

IACP's response to Covid19 pandemic – Academic year 2020/2021

The IACP is aware that the situation in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic is having a detrimental impact on our education, training providers and students.

In recognition of the urgency of the situation, in March the IACP issued guidance on its website in relation to contingency planning around course delivery and continuity of the placement work for students during Covid19 outbreak. IACP stated that it is at the course provider's discretion to organise alternative temporary arrangements for course provision and client work if necessary.

Regarding the clinical placement, IACP decided that it is the course provider's responsibility and at their discretion to see if it is in the best interest of the client to continue sessions by temporary remote arrangements, subject to the IACP Code of Ethics and Practice and the IACP guidelines on working remotely. (<https://iacp.ie/onlinecounselling>).

For the Academic Year 2020/ 2021: Blended Approach

The IACP approves a blended approach for the Counselling and Psychotherapy programmes for the academic year 2020-2021, as long as the course provider is able to redesign the course content to meet below conditions:

1. The redesign must take into account all the learning aims, as well as the proposed learning outcomes, and demonstrate how these would be achieved. The redesign has to include any anticipated difficulties or barriers.
2. Where it is not possible to achieve learning outcomes remotely, additional contingency plans must be put forward for when and how they may be achieved.
3. The redesign is required to show ongoing consideration of safety, ethical and legal requirements of remote pedagogical methods for the video communication platforms used, as well as the trainers and students who use them.
4. The redesign should aim at as many hours of class contact as possible to be completed within the classroom setting (skills training must be delivered in the classroom setting where possible / safe to do so), but as it is difficult to predict at this point what proportion of hours will be possible to be

delivered within the classroom, IACP does not set a minimum percentage of hours to be delivered in the classroom vs hours delivered online. Where it is not possible to deliver classes in a physical settings, colleges must outline how they intend to safely and robustly conduct skills classes and meet learning outcomes, including a plan for physical provision of this work where it is safe to do so.

Clinical Placement

Regarding the clinical placement, it would be ideal for the Students to practice their counselling skills face-to-face. If it is not possible for all the clinical practice hours to be completed face-to-face, the course can design a proportion of hours (up to 30%) to be conducted remotely. Remote supervision for these hours would also be accepted.

Client work, personal therapy and supervision

While IACP is making such allowances for remote contact counting towards qualifying hours, including client work, personal therapy and supervision during the academic year 2020/ 2021, it is up to the individual training institution as to whether they feel this aligns with their protocols and standards. If the Course Provider decides to allow the students to conduct such practice remotely, the IACP Code of Ethics, and Guidelines and Criteria for online work must be followed:

<https://iacp.ie/onlinecounselling>

Please note that both remote and face-to-face client work refers here to counselling/psychotherapy relationships with individual clients over 18 years of age.

No Detriment Policy

Courses must have in place a no detriment policy which should take into account the professional nature of the course. Students who are affected by the pandemic should be given extra time to complete their studies. The course might have to explore additional options such as holding a later or supplementary graduation ceremony.

Online Training Module

If remote counselling is approved by a course provider at any stage of the training, the IACP requests that the course must include a module or specific training on working remotely. This should be in advance of the student's clinical placement. Such additional training would not be seen as a qualification but as an additional support for students to assist them in adapting to the challenges and changes in relation to client practice hours during the current Covid19 pandemic.

Ratified August 2020.

To be reviewed in first Q of 2021.