



COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)
16 Melville Terrace | Stirling | FK8 2NE
t: 01786 475 140 f: 01786 446 207
e: info@cosca.org.uk w: www.cosca.org.uk

COSCA Validated Courses in Counselling and Psychotherapy

Blended and Fully Online (Real Time) Delivery

Introduction:

In advance of the COVID-19 pandemic, COSCA conducted a pilot to test the fully online delivery of the COSCA Counselling Skills Course. This pilot was recently completed and it has helped inform COSCA about the requirements for successful online and/or blended delivery of this and other validated courses.

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, COSCA allowed the blended and fully online delivery of all validated courses for as long as the COVID-19 restrictions were in place.

During this time when online delivery was permitted, COSCA learned from training providers about their experience of delivering online. It also devoted much careful consideration to all the issues involved in online delivery, consulted extensively with relevant stakeholders, and closely monitored the student experience of those in the above pilot.

As a result, COSCA has decided to change its position regarding only allowing face to face delivery and shift to allowing, but not requiring, training providers to deliver validated courses in the formats of blended and fully online (real time) delivery depending on the kind of course that is delivered. This may help to increase accessibility to training courses by those who live in rural parts of Scotland and who may otherwise be unable to attend courses as often as currently required. Other benefits may be affordability, reacting to extremes in weather, ease of guest presenters delivering remotely which would increase access to the pool of expertise available, and increasing access to courses by those who have physical disabilities.

We are also aware of the continued demand for remote services even where face to face is now permitted. What seems to be the case as we emerge from this pandemic is that more counselling services will be delivered in a hybrid fashion i.e. both face to face and remotely. So, providing participants on diploma courses with additional training on working online as counsellors may also be of great benefit to them as many will be expected later to do this by their employers and clients.

In considering the above change to the current requirement for face-to-face delivery, COSCA is aware of the possible unintended consequence of excluding both providers and participants who do not have access to online technologies and/or who do not have the appetite to deliver or participate in online (real time)/blended training courses. However, our intention here, as stated above, is not to create yet further barriers to the public's access of its validated training courses.

However, different than during the above pandemic, training providers will now be required to submit a specific application and additional validation fee to deliver in a format which is not face to face. The application forms for this are on the COSCA website and are detailed below.

Blended delivery:

Blended delivery involves a blend of face to face and online (real time) delivery, with the balance being in favour of face-to-face delivery.

The blended delivery of validated courses can include some online (real time) and face to face delivery provided that:

- no more than 30% of total tutor contact time is delivered online via synchronous, live methods. The rest of the course must be delivered face-to-face
- participants must be required to attend physically in person and in the training room in real time for the face-to-face parts of the course. This means that they must physically attend the course in the training room in person and live at a particular time and date as part of a timetabled programme of delivery.
- for the online parts of the course students must be required to attend in person the live, synchronous online delivery.
- participants meet the standard attendance requirement for each of the above delivery methods
- up to 30% of counselling sessions on counselling practice placements can be delivered remotely
- trainers provide relevant training in remote counselling and/or signpost to relevant training courses for participants who are allowed to deliver up to 30% of the supervised counselling practice sessions remotely
- COSCA Accredited and Approved trainers on blended courses whose participants can work remotely with clients during counselling practice placements must evidence that they are competent to train participants in working remotely as counsellors.

Fully Online (Real Time) Delivery:

Fully online (real time) delivery requires participants to attend in person and in real time for the online delivery of the course.

This means that they must attend in person the live, synchronous online delivery of the course at a particular time and date as part of a timetabled programme of delivery.

Participants are required to meet the standard attendance requirement for the course.

Diploma Courses:

Diploma courses can be delivered in a **blended format**.

COSCA Courses:

- **COSCA Counselling Skills Course:** this course can be delivered **fully online (real time)**.
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- **COSCA Counselling Supervision Course (parts 1 and 2):** this course can be delivered **fully online (real time) or by blended delivery**, including the counselling practice placement in part 2.
- **COSCA Further Steps in Counselling Skills:** this course can be delivered **fully online (real time) or by blended delivery**.
- **COSCA Group Counselling Skills Course:** this course can be delivered in a **blended format and not fully online**.

Non-COSCA Counselling Skills and Supervision Courses

- **Non-COSCA Counselling Skills Courses:** these courses can be delivered **fully online (real time)**.
- **Non-COSCA Counselling Supervision Courses:** these courses can be delivered **fully online (real time) or by blended delivery**.

Children and Young People Courses

- **Courses in counselling children and young people:** these courses can be delivered in a **blended format and not fully online**.

Specialist Courses of Validated Training Providers:

- **Specialist Courses:**
 - specialist courses delivered at post-qualifying level can be **delivered fully online (real time)**.
 - specialist courses delivered at pre-qualifying level, and when they are core training in counselling, can be delivered in a **blended format but not fully online**.

- otherwise, specialist courses can be delivered **fully online (real time)**.

Application Forms

The application forms to apply for blended and/or fully online (real time) are on the COSCA website under validation. www.cosca.org.uk

Participant Registration Forms

Participants on courses that are delivered in a blended or fully online (real time) format are required to be registered with COSCA in the same way as participants on face-to-face courses using the participant registration form.

Costs and Payments

The costs of applying to deliver in a blended or fully online (real time) format are listed under 'About Us' on COSCA's website and also in the application forms.

The costs of the use of electronic handbooks for COSCA's courses are also given above. The above participant registration forms have a section included that states that training providers will be invoiced on receipt for the use of electronic handbooks based on the number of participants registered.

Brian Magee
Chief Executive
COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)
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