University for the Common Good

Postgraduate Programme Specification

MSc Counselling Practice

This specification provides a summary of the main features of the programme and learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate where full advantage is taken of all learning opportunities offered. Further details on the learning, teaching and assessment approach for the programme and modules can be accessed on the University website and Virtual Learning Environment, GCU Learn. All programmes of the University are subject to the University's Quality Assurance processes.

GENERAL INFORMATION				
Programme Title	Counselling Practice			
Final Award	Master of Science in Counselling Practice			
Awarding Body	Glasgow Caledonian University			
School	School of Health and Life Sciences			
Department	Psychology			
Mode of Study	Part-time			
Location of Delivery	Glasgow Campus			
UCAS Code	N/A			
Accreditations (PSRB)				
Period of Approval	From:	September 2025	To:	August 2029

EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF PROGRAMME
The overarching aim of the MSc Counselling Practice is to provide graduates with comprehensive theoretical and applied training to support their practice as qualified counsellors and psychotherapists. The MSc Counselling Practice aligns with the theoretical requirements for membership of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, with graduates required to undertake additional practice supervision to meet practice requirements for membership. The programme will facilitate the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical applications, to ensure graduates are suitably prepared to enter mental health professions. The MSc Counselling Practice will provide separate routes of award aligned with specialist modalities of practice, such

as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Person-Centred Therapy, or aligned with specialist domains of treatment, for example substance use/addiction treatment, eating disorder treatment, etc.

More specifically the programme aims are to:

- Equip students with an understanding of counselling theories and models;
- Equip students with a comprehensive understanding of specific counselling modalities and/or the practice of counselling in specialist treatment domains;
- Develop an advanced capability to establish and employ effective professional relationship with clients, including therapeutic communication skills, assessment and intervention;
- Deliver a comprehensive understanding of the ethical and professional issues pertinent to professional practice;
- Equip students with ethical, reflective and culturally competent practices;
- Engage students in ongoing professional development, and an understanding of the responsibilities for continuing professional development through their careers.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Across all programmes, the Department of Psychology at GCU takes accountability for continuous monitoring and improvements in matters relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), guided in our ethical practices by our links with professional and statutory bodies. We commit to representing historically excluded groups and addressing inequalities in our recruitment and retention processes, and across our research projects and learning and teaching practices. We are cognisant of, and deliberately embrace, the diversity of our staff, student body and the wider psychology community in terms of demographics and protected characteristics, and we seek to actively reflect that diversity throughout our work. Practically, we will transfer our EDI priorities into each module by regularly seeking perspectives from our diverse staff, student and client groups, and using these to inform the development of curricula, applied practice and engagement activities. This includes periodic auditing of our recruitment, progression and attrition rates with a focus on under-represented groups, ongoing evaluation of diversity among our invited speakers, and sharing of best practice in these areas across our programmes. In every module, we will ensure the resources and reading that we recommend come from increasingly diverse sources, and that the learning activities and applied examples provided in teaching materials and assessments explicitly reference a wide range of socio-cultural groups and perspectives

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

A: Knowledge and understanding;

A1 Develop a critical understanding of the foundations underpinning the profession of counselling;

A2 Develop knowledge and understanding of the various modalities underpinning the field of counselling;

A3 Demonstrate an advanced understanding of counselling practice, which may focus on a single specialist modality, or domain of practice/treatment;

A4 Demonstrate an understanding and sensitivity to the complexity of human experience, and the ability to work with issues of power, difference and disadvantage within the therapeutic space;

A5 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the research process, including research design, analysis, and research synthesis;

B: Practice: Applied knowledge, skills and understanding;

B1 Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the theoretical basis, and applied practice of counselling theories, which may focus on the practice of a single modality, or domain of treatment;

B2 Demonstrate a critical application of knowledge, skills and ethical standards relevant to practice;

B3 Demonstrate effective and ethical therapeutic practices;

B4 Develop appropriate strategies to ensure self-awareness, and own wellbeing within a professional context.

C: Generic cognitive skills;

C1 Demonstrate critical analysis and advanced problem-solving skills to evaluate and synthesise new and complex ideas, information and issues;

C2 Apply a range of standard and specialised techniques of enquiry in a critical and reflective manner;

C3 Manage complex and/or new issues and make informed professional judgements in the absence of complete or consistent data, information or guidance;

C4 Develop strategies to support own resilience to manage the emotional and physical impact of practice, an awareness of own fitness to practice, and appropriately seek support when required.

D: Communication, numeracy and ICT skills

D1 Demonstrate the capacity to communicate at the standard of published academic and/or professional work;

D2 Demonstrate effective communication skills to work effectively with clients and colleagues, responding to diversity in communication ability and needs;

D3 Effectively communicate clinical and non-clinical information to a range of different audiences and demonstrate creativity and artistry in the use of language appropriate to the therapeutic contexts.

E: Autonomy, accountability and working with others.

E1 Demonstrate a high level of autonomy and initiative including the capacity to hold oneself accountable to the public and the profession for their personal integrity;

E2 Demonstrate a willingness and ability to manage complex ethical and professional issues and a capacity to monitor, obtain feedback from different sources, critically evaluate and reflect on practice, considering alternative ways of working and recognising personal limitations and needs for further development or training.

