

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) in Integrative Counselling

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	Iron Mill College
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award	BA(Hons)
5.	Programme title	Integrative Counselling
6.	Pathways available	N/A
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Iron Mill College Exeter
8.	Mode of attendance	Full time One teaching day per week
9.	UCAS Code	52B8
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Course Accreditation (Gold Standard, May 2009) The QAA Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark Statement (2010) The QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Counselling and Psychotherapy (2013)
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	June 2013 August 2014 and October 2014 (Regulations)

12. Educational aims of the programme

BA (Hons) in Integrative Counselling (Level 6)

The BA is a one year, full time top-up programme which encourages individual choice in study, and a vocationally relevant and up-to-date focus. It provides opportunities for you to develop a specialism, to conduct a literature review on a chosen area, and a negotiated work based learning project of your choice. It also encourages a wider view of counselling in the 21st century, with the exciting developments in the present and future of our profession.

- **Philosophy**

The BA (Hons) in Integrative Counselling embraces relational values as described by Mearns and Cooper's work on relational depth (2005). This focuses our attention on the importance and the quality of relationship as the central component of therapeutic work. The programme adopts a pluralistic postmodern philosophy, according to which there is no 'one true reality': the programme respects differing theoretical stances as 'lenses' through which to

view the therapeutic relationship. The programme will therefore be suitable for practitioners from a wide variety of theoretical backgrounds. The BA (Hons) combines a practical applied focus - thorough placement, professional skills and work based learning - with a deep interest in the richness of the human condition and the nature of relationship. These elements are integrated throughout the programme.

- **Ethical Framework**

The BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy (2013) is at the heart of each module taught on the programme. The BACP is the largest (by membership) professional organisation for Counselling and Psychotherapy in the UK. The IMI consider it important that all counsellors, whether qualified or in training, adhere to an Ethical Framework and are accountable for their professional work. Membership of the BACP for all students will promote a shared understanding of good practice standards. The BACP offer a wide variety of support for students who are members, including CPD, conferences, online resources, practice information sheets and placement information.

- **Work based Learning**

The BA combines a practical applied focus, thorough placement, professional skills and work based learning, with a deep interest in the richness of the human condition and experience. These elements are integrated throughout the programme. Additionally, the Specialist Work Based Learning module allows students to develop a specialism of their choice and to participate in a negotiated learning contract with a counselling provider.

The BA aims to:

- advance understanding of integrative approaches to counselling, which place the relationship at the heart of the work
- provide a rich and creative learning environment from which each counsellor can further evaluate and develop a unique personal integrative approach
- enhance employability with a focus on development of specialisms, professional applications and work based learning
- focus on up-to-date theory, research and critical thinking
- provide skills enabling participation in research
- enhance counsellor self-awareness and reflective practice
- encourage and provide opportunities for the development of creative thinking and practice
- focus on advanced ethical practice and the use of the BACP Ethical Framework (2013) in managing complex work
- expand awareness of difference and diversity and manage the complexities which can develop in practice
- meet the criteria listed in the QAA Benchmark Statement for Counselling and Psychotherapy (2013) for undergraduate training, and the BACP Gold Standard Document for Accredited Training (2009)
- Reflect on the role and function of counselling in society with regard to economic, cultural, professional and political influences

- engage with the possibility of making a personal contribution to the future of this profession

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

The bracketed numbers in the following sections refer to the General Learning Outcomes as listed on page 11 of this handbook, and in the table in Appendix 4 (General Learning Outcomes mapped onto Module Specific Learning Outcomes)

Knowledge and understanding:

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

- critically evaluate the philosophical assumptions underpinning the theory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy (1)
- analyse and assess ways in which the relationship is conceptualised in a range of different theoretical models, and evidence the ability to form and maintain a meaningful therapeutic relationship (4)
- professionally manage ethical complexities using the ethical principles that underpin counselling and psychotherapy (6)
- critically evaluate professional knowledge of mental health and psychopharmacology (9)
- critically analyse the purpose, theory and practice of supervision (14)
- critically analyse the present role and function of counselling in society with regard to economic, cultural, professional and political influences (17)
- demonstrate, evaluate and enhance the personal qualities and ethical awareness which underpin successful relational therapeutic work (21)

Cognitive and intellectual skills:

- analyse, compare and contrast a range of well-established therapeutic approaches and demonstrate the ability to use these in a manner which is appropriate to the needs of the client (2)
- critically analyse a personal philosophy of counselling, and provide evidence of a well-developed integrative approach in practice (3)
- develop knowledge about research and apply a comprehensive, in-depth and research-informed body of knowledge in practice, developing skills in the retrieval, evaluation and communication of information (8)
- explicitly define areas for professional development and demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate your own practice (13)

