information we collect might include your name, address, email address, phone number. If you make a once-off or recurring donation online using your credit / debit card your card information is not retained by us; it is processed by a third party, i-Donate, who specialise in secure capture and processing of donor card transactions.

Sensitive personal information is personal information relating to your religious or ethnic origin, religious or political opinions, sexual orientation, physical or mental health, trade union membership or criminal convictions. We don't ask for sensitive personal information about you unless you are applying for an employment or volunteering opportunity with us, unless you are looking to attend counselling or support with us or to do training/education with us. Such applications request some sensitive personal information relating to physical and mental health, and criminal convictions for the purpose of Garda vetting.

Personal information on clients availing of counselling or support clients is not held on computer. This information is stored in hard copy and the file identifier is encrypted and stored securely. The information in this file is available only to your counsellor or to his/her supervisor.

4.15.6 What do we do with your information?

We will, for example:

- Process a job application.
- Process a volunteering application.
- Process a once-off or recurring donation that you have made.
- Seek your views or comments on the services we provide / activities we undertake.
- Look to assist our counsellors to engage in counselling or personal support interventions with you.
- Look to assist our trainers to engage in training and education interventions with you.
- Notify you of changes to our services.
- Send you communications that may be of interest to you. These might include information about appointments, courses, fundraising events, or information on volunteering.
- Respond to an interest you have expressed in receiving a school visit under our ACT Now Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Programme for schools

We may use your data for statistical reports. These statistics will not include any information that could be used to identify you or any individual. We will store and use the personal information you submit to us in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 (as amended) and GDPR.

4.15.7 How long will we keep your personal information?

We retain data for periods necessary to comply with legal obligations (e.g. tax compliance), and for the duration needed to manage relationships with existing and former supporters, students, clients, volunteers and employees.

4.15.8 Who has access to your information?

We do not and will not sell or rent your information to any third-party organisation for marketing, fundraising or campaigning purposes.

We may disclose student information to accrediting bodies (eg. Coventry University and Irish Association Counselling Psychotherapy (IACP)). They are only permitted to use the data in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 (as amended) and GDPR. We will supply the minimum information necessary for them to conduct their auditing or accreditation functions.

We may use client data for statistical reports. Cork Counselling Services have Service Level Agreement type contracts with Tusla and HSE for which funding is provided. These statistical reports will not include any information that could be used to identify you or any individual. These bodies are only permitted to use the data in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 (as amended) and GDPR.

In general, as a counselling or support client or as a student, your explicit permission will be sought in the rare situation that any personal information is disclosed to a third party. However, where we are legally or professionally obliged to report information to statutory bodies (for example by a court order or for the purposes of prevention of fraud or other crime), we will do so. We always look to do this in conjunction with our client or student, so that they are kept fully informed by us. Before training, counselling or support commences, we will outline all such possible scenarios so that clients are fully informed prior to disclosing such information.

Please be reassured that we will not release your information to third parties beyond Cork Counselling Services for them to use for their own direct marketing purposes, unless you request for us to release your information to a third party (eg. for a employment reference).

When you submit information using our secure online once-off donation pages, or when you sign up for a recurring donation using your credit / debit card, your donation is processed by third-party payment processors i-Donate, who specialise in the secure capture and processing of credit / debit card transactions. When you submit information using our secure online recurring donation pages on our website, we process your donation using the bank details you submit.

4.15.9 What choices do you have?

You have a choice about whether or not you wish to receive information from us. If you do not want to receive communication from us about the work we do, then you simply need to inform us on info@corkcounsellingservices.ie

We will not contact you by email, phone, text message or post if you have indicated that you do not wish to be contacted. You can inform us of your latest preferences at any time by contacting us by email: info@corkcounsellingservices.ie or by telephone: 021 4274951.

4.15.10 How can you access and update the information we hold about you?

You have the right under the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 (as amended) and GDPR to know what information we hold about you and to ask, in writing, to see your records, to amend your records or to have your records erased. In certain circumstances we will be unable to delete data entirely for statutory purposes such as tax and accounting legislation, but in such cases we will remove your data from any other processing activities.

The accuracy of your information is important to us. If you change email address, or any of the other information we hold is inaccurate or out of date, please email info@corkcounsellingservices.ie, or you can write to Data Controller, Cork Counselling Services, 7, Fr Mathew St, Cork. Alternatively, you can telephone: 021 4274951.

You have the right to ask for a copy of the information Cork Counselling Services holds about you. We will comply with your request within 30 calendar days of receipt. To receive a copy of the information Cork Counselling Services holds about you, please email info@corkcounsellingservices.ie. Or you can write to Data Controller, Cork Counselling Services, 7, Fr Mathew St, Cork. Alternatively, you can telephone: 021 4274951.

You have the right to have the information Cork Counselling Services holds about you erased. We will comply with your request within 30 calendar days of receipt, in accordance with legislation. If you wish to have the information Cork Counselling Services holds about you erased, please contact our Data Controller using the contact details above.

Cork Counselling Services is entitled to contract with you privately so that you waive these rights in the interest of the proper provision of services to you.

4.15.11 What security precautions are in place to protect the loss, misuse or alteration of your information?

When you give us personal information, we take steps to ensure that it is secure. Any sensitive information received through our website (such as credit or debit card details or other banking information) is encrypted and protected with the following software: 128 Bit encryption on SSL.

Non-sensitive details (your email address, etc.) are transmitted normally over the Internet, and this can never be guaranteed to be 100% secure. As a result, while we strive to protect your personal information, we cannot guarantee the security of any information you transmit to us, and you do so at your own risk. Once we receive your information, we use technical and organisational precautions to prevent the loss, misuse or alteration of your personal data.

The information which you provide to us will not be transferred to countries outside the European Union (EU).

4.15.12 How do we use information we gather for applications for employment/volunteering

opportunities at Cork Counselling Services

When you apply for an employment or volunteering opportunity with Cork Counselling Services, we will collate your personal data to monitor the progression of your application and monitor the effectiveness of the recruitment process through the statistics collected. Where we need to share your data – such as gathering references, garda vetting and / or police clearance, you will be informed beforehand, unless the disclosure is required by law. These checks are only completed after a position has been offered to the successful candidate and with his/her permission.

Personal data about unsuccessful applicants are held for 12 months after the recruitment exercise is complete for that particular vacancy. Applicants can ask us to remove their data before this time if they do not want us to hold it.

Once a successful applicant has taken up an employment / volunteering position with Cork Counselling Services, we will compile a file relating to their tenure of employment / volunteering. The information contained in this will be kept secure and will only be used for purposes directly relevant to the position. Once you have left Cork Counselling Services, we will retain the file in accordance with the requirements of the law and our retention schedule and then delete it from our files.

4.15.13 Do we use 'Cookies'?

Like many other websites, this Cork Counselling Services website uses 'Cookies', which are small pieces of information many websites send to your computer and stored on your hard drive to allow those websites to recognise you when you visit. They collect statistical data about your browsing actions and patterns. For example, they may store details that you submit on the site, such as your personal settings, your location, etc. Using cookies does not allow us to identify users personally; we will only store information that you have specifically given us permission for.

Our website uses a small number of cookies to give us a better overall picture of how people interact with our website, and how we can improve our services to you. The information we

gather through this process is completely anonymous, and visitors to the site cannot be identified.

We use some tools on our pages from social networks, such as Twitter and Facebook. Any information used via these tools is not shown to us, and we don't store any information from them. Please refer to each site's own privacy policies for more information.

All browsers allow you to manage which cookies you accept, reject and delete. You can usually find these controls under the 'Preferences' or 'Tools' menu. You can find more detail about individual browser settings at http://www.aboutcookies.org.

If you choose not to accept cookies from our website, some sections of the website may not work properly.

4.15.14 Does this privacy statement cover links to or from other websites?

Our website may contain links to other websites run by other organisations. This privacy statement applies only to our website, so we encourage you to read the privacy statements on other websites you may visit. We cannot be responsible for the privacy policies and practices of other sites even if you access them using links from our website.

If you linked to our website from a third-party site, we cannot be responsible for the privacy policies and practices of the owners and operators of that third-party site and recommend that you check the privacy statement of that third-party site.

4.15.15 What if I am 16 years of age or under?

We are concerned to protect the privacy of children aged 16 years or under. If you are aged 16 years or under, please get your parent / guardian's permission beforehand whenever you provide us with personal information.

4.15.16 Review/ update of this privacy statement

We keep this Privacy Statement under regular review. This Statement was last updated in May 2018.

5. Code Of Conduct

5.1   General

All students are expected to conduct themselves with due regard for their legal responsibility as adults and the reputation of CCSTI.

5.2   Safety Regulations

The Institute owes a duty of care to its students and staff and, as far as is reasonably practical, seeks to ensure that the Institute is a safe place to train and work. Students are required to comply with reasonable instructions from any member of staff of the Institute and to observe the safety regulations of the Institute. Students' responsibilities in this context are given in more detail in safety regulations below. Students are urged to report all personal accidents to a member of the Training Team.

5.3   Institute property

Property must not be removed from the Institute or any of its training venues without prior written permission from the appropriate member of staff. Students will be held liable for damage to Institute property or to the property at any of its training venues and may be held responsible collectively for damage not traceable to an individual.

5.4   Drugs

The Institute takes all reasonable measures within its powers to discourage the use of illegal drugs amongst its students. Students are reminded that possession of illegal drugs is a criminal offence and that possession with the intent to supply is a more serious offence. The Institute will inform the Gardaí of any student found to be using or in possession of any illegal drug (including cannabis) in any of the Institute's training premises.

5.5   Noise Disturbance and Respect

The creation of disturbances or an obstruction is forbidden. Disturbances include the ringing of mobile telephones or pagers during workshops/ tutorials, placement premises, open access rooms and the Library.

During training students will be at different training venues, placement centres etc. They will be required to work and live with different communities of people. These people may hold similar or very different beliefs to individual students. All trainee counsellors are expected to behave with consideration and respect for the venues as a whole, for other users of the venues and for fellow trainees. When students visit various religious communities, they are asked to

respect their house rules, their cultural beliefs and their places and objects of worship or prayer,

In places like a working counselling centre or a retreat house noise must be kept within reasonable bounds at all times and to a minimum after 10pm and when others are working. Students will also be required to clean up and leave communal areas tidy after use. Failure to comply with the general spirit and cultural norms of a venue will be treated seriously. Specific complaints will be investigated and will generally result in disciplinary action.

5.6   Dress Code

Students should dress appropriately for the activities they will be involved in during training. At workshop students are advised to dress casually and comfortably.

On placement however students should dress according to the dress code of the organisation. They need to remember that they are presenting the profession to the public. Generally clothes should be smart casual. Clothing should not be distracting or offensive.

5.7   Display of posters

No notices or posters may be displayed or distributed on the Institute's premises without due authority. Such authorised display must be confined to the notice boards provided.

5.8   Smoking

Smoking is prohibited inside any building operated by the Institute (including corridors, foyers, toilets and entrances etc) other than in specifically designated "Smoking Areas". Local rules apply in external training venues and at residential workshop accommodation and students are expected to respect these.

5.9   Telephone calls

Students may not use the Institute's telephone service or fax facilities for incoming or outgoing calls, other than when expressly permitted by an authorised member of staff in connection with a project or placement, except in cases of emergency.

5.10   Recording of lectures

a)   The Institute may record lectures seminars or other teaching sessions and make them available in different formats (e.g.: podcast, videocast, etc) accessible via a variety of devices (e.g.: laptops, MP3 players, video iPods, etc) to enhance the teaching and learning process.

b)   Group sessions, presentations or other teaching session, may be recorded by a student ONLY with the express permission of the Training Team. Where that permission is granted the material recorded will be for the student's personal use, in order to assist them in the pursuit of their studies. In certain circumstances that teaching material will be regarded as confidential information and the student will be required to undertake its safety and protection. Recordings are not permitted for any other purpose. Recordings may only be made with the prior knowledge and consent of the trainer and the group concerned. Covert recording is not permitted. Requests made for recordings as reasonable adjustments as part of accommodation for someone with a disability will of course receive positive consideration. Where a recording is to be made, all those present must be notified of the fact at the outset.

