



COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)
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COSCA Counsellor and Psychotherapist Accreditation

Annual Renewal Guidelines

These are the **Guidelines** for the application for **Annual Renewal of COSCA Counsellor/Psychotherapist Accreditation**.

All Appendices referred to in this document form the **Application for Annual Renewal of COSCA Counsellor/Psychotherapist Accreditation**, which is available on – www.cosca.org.uk – Accreditation – Counsellor – Annual Renewal Application.

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Section A: Introduction

Background

In line with the COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) commitment to developing and maintaining standards of practice in counselling in Scotland, there is a requirement that COSCA accredited counsellors give evidence of containing professional development and supervision. The process is underpinned by the COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice.

It is recognised that the COSCA Accreditation process is the means by which the practitioner has demonstrated professional competence. Maintenance of accreditation requires annual evidencing of continuing professional development and supervision of practice.

Summary of Process

You need to submit evidence of the following on an annual basis:

- Practice hours over the past 12 months
- Hours of supervision over the past 12 months
- Continuing professional development
- Current membership of COSCA

What happens to my submitted application for Annual Renewal?

1. COSCA will acknowledge receipt of the Annual Renewal of COSCA Accreditation form once it has been received.
2. Annual Renewal forms should be such that COSCA can say, on the basis of what has been submitted, that the applicant has provided sufficient evidence to maintain their accredited status.
3. The Development Officer will review the document against the criteria set and, if all is in order, confirmation of renewal of accreditation will be issued to the Counsellor.
4. If the Annual Renewal form does not meet the criteria set out in this document, or requires clarification and/or further information, the Development Officer will contact the Counsellor to address this within a set deadline. Once all the required information has been received and approved by the Development Officer, confirmation of renewal of accreditation will be issued to the Counsellor.

5. If, however, the information provided does not meet the criteria, or is not provided within the deadline set, Counsellor Accreditation will not be renewed and the Counsellor will be informed in writing.
6. As part of the annual renewal process, three annual renewals are reviewed by the panel once per year and any learning points are fed back to the development officer.
7. The Chief Executive of COSCA will inform applicants in writing of the Panel's decision.

How do I submit my application for Annual Renewal?

1. **One copy** of all applications for renewal must be submitted to COSCA, 16 Melville Terrace, Stirling FK8 2NE together with the Membership Renewal Application Form and payment of the fee. Applicants should keep a copy of their application. All applications need to be clearly presented, preferably word processed/typed.

What if I take a break from practising as a counsellor/psychotherapist?

- **Breaks between 6 months and 5 years:**
COSCA accredited counsellors/psychotherapists who take a break from practising as a counsellor/psychotherapist for more than 6 months but less than 5 years, and who wish to renew their counsellor accreditation can apply for annual renewal by submitting the evidence required in paragraph 2.4 in Section B of this document.
- **Breaks over 5 years:**
COSCA accredited counsellors/psychotherapists who take a break from practising as a counsellor/psychotherapist for more than 5 years and then decide to return to practising as a counsellor/psychotherapist can apply for re-accreditation by submitting the evidence required in paragraph 2.4 in Section B of this document.

What if I have been practising for more than eight years post accreditation?

For COSCA Accredited counsellors/psychotherapists who have been practising for more than eight years post accreditation, please see paragraph 2.3 in Section B of this document.

Section B: Application Procedure

1. Applicants Personal Details

You must complete **Appendix A: Applicant's Personal Details, Disclosure and Declaration** in full.

2. Practice

2.1 Criteria

A minimum practice of 90 client hours per year, involving at least three clients.

If you are involved in a range of work in the counselling field such as training, supervision practice and/or management in a counselling situation, you must have had a minimum practice of 60 client hours per year involving at least two clients.

2.2. Evidence

A signed Practice Statement for the year (see **Appendix B: Counselling/Psychotherapy Statement**). If you have an average of less than 90 client hours per year please provide a brief statement that outlines the extent of your other involvements in the counselling field.

2.3 Evidence

Annual Renewal of Experienced COSCA Accredited Counsellors

Accredited counsellors and psychotherapists who have been practising for more than eight years post accreditation need to meet the following criteria:

Counselling Practice:

60 hours – made up of a variety of counselling, face-to-face relationship work and related pursuits. This would incorporate:

- Face-to-face counselling (circa 20 hours)
- supervision of trainees/other counsellors
- group work (therapeutic and development/learning types)
- possibly individual work undertaken as a course tutor

Supervision:

- Not less than one hour per month and is appropriate to the volume and nature of client work

Continuing Professional Development:

- 12 hours per annum

2.4 Evidence

Breaks between 6 months – 5 Years

If you have taken a break greater than 6 months but less than 5 years from practising as a counsellor/psychotherapist, please submit **Appendix A: Applicant's Personal Details, Disclosure and Declaration** and a report that explains the reason(s) for the break. The report should also indicate how you already have, or plan to, put in place what is needed for you to re-connect with your counselling practice. In addition, the report should provide evidence of the following during the period of your break:

