



The only awarding body
run *by* counsellors
for counsellors

2014 -15

Candidate Guide

Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills (CSK-L2)

CSK-L2 is regulated by the Office of the Qualifications & Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) and is on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

Qualification/learning aim number: 500/7938/4

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CSK-L2 Candidate Guide

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This document can be downloaded from www.cpcab.co.uk/public_docs/ask-l2_candidate_guide.

It is intended to provide information that will enable you to maximise your learning on this course and to complete the unit/qualification successfully.

Find a Counsellor - www.findacounsellor.info - is an online directory sponsored by CPCAB and designed to put potential clients (or employers) in direct touch with counsellors.

It provides the ability to search for a suitable counsellor using several different search criteria, for example:

- Location (map-based search, or else via post-code, town, county, country etc)
- Area(s) of special expertise
- Language spoken
- Type of client seen
- Gender

The search facility is free to use, whilst inclusion in the directory (available only to fully qualified counsellors) currently costs just £29.95 per year!

1. Introduction for candidates

You are undertaking a course that leads to a nationally regulated qualification on the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) awarded by the Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB) – the only Ofqual approved awarding body to specialise in the field of counselling and supervision.

This unit/qualification is for candidates who:

- want to become competent in the use of counselling skills to help others – either in a voluntary or an employed situation;
- want to take the first step in training to be a counsellor

This course will not teach you to be a counsellor, but it will give you counselling skills which will be useful in a variety of roles and may help you decide whether or not you want to train as a counsellor. Roles might include key working, care assistant, support worker or teaching assistant. Areas of work could include mental health, the homeless, substance misuse, education and health and social care.

Tip:

Know your limits: this course won't train you to be a counsellor.

Helping work is different from counselling (which is a formally contracted relationship between a counsellor and a client). To make this difference between counselling and helping work clear, CPCAB calls the person using counselling skills the “helper” and the person being helped the “helpee”.¹

An example of helping work would be a care assistant (the helper) listening to someone they are looking after (the helpee) who is very worried about the health of a family member. The helper will help them to express their feelings and concerns. They may also guide them to a specific professional who may be able to provide them with the more specialised or in-depth help which they may need.

¹ The terms ‘counsellor’ and ‘client’ are not used until CPCAB’s *Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Studies (CST-L3)*.

2. Qualification structure

The qualification is made up of one mandatory unit which has seven learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria. This structure is based on the seven processes of the CPCAB model.

- For details of this model go to: www.cpcab.co.uk/qualifications/the-cpcab-model.

Tip:

Think of the assessment criteria as ‘learning tasks’ which you have to complete and then record so that your tutor can see you have achieved the task.

To achieve the unit/qualification you must be (a) assessed by your tutor as **Proficient** in all seven learning outcomes of the mandatory unit; and (b) externally assessed by CPCAB as **Proficient**.

Tip:

Remember you can gain a great deal from the course without necessarily gaining the unit/qualification. “The journey is as important as the destination.”

3. Internal assessment

Art students keep a portfolio of their coursework which they use to show other people what they, as artists, have learnt. In a similar way you need to keep a portfolio of your coursework, which you can use to show your tutor what you have learnt. Keeping a portfolio of your coursework will not only provide your tutor with evidence of your learning, but also really help you with the learning process itself.

You also need to complete your Candidate Learning Record (CLR – see [Appendix 1](#)), which should be placed at the front of your portfolio to signpost the evidence for each criterion. The CLR has brief notes beside each criterion to help you understand what is being asked for and guidelines on how to record your learning.

You must give **two** pieces of evidence for each criterion. In addition, the CLR (when complete) must include references to the following three types of course work²:

1. **Documents** – You must include the regular exploration of your learning (called the learning review) which contains your reflections on the input, discussions, experiences and readings for the course and which you start right from the beginning of the course. You must also include here one self-review and at least one assignment (such as an essay). You might also include here a review of audio/video recordings (including verbatim transcripts) and notes on your personal development.³
 2. **Tutor observation** – You must include records of tutor feedback on your counselling skills practice sessions. You must refer to at least two examples of being observed by your tutor and one of these must be via audio or video recording.⁴ You might also include tutor feedback on case presentations and group discussions (including contributions to seminars and group-work).
 3. **Testimony** – You must include records of peer feedback on your counselling skills practice sessions. You might also include tutorial records, plus peer feedback on case presentations and group discussions (including contributions to seminars and group-work).
- See [CSK-L2 Qualification Document](#) for a summary of minimum assessment requirements.

