



ADDICTION
COUNSELLORS
of IRELAND *CLG*

Accreditation Criteria

A Guide for Course Providers, Counsellors,
Psychotherapists, and Trainee Counsellors/
Psychotherapists

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Declaration: The information within this document exclusively reflects the considerations of ACI CLG on accreditation requirements for its membership & potential members. ACI does not have an opinion on any other organisations/associations.

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ACI Education Committee:

- Dr. James O'Shea; ACI vice chairperson, & chairperson education committee
- Ms. Helen O'Neill; ACI board member & member education committee
- Ms. Ann Jordan; Secretary and member of ACI education committee
- Dr Robert O'Driscoll; Member of ACI education committee
- Ms. Margaret Dillon; Member of ACI education committee
- Mr. Mick Devine; Member of ACI education committee

Authors: Dr. James O'Shea & Ms. Helen O'Neill

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Introduction

Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG (henceforth known as ACI) welcomes an opportunity to engage with course providers who prepare individuals wishing to pursue careers in the professions of counselling and psychotherapy. This document offers a brief overview of the role and function of ACI and outlines our membership criteria. In this guidance document we clearly set out the criteria required for membership at each membership grade. Although ACI does not formally accredit specific courses, we invite course providers, counsellors/ psychotherapists, and trainee counsellors/psychotherapists to engage in self-assessment of their course(s) in terms of adherence to membership criteria. In this regard we provide self-assessment frameworks for *pre-accredited*, *accredited*, and *accredited supervisor* membership categories.

Background & Context

We fully and wholeheartedly support the QQI standards at Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) for entry into the professions of Counselling and Psychotherapy for all new entrants (see QQI, 2014) and the standards set by CORU. CORU, the regulatory body for health and social care professions, has responsibility for establishing a registration board and assessing, approving, and monitoring training courses for counsellors and psychotherapists under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (amended). Their role is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training, and competence, through the statutory registration of health and social care professionals. The establishment of the Counsellors and Psychotherapists Registration Board of CORU to regulate the professions of Counselling and Psychotherapy was approved by the Minister for Health in February 2019. CORU requires the counselling and psychotherapy professions to maintain requisite knowledge and skills and it will oversee conduct and competence for the profession (see CORU 2017). Additionally, Ireland's national drug and alcohol Strategy *Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017-2025* (Government of Ireland, 2017), highlights the need for evidence based psychosocial interventions in the prevention, treatment and reduction of harm related to problem drug and alcohol use. Addiction counselling plays a pivotal role in the delivery services which are advocated within this current government policy statement.

Brief History of ACI

ACI was originally formed as the IAAAC (Irish Association of Alcohol and Addiction Counsellors) in 1990 as the professional body to represent alcohol and addiction counsellors in Ireland. The association was reformed as ACI in 2013 to reflect contemporary membership, ensure congruence with emerging alcohol and drug policy, and create robust structures for representing the profession in the twenty-first century. In the last decade, a large proportion of our members have engaged in a breadth of training in counselling and psychotherapy, and clinical supervision at Levels 7, 8, 9 and 10 on the QQI National Framework of Qualifications (see QQI, 2020). ACI currently has a membership of more than 500 pre-accredited members, accredited members, and accredited supervisors. ACI currently accredits counsellors and psychotherapists holding appropriate degree, master's degree, and doctoral level qualifications combined with requisite clinical experience, which is obtained under strict clinical supervision and augmented by robust personal development.

In the absence of statutory registration for addiction counselling during the 1970's and 1980's, the founding of the Irish Association of Alcohol and Addiction Counsellors (IAAAC) in 1990 represented a critical step in the evolution of the addiction counselling/psychotherapy profession in Ireland (see Butler, 2011). Anderson (1992) highlights the seminal importance of early IAAAC members who undertook, on a voluntary basis, to put alcohol and addiction counselling on a professional footing. Essentially, IAAAC functioned since its foundation as the unitary self-regulatory body for addiction counsellors in Ireland. In so doing, the then IAAAC and now ACI has established standards for (i) accreditation, (ii) continuing professional development, and (iii) ethical practice for counsellors/psychotherapists and clinical supervisors (See Butler, 2011) over the past 30 years in Ireland.

Promoting Standards

The need for consistency of qualifications, continuing professional development and overall standards is widely acknowledged in the literature in terms of ensuring accountability, professionalism, and evidence-based practice. ACI has a long-established complaints and fitness to practice sub-committee, which aims is to respond to complaints from the public. We are confident that this robust process protects service users, ACI members and the public alike. Addiction counsellors/psychotherapists are seen to be best placed when integrated in a consistent manner into a broader systematic health service response to alcohol and

substance misuse problems (Velleman et al., 2001), a position long advocated by ACI. Our association has worked tirelessly over many years to develop relationships with a broad range of stakeholders, including the Health Service Executive (HSE), Ireland's Community and Voluntary Treatment Sector, Child and Family Agency (TUSLA), Drug and Alcohol Taskforces (DATFs), Department of Justice, and successive ministers with responsibility for drug and alcohol strategy. We have supported the development of all of Ireland's drugs and alcohol strategies since their inception in 1997. Our central role in shaping and prompting a standardisation process for regulation of the profession for more than a quarter of a century is acknowledged by the broad acceptance of our standards for training and accreditation of counsellors/psychotherapists by all key stakeholders in the Irish addiction treatment system and beyond. In the current regulatory environment ACI is actively engaged along with other professional bodies in understanding and responding pro-actively to CORU registration standards.

Core Values

ACI upholds three core values relating to ethical practice, trust, and support:

- *Ethical*: we adhere to clearly defined high ethical standards.
- *Trusting*: we are committed to an open, honest, and trusting counselling/psychotherapy environment.
- *Supportive*: we continuously encourage and empower our members and the community.

Protecting the Public

ACI membership is designed to ensure that accredited members meet, and indeed exceed, a high standard of competence in clinical practice. All our membership is thus required to meet well established criteria in education and training. Our members are bound by our code of ethics, which establishes and maintains standards for counsellors and psychotherapists in the field of addiction. All ACI members have an ethical responsibility to undertake rigorous continuing professional development (CPD) and demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning. CPD ensures that our members maintain and develop their competence throughout their careers and continue to practice safely and effectively. In this regard, ