

FOUNDATION PATHWAY ACCREDITATION

REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION

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This document provides details on COSRT's accreditation of Foundation Pathway courses.

These are courses designed to provide graduates with a unique blend of general and specialist knowledge. They facilitate general therapy practice whilst supporting specialisation from the beginning of the professional journey.

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OVERVIEW

COSRT accredits courses designed to equip people with the necessary skills and knowledge to enter advanced, specialist training. Depending on the specialist content, courses can be:

- Foundation Pathway – Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy (integrated)
- Foundation Pathway – Relationship Therapy

These courses stand out from generic therapy training by providing individuals with opportunities to fast-track specialist development and career progression. Graduates will be able to:

- Have the qualification automatically accepted by any COSRT Accredited Professional Qualification course as proof that relevant training, skills or experience entry requirements are met; and
- Have the qualification automatically accepted by COSRT as proof of general competence requirements as part of any application to become a registrant; and
- Use all specialist training or clinical placement hours completed during the course within any later portfolio-based application for COSRT Registered, Accredited or Senior Accredited membership.

LEVEL OF ACCREDITATION

Courses are accredited at a level which reflects the expected learning outcomes for graduates. That level is informed by the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), European Qualification Framework (EQF), and QAA benchmark standards for counselling and psychotherapy:

- COSRT Level 5 Foundation Pathway (RQF examples include certificate of higher education)
- COSRT Level 4 Foundation Pathway (RQF examples include diploma of higher education)

Graduation from a course at these two levels will support general therapy practice and entry into specialised, advanced training in Psychosexual and Relationship Therapies.

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and Autonomy
5	Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge.	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems.	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others.
4	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within the field of work.	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work.	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work activities.

The award of levels by COSRT is based on information provided within the accreditation application process. The three key elements are:

- Clear outcomes for course units which indicate that learning is at a particular level.
- A coherent link between content, outcomes and required professional competencies.
- A robust statement describing the course which articulates how graduates are equipped with skills and competences in line with generic descriptors above.

TRAINING TIME

Any Foundation Pathway accredited by COSRT must meet the following minimum standards for overall training time:

Total Qualification Time	Overall Guided Learning
Determined by course	At least 300 hours

Within that, courses must include training specifically linked to the specialism the Foundation Pathway is aligned to:

Specialised Guided Learning
Minimum 10% and maximum 40% of overall Guided Learning hours

Total Qualification Time (TQT) is calculated by considering the different activities that learners would typically complete to achieve and demonstrate the learning outcomes of a qualification. Values for TQT are estimates. Some examples of contributions to TQT include:

- Independent and unsupervised research/learning.
- Unsupervised compilation of a portfolio of work experience.
- Unsupervised e-learning.
- Unsupervised e-assessment.
- Unsupervised coursework.
- Watching a pre-recorded podcast or webinar.
- Unsupervised workplace-based learning.
- All Guided Learning.

Guided Learning (GL) is learning activity under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training. This includes the activity of being assessed if the assessment takes place under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training. Examples of Guided Learning include:

- Classroom-based learning supervised by a tutor.
- Work-based learning supervised by a tutor.
- Live webinar or telephone tutorial with a tutor in real time.
- E-learning taught or supervised by a tutor in real time.
- All forms of assessment which take place under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

Supervised clinical placements contribute to TQT, including unsupervised sessions, reflective activities and setting up placement agreements.

However, only clinical sessions observed by a supervisor and supervision sessions relating to the placement contribute to GL.

SUPERVISED PLACEMENTS

Accredited courses must include at least one clinical placement. This will be within the structure of the course alongside teaching and learning (rather than taking place afterwards or separately). Clinical training should blend general and specialist activities:

Overall clinical placement	Specialist clinical placement activity
Minimum 100 hours	Minimum 10% and maximum 25% of overall placement hours

Specialist clinical placement activity can involve direct observation of qualified COSRT registrants using the modalities of Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy or Relationship Therapy.

To ensure the quality of placements, it is imperative that:

- At least 60% of supervised clinical practice (placements) is in person¹.
- Students work with diverse clinical presentations within placements.
- Supervision is conducted at a ratio of 1:6 and can be online or in person.

Organisations must also evidence high levels of quality assurance and support for placements. This includes the following key standards:

- Course Directors approve the placement, including clinical supervision arrangements.
- Students are ordinarily in placement within organisations rather than with or as sole practitioners.

¹ Specialist training must be given to the student prior to any online practice.

- Service users must be made aware of a student's status as being in training – COSRT will place them on the public Student List as part of this.
- A tripartite agreement must exist between the course, student, and placement supervisor.
- Supervisors should be on COSRT's Supervisor Register or hold another registration specific to supervision.
- Supervisors should be COSRT Accredited or Registered Members.
- The course must provide a regular forum for discussing clinical work undertaken by students.
- Group supervision may form up to a maximum of 40% of supervision hours during training.
 - Where a group has 4 members or less, all time can be counted as supervision hours.
 - Where the group has more than 4 members, the length of time of the group is divided by the number of members and that amount counts towards supervision hours.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

COSRT's accreditation is based on courses equipping graduates with the competences required to practice as therapists and progress through specialist development. Courses must show through their Learning Strategy, how their content and assessment support the achievement of:

- The competences laid out in SCoPEd Column A; and
- Selected COSRT Professional Competences.

Foundation Pathways – Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy (integrated) must show the following competences are achieved:

Code	Description
PRT 3.1	Ability to understand the unique role and purpose of the therapist within Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy.
PRT 4.1	The ability to clearly articulate the clinical rationale and impact of Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy on individuals, couples (and other groups) in choosing the appropriate interventions tailored to Service Users.
RT 2.1	Ability to make an initial and ongoing assessment of the Service User's problems and suitability for Relationship Therapy.

RT 3.1	Ability to understand the unique role and purpose of the therapist within Relationship Therapy.
RT 4.1	The ability to clearly articulate the clinical rationale and impact of Relationship Therapy and the specific approach used.

Foundation Pathways –Relationship Therapy must show the following are achieved:

Code	Description
RT 2.1	Ability to make an initial and ongoing assessment of the Service User's problems and suitability for Relationship Therapy.
RT 3.1	Ability to understand the unique role and purpose of the therapist within Relationship Therapy.
RT 4.1	The ability to clearly articulate the clinical rationale and impact of Relationship Therapy and the specific approach used.

ASSESSMENT

COSRT requires that qualification from a course is dependent on learning outcomes being demonstrated through assessment. The assessment may include gradings but must be based on a definitive pass/fail mechanism. It must address both theory and competence. It will evaluate knowledge and competencies in relation to the learning outcomes.

The learner should be ready to engage in clinical practice and specialist training immediately after the qualification is awarded. Considerable weight will therefore need to be given to practitioner competence. Methods of assessment will reflect the independent learning and teaching methods employed and ensure that the student's work is evaluated from a variety of perspectives.

To allow this, assessment must combine formative and summative and include three methods – documentary, observational and testimonial. Organisations define the tools used under each method. The following table gives examples of tools that may be used:

Required Methods	Example Tools
Documentary	- Essays

	- Written exam
Observational	- Verbal presentation - Tutor report
Testimonial	- Clinical supervisor report

Each method and tool can be used to evidence multiple Criteria and Learning Outcomes. To support good governance of assessment, COSRT requires that organisations ensure:

- Clear information for students on methods of assessment and what is being measured.
- Written and verbal presentation of placement clinical work supported by supervisor's reports.
- Ongoing evaluation of the student's work through the course.
- Final assessment moderated by an independent external examiner.
- A clear and open marking system.

OVERALL LEARNING STRATEGY

The Learning Strategy is the key document in which organisations combine information to present their course for accreditation. This simple but comprehensive document shows how the course ensures graduates are equipped with the required competences for the profession. The strategy will be presented in table format (example in Appendix 1) outlining the links between:

- Course unit. Description of the specific course teaching unit.
- Content. Taught content within the unit.
- Outcomes. Learning outcomes for the unit.
- Methods. Teaching tools and methods are used.
- Assessment. Assessment methods are used.
- Competences. Professional competences supported.

ADMISSIONS

Appropriate entry routes to specialist training are highly important. Courses must show that:

- Applicants have suitable skills and aptitudes necessary for high quality therapy practice.

- There are clear and transparent APEL procedures in place.
- The selection process is clear and transparent.

COURSE GOVERNANCE

Good governance is vital for course integrity and maximising learning outcomes. COSRT requires that the following policies and procedures are in place:

- Complaints, grievance and appeals procedure(s).
- Policy and process for assessing fitness to practice of staff and students (related to clinical placements for the latter).
- Fully embedded anti-discriminatory and equal opportunity policies and practice.
- Mechanisms to gather and act on student feedback to support course standards.
- Full and comprehensive course insurance.
- Appropriate screening measures to ensure public protection for supervised placements.
- Safeguarding policy covering children and adults appropriate for therapy practice.

CONDUCT AND ETHICS

Course providers will be responsible for dealing with complaints regarding the course, teaching, and related issues in the first instance. This should be based on policies and processes in line with COSRT's Code of Ethics.

