

Professional Diploma in Counselling

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I study your course if I don't have any formal qualifications?

Yes, no formal qualifications are needed just the ability to read and write fluent English

2. Can I use prior learning to gain exception from the first-year course?

Yes. If you have done at least 150 taught hours at another institution you can be exempt from the first year i.e. enter straight into 2nd year. Please discuss this on application

3. How long does it usually take to complete the course?

The taught component is 3 years however the time it takes for students to complete the 130 clinical hours can vary from person to person and typically takes up to an additional year

4. Is the Diploma accredited with the BACP?

No.

- *BACP accreditation of courses is quite a moot point within the counselling profession and there are a number of issues: Most courses are not accredited. For example, West Herts College or even the Foundation Degree that I have written for Harrow College/Middlesex University are not accredited. The only course that I'm aware of within a reasonable distance of The Albany Centre is Metanoia in Ealing (humanistic). You can get a full list of accredited courses through the BACP website www.BACP.co.uk.*
- *Accreditation can only be applied for retrospectively, thus an institute has to train and graduate a complete cohort (in our case, run the whole 3 year programme) before applying for accreditation. This we are planning to work towards and all the original students will then also be retrospectively recognised.*
- *The individual will need to become personally accredited through BACP **regardless of whether** the course is accredited and the process is very similar either way. All that really matters is whether the course meets certain requirements for training provision and this course at The Albany Centre will exceed all those requirements as I wish to set a higher standard for my students than BACP sets; as stated above I will work towards accreditation anyway. Several previous students at Harrow College who have met the professional requirements of BACP have gained their accreditation and the course I have set up for The Albany Centre exceeds the standards that we have had at Harrow College*

5. Will I be able to practice as a counsellor after completing the Diploma?

Yes, you can. Some but not all employers will require that you are BACP accredited, please see previous answer

6. What are the entry requirements?

No formal qualifications however a basic introduction to counselling skills or equivalent work/life skills experience will be assessed at application

7. Are there any examinations?

No. Assessment is continuous in terms of skills & fitness to practice and there is a formal piece of written work at the end of each year in addition to journals and project work throughout

8. What type of counselling is studied?

Humanistic with a Gestalt leaning

9. Do I need to be in personal therapy while studying?

Yes. Weekly one to one therapy is a requirement throughout and is an additional cost.

10. What is the minimum attendance requirement to pass?

80% (any less would have to be made up or the year repeated)

11. What are the course costs?

All-inclusive except for therapy and a requirement to complete a one day first aid at work course before seeing clients.

12. Can I pay the course by instalments?

Yes. The fees for the year 2017 -2018 are £3140.00 (£2616.67 +VAT) per year including the full cost of the residential. (The Albany Centre also provides free lunches and refreshments throughout all trainings). Fees can be paid in instalments by monthly standing order with a deposit to secure a place (ie total yearly fee of £3140 comprises £860.00 non-refundable deposit on enrolment plus 12 months of £190.00 per month). Please note that joining the programme commits the individual for one year so that that year's fees are due whether or not the individual decides to continue. A 5% discount will be available for those wishing to pay the full year's fees up front. (Cheques made payable to The Albany Centre, bank details for BACS payments are HSBC sort code 40-40-01, account number 42200066). Please note the fees may increase slightly year on year to keep pace with rising costs and the amount of increase will be decided in January of each year for the following academic year.

13. Can I get my money back if I decide the course is not right for me?

Students are committed to a year. If at the end of a year you decide not to progress there's no further obligation however once you have committed to the year the full years fees are payable.

14. Will the course give me credits towards a degree or some other course?

All institutes have their own policies around entry requirements however, this diploma should be recognised for institutes offering masters degrees. This would need to be checked with the institute

15. How many placement hours do I need to complete before I can pass the diploma?

130 hours of one to one therapy with clients and 20 hours of project work, working within our counselling agency

16. How will I find my placements?

There is no need to find an external placement as we provide a placement in house. However, if you have a particular area of interest, an external placement can be arranged with the Director of the course

17. How many students are on the course?

18 over the 3 years

18. What happens if I am ill and cannot attend one of the weekends?

As long as you are able to attend 80% of the course overall, you will have the opportunity to catch up on missed days.

19. What support is offered outside of the study weekends?

There is an online student portal providing independent study materials, there are student study groups set up to meet between each weekend and tutorials can be arranged with the course director as required.

20. How many additional study hours are expected?

	Hours Per year
40 hours (per year) personal therapy	40
150 placement hours (spread over the second and third year). This breaks down to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 130 direct client therapy hours• 20 administrative hours supporting the work of a counselling agency (in this case, the Albany Centre's Mosaic Counselling Services).	75
26 hours Supervision minimum over the whole placement hours	13
4 hours per month reading	48
2 hours per month writing a professional reflective journal	24
16 hours per year on the year end academic essay	16
Total additional non-classroom hours per year	216

21. Is there any residential study?

Yes. There is a 5 day residential trip each Summer

22. How often do you have guest speakers?

Most weekends

23. What is the application deadline for next year's course?

The course usually fills up by the Summer so early application is advised to avoid disappointment

24. What if I'm already a qualified counsellor/ psychotherapist?

Each year we have one or two qualified counsellors/ psychotherapists join the programme as year three students as they are seeking to increase their skills and supplement their original training. Under these circumstances there is no requirement to complete placement hours with us however some do as they value

the experience of working in our counselling service with our highly skilled and experienced supervisors and learning how to run a counselling service thereby enhancing their CV.

25. What is Gestalt therapy?

Gestalt therapy can be viewed as a voyage of self-discovery, with client and counsellor working as partners in this process. Together, you will explore experiences, feelings, emotions and thoughts that are difficult and painful, or have become fixed or unfinished, to find a way forward. Expanding your awareness of possible choices can bring relief and an increased sense of well-being.