5.11   Care of personal property

The Institute cannot in any circumstances, accept responsibility for the loss or theft of private property left or lost on Institute's premises.

a)   Students who suffer a loss of, or damage to, their personal property should advise the administration and inform the Gardaí.

b)   Students finding lost property should deliver it to the Reception in Cork Counselling Services CLG at 7 Father Mathew Street.

c)   The Institute cannot accept any responsibility for the safety of bicycles, motor bicycles or motor cars while they are on the Institutes premises or on the premises of any of its training venues.

5.12   Discipline

Disciplinary procedures may be invoked if it is alleged that a student has committed misconduct, examples of which may include the following:

a) assault or serious threatening behaviour;

b) criminal damage to the Institute's property or the property of any of its training venues, its students or members of staff;

c) theft or fighting on the Institute's premises or at any of it's training venues;

d) offences against the criminal law, where these offences involve other students or directly affect the interests of the training Institute;

e) sexual harassment;

f) racist activity or behaviour;

g) misappropriation or misuse of the training Institute's funds or assets;

h) abusive or unreasonable behaviour;

i) unlawful occupation of the Institute's land or premises;

j) behaviour which causes fear or distress to others;

k) behaviour which interferes with the legitimate freedom of speech, ideas actions or enquiry of other students or members of staff or which disrupts or interferes with the Institute's processes and procedures;

l) a serious breach of the Institute's Regulations, code of conduct or code of practice or fitness to practise standards;

m) any action likely to cause injury to any person or impairing the safety of the premises of the Institute or any of its training locations;

n) attempts to subvert the Institute's procedures by means of fraudulent claims or documents;

o) Conduct, either on or off campus, which brings the Institute into disrepute.

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive. In the case of minor offences (such as minor breaches of the Institute's regulations, codes of conducts, minor cheating offences or fitness to practise concerns), the Institute may use its discretion in invoking a local disciplinary procedure.

5.13 Disciplinary procedures

The Disciplinary Procedures set out in the Quality Assurance Document will be followed where there is a breach of the Code of Conduct.

5.14 Health and Safety: Student Responsibilities

Cork Counselling Services Training Institute is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all students. The Institute will take all reasonable steps to achieve this but the final outcome will also depend on the co-operation of all students in complying with this guidance and local policies and practices where they exist. Students through their 'duty of care' have a responsibility to take reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and others by their acts and omissions. In brief this will mean:-

1) As well as looking after himself/herself, a student must not do anything which may cause injury to someone else i.e. indulging in horseplay, misusing equipment.

2) Students are expected to report all accidents, incidents, including near misses and other situations they consider to be a health and safety matter to their trainer or a responsible person within the Training Institute.

3) Students shall co-operate with the Institute as far as is necessary to enable any duty, statutory requirement etc. to be performed or complied with. This will include complying with instructions given by staff or participating in exercises such as fire drills.

4) With regard to fire safety students must not interfere with fire equipment, deface notices or activate false alarms. It is a criminal offence to tamper with fire safety equipment. Anyone infringing this rule and maliciously tampering with fire-fighting equipment may be liable for a fine and/or expulsion from the Institute under the disciplinary procedure.

5) Students must not attempt to gain entry to areas they know to be out of bounds. This will include areas where staff presence is a pre-requisite of student entry. Also included in out of bounds areas are roofs of all buildings (except areas open for free access), boiler houses, electrical switch gear rooms/substations, and building and construction sites. This list is not exhaustive but gives an indication of the type of areas students are prohibited from entering. If in doubt students should seek permission.

6. Intellectual Property Rights Policy in relation to students

6.1   Introduction

This policy is about Intellectual Property, the output generated every day by students. "Intellectual Property" means rights such as patents for inventions and trademarks, domain names and registered designs as well as design rights, copyright and moral rights, database rights, unregistered trademarks, know-how and confidential information. CCSTI recognises that Intellectual Property generated by research and other work undertaken at the Institute is an important asset and wishes to encourage all students to contribute towards this activity. CCSTI has the responsibility to identify, protect and manage its Intellectual Property effectively. The Institute intends that the benefit of having such a Policy will include wider recognition of individual achievements and the reputation of the intellectual contribution made by its students. The Training Team is responsible for the communication and administration of the Institute's Intellectual Property Policy to students.

6.2   Intellectual Property Right Ownership

Undergraduates at enrolment and registration will be required to agree that CCSTI has ownership of Intellectual Property they create during the period of, and relating to, their studies and/or research. For the avoidance of doubt, any Intellectual Property created by the undergraduate purely in a personal capacity and without use of the Institute's facilities and/or resources, will be owned by the student. The reasons why CCSTI asserts ownership over Intellectual Property created by students is as follows:

Research and other projects form a part of many programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Such projects are usually proposed by members of academic staff. The student may be joining a team to investigate one particular aspect of a much larger programme. This is usually of great benefit to the student as, rather than starting from a blank sheet, he/she can draw upon the considerable expertise, reputation and infrastructure of the Institute's group.

It is therefore appropriate for CCSTI to assert ownership of Intellectual Property created by students for the following reasons:

a) the Intellectual Property developed by the student will sometimes be needed to enable use to be made of the whole project developed by a research/project team;

b) the Intellectual Property will often be based on advice and ideas contributed by many others including staff, third parties and other students;

c) the project may be conducted under the terms of agreements with, or *grants from*, third parties, including both commercial and non-commercial funding bodies. These terms may require that the Intellectual Property be owned by the third party or CCSTI;

d) any Intellectual Property is likely to be created whilst using CCSTI's facilities/resources;

e) CCSTI can, where necessary, negotiate commercial terms with third parties to obtain the best possible deal for both the Institute and the student.

