



COURSE  
HANDBOOK

# Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills



# Welcome to the Astranti Connect Counselling Hub



We would like to extend a warm welcome to all learners enrolling on our courses.

Whether you are an experienced learner or are returning to study after a break, our aim is to support you in the successful achievement of the qualification you have chosen.

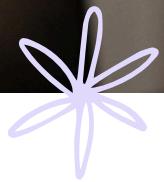
We are a specialist counselling training organisation and bring a decade of experience in the design and delivery of counselling courses to our work. We run courses from various locations and online.

Everyone involved in the work of Connect hopes that your time with us will be rewarding and enjoyable and, most importantly, that it will help you to achieve your learning goals. We are all practising counsellors and therapists, as well as experienced teachers and university lecturers. We bring our passion for teaching and counselling to the groups that we teach.

This handbook provides information on the course you have chosen and contains important information about what is required from us and from the awarding body, which in your case is the Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB). CPCAB courses are nationally accredited and offer a unique pathway to the Open University foundation.







All courses are approved by Ofqual and accredited by the qualifications and credit framework (QCF)

We actively promote the ethical framework of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

It may be that your question isn't answered within this course document, and if this is the case, do feel free to ask your course tutors, who will be delighted to answer any questions you may have.

The Level 2 course is one of the most useful courses and qualifications you could undertake. It teaches skills that will be useful in everyday life and has the potential to change your perception of yourself as well as others. The skills you will learn are welcomed by employers across a wide range of professions, and of course, it is the foundation course for the training to become a professional counsellor.

During the Level 2 course, we will guide you through the process of learning counselling skills, but also help and support you with the development of the written aspects of the course too. We aim to help you with your personal needs in order to ensure your successful completion of the course.

# Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills



The Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills course is a part-time course and is intended for candidates who:

- Want to take the first step in training to be a counsellor (this course won't teach you to be a counsellor but will prepare you for the next level of practitioner training)
- Want to become competent in the use of counselling skills to help others – either in a voluntary or an employed situation.

No previous experience or training is required to enrol on this course. You do need to be over 18 years old, though.

We do not recommend that you begin this course if you are currently struggling with strong emotional difficulties that you are finding hard to manage. For example, recovery from substance addiction or a severe and enduring mental health problem. Whilst we can all experience depression, stress and anxiety from time to time, these may not impact your ability to engage with the course in the same way that severe emotional difficulties, such as the ones mentioned above, might.

We will discuss any personal situations with you at the time of enrolment to ensure that you are in the best position to get the most out of the course and achieve your qualification.





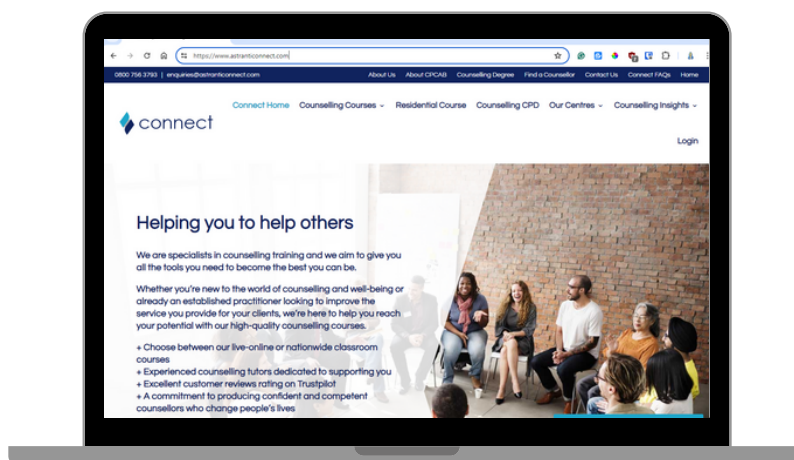


You will need to be able to read and have sufficient writing skills to meet the written work requirements for the course. You will need access to a computer and printer in order to do the written work.

The programme for this course includes theory lectures, demonstrations, group work, skills practices, tutor and peer assessed observations of practice, weekly reflective homework, a self-review and tutorials. You will need to allow around 2 hours per week for homework.

The course is made up of seven learning outcomes, which are based on the seven processes of the CPCAB model.

Successful completion of the course will give you the option to progress to the Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Studies.



## Online courses

If you are taking this course online, you will need to make sure you have access to a good broadband signal and be able to work from a place that is private and where you will be uninterrupted during the course sessions. This is essential for privacy and for your own and others' confidentiality.



### key topics that will be covered:

- An introduction to person-centred counselling
- Ethics and why it's important to work within an ethical framework
- Boundaries to keep you and the other person safe
- Working within the limits of your ability
- Empathising with others
- Working with diversity and difference
- Uncovering your own prejudices and biases
- Putting aside your own feelings to focus on the other person's needs
- Self-awareness tools to help you understand yourself, relationships and life's journey more deeply
- Other key counselling skills, including:
  - Active listening
  - Working with silence
  - Verbal communication tools
  - Body and non-verbal communication
  - Asking appropriate questions

You will have the opportunity to undertake regular skills practise with your peers, and you will be encouraged to identify and deal with key personal development points in order to develop your skills and confidence in helping others.