Tip:

It is a good idea to outline possible sections in your portfolio, for example:

- » Learning review (document)
- » Tutor feedback on skills practice (tutor observation)
- » Peer feedback on skills practice (testimony)

An example reference in your CLR might read: *Learning review p 21, para 3, lines 3-6 (document)*

Skills feedback sheet No. 6, line 29 (testimony)

² Please note that if it's appropriate you can reference the same section of your portfolio, or the same piece of work, a number of times.

³ Your personal development may result from insights gained from the course, other personal development work or from personal counselling.

⁴ In the case of the audio or video recording your tutor may choose to listen to (or watch) the recording, rather than observe you directly.

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CPCAB recommends that you attach a Criteria Assessment Sheet (CAS) – available to [download from our website](#) – to any work you hand in to your tutor for assessment. Your tutor can use the CAS to tell you which criteria you have met and to give you helpful feedback throughout the course. In this way you can gradually collect evidence as you go along and keep track of what evidence you still need to look out for.

Tip:

Meeting criteria is important, but the experience of learning about counselling skills should be much richer than criteria. Try to keep a balance.

After you have completed your portfolio your tutor will look at the evidence you have referenced in your Candidate Learning Record (CLR) and assess whether or not you have completed the assessment criteria and achieved the learning outcomes. S/he may decide that you are not yet Proficient – and will identify what you still need to complete/ achieve and how you might work towards doing this.

- Your tutor will give you further guidance on developing your portfolio, the three types of coursework and filling in the Candidate Learning Record.

The final assessment of your work is recorded on the [Completion Statement](#) at the end of your Candidate Learning Record.

Please note that all the work you include in your portfolio is *assessable material*, so it may be seen not just by your tutor but also by all those involved in your training centre's internal assessment process or any associated appeal or complaint. Such people will include the internal moderator and verifier as well the CPCAB external verifier.

4. External assessment

You must have completed at least two-thirds of the course before undertaking external assessment. For this external assessment you will watch a short DVD of a helper using counselling skills, and then complete a written Candidate Feedback Paper under exam conditions.

Tip:

The external assessment is like being an observer in a skills practice session.

The external assessment is structured as follows:

1. 5 min to read through the questions/tasks.
2. DVD played (approx 15 min) – during which time notes can be made.
3. 25 min to draft answers [using rough paper].
4. DVD played again – during which time notes can be made again.
5. 30 min to complete your answers, which can be in the form of bullet points.

Your answers must be brief and written clearly. Any quotations do not need to be exactly word for word. You should allow yourself a few minutes at the end to review and finish your answers. If you have very large writing you may attach a separate sheet which will be available from the invigilator. The papers are sent to CPCAB for assessment.

- Your tutor will offer you the opportunity to practice this assessment by using the CPCAB mock paper and practice DVD.

5. Equal opportunities and reasonable adjustments

In order to make sure that assessment is fair to all candidates, CPCAB requires all registered centres to have an appropriate candidate support system in place and to make appropriate arrangements to meet individual assessment needs. You can ensure that your own learning and assessment needs are being met by discussing your own needs/difficulties with your tutor, who can ensure that you receive the appropriate support at your centre.

- Please talk to your tutor as soon as you start the course about any additional support that you may need regarding learning and assessment.

Both CPCAB and centres are required to recognise and comply with both the spirit and the word of equal opportunities legislation. Previous Acts were amalgamated into the Equality Act 2010 (click [here](#) for more information).

For details of CPCAB's *Equal Opportunities Policy*: www.cpcab.co.uk/public_docs/equal_opportunities_policy.

6. Re-sits, enquiries, appeals and complaints

If your external assessment result is 'Not Proficient', your centre can make arrangements with CPCAB for you to re-sit the assessment or else appeal against the assessment result. A fee is charged for both a re-sit and an appeal, but if the appeal is successful your fee is refunded. Your tutor can ask CPCAB for verbal feedback on external assessment results in order to help the centre decide whether an appeal is warranted.

Please note:

- (a) an appeal must be made in writing via your approved centre. If this is not possible you should contact CPCAB's External Assessment Co-ordinator for advice on how to appeal directly.
- (b) if an appeal has been lodged with CPCAB, this process must be completed before you can register for a re-sit.

If you have any enquiries, complaints or appeals about the **internal** assessment of your work, or about any aspects of your learning experience on the course, these should be addressed to your training centre which has its own internal complaints and appeals procedures.

If you contact CPCAB directly on these issues you will normally be advised to go back to your centre.

However, you can visit [this webpage](#) to read or download CPCAB policies on *Complaints, Appeals, Malpractice & Maladministration*, and *Whistleblowing*.

Appendix 1: Candidate Learning Record – Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills (CSK-L2)

Instruction:

Print out (or otherwise detach) this Candidate Learning Record and the [Completion Statement](#) which follows it. Then insert both of them in the front of your portfolio.