6.3   Intellectual Property over which CCSTI asserts ownership rights

Intellectual Property Rights will arise in many forms, as CCSTI engages in many activities across various disciplines. In respect of students, it is most likely to result from discoveries during research and learning.

6.4   Publication

A student shall obtain consent from the Institute before entering a contract with a publisher or producer of works in other media in relation to copyright in a work produced by that student but where the Intellectual Property belongs to the Institute. CCSTI will usually agree to the assignment of copyright to the publisher in paper printed materials intended for publication in academic journals or books unless

a) it relates to materials specifically produced as learning materials or

b) where publication could result in certain rights of the Institute being adversely affected, for example, inability to apply for a patent protection.

In the latter case consent will be given once the adverse effect no longer exists. Other cases will be considered on a case by case basis.

6.5   Disclosure of Intellectual Property Rights

Where a student of the Institute creates any Intellectual Property he or she shall disclose it to the Institute. CCSTI shall determine whether it has any obligations to research sponsors or other organisations in respect of the Intellectual Property. Where there are no such obligations, the Institute, following consultation with the creator of the Intellectual Property, shall decide upon and implement the most appropriate route for exploitation of the Intellectual Property. In the event of a dispute between the creator of the Intellectual Property Right and the Institute concerning ownership, protection or exploitation of the Intellectual Property the matter shall be referred to the Institute's legal advisor. Following consultation with the parties and any external expert that the Legal Advisor considers to be desirable, the advisor shall decide upon a course of action to finally resolve the dispute.

Where the Institute decides to seek exploitation, the creator of the Intellectual Property shall provide reasonable assistance with the exploitation process by (for example) providing information promptly upon request, attending meetings with potential partners and advising of further development.

6.6   Intellectual Property Rights Reversion

If having received full disclosure from all students the Institute decides not to protect or exploit the Intellectual Property, CCSTI will normally upon request assign its rights to the person who created the Intellectual Property. In the event that the assigned rights were subsequently exploited CCSTI might require the person who created the Intellectual Property to pay the reasonable costs incurred by CCSTI in relation to those rights. In certain circumstances the Institute may not be free to assign its rights, for example if a public sector body has funded work, that body may acquire the rights if CCSTI does not exploit them.

For the avoidance of doubt, CCSTI is not under any obligation to protect or exploit Intellectual Property.

6.7   Confidentiality

Students should be aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality in relation to the Intellectual Property. Commercially sensitive documents should be marked as "Confidential". The Training Institute will assist with the correct confidentiality requirements should external confidential disclosure be required. Students are not authorised to enter into confidentiality agreements with third parties on behalf of CCSTI.

6.8   Protection of Intellectual Property

Students should ensure that all Intellectual Property is properly documented in a form that would enable the date of creation to be clearly established. This may be through regular dating and signatures on log-books, or through writing-up and regular filing as appropriate.

6.9   Exploitation of Intellectual Property

The Institute actively encourages its students to take the initiative in identifying Intellectual Property which has potential exploitation or publicity value or which could otherwise enhance the reputation of CCSTI together with the potential scope of its exploitation.

CCSTI will consider all reasonable proposals in relation to Exploitation of Intellectual Property made by its students. Where such Intellectual Property does not solely belong to the Institute, assistance may be given with exploitation, subject to agreeing satisfactory arrangements

which ensure that CCSTI receives an appropriate share of any monetary or other revenue or value derived from exploitation.

6.10   Revenue sharing from Exploitation of Intellectual Property Rights

While the Institute will retain the ownership of Intellectual Property as set out above, it will also provide an incentive to its students by sharing revenue generated from Intellectual Property.

7. <u>Risk Management</u>

7.1   Aims

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a procedure for management to identify, assess and rate risks, and to develop strategies to deal with risks so as to provide reasonable assurance that the strategic objectives of Cork Counselling Services CLG are achieved.

7.2   Scope

A system of risk management is important in the fulfilment of the aims of CCS. A system of internal control contributes to safeguarding the interests of all relevant parties and to the organisation's assets. Internal control facilitates the effectiveness and efficiency of operations; helps ensure the reliability of internal and external reporting and assists compliance with laws and regulations. Equally, effective financial controls, including clear delineation and separation of functions and the maintenance of proper accounting records, are an important element of internal control. These help ensure that CCS is not unnecessarily exposed to avoidable financial risks and that financial information used and published is reliable. They also contribute to the prevention and detection of fraud.

Our organisation and the environment in which it operates are continually evolving and, as a result, the risks it faces are continually changing. A system of internal control therefore depends on a thorough and regular evaluation of the nature and extent of the risks to which we are exposed. A system of internal control reduces, but cannot eliminate, the possibility of poor judgement in decision-making, human error, control processes being deliberately circumvented by employees and others, management overriding controls and the occurrence of unforeseeable circumstances. We intend not to be hindered by circumstances which may reasonably be foreseen. Systematic identification, assessment and management of risk is therefore an increasingly important part of our internal controls. The Board of Directors ensures the system is in place and active at CCS. The aim is to ensure that the system is integrated into existing management systems, while being kept as simple as possible. Roles and responsibilities are clearly assigned and there is a direct reporting line to the Board.

7.3   Definitions

Risk is defined as the organisation not benefiting from opportunities available, suffering damage or disadvantage, or not achieving its objectives due to an internal or external event. Risks, by their very nature, may or may not occur and fall into a variety of categories, some of the most common being:

- Strategic Risks: the inability to achieve the organisation's strategic and operational objectives, not availing of opportunities when they arise;

- Operational Risks: the inability to prevent a loss resulting from inadequate internal processes and systems;

- Financial Risks: exposure to losses arising as a result of inadequate controls or the need to improve the management of the organisation's financial assets;

- Reputational Risks: exposure to losses arising as a result of bad press, negative public image and the need to improve stakeholder relationship management.

