14. Mode of Study

The programme is offered in the following modes of study:

Full-time: Over 1 years
Part-time: Over 2 and 3 years

15. Introduction and Special Features

15-a Introduction

The MA course is a postgraduate qualification which allows practising counsellors and psychotherapists, health and care professionals and individuals with an appropriate degree in a related area, to explore contemporary counselling and psychotherapy issues. The course, in addition to developing understanding of the theoretical field, extends critical abilities in relation to practice and develops research awareness and capacity.

Thus the course will be of interest to those who have completed their main counselling and/or psychotherapy training who wish to deepen their theoretical understanding and reflect on practice issues through engagement with current writing and research in counselling and psychotherapy. It can also support those that work in the allied health professions in a helping capacity by providing a good grounding in psychological therapies theory. Similarly, graduates with a degree and suitable experience in a helping context may wish to use the programme to develop their understanding of key issues.
Special features of the programme.
The course develops a clearer understanding of the theoretical field of counselling and psychotherapy; extends critical abilities in relation to practice and develops research awareness and capacity. The generic skills which students develop are initiative, ability to take responsibility, solve problems in a creative and innovative way, make decisions in challenging situations, continue to learn independently, develop professionally and communicate effectively with colleagues and wider audiences. This comprehensive package of knowledge and skills enhances students’ employability.

Criteria for Admission
While many applicants have a qualification in counselling to at least Diploma level and are in supervised counselling practice, applications are welcomed from those in health and care professions and individuals with an appropriate first degree in a related area, who can also show relevant experience.

It is recognised that International and EU students may not be able to demonstrate their suitability for the programme through the same range of qualifications as Home students; however we will consider a variety of evidence of appropriate qualifications and background. In line with University policy there is a requirement that international student’s meet the English language requirements of an overall IELTS score of 6.5. The written element must be at level 6.5.

(1) Students who register in the first instance for the Masters programme must normally have an honours degree at 2.2 or above because of the demands of study at Masters’ level.

(2) Students who register in the first instance for the Postgraduate Diploma will have relevant academic or professional qualifications which equate to satisfactory completion of the appropriate prior learning recognised as equivalent to 360 credits including at least 60 credits at level 2, and at least 60 credits at level 3 on the University’s modular course system.

The student, unless there are exceptional circumstances, can be judged through the application form, by their academic history, professional experience and personal statement. Applications are reviewed in light of the University’s widening participation approach of being an inclusive and accessible university (Strategic aim 1). Applicants that do not have the traditional academic qualifications for postgraduate study, but satisfy the criteria around professional experience, can be required to undertake and pass the Access module (3ID130), as part of the entry process.

Programme Aims
The programme aims to provide opportunities for trained and practising counsellors and psychotherapists, allied health professionals and those with a related background to reflect upon current writing and research in counselling and psychotherapy theory, process and practice. Through studying to either PG Diploma or Masters’ level students are provided with the opportunity to deepen their knowledge base acquired previously and to synthesise ideas from different theories and models. Students are encouraged to integrate theory and practice through evaluating their own work experience in light of the learning on the course. This course also provides an opportunity to critically evaluate counselling and psychotherapy research and to investigate one aspect in some depth through a research paper. Thus the course aims to:

1. Enable students to extend their understanding of counselling and psychotherapy theory and its application to practice
2. Encourage the learner to critically evaluate writing and research in the subject area against her/his own practice
3. Provide a forum in which students can engage critically and creatively with current issues and advanced scholarship in the discipline
4. Develop a community of study in which participants share experience and reflection, and facilitate each other’s learning

18-M  YSJU Level M / NQF Level 7 / FHEQ M

18-Ma  Level M Programme Outcomes

Students who gain the award of Postgraduate Diploma by the end of the course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes and be able to critically:

1. Analyse key schools of thought within counselling and psychotherapy theory
2. Review and evaluate significant issues and dilemmas within the counselling and psychotherapy field
3. Review and evaluate significant issues and dilemmas within the counselling and psychotherapy process
4. Reflect on the significance of the therapeutic relationship
5. Evaluate a range of counselling interventions in relation to diverse client groups in different types of settings
6. Develop theoretically informed responses to complex and problematic practitioner situations
7. Analyse issues, roles and dynamics in counsellor and psychotherapy training and supervision
8. Reflect upon their own personal and professional development
9. Explore inherent ethical issues
10. Evaluate research illuminating current professional issues and concerns
11. Engage with a range of research methodologies and analytical strategies
12. Evaluate research methods and demonstrate an understanding of the principles underpinning an effective research project

Students who gain the award of MA by the end of the course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes and be able to critically:

1. Analyse key schools of thought within counselling and psychotherapy theory
2. Review and evaluate significant issues and dilemmas within the counselling and psychotherapy field
3. Review and evaluate significant issues and dilemmas within the counselling and psychotherapy process
4. Reflect on the significance of the therapeutic relationship
5. Evaluate a range of counselling interventions in relation to diverse client groups in different types of settings
6. Develop theoretically informed responses to complex and problematic practitioner situations
7. Analyse issues, roles and dynamics in counsellor and psychotherapy training and supervision
8. Reflect upon their own personal and professional development
9. Explore inherent ethical issues
10. Evaluate research illuminating current professional issues and concerns
11. Engage with a range of research methodologies and analytical strategies
12. Evaluate research methods and demonstrate an understanding of the principles underpinning an effective research project
13. Engage with the research process, presenting findings in a recognised journal format

18-Mb  Level M Programme Structure and Content

Students have to complete 180 Credits for the MA. Students need to obtain 120 Credits for the Postgraduate Diploma. There are four taught modules each with a credit rating of 30 Units. Successful completion of the 4 taught modules qualifies for the award of
Postgraduate Diploma. The fifth module, the research paper has a credit rating of 60 Units. Students successful on the Postgraduate Diploma may continue to the Masters programme by undertaking the research paper.