When you have completed your Candidate Learning Record (CLR), please tick the following box to confirm that you have inserted - in the CLR as a whole - cross-references to all three types of coursework (i.e. documents, tutor observation and testimony):

| CSK-L2 | | |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| LEARNING OUTCOME: | 1. Use counselling skills ethically and safely | |
| Assessment criteria | Candidate guidance to criteria | Portfolio reference |
| 1.1 Use counselling skills within an ethical framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand safe & ethical practice and why it is needed. • Explore features of safe practice. • Show understanding of the above through learning review and skills practice sessions. | |
| 1.2 Work within personal limits of ability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what limits of ability actually means. • Develop and show awareness of own limitations in terms of knowledge and skills. • Communicate limits of own ability during skills practice. • Show your understanding in a learning review by referring to specific examples. | |
| 1.3 Enable the helpee to find additional sources of support where appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand where helping fits into a wider supportive network (e.g. careers advice, CAB, GP's, therapeutic counselling). • Identify a range of referral agencies along with the value and potential of appropriate referral. • Practise using this intervention in skills practice. | |
| LEARNING OUTCOME: | 2. Establish and sustain the boundaries of the helping role | |
| Assessment criteria | Candidate guidance to criteria | Portfolio reference |
| 2.1 Establish boundaries as a helper in a particular setting and within the limits of time available | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover what boundaries are needed in different helping situation and why. • Learn to work within a time boundary and why keeping to this is important. • Show ability to work within a structured framework (beginning, middle, end) in skills practice and write about the experience in your learning review. | |

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|----------------------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| 2.2 | Establish the nature and limits of confidentiality for helping work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the implications and limitations of confidentiality and apply in skills practice sessions. • Explore what you would personally find difficult to keep confidential and write about it in your learning review. | |
| 2.3 | Maintain the boundaries of the helping role throughout the session | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on your understanding of the relevance of boundaries in the helping role (e.g. disclosure, relationship, ability). • Rehearse, using role-play, the maintenance of those boundaries. | |
| 2.4 | End the helping interaction appropriately | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the importance of sensitivity around ending a helping session and write about the risks of not working with ending appropriately. • Understand the value of summarising and demonstrate how to end a session appropriately. | |
| LEARNING OUTCOME: | | 3. Work empathically as a helper | |
| Assessment criteria | | Candidate guidance to criteria | Portfolio reference |
| 3.1 | Define empathy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the meaning of empathy. • Reflect on the difficulty and challenge of feeling empathic towards others (e.g. in the learning group, family etc). | |
| 3.2 | Identify and explore differences between self and others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop understanding and knowledge of self (e.g. beliefs, values and own responses to experiences). • Explore how prejudices may have originated and the effect of some experiences on your own beliefs, feelings and responses. • Show, in the learning review, an understanding of the difference between your own perception and another person's of an experience or event. | |
| 3.3 | Explore and challenge personal issues, fears and prejudices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate a range of potential differences between helper and helpee (e.g. gender, race, age, social habits, capability, sexual orientation, physical ability). • Understand why it's important to be aware of difference between the helper and helpee. • Explore stereotyping and prejudice. Identify your own beliefs, feelings and potential responses to certain people and situations. • Reflect on assumptions you have made about people and write in your learning review how your assumptions have impacted on relationship(s) concerned. • Use skills practice to learn to work effectively with difference. • Use the learning review to reflect on your learning. | |

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| 3.4 Communicate empathic understanding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use skills to develop and communicate empathic understanding of another's perspective. • Identify in your learning review how it felt to be listened to and empathically understood, as opposed to being given advice. • Reflect on how you used your skills to communicate empathically. | |
| LEARNING OUTCOME: | 4. Focus on the helpee's needs and concerns | |
| Assessment criteria | Candidate guidance to Criteria | Portfolio reference |
| 4.1. Enable the helpee to identify and focus on their concerns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the difficulties the helpee might have of verbalising concerns and prioritising them. • Identify and practise the skills needed to assist the helpee to stay focused throughout. | |
| 4.2 Identify own feelings in order to set them aside and focus on the helpee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop self-awareness of your own agenda and reactions to the helpee's issues. • Actively explore the consequences of not being aware. • Consider ways of managing your own reactions. • Reflect on this process in your learning review after skills practice. | |
| 4.3 Work with the helpee to meet their objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a range of listening and responding skills to stay focused on the helpee's needs and issues. • Use your learning review to reflect on the challenges of doing this. | |
| LEARNING OUTCOME: | 5. Use self-awareness in helping work | |
| Assessment criteria | Candidate guidance to criteria | Portfolio reference |
| 5.1 Describe how reflecting on own personality increases self awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify personal blocks to listening and write about them in your learning review. • Explore aspects of your 'self' which contribute to patterns of thought and behaviour (e.g. social preferences, communication style and formative years). • Allow your understanding of the relationship between your personality and helping work to grow – by asking yourself the question “why do I do this work and why do I do it here and in this way?” • Build on those insights gained through discussion by writing about them in your learning review. | |
| 5.2 Describe how reflecting on own personal history increases self awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the ways in which your life history has impacted on your behaviour and life choices. • In your learning review identify the insights gained and suggest the potential benefits in relation to your helping work. | |