In addition, risks exist at different levels:

- Organisational Level (Fundamental)

- Departmental Level – Clinical, Training, Business

- Project Level

Risk identification is defined as the process of determining what can happen, why and how.

Risk analysis is defined as the systematic use of available information to determine the likelihood of specific events occurring and the magnitude of their consequences/impact on the organisation.

Risk assessment is where risks are assessed and prioritised on the combined basis of their likelihood of occurrence and the resulting impact should they materialise.

A risk register is defined as a risk recording and monitoring tool for the management of the organisation.

Risk appetite is defined as the amount of risk an organisation is prepared to accept based on the expected return of the development/activity in question.

7.4   Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for the management of risk within the organisation lies with the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors approves the organisation's Risk Management Policy and satisfies itself that the policy is effective, that an adequate Risk Management Procedure is in place in the organisation and that fundamental risks are being managed appropriately by the Management Team. The Board can ask the Management Team to amend the policy as needed. They keep under review, and advise on, the operation and effectiveness of the organisation's Risk Management Procedure. They monitor the effectiveness of Risk Management in relation to risks identified as fundamental to the success or failure of the organisation's objectives.

They ensure that Risk Management is a standing agenda item at both Board and Management Team meetings and that a current Risk Register is in place. They may, on occasion, require an external review of the effectiveness of the Risk Management Procedure and its governance on a periodic basis. They may also advise on the need for training on risk management if warranted.

The Management Team is charged with implementing the organisation's Risk Management Policy, identifying and monitoring risks and the issuing of reports to the Board of Directors where a new risk arises or where there are significant changes in circumstance surrounding an existing one. It ensures that each risk has a risk owner and ensure that individuals understand what level of risk they are empowered to take on behalf of the organisation. They encourage a risk management culture throughout the organisation so that risk is embedded as part of the organisation's decision making and operation. They periodically review the effectiveness of Risk Management. They report to the Board of Directors on a regular basis about Risk Management. They periodically do an internal audit .

Staff and contractors know and implement Risk Management Policy within their area of control to include the identification, assessment, management and ownership of risk within that area and to communicate it clearly to the Management Team in a timely way. They support the embedding of risk management in their area and the development of a risk-aware culture.

7.5   Procedure

The Risk Management Procedure is an iterative process consisting of steps which when taken in sequence, enable continual improvement in decision making. It constitutes a logical and systematic method of identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating, monitoring and communicating risks associated with any activity, function or process in a way that enables CCS minimise losses and maximise opportunities.   In order to be effective, our risk management focuses on understanding and measuring risk rather than necessarily avoiding or totally eliminating it and comprises the following components:

Risk identification produces a list of the potential risks that could impact on the organisation achieving its objectives. Risks are identified (commonly under four pre-defined categories as set out above) and prioritised. A formal risk identification and review exercise are undertaken on at least an annual basis in to update both the Risk Register.

Risk assessement has two dimensions, the effect on CCS should the risk materialise (impact) and the probability of the event occurring (likelihood). A scale of 0..5 is used for

each where 0 is low and 5 is high. A matrix is then constructed so that risks are prioritised from high impact/high likelihood to low impact/low likelihood by calculating the product of the two ratings.

8. **Information & Data Management**

Good information is needed to make informed decisions on what works well and on what needs to change. This includes Training information, management information and planning information. Cork Counselling Services has information technology systems in place to ensure quality records are established and securely maintained in these areas and to ensure reports can be generated for self-monitoring and planning purposes in these areas. We generate key performance indicators such as student numbers per programme, student satisfaction rates, student drop-out rates, graduation rates, including grade analysis and career paths of graduates. This data is analysed by the management team for planning follow-up activities.

Information systems at Cork Counselling Services maintain secure, accurate and complete student records and are capable of generating reports for internal and external reporting purposes. Records are also held of Quality Assurance activity – including meetings, actions planned, actions completed, key performance indicators etc. This information is centrally stored and backed up. Data is retained for seven years.

9. Student Resourcing & Support

At CCS we aim to have the theory from which we work reflected at all levels of our therapeutic and training work. In practice this means our students get the best we have to offer in terms of individual attention in a supportive learning environment. This resource document contains information on facilities and resources provided by CCSTI to support students. These resources include:

Physical Learning Resources

- Training Venues
- Teaching and Learning Aids
- Library
- Study Facilities
- Computer and Internet Access
- Student Section of Website

Student Support

- Trainers
- Disability Support
- Academic Support
- Pastoral Support
- Student Representatives
- Induction and Continuity Support Meetings
- Library Seminars
- Career Information
- Placement Opportunities

Staff of CCSTI

- Members of Training Team
- Other Support Staff
- External Examiner

9.1 Training Venues

Training workshops are held at CCSTI training venues. Venue selection criteria are stringent – venues must offer a quiet and warm environment, have a large training room with capacity for 20+ students in a circle, small group rooms suitable small group work, counselling skills practice and individual reflection, ample seating, complimentary parking, broadband facilities,

health and safety and fire safety standards, heating, sanitation, kitchen facilities, social space and preferably garden/ outdoor space.

In brief, training venue selection and implementation consisted of seven steps (1) determining training venue selection criteria- previously established by Cork Counselling centre team; (2) develop list of potential venues with supporting information; (3) filter the options (4) make a venue visit; (5) select preferred venues via team discussion; (6) obtain venue access permission(s); and (7) implement venue logistics.

A large tutorial room is available at Hanover Street for seminars and peer discussion groups.

9.2 Teaching and Learning Aids

The following equipment is available to enhance and support teaching and learning:

- Interactive White Board
- Photocopiers
- Printers
- Data projectors
- Overhead projector
- Audio-visual data recorders
- DVD players
- Audio players
- Digital camera
- Flipcharts
- Presentation display boards
- A full range of creative materials including clay, paints, coloured pens, materials for collage, toys, and a range of fabrics, masks and dress up clothes for drama.