- current membership of COSCA
- contact with your supervisor and at least one counselling supervision session from him/her prior to starting again to work with clients
- on-going personal and professional development during the break and how this has benefited you as a counsellor/psychotherapist

Breaks over 5 Years

If you have taken a break from practising as a counsellor/psychotherapist for more than 5 years, and then decide to return to practising as a counsellor/psychotherapist, you can apply for reaccreditation by submitting **Appendix A: Applicant's Personal Details, Disclosure and Declaration**, together with a report that explains the reason(s) for the break. In addition, the report should provide evidence of the following:

- current membership of COSCA
- one year of supervised counselling practice (90 + hours) in the form of a practice log signed by your supervisor
- 18 hours continuing professional development during the past year
- a case study (900-1000 words)
- on-going personal and professional development during the break and how this has benefited you as a counsellor/psychotherapist

3. Insurance

Please sign **Part III of Appendix A: Applicant's Personal Details, Disclosure and Declaration** stating that you have adequate and appropriate public and professional liability insurance for your counselling/therapy work. (N.B. COSCA advises that professional liability cover should not be less than £1,500,000.)

4. Supervision

4.1 Criteria

Counselling Supervision:

0-5 Years Post Accreditation

For accredited counsellors who have been practising for less than 5 years post accreditation the recommended level of counselling supervision is not less than 1.5 hours per month. This level is not directly linked to the number of counselling hours and may therefore suit those accredited counsellors who deliver higher number of counselling sessions per month.

When the 1.5 hours per month level means that accredited counsellors would require more counselling supervision than under the standard 1:12 ratio, they can opt to follow the 1:12 ratio. The 1:12 ratio may be more appropriate, for example, when accredited counsellors are delivering 12 counselling sessions per month as this would mean that they require only 1 hour of supervision rather than 1.5 hours.

The above levels are the recommended minimum level of counselling supervision and are not maximum levels. Depending on their assessment of the volume and nature of the client work, accredited counsellors would be expected to increase these levels.

5 Years Post Accreditation

For counsellors who have been practising for more than 5 years post accreditation it is recommended that supervision is not less than 1 hour per month and that it is appropriate to the volume and nature of client work.

4.2 Evidence

a) A record of supervision hours in the appropriate part of the Practice Statement (see **Appendix B: Counselling/Psychotherapy Statement**). Supervision can be individual, group supervision or, 5 years post accreditation, peer group supervision where the group is no less than three people. Counselling supervision should be face to face, but in exceptional circumstances a range of technologies can be used for supervision.

b) A report from your current counselling/therapy supervisor (see **Appendix D: Supervisor's Report**).

Your supervisor/peer group should be substantially experienced or accredited counsellor/psychotherapist(s) who belongs to a professional organisation that has a Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice. They should have wide experience in supervision and not hold any line management responsibilities for your counselling/therapy, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Please note that if you have been working with your current supervisor/peer group for less than 6 months, you will also require a supervisor's report from your previous supervisor/peer group.

5. Continuing Professional Development

5.1 Criteria

You must complete the equivalent of a minimum of 3 days (18 hours) of continuing professional development each year. CPD is an activity that develops your understanding and skills in your profession and impacts on your work as a counsellor. You should evidence a range of CPD activities, examples of which include: short courses on professional issue, seminars and conferences, designing and facilitating workshops, writing articles relevant to professional practice, participation in relevant professional committees, personal therapy, research relevant to counselling/therapy.

5.2 Evidence

A log of your CPD activities over the year that includes a brief explanation as to the reason you undertook the activity and a short description of the ways in which the above CPD activity has impacted on your professional development and practice (see **Appendix C: Continuing Professional Development**).

6. Ethics

6.1 Criteria

You need to be aware of your responsibilities and duties to practice ethically. You will be fully conversant with COSCA's Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice and abide by it.

6.2 Evidence

Please sign **Appendix A: Applicants Personal Details, Disclosure and Declaration Part III** declaring that you will

- abide by COSCA Guidelines and Criteria for the Annual Renewal of COSCA Accreditation of Counsellors and Psychotherapists
- be bound by COSCA Memorandum and Articles of Association
- abide by COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice.

7. Appeal

You can appeal the decision of COSCA through the COSCA appeals procedure within three months of the decision being made – www.cosca.org.uk – Complaints – Appeals Procedure.

8. Fee

The annual renewal of counsellor/psychotherapy accreditation form requires to be submitted together with your membership renewal application form and the appropriate fee (to be found on the membership renewal application form). A membership renewal package is sent to your 4 weeks prior to membership renewal date.

You may pay by cheque or direct to the bank:

Clydesdale Bank PLC

Sort Code: 82 68 05

Account Number: 70174110

If an invoice requires to be submitted, please give details with the application. Please note that payment requires to be received prior to continued accreditation being awarded.