**Full-time mode: 1 Year**
Semester 1 - modules 1, 2 and 3
Semester 2 – module 4 and 5

**Part-time mode: 2 Years**

**Year 1:**
Semester 1 – module 1
Semester 2 – module 4

**Year 2:**
Semester 1 – module 2 and 3
Semester 2 – module 5

**Part-time mode: 3 years**

**Year 1:**
Semester 1 – module 1
Semester 2 – module 4

**Year 2:**
Semester 1 – module 2

**Year 3:**
Semester 1 – module 3
Semester 2 – module 5

**Modules for the Programme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Status of Module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3ID140</td>
<td>Counselling &amp; Psychotherapy Theory &amp; Process</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID181</td>
<td>Training and Supervision in Counselling &amp; Psychotherapy</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID182</td>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID180</td>
<td>Client Issues in Counselling &amp; Psychotherapy Practice</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID183</td>
<td>Research Paper (Master of Arts)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CA</td>
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</tbody>
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Status of Module will be either:
*C*: Compulsory, *CP*: Compulsory for progression to the next level, *CA*: Compulsory for award, *O*: option or *E*: elective

Each taught module of 30 credits requires of the student a notional 300 study hours of which 30 hours are in structured learning and 12 hours are Supported Open Learning. Modules are studied in the order in which they appear in the list below. The research paper module of 60 credits requires a notional 600 study hours.
Tutors develop a learning context that is personally and professionally challenging and meaningful to develop and enhance the student’s practice. Counselling and psychotherapy recognise the need for proficient practitioner’s to be able to understand the theory and enrich their own personal development. To achieve this balance of personal and professional challenge the course is carefully organised to allow for a balance between structure and flexibility to meet the individual needs of students. The style of the course is participative and resources for learning, in addition to library based resources, include the knowledge, experience and skills of all participants and staff.

The course aims to provide student centred approaches to learning. The course incorporates a variety of learning modes, which provides flexibility for students. The approach includes lectures, seminars, experiential group work and tutorials. In addition there are Supported Open Learning strategies, whereby the tutor supplies regular guided reading materials in advance of the seminar and specific follow up reading. Students additionally undertake student-led presentations on areas of interest and expertise.

The Counselling Studies subject area is committed to a collaborative style of learning in which students and tutors interact productively, each bringing their own experience and scholarship into group inputs and group discussions. Student contributions (for example, case study presentations) are a regular part of the work of the seminar group. This enables high quality feedback in sessions as well as through tutorials and assignments. The learning is predicated on the experience of group members, often mature practitioners, who will offer reflections on casework and personal interactions with clients, on interactions in supervision, on situations in training, and on counselling and psychotherapy research. The variety of work experiences within different contexts also supports inter-professional learning. This makes use of work-based learning and encourages reflective practice. This will support students to develop their professional skills and those of critical reflection and analysis.

There is transparency regarding curriculum demands. Students are made aware that the group sessions provide the focus for learning, but that they are a small part of the learner’s commitment to the course. Tutor-facilitated seminars provide the impetus and direction for students to undertake their own activities of scholarship and research. The learner is heavily dependent on textual and IT-based resources in order to follow up lines of enquiry that are primarily chosen by the individual within the framework of the module assignments. The emphasis is on independent study, supported by group work and by access to tutors. Thus there is an emphasis on an enquiry-based approach by students and a focus on developing a learning community.

Assessment modes include: essay writing; independent research project; critical analysis of a case study; and a reflective account based on the student’s own experience.

Each of the four taught modules will be assessed by course work of 5000 words, or equivalent. Individual assessment modes are described in detail in the module documentation. The research paper (level M) module requires students to present their findings in a recognised journal format. The research paper module enables students to conduct research into a topic of interest to them that is associated with psychological therapies.

19. **Progression and Graduation Requirements**

The University’s [general regulations for undergraduate/postgraduate awards](#) apply to this programme.

In addition, the following specific programme regulations apply in respect of progression and graduation:

- MID182 must be passed in order to progress to module MID183, the research paper.
- To gain the award of Postgraduate Diploma students must have successfully
completed the four taught modules 3ID140, MID180, MID181 and MID182.
• To gain the Masters award, students must successfully complete the four taught modules and the research paper (180 credits).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20.</th>
<th><strong>Internal and External Reference Points</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This programme specification was formulated with reference to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>University Mission Statement</strong> [see page two]</td>
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<tr>
<td>• QAA Masters' level benchmark statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• York St John University regulations for MA/Postgraduate Diploma Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Norms and standards applied to counsellor education at other Higher Education Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Norms and standards applied to counsellor education by the British Association for Counselling &amp; Psychotherapy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• QAA: Qualifications can Cross Boundaries</td>
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<td>• AF02 Qualification Descriptors</td>
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<tr>
<th>21.</th>
<th><strong>Further Information</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Further information on the programme of study may be obtained from:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Admissions Entry Profile (Admissions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Programme validation document 2011 (Registry – Academic Standards)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student programme handbook (Faculty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Module handbooks (Faculty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Regulations (Registry – Academic Standards)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling &amp; Psychotherapy</td>
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