9.3 Library

Students have access to a well-stocked library run by CCSTI. This is located at Hanover Street in Cork City. This library contains approximately 1000 textbooks, including all core texts and an extensive range of relevant counselling literature. A number of peer-reviewed journals are available in the Institute. Assignments completed by past students are accessible for student consultation.

Students are actively encouraged to make recommendations to the library for new texts that they have found beneficial. The library is also stocked from the recommendations of trainers, supervisors, clinical staff and the External Examiner.

The Training Institute has established a database of all library books. This database is accessible via the Students Section of the website. This database allows students to find books listed by ISBN number, author(s) name, book title, publisher or specific keywords. Furthermore, students can view if books are available to borrow at that time.

In addition to the library at Hanover Street, students on enrolled on a programme validated by the validating university have access to the validating university e-Library resources.

9.4   Study Facilities

Study desks are available in the library in Hanover Street.

Residential venues offer individual accommodation for each student, each with a desk for study.

9.5   Computer and Internet Access

A number of computer stations are available for use by students, each consisting of a computer, word processing facilities, printing facilities and internet access. These facilities are located in The Education Centre, Marymount University Hospital & Hospice, the library in Hanover Street, and in the Centre.

Broadband internet access is available during workshops in training venues, in the Centre, and in the library in Hanover Street.

9.6   Student Section of Website

A password protected section of the website is available for students enrolled on CCSTI training programmes. Here students can access, view and download:

- Training calendar
- Assignment calendar
- Module descriptors
- Student manual
- Assignment guidelines
- Marking criteria
- Reading lists
- Library database

- Placement guidelines

- Student, placement and supervisor contracts

- Supervisor report template

- Midway and exit reflection questions

- IACP Code of Ethics and Practice

- BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy

- End of year checklists

- Library seminars calendar

- Library seminars presentation handouts

- Research articles

9.7   Trainers

Student support comes firstly from trainers. Within the Training Institute it is seen as a sign of maturity and the eventual hallmark of a safe practitioner that students seek support, ask questions and request guidance when necessary. Trainers are generous with their time and readily meet with students, recommend reading, identify resources that may help, and overall encourage students to be active in expressing and meeting their learning needs.

The BSc (Hons) Counselling and Psychotherapy in particular, contains significant teaching input by highly experienced trainers, clinical practitioners, and supervisors. Seminar presentations are also be offered by a number of qualified, experienced allied professionals.

9.8   The Students' Environment

Students are given the practice and academic supervision appropriate to the level of the award to which they are working. Adequate learning resources and appropriate support services are provided. Students are also given opportunities to contribute in an informed way to course and module development and to benefit from an atmosphere in which rational debate is encouraged. The Institute provides educational guidance to enable students to exercise appropriate choices within their programmes of study.

9.9   Disability Support

CCSTI is committed to the promotion of equal and inclusive training opportunities with all training conducted in accordance with our Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities/ Specific Learning Difficulties.

Students have on-going access to the Training Institute's designated contact person for disabilities/ specific learning difficulties.

9.10 Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities / Specific Learning Difficulties

CCSTI is committed to the promotion of equal and inclusive training opportunities. We welcome applications from people with disabilities/specific learning difficulties, with all places offered solely on the basis of merit. We encourage students to disclose any disability or medical condition to us in confidence so that together we can put supports and resources in place to meet their particular needs. Students are advised to talk to us about this information, even if they do not anticipate that additional support will be required.

Information about disabilities/specific learning difficulties needs to be given to CCSTI on acceptance of a training place. While we will do "all that is reasonable" (Equal Status Act, 2000) to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities, the responsibility for learning and achieving lies with the student.

In promoting the inclusion of students with disabilities we are acting on:

- The mission statement of CCSTI
- The Disability Act 2005
- The Equal Status Act 2000-2004

Every student with a disability/specific learning difficulties has the right to:
- Equitable access to courses, services, activities and facilities of CCSTI, as far as is reasonably possible.
- Reasonable and appropriate additional accommodations determined on a case-by-case basis. For this to be implemented the student's disability has to be certified by an appropriate Consultant and/or Educational Psychologist.
- Appropriate confidentiality of disability records (within certain limits); disclosure of information only with the student's written consent.
- Be treated with dignity and respect.

Note: If due to unforeseen circumstances a student cannot comply with approved arrangements, contact must be made with the Training Institute's designated disability contact person immediately.

Every student with a disability/specific learning difficulties has the responsibility to:

- Inform CCSTI on acceptance of a training place.
- Provide documentation from a Consultant/Educational Psychologist that certifies the nature of the disability/learning difficulties on acceptance of a training place.
- Sign the Code of Practice and consent form concerning the release of information.
- Attend all training units.
- Complete all course work.
- Identify themselves to trainers/tutors.
- Treat all staff with dignity and respect.

CCSTI has the right to:

- Maintain academic standards.
- Request a report completed by an appropriate Consultant/Educational Psychologist to certify a disability/specific learning difficulties.
- Contact the Consultant/Educational Psychologist if necessary.
- Deny a request for additional accommodations if the documentation does not verify a disability/specific learning difficulties.
- Refuse to provide an accommodation that is inappropriate or unreasonable including any that:
  - o Demand a substantial change to an essential element of the course.
  - o Pose a threat to the health/safety of the student or others.
  - o Pose undue financial or administrative hardship on CCSTI.

CCSTI has the responsibility to:

- Inform students with certified disabilities/specific learning difficulties of the Training Institute's policies and procedures.
- Deliver programmes in an integrated and accessible format.
- Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations if informed on acceptance of a training place.

- Keep confidentiality of records and communications concerning students with disabilities, except where the disclosure is authorised by the student.
- Appoint a contact person for students with disabilities/specific learning difficulties.

Disclosure of disability/specific learning difficulties means that students will be assisted and supported by the Training Institute to help them achieve their academic goals in an inclusive learning environment. This will be done on a case-by-case basis, discussing specific needs of students and establishing reasonable and appropriate supports.

Like all students of CCSTI students with a disability/specific learning difficulties have access to the 'Complaints and Appeals' procedures.