# Progression Opportunities

We will help you from the time you take the first step until you have reached your goal.

IfAt Connect, we offer a complete progression route from Level 2 through to Level 6. All of these courses are accredited by The Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB). Full details of its progression route are available on its website. The progression route available through ourselves is outlined below.



## Open University Foundation Degree

Learners who complete a CPCAB Level 4 course can go on to do a CPCAB Level 5 and some open university modules in order to obtain a foundation degree. More information about this can be found on both our website and the CPCAB website.

# What to Expect

A typical course session will begin with a check-in. This is a chance to share with the group something about how you are feeling and what is going on for you. It is a good way of “arriving” and an opportunity to practise empathic listening and to get to know more about the other members of the group.

This is followed by the delivery of some theory or the introduction of a new concept, and small group work, pair work and skills practices provide you with the opportunity to practise the new ideas you have learnt.



## Attendance

You will need to attend 85% of the course sessions in order to complete the training successfully.

There may be times when there are exceptional circumstances which make this difficult, and such situations will be discussed with you personally. Please refer to our attendance policy for further details.







## Support

At this level of training, we promote autonomous learning, and so if you would like a tutorial to discuss any aspect of the course, you can request one. If you need to talk to a tutor, please let them know and arrange an appointment. Likewise, if we need to talk to you about an aspect of the course that cannot be addressed in the group, we will invite you to a tutorial. Formal one-to-one tutorials will be offered as part of your course from time-to-time as needed.

As a small organisation, we do not currently offer learning support but can signpost you to places where you could access this if required. Your application form will ask for details of any special needs you may have, and we will discuss these with you upon receipt to ensure we can accommodate your requirements.



## Online Learning Materials

You will also receive a workbook with course notes as well as access to our online video content library. This will enable you to revisit key concepts taught in class or catch up if you ever miss a session. You will be provided with a login to this content library at the beginning of the course.





## Course dates, deadlines, times and important dates

A list of all course dates, times and deadlines for the internal assessment will be provided separately. Please make a note of important dates and times, such as internal assessment deadlines, as repeatedly missing these could compromise your successful qualification from the course. If you become aware of a circumstance that may affect a deadline, let your tutor know at once as they may be able to grant an extension. For helping work commitment and reliability are important values, so continual failure to meet deadlines without a valid reason may mean you do not pass the internal assessment and therefore the course.



## Policies and procedures

Connect and its associates are committed to working ethically and in line with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) ethical framework.

We have a range of policies and procedures which will be available to you via our website once you have enrolled. These policies are designed to keep you safe, offer you the best opportunities, and to ensure that the learning environment is ethical, fair and adheres to legal requirements. If you would like any information on any of our policies or procedures before you enrol, please ask, and we will be delighted to provide you with a copy. Upon registration, you will be given access to the students area of the website, where these documents can easily be accessed.



# Internal moderation and verification



## Internal Moderation

To ensure that the assessment of your coursework is fair and consistent, a sample from each group will be examined by an internal moderator. The moderator will check the marking of coursework, such as assignments and learning reviews, and provide feedback to the teaching team on the nature, quality and consistency of their assessments. You will need to make your portfolio available for the moderator's visit.

## Internal Verification

Verification is the 'BIG' picture, an overview of the whole process of developing, delivering, assessing and moderating units/qualifications.

Our internal verifier will monitor that our programmes are properly in place and are operating effectively.



# Assessment

CPCAB courses starting from September 2024 will no longer have an external assessment to complete. Instead, your Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills will be based entirely upon an internal assessment. CPCAB has set a list of criteria for the course that you must meet in order to pass the course as 'proficient'.

## Internal assessment

To gain this qualification, CPCAB requires students to meet seven learning outcomes (and the criteria associated with each) by the end of the course. To demonstrate that you have met these outcomes, throughout the course you will have the opportunity to show your ability and gain evidence from:

- Written learning reviews
- Group discussions and presentation
- Skills practises
- Observations from your peers
- Observations from your tutor

This evidence will be collected in your own personal Assessment Record (portfolio). To be passed as proficient you will need to have submitted two pieces of evidence for each of the twenty-three criteria that together make up the seven learning outcomes. These will be assessed at regular intervals by your tutor who will also provide you with feedback to help you develop your skills and progress.





# Useful Resources



As a Connect student, when your course begins you will gain access to a range of useful resources chosen to inspire and develop your counselling skills. These include - a personal workbook (with course notes and reflective exercises), an online content library of pre-recorded videos and study notes as well as online and recorded seminars on a variety of diverse counselling topics.

In addition, you will also gain free e-book access to CPCAB's own textbook - 'Counselling Skills and Studies' by Dykes, Kopp and Postings.

(If you wanted your own copy, this can also be purchased with a 30% discount from Sage College Publishing using the discount code: UKCPCAB30)