COSRT retains the right to consider complaints about course quality or related issues where the provider has been unable to resolve the issue. This reflects the position of COSRT as accrediting body and involves examination of evidence from all parties, drawing on COSRT's Conduct Procedure. Where COSRT concludes that there is an issue with course provision or similar, it will seek resolution by providing 'requirements' to the training organisation. These will be time limited actions necessary to remedy deficiencies and continue accreditation. Where COSRT is unable to resolve an issue relating to an accredited course, it can seek removal of accreditation through a Board decision.

COSRT also retains the right to consider complaints against any individual related to the course who is a COSRT Member. In such instances the COSRT Conduct Procedure will be followed in full.

TEACHING

All tutors must be suitably experienced, trained, and skilled to teach. The course team must have a wide range of expertise and skills within Psychosexual and Relationship Therapies, including where necessary sexual health and medicine. Staff should remain up to date with evidence-based practice and use research-based evidence to inform teaching.

ONLINE WORKING

Learning and practice is increasingly online. And COSRT's standards reflect that. To ensure appropriate outcomes, COSRT ordinarily permits that:

- Up to 40% of clinical placements can be online.
- Up to 100% of supervision for clinical placements can be online.
- Up to 40% of teaching and learning can be online.

In certain circumstances an organisation can request that these limits are changed. These requests will be considered case by case, subject to evidence and rationale.

RELATIONSHIP WITH COSRT

COSRT is the professional body for Psychosexual and Relationship Therapists and Relationship Therapists. It is the only organisation in the UK dedicated to the professional pathway from entry into training to senior practice.

To uphold standards and protect the public, COSRT therefore requires training providers ensure that:

- Course Directors should be COSRT Accredited Members as a minimum.
- Course staff (involved in teaching, learning, supervision and assessment) should be COSRT Registered at a minimum.
- If this is not possible, at least 50% of core staff must hold this status.

- Courses must promote and uphold the COSRT Codes of Ethics and Practice.
- All students are required to become Student Members of COSRT.
- Students must have COSRT Membership in place as they commence training.

The entry of students into COSRT Student Membership ensures they are subject to the most rigorous, specialised ethical and conduct frameworks when in training – including clinical placements.

ADDITIONAL COURSE ACCREDITATION

Course providers can apply for an accredited course to be duplicated. This can be done after at least one cohort has graduated from the original course. And it can be done in two ways – replication of a course in a second physical site, or replication in an online model (not on-site). For such additional accreditation, organisations will be asked to provide confirmatory evidence that the standards and learning outcomes originally accredited are still valid.

ACCREDITATION COSTS AND DURATION

COSRT is a non-profit organisation and seeks only to cover incurred costs for accreditation. Accreditation lasts for five years from the point of award. A non-refundable fee is paid for the initial assessment. Once accreditation is awarded, it is valid for 5 years and is ordinarily only terminated in the event of course closure or standards-related procedure instituted by COSRT. Standard costs are as follows.

Single/main course

Initial accreditation assessment:	£400
Five-year accreditation fee:	£750
Re-assessment fee:	£350

Second/additional course

Where an organisation launches a duplicate of an accredited course (for example, a second location or an online version), a nominal fee is charged:

Confirmatory assessment fee:	£200
Five-year accreditation fee:	£500
Re-assessment fee:	£150

ACCREDITATION BENEFITS

Accreditation brings the following core benefits to providers:

- Tailored logo indicating accreditation and level
- Limited rights to use COSRT 'marks' (logo and other elements)
- Listing on COSRTlearn and COSRT websites for duration of accreditation
- One full page advert per year in COSRT's Good Therapy periodical
- Advertising of the course on COSRT social media platforms twice per year
- One free staff member place at each COSRT conference

APPENDIX 1.

SAMPLE LEARNING STRATEGY

Unit	Content	Unit outcomes	Learning Methods	Assessment	Professional Competencies Supported
<i>Ethical and legal practice</i>	• <i>Ethical frameworks and codes of ethics</i> • <i>The role of professional bodies.</i> • <i>Responsibility for good practice.</i> • <i>Laws applicable to specialist psychotherapy practice.</i>	• <i>Able to understand and work within the regulatory and non-regulatory framework for therapy.</i> • <i>Able to take responsibility for independent decision making and ensure</i>	• <i>2 Lectures.</i> • <i>1 Seminar.</i> • <i>5 hours recommended Self-study.</i>	• <i>3,000 word written essay.</i> • <i>2 verbal presentations.</i>	• <i>SCoPEd 1.2, 2.2, 3.2</i> • <i>COSRT PRT 3.1</i>



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