9.11 Academic Support

A one-day academic writing tutorial is offered at the outset of each academic year. This seminar provides guidance and support for students in preparing for the academic requirements of the course. Students in Year 1 are required to attend. Any other student enrolled in the Training Institute is welcome to attend.

A research seminar is delivered to all students enrolled on the BSc (Hons) Counselling and Psychotherapy in order to instruct them in sourcing, accessing, understanding and critically evaluating published research articles.

For students who require additional academic support a designated support tutor is available. Further details of his/her role and where (s)/he may be contacted are included in the student manual.

9.12 Pastoral Support

A student support officer is available to provide support to students who experience difficulties in the course of their training. This support person will meet with students at the beginning of first year. Further details of his/her role and where (s)/he may be contacted are included in the student manual.

The student support officer meets with the Training Team annually and presents a report on his/her work. This may also include recommendations to the team about changes required to strengthen the support offered to students.

9.13 Pregnancy and Adoption Support

Students who are pregnant, or in the process of adopting a child/(ren), are always a very welcome part of the diverse student population of the institute. Cork Counselling Services Training Institute is committed to providing an opportunity for female students to integrate their studies with family responsibilities. We will work with such students to determine suitable scheduling and timeframes that serve this integration, to the extent that, students are still able to meet the academic requirements, and that any re-scheduling or altered timeframe, are reasonable and feasible for our organisation. We will also work with students to support their needs in other ways.

If students are pregnant or adopting, we ask that they inform their year facilitators/supervisors as soon as possible and to confirm same in a short written note with relevant dates.

In the case of pregnancy, a certain number of components of the training, and/or client work, are deemed stressful for a pregnant mother and her unborn baby/babies. Therefore, in the interest of the wellbeing of both, these components will normally be deferred until after the birth of the child/(ren) and will usually be undertaken as part of the following year's study. The year facilitators and/or supervisor will discuss this matter with the students in more detail.

It is recommended that pregnant or adopting students plan their maternity leave or adoptive absence with facilitators and/or supervisors, and that they meet at least once during that leave to discuss plans for returning to study.

9.14   Student Representatives

Training group members elect two student representatives from within their training group at the beginning of the training year. These student representatives meet with representatives from the Training Team once to twice a year. Their role at these meetings is to present any problems encountered by the students with the training programme and/or teaching methods and learning resources and supports. Students are also encouraged to propose solutions or changes which may be needed to the programme.

9.15   Induction and Continuity Meetings

An introductory evening is held at the outset of the course. This provides an opportunity for students to meet with the other group members, the trainers, and support staff. Induction information covers:
- Introduction to the Institute its background and history.

- The ethos and model from which the training operates and the implication of these for students in training
- The structure of the Training Institute and the roles of the Training Team and support staff
- Introduction to validation partners
- Programme outline and attendance requirements
- Academic requirements
- Student support services
- Library, computer, and study facilities

Furthermore, the first workshop then continues the induction process with the establishment of group contracts, ground rules for training group functioning, initiation of professional training relationships with peers and trainers and exploration of learning needs. The initial workshop of each subsequent training year is then devoted to continuity, to welcoming new students and reconnecting with others, to revising and introducing relationships and group practices and ground rules. While the induction and continuity process continues through other workshops this initial workshop in all years is seen as pivotal to ensuring all students are active in identifying personal and educational learning needs and in devising the ground rules that will enable them to foster and develop their learning throughout the year.

9.16   Library Seminars

A programme of seminars is offered in the library delivered by the library supervisor, students, trainers and counsellors. In particular, students who receive a distinction grade in a presentation assignment are formally invited to deliver their presentation to the wider student body as part of the Library Seminars Programme.

The seminars combine didactic teaching, experiential exercises and group discussion. The seminar facilitators prepare the chosen topics and create a learning space for information and reflection. The specific topics arise from explicitly identified questions or implicitly perceived developmental needs in training or practice. Sample topics include theoretical models integration, trauma, self-development, LGBTQ terminology and culture, working with shame.

The seminar calendar and presentation handouts are available in the Student Section of the website.

9.17   Career Information

In order to support students in their on-going career development relevant job opportunities are displayed on the careers notice board in Cork Counselling Services. Vacancies arising within CCS and other community organisations are further circulated by email.

9.18 Placement Opportunities

Our link with a working counselling centre allows us to provide a limited number of in-house supervised clinical placements for students. Students who avail of these placements will be afforded the unique opportunity to witness and experience the operation of an established community-based counselling practice. Students will receive counselling referrals from a client population with a wide variety of presenting issues. They will be provided with individual and group supervision, as appropriate, with highly experienced accredited supervisors. Purpose-designed counselling accommodation and administrative back-up is included.

External placement opportunities are also available for students in other parts of the country. Students who travel long distances have the opportunity to do their placement closer to home. Again effective and supportive structures are present so that students can practice safely. Any student not undertaking their clinical placement at CCS will be supported to source an appropriate placement and supervisor. Relevant information, placement criteria, and support will be provided.

All students on placement have a placement mentor and a supervisor. Students on placement also have access to a designated placement coordinator who liaises with CCSTI Training Team. External placement students also have a designated placement liaison person who will assist students in establishing an external placement and will visit the placement, meeting both the supervisor and placement mentor to ensure standards of quality and safety for the student.

9.19 Staff of CCSTI

CVs for Staff of CCSTI are available to external validating bodies as required in line with course accreditation/ validation policies.

10. Staff Recruitment and Development

10.1 Introduction

High standards of staff recruitment and development enable Cork Counselling Services to ensure high quality delivery by its staff.

The Head of Business in conjunction with the Head of Training and Head of Clinical Practice is responsible for fair and transparent recruitment, ensuring that training, counselling and administrative staff have adequate experience and expertise to fill their designated roles, receiving further staff development if necessary to perform their functions.

All materials pertaining to the recruitment process must be maintained within the service for a period of four years starting from the successful candidate's start date.