E3 Demonstrate a personal, coherent and ethical way of working with clients that takes account of a critical knowledge of evidence-based practice, practice-based evidence and reflective practice;

LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

The programme provides a variety of learning and teaching methods. Programme and Module specific guidance will provide detail of the learning and teaching methods specific to each module.

Across the programme the learning and teaching methods and approaches may include the following:

- Lectures

- Seminars
- Practical classes
- Work based learning activities
- Simulation experiences
- Groupwork
- Flipped classroom approaches
- Online learning

The above approaches may be delivered either in person or online as appropriate and determined at module level by the Module Leader.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

The programme provides a variety of formative and summative assessment methods. Programme and Module specific guidance will provide detail of the assessment methods specific to each module.

Across the programme the assessment methods may include the following:

- Written coursework (essays, reports, case studies, dissertation, literature review)
- Oral coursework (presentations, structured conversations)
- Practical Assessment (Placement, VIVA, Laboratory work)
- Group work
- Blogs and Wikis
- Portfolio Presentations
- Formal Examinations and Class Tests

The above assessments may be delivered either in person and online as appropriate and determined at module level by the Module Leader.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants will typically hold a Bachelor's degree with Honours awarded at a 2.2 or higher.
- Applicants who do not hold a degree, will require a COSCA counselling skills certificate delivered at SCQF 8 or equivalent, will also be considered for entry subject to evidence of ability to perform as SCQF 11.

Specific entry requirements for this programme can be found on the prospectus and study pages on the GCU website at this location: www.gcu.ac.uk/study

All students entering the programme are required to adhere to the GCU Code of Student Conduct.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND AVAILABLE AND FINAL EXIT AWARDS[1]							
The following modules are delivered as part of this programme:							
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Pathway Specialism**	**SCQF Level**	**Credit Size**	**Coursework %**	**Examination %**	**Pathway Specialism**
MMC830809	CBT Theory, Treatment and Ethical Practice	CBT	11	30	100		CBT
MMC830810	CBT in Context: Advanced Research Skills and Models of Therapy	CBT	11	30	100		CBT
MMC830811	CBT Disorder Specific Treatment for Anxiety Disorders	CBT	11	30	100		CBT
MMC830812	CBT Disorder Specific Treatment for Mood Disorders and Trauma	CBT	11	30	CW1 80 CW2 20		CBT
MMC831000	Theoretical Foundations of Psychodynamic and Existential Practice	EPT	11	30	CW1 50 CW2 50		EPT
MMC831001	Existential–Psychodynamic Practice in Contemporary Clinical Contexts	EPT	11	30	CW1 60 CW2 40		EPT
MMC831013	Relational Development of Personality, Attachment and Identity	EPT	11	30			EPT
MMC831014	Research, Professional Practice, and Integration	EPT	11	30			EPT

[1] Periodically, programmes and modules may be subject to change or cancellation. Further information on this can be found on the GCU website here: www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/essentials/policiesandprocedures/changesandcancellationtoprogrammes

MMB724468	Dissertation	All	11	60	CW1 50 CW2 50		All

Students undertaking the programme on a full-time basis commencing in September of each year will undertake the modules in the order presented above. Students are normally expected to successfully complete all 120 taught credits prior to commencing the Dissertation module.

Students will undertake 120 taught credits in a focussed pathway specialism and a 60 credit Dissertation to obtain their Masters award. Modules are identified as pertaining to one of the following specialisms

Pathway – Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

- CBT Theory, Treatment and Ethical Practice (MMC830809)
- CBT in Context: Advanced Research Skills and Models of Therapy (MMC830810)
- CBT Disorder Specific Treatment for Anxiety Disorders (MMC830811)
- CBT Disorder Specific Treatment for Mood Disorders and Trauma (MMC830812)

Pathway – Existential and Psychodynamic Therapy (EPT)

- Theoretical Foundations of Psychodynamic and Existential Practice (Module code MMC831000)
- Existential–Psychodynamic Practice in Contemporary Clinical Contexts (Module code MMC831001)
- Relational Development of Personality, Attachment and Identity (Module code TBC)
- Research, Professional Practice, and Integration (Module code TBC)

The following final and early Exit Awards are available from this programme[2]:

Postgraduate Certificate in Counselling Practice - *achieved upon successful completion of 60 credits from the 4 taught 120 credits of pathway specialism identified modules*

Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling Practice - *achieved upon successful completion of all 120 credits of pathway specialism identified modules*

[2] Please refer to the GCU Qualifications Framework for the minimum credits required for each level of award and the Programme Handbook for requirements on any specified or prohibited module combinations for each award.

Master of Science in Counselling Practice - *achieved upon successful completion of 180 credits comprising of 120 credits of pathway specialism identified modules and the Dissertation module*

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS
Students should expect to complete their programme of study under the GCU Assessment Regulations that were in place at the commencement of their studies on that programme, unless proposed changes to University Regulations are advantageous to students. These can be found at: www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/supportservices/qualityassuranceandenhancement/regulationsandpolicies

VERSION CONTROL (to be completed in line with AQPP processes) **Any changes to the PSP must be recorded below by the programme team to ensure accuracy of the programme of study being offered.**			
Version Number	*Changes/Updates*	*Date Changes/Updates made*	*Date Effective From*
1.0	New Programme	June 2025	September 2025
2.0	Addition of Pathway	August 2026	September 2026