Practical skills relevant to employment:

- self-assess, analyse and demonstrate advanced competence in the use of therapeutic skills (5)
- evaluate legal, professional and organisational requirements pertaining to equal opportunities, diversity and anti-discrimination (7)
- evaluate and analyse ethical, contractual, professional, legal, social and organisational aspects of work based learning (10)

- critically evaluate their own professional strengths and limitations, demonstrate awareness of the impact of limitations upon practice, and develop appropriate self-support and self-care strategies (11)
- competently assess potential risk to the client or others, and make professionally appropriate decisions in response to ethical dilemmas and legal responsibilities (15)
- critically evaluate professional knowledge of mental health and psychopharmacology (9)
- negotiate and manage a work based learning project appropriate to an area of professional interest (19)

Transferable/key skills:

- self-assess, analyse and demonstrate advanced competence in the use of therapeutic skills (5)
- demonstrate and analyse understanding of the self in relationship, making use of a well-established self-reflective practice (12)
- professional presentation of work in a clear, well structured and well-informed manner, with the ability to critically evaluate material (16)
- specialise in a chosen professional area and develop advanced contemporary professional knowledge (18)
- evaluate and apply advanced professional learning to the practice of counselling (20)

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

• **Staff and specialists:**

The BA makes use of both experienced core teaching staff and invited specialist staff in the teaching and learning on this programme.

• **Students:**

The Iron Mill is a professional learning community which values the experience and knowledge students bring to and acquire during the programme, and provide ample opportunity for the shared learning opportunities this presents.

• **Teaching focus:**

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

• **Placement/Work Based Learning provision:**

The Specialist Work Based Learning module allows students to develop a specialism of their choice and to participate in a negotiated learning contract with a counselling provider. Students continue in placement, achieving 50 hours during this programme.

• **Technology:**

The [University of Worcester Information and Learning services](#) ('The Hive') include an array of online information which is available to BA students. Resources Online provides access to numerous online databases as well as

numerous full text journals. Most modules on the programme have an online presence via Blackboard. The Summon facility allows searches across all university library resources. Students will make use of the VLE (Blackboard) and e-portfolio (Pebblepad).

- **Learning and Teaching Methods:**

Students gain knowledge and understanding through a balanced use of methods including lectures, seminars, handouts, discussion, debate, modelling, audio-visual input, professional skills triad work, case studies, experiential work, group work, reflective practice opportunities, and guided independent learning.

- **Summative Assessment Methods:**

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

- **Formative Assessment Methods:**

Journal writing; peer and tutor feedback on skills work; group process work; reflective practice opportunities; experiential work; observations.

14. Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy is designed to help students develop the knowledge, skills and competence to practise as competent and professional counsellors on completion of the programme. Assessments provide opportunities to critically analyse and evaluate evidence and current practice in counselling and apply this knowledge within their own developing practice.

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

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

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

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

Details of **assessment weeks** for oral exams and portfolio assessments are provided on the programme Calendar, located in the programme handbook.

Regulation of assessment

The assessment strategy is aligned with the University's [Assessment Policy](#).

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

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

15. Programme structures and requirements

The BA (Hons) in Integrative Counselling is a modular programme, comprising 4 modules of 30 credits at level 6.

This course involves a high degree of self-directed learning. The following represents a guide to the time you need to devote to study per module in order to successfully complete the course:

- attendance at all timetabled teaching days
- 1-2 days per week attending placement, work based activities and supervision
- 2 days per week guided independent study and assessment preparation
- personal therapy is recommended at 1 hour per week

Additional expenses to budget for throughout the programme are:

- personal therapy – approximately £30-£50 per hour
- supervision – if not paid for or supplied by your placement, approximately £30-£60 per 1.5 hours for monthly individual supervision; approximately £20 per hour for group supervision.
- *enhanced DBS Certificate (DBS means [Disclosure and Barring Service](#), previously known as the Enhanced CRB) – £44. Checks for eligible volunteers are free of charge. Please see [CRB/DBS website](#) for details.
- personal insurance – approximately £25 - £90 per year; discounts available from some insurers for BACP members; monthly payment options usually available.
- *professional membership of the BACP - £152

*the expenses quoted above are correct for 2013; it is advisable to check on the appropriate websites for updates.

Options for Attendance

Students may attend either a weekday option (one day per week) or a weekend option (one weekend per month, plus a three-day and a five-day intensive block per year).

Expectations regarding attendance

It is expected that students will arrange to attend 100% of the taught programme and all additional requirements such as placement, supervision and personal therapy. Students who are unable to attend any part of the module must discuss this with the Programme Leader, and will be advised of the action necessary to meet the award requirements.

Supervised Placement and Work Based Learning

- **Supervised Placement**
During the programme you will be expected to gain 50 hours of supervised placement counselling practice.
- **Work based learning**
Students will negotiate a workplace based contract for additional contextual learning either within their placement or in another chosen organisation. The work chosen will establish a specialist area of interest for the student. Work Based Learning has no specific 'hours' requirement, but students should expect to attend for 30 hours over the year of study in order to meet the learning outcomes fully.

Award Map

Level 6: BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling				
Students must successfully complete 4 modules at level 6 to achieve this award.				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status	Pre-requisites
IMIC3000	Advanced Professional Practice	30	Mandatory	None
IMIC3003	Specialist Work Based Learning	30	Mandatory	None
IMIC3004	Research for Counselling Practitioners	30	Mandatory	None
IMIC3005	Counselling in the 21 st Century	30	Mandatory	None

16. QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

The BA is designed with reference to the Academic Infrastructure, a means of describing academic standards in terms of the academic level you are expected to achieve. This includes the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), which provides details of the academic level expected within each year of the programme.

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

The BACP Gold Standard Course Accreditation criteria (2009) have been integrated throughout, as this programme is in the process of applying for accredited training status.

17. Support for students

The Iron Mill has a library available for students to use, internet access, and a pleasant learning environment where our team of administrators are available to answer any concerns throughout the year. Students will also be allocated a personal tutor who will offer support throughout their studies at the Iron Mill College. The Iron Mill's Placement Coordinator will support students in their professional placement practice.

Students enrolled on the BA (Hons) in Integrative Counselling have the opportunity to access the services offered by UW Student Services. Student Services is the central department that provides non-academic support of students. The department includes Careers, Counselling and Mental Health Support, Disability and Dyslexia Service, Student Wellbeing Centre, and Welfare and Financial Advice. Further details are listed in the Programme Handbook.

18. Admissions

Admissions Policy

The BA (Hons) in Integrative Counselling course aims to attract interest from applicants who are already qualified as a counsellor. This will include those who are experienced in the counselling and psychotherapy profession who wish to gain a professional degree and/or establish a specialist area of expertise; those who have recently qualified who wish to enhance their employability and increase their learning to a more advanced level; and people who wish to engage further with the future of the counselling profession through research and wider understanding of the issues involved.

Entry requirements to the BA (Hons) Top-Up Programme

- an FdA Counselling award at Levels 4 and 5, meeting BACP supervised practice requirements of 100 hours minimum, or equivalent
- Applicants not meeting this requirement will be individually assessed by the Programme Leader, and must provide further evidence of qualifications at Level 5 or higher
- MBACP status (qualified counsellor and member of the BACP)
- in practice as a counsellor: it is expected that as qualified counsellors, students will enter the programme with counselling practice arranged in advance.

Additionally, all applicants must provide:

- **references:** an offer of a place is dependent upon the receipt of two supportive references
- **enhanced DBS Certificate.** The DBS was established under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and merges the functions previously carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). We require students who do not hold a current certificate to apply for one as soon as a place on the course has been accepted.

Admission to the programme via RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning)

Details of acceptable level 4 and 5 qualifications, policy in relation to mature students or applicants with few or no formal qualifications can be found in the prospectus or on the University web pages. Information on eligibility for recognition of prior learning for the purposes of entry with advanced standing is also available from the University webpages or from the Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111).

For students who wish to enter the BA (Hons) programme via RPL: these are thorough processes of assessment, requiring clear evidence of prior achievement of the Learning Outcomes for each module at the required level of study. For information on eligibility for recognition of prior learning for the purposes of entry with advanced standing at level 6, please contact the Programme Leader at the Iron Mill College to arrange assessment via the Institute of Health and Society at the University of Worcester.

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

Further Progression: PG Cert Programmes

The Iron Mill College is in the process of creating a range of PG Cert programmes at level 7, subject to validation, and will provide further details of these new programmes in due course.

BA (Hons) Admissions procedures

1. Applicants apply to the University of Worcester. The application must include a personal statement and two references.
2. Applicants invited for interview must bring the following documentation to their interview:
 - Proof of academic achievement (original certificates) plus 2 photocopies of each certificate
 - Proof of identification (Birth certificate, Driving licence card, Passport) plus 2 photocopies of each
3. Students attend for interview at the Iron Mill College (see details below)
4. The University will send a letter to successful applicants confirming the offer, and requesting that the student completes the on-line registration. The student completes the registration via Sole Pages. Worcester University will send a confirmation letter to the student and will enclose a handbook and student card.
5. Students will be required to apply for their Enhanced DBS Certificate via the University. A fee will be payable at this point.

Admissions/selection criteria

An offer of a place on the course will depend upon the entry criteria described above and a successful interview at the Iron Mill College.

Interview

The interview is an important part of the selection process, and applicants will need to demonstrate the criteria listed below in order to be offered a place.

Applicants successful at interview will have the professional and personal qualities for counselling training*, as well as a good understanding of the expectations and commitments of the training. Strong relational and communication skills are essential, along with maturity, self-awareness and self-reflective ability, and the ability to engage with the academic requirements of the programme. Applicants will need to show the confidence and enthusiasm required to successfully negotiate a work based learning opportunity, and a clear idea of the area of specialism they wish to develop. Applicants also need to be at the right time in their own lives to be able to engage fully with this highly demanding training.

*In preparation for interview applicants are advised to look at the BACP website and the [BACP Ethical Framework](#), which lists the values and personal qualities expected of counsellors.

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

Course evaluation is an ongoing process. It involves staff, students, the external examiner and the Programme Management Committee.

We invite feedback using the following methods:

- Student evaluation forms for each taught module
- Reports and evaluations from placement providers and supervisors
- External examiner and moderator reports and visits
- Discussion arising spontaneously during check in/out. Time allocated as necessary for staff and students to meet as a learning community, with regular feedback from the whole group
- Suggestions for programme changes.
- Staff meetings.
- Two student representatives involved in ongoing discussions within the Staff/student Liaison and Programme Management Committees.
- End of course evaluation that involves discussion between the external examiner with staff and feedback from the Programme Management Committee.
- Annual course evaluation process.

20. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's Undergraduate Regulatory Framework

Requirements to pass modules

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

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 5 days of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 5 days but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- Students who do not submit any items of assessment for a module lose their right to reassessment in that module, and will be required to retake the module in the following academic year, which will incur payment of the module fee.
- For full details of submission regulations see [Undergraduate Regulatory Framework](#).

Retrieval of failure

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

Requirements for Progression

- A student who fails 90 credits or more due to non-submission will be required to withdraw from the University.
- Students who pass less than 90 credits but have submitted all items of assessment will be required to retake modules.

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
BA Degree: non-honours	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at Level 6
BA Degree: with honours	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 6

These awards are not classified.

21. Indicators of quality and standards

The University underwent a QAA Institutional Audit in March 2011. The audit confirmed that confidence can be placed in the soundness of the institution's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the learning opportunities available to students. The audit team highlighted several aspects of good practice, including the student academic representative (StARs) initiative, the proactive approach which supports the student experience for disabled students, the comprehensiveness of the student online environment (SOLE), the wide range of opportunities afforded to students to enhance their employability, the institution's commitment to enhancement, and the inclusive approach to working with its collaborative partners.

22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Employability and Graduate destinations

The recent BA QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Counselling and Psychotherapy (2013) states: "As those entering the counselling and/or psychotherapy fields require understanding of a complex body of knowledge, clinical skills, self-awareness, analytical techniques and problem-solving skills, and the ability to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions to reach sound independent judgements, it is likely that they will need to be qualified to at least the level of a bachelor's degree with honours" (Section 1.4). This BA is designed to address these abilities, and to enhance skills and knowledge with particular reference to employment and the development of specialist areas of interest. It provides the opportunity for advancement in a variety of counselling-related careers. Our graduates are people with the advanced theoretical and applied knowledge to make an impact on service provision.

Successful completion of the BA (Hons) also allows students to apply for progression onto the PG Cert Programmes at the Iron Mill College. The Iron Mill College is in the process of creating a range of PG Cert programmes at level 7, subject to validation, and will provide further details of these new programmes in due course.

Possible career opportunities include:

- NHS initiatives e.g. Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)
- Educational institutions: schools, colleges and Universities
- Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPS)
- Local Authority employee services programmes
- Charitable agencies
- Private Practice

The Programme provides links with employers through the placement and work-based learning component.

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

- **Postgraduate Certificate in Integrative Counselling (1 year, level 7)**
- **Postgraduate Diploma in Integrative Counselling (2 years, level 7)**
- **MA Integrative Counselling (3 years, level 7)**

This course of study is unique because it provides you with the opportunity to discover, follow and develop your own professional specialism to an advanced level, and experience its application to the workplace. You will build upon a professional portfolio which will enhance your employability, and through research you will contribute to the body of knowledge in your chosen field.

Additional Requirements: You are expected to maintain your BACP membership throughout the MA programme. While there is no requirement for placement during the PG Certificate modules, you are expected to arrange and undertake a clinical placement, supervision and personal counselling to meet the practice requirements for the PG Diploma award (100 hours) and MA award (150 hours total).

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module outlines and the course handbook. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education](#).