10.2 Equal Access

Equality of opportunity is the right of all persons to receive fair, equal, and non-discriminatory consideration in access to and the processes of education and employment, irrespective of characteristics including, but not limited to, gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the traveller community. Discriminating against or harassing a person on these grounds, or due to personal association with a person who could be discriminated against on one of these grounds, will not be tolerated by Cork Counselling Services.

10.3 Job specification

All applicants are given a job description for the position they are applying for that has been agreed upon by the employment team before the interview has taken place. The job specification document is attached to the initial job application form to reduce any complications in the recruitment process. It outlines academic, professional and technical standards for positions. Benchmark staff profiles with those of competing providers are identified.

10.4 Hiring approval

It is the policy of Cork Counselling Services to hire qualified individuals according to standards of education, experience, aptitude, character, and physical ability to do the job with or without reasonable accommodation. Decisions regarding recruitment, selection, and placement of individuals are made on the basis of job-related criteria. Every effort is made to place individuals in positions which best utilize their abilities and which provide opportunities for

personal growth and satisfaction. Replacement hiring is decided by the management team and new job roles are decided by the Board of Directors in consultation with Management.

10.5 Advertising

In the event that a job position is available at Cork Counselling Services it is mandatory that this is advertised internally for employees. If there are no adequate internal applications then external advertising (for the general public) is implemented.

10.6 Screening

The Head of Business (in consultation with the Head of Training and/ or the Head of Clinical Practice) will screen applications. An appropriate hiring team will be formed. The hiring team is required to interview all referred applicants. If the hiring team does not find a suitable candidate after interviewing all referred applicants, the hiring team may request in writing that additional candidates be referred.

10.7 Interview process

Interviews will consist of a minimum of two staff and selections are made based on criteria from the job specification.

10.8 Notification and feedback

After the verbal offer of employment is made, a letter of offer is posted to the successful candidate. The successful candidate is required to reply to the letter of offer in writing with either a Letter of Acceptance or by signing and returning the Letter of Offer. The Letter of Acceptance includes the start date, the position title, the salary, and confirmation of the terms of probation.

Occasionally, unsuccessful candidates enquire about the status of their application. we generally respond to an inquiry from an unsuccessful candidate by indicating that a candidate whose qualifications better matched the needs of the organisation was selected for the position.

10.9 References

Once interviews have been completed, the hiring team conduct reference checks of the top candidate's current and previous employers. Each candidate are required to have at least two references attached to their CV.

10.10 Garda Vetting

Since the introduction of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012-2016, there is a now statutory requirement that people who carry out relevant work (i.e. work that involves regular and necessary access to and/or contact with children and/or vulnerable adults) are vetted prior to commencing employment or relevant volunteer work. Management actively comply with these requirements.

10.11 Probation

Probation is intended to be a positive, collaborative process which provides an opportunity to allow:

- The newly appointed or promoted employee to integrate into the role and/or organisation;

- A fair assessment of an employee's performance, behaviour and overall suitability to the role;

- A recommendation in relation to the employee's suitability for continued employment to be made by the line manager.

10.12 Contracting

Successful applicants will be mailed their contract with Cork Counselling Services including the agreed starting and end date, job description and responsibilities, holidays, code of conduct and ethos etc.

10.13 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a central and integral part of the counselling process, it offers safety and privacy to those who choose to discuss personal and private concerns and it safeguards against any inappropriate or unnecessary disclosures. Information, written or verbal, given to the organisation will be held in the strictest confidence.

10.14 Induction and Training of Staff

CCSTI engages in recruitment and induction procedures that ensure that staff who are appropriately qualified are recruited to meet the academic requirements of the Institute.

10.15 Qualified Trainers

Qualified trainers who join the Training Team receive ongoing support.
Induction information covers
- Introduction to the Institute its background and history.
- The ethos and model from which the training operates and the implication of these for the culture of the organisation and its staff.

- The structure of the organisation and the roles of staff members and the board.
- Introduction to validating partners.
- A description of the responsibilities and roles of training staff.
- Academic and administrative procedures.
- The terms of their employment contract.
- The policies and procedures that govern staff of the Institute.

Time is spent working with existing trainers and in training supervision on developing familiarity with the course and the Institute. Trainers have access to detailed facilitation notes from other facilitators and ongoing support of other trainers. All staff undertake a probation period. There are a number of reviews of work as part of this.

10.16 Apprentice trainers

Apprentice trainers work alongside more experienced trainers. There is a clear induction procedure which is part of the Certificate in Counselling & Psychotherapy Studies Training programme. In addition to what is outlined above apprentice trainers learn about assessment, intake, programme design and implementation, group facilitation, countertransference and transference in counselling training, models of adult education, ethics of training, ongoing facilitation, marking, skills development, and student feedback processes.

10.17 Continued Professional Development

Full time staff are supported to engage in ongoing training as part of continued professional development. In addition to this being a requirement from the Institute it is also a requirement of the professional counselling body. In our staff development policy we aim to ensure that trainers

- Have the qualifications and expertise to deliver the academic and training requirements of the Institute.
- Are facilitated to keep abreast of current developments in the field of counselling, theory, practice, and education.
- Are encouraged to enhance and expand their personal and professional development.

We also encourage our staff to become involved in the accreditation, governance and development of the profession at a local and national level.

Focus of staff development programmes and activities comes through annual reviews of staff where staff and management agree on subject areas that broadens the particular staff

member's expertise. The Institute invites outside trainers to give workshops to trainers and students on a variety of topics. Staff also attend workshops on varied topics such as working psychotherapeutically with adolescents; spirituality and sexuality in counselling; anger issues in counselling; supervision in groups, etc.

10.18 Support for the Training Team

The Training Team meets once a month for training supervision with an external supervisor. (Additional meetings of the Training Team may be requested by trainers if necessary). In addition the team meets for planning days, a review of courses meeting and a yearly meeting with the External Examiner.

10.19 Communication of Information

In relation to staff communication, regular staff meetings are held to ensure that views of staff members are collected and staff members are kept informed of issues relating to their programme areas.