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| <p>5.3 Describe how reflecting on own patterns of relating increases self awareness</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover and understand the meaning of 'relationship'. • Explore the ways in which you have developed relationships with other people. • Reflect in your learning review on the difficulties that you have experienced in developing and maintaining relationships with others. | |
| <p>5.4 Use self awareness to inform helping work</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify your responses (thinking, feeling, sensing) that occur during a helping interaction. • Develop, during skills practice, a greater awareness of yourself as an individual. • Record (in your learning review) what you noticed about yourself during a skills interaction. Use peer feedback to help in this learning activity. | |
| <p>LEARNING OUTCOME:</p> | <p>6. Use a range of counselling skills to facilitate the helping interaction</p> | |
| <p>Assessment criteria</p> | <p>Candidate guidance to criteria</p> | <p>Portfolio reference</p> |
| <p>6.1 Demonstrate appropriate use of a range of listening and responding skills to facilitate the helping interaction</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, and use appropriately, skills which enable the helpee to experience being heard, understood and accepted (e.g. questioning, paraphrasing, reflecting, summarising) – in a way which enables closer understanding of another. • Choose and use skills to move an interaction forward from beginning to middle stage and then to a conclusion. • Find out about the dangers and benefits of self-disclosure. • Increase your range of skills to support the helpee in finding ways to implement change. | |
| <p>6.2 Demonstrate appropriate use of questions</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the difference between open and closed questions and when to use them appropriately. • Reflect on whose agenda – helper's or helpee's – we are focusing on when we ask questions. | |
| <p>6.3 Demonstrate sensitivity in timing responses and staying with silence</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on personal response to silence. How do you usually react to silence? Write about this in your learning review. • Practise skills in role-play and reflect on the process in the learning review. | |

| LEARNING OUTCOME: | 7. Use feedback and reflection to enhance counselling skills | |
|---|---|---------------------|
| Assessment criteria | Candidate guidance to criteria | Portfolio reference |
| 7.1 Use reflection and feedback to assess personal progress and identify learning needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a record of feedback received from peers and tutor observation – note and monitor your capacity to hear and work with constructive feedback. • Record reflections on your personal development and competence as a helper. • Use learning reviews and self review to help you identify your progress, any barriers to progress and any areas of skills or knowledge that need to be developed further. | |
| 7.2 Use feedback skills to provide constructive feedback to other learners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide verbal and written feedback to other learners using a constructive and honest approach – e.g. the feedback sandwich – offering positive observations at the beginning and end of the feedback. Areas for growth are offered in a constructive manner. • Identify personal areas of difficulty in feedback – e.g. are you overly critical or overly “nice”? Explore and reflect on this and write about it in your learning review. • Practise this skill in the skills practice sessions. • In your learning review look critically at your own responses to the process of giving feedback to others. | |

Appendix 2: Completion Statement for CSK-L2

| Completion Statement for Candidate Learning Record Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills (CSK-L2) | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Learning outcome | | Contra-indications present Y/N | Tutor signature if learning outcome has been achieved |
| 1 | Use counselling skills ethically and safely | | |
| 2 | Establish and sustain the boundaries of the helping role | | |
| 3 | Work empathically as a helper | | |
| 4 | Focus on the helpee's needs and concerns | | |
| 5 | Use self awareness in helping work | | |
| 6 | Use a range of counselling skills to facilitate the helping interaction | | |
| 7 | Use feedback and reflection to enhance counselling skills | | |

To be completed by core tutor:

Where the learning outcome has not been achieved please:

- (a) state clearly which learning outcome this relates to.
- (b) give specific and relevant reasons why the learning outcome has not been achieved.
- (c) record proposed course of action agreed between tutor and candidate to address/remedy concerns.

| Learning outcome | Details of relevant contra-indications | Proposed course of action |
|------------------|--|---------------------------|
| | | |

I declare this Candidate Learning Record to be a true and authentic record of evidence submitted in my portfolio:

Candidate name: Candidate signature: Date:

I declare that this Completion Statement is a true record of the candidate's achievement:

I declare that this candidate has achieved all the above qualification requirements for CSK-L2:

Tutor name: Tutor signature: Date: