

About Accreditation, Validation and Regulation

In our experience there is a lot of confusion about Accreditation and related issues, so these notes are to help you understand what it means and where the Academy: S.P.A.C.E. is positioned.

There are two types of Accreditation (see 1 and 2 below), also something called Validation (see 3 below), and a LOT of acronyms to get used to. Accreditation and validation processes involve an external body, such as a professional association (e.g. BACP, NCS, UKCP) or an academic institution, such as a university, college or other organisation that approves courses (such as NCFE, OCN).

In addition to this, the government, after a number of years of deliberation and consultation, brought in a system of regulation (see 4 below).

1. Counsellor Training Course Accreditation

Courses can seek approval from professional bodies that they are providing the right kind of training and education to equip their students to qualify as counsellors. Here are some examples of relevant professional bodies:

[BACP](#) (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy),
[NCS](#) (National Counselling Society) and
[UKCP](#) (United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy)

These bodies operate Course Accreditation schemes. Each sets out criteria that a training institution needs to meet if their course is to be deemed suitable as a counsellor training. You can find out more about this on their websites.

It is very important to note that doing an Accredited course will not give you, the individual, Accreditation as a counsellor. Individuals who complete counsellor training have to apply for individual Accreditation and go through an Accreditation process (see below). You may also have to gain further experience before you can apply.

When our courses were delivered within the university (Sheffield Hallam - SHU) the Diploma was Accredited by BACP in 2004 (under the leadership of Gail Evans, Programme Director at The Academy: S.P.A.C.E.). As Accreditation was not portable, when we left SHU we made the commitment to seek re-Accreditation at the earliest opportunity (which is academic year 2014-15). We are currently in process of seeking Course Accreditation with NCS, which has an approach that is in line with our ethos.

2. Counselling Practitioner Accreditation

The different professional bodies have slightly differing criteria about Accreditation as a practitioner:

BACP:

- You must be a member of BACP when you apply
- You must have professional indemnity insurance
- Completion of 450 hours of training including 100 hours of properly supervised client work – ***this does not need to be a BACP Accredited Course***
- You have to be on the BACP AVR before you can apply (from Sep 2014).
- To be on the BACP AVR you either have to have completed a BACP Accredited Course OR successfully complete their on-line Certificate of Competence.

- You must be in practice, and have been in supervised practice for at least 3 years with at least 150 hours client work post-qualification, total at least 450 hours.
- You write several pieces of work to show how you meet the various criteria.

NCS:

- You must be a member of NCS
- You must be in practice and have professional indemnity insurance
- You complete an application form and may submit case studies
- Your application is treated holistically and a points system is used to judge which membership category you will be offered.

UKCP:

UKCP offers an accreditation via its member colleges (that provide the training). It has recently introduced direct accreditation of individuals, but this route is not published on their website yet. Training must be:

- Postgraduate
- Include supervised practice
- Normally at least 4 years duration

Our Diploma course was written to meet the requirements of BACP's Gold Book standards for Accredited Courses. It also is designed to meet the standards of NCS for an Accredited training.

3. Validation

Validation is a process operated by academic bodies, usually in relation to government sets of standards called the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and National Qualifications Framework (NQF). These set out the requirements of different levels of training from levels 1-8. You can find out more about this on the following websites:

<https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean>
<http://ofqual.gov.uk/help-and-advice/comparing-qualifications/>

Because many professional bodies in counselling do not ask for particular academic levels of training, and because our students come from a very wide range of academic (and non-academic) backgrounds, we have made the decision not to have our awards validated. We aim to encourage and support all students to reach the highest level of academic standard that they can.

4. Regulation

This is a government approval process of the registers of counsellors that various professional bodies operate. The government's Professional Standards Agency (PSA) examines the processes used by a professional body to admit counsellors to its register and if the PSA approves then the register is called an Approved Voluntary Register (AVR) and that organisation can use a special and distinctive logo on its website. Professional bodies like NCS, BACP and UKCP publish registers of counsellors who meet their expectations of a trained counsellor and these three organisations have had their registers approved by the PSA. See <http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/voluntary-registers> for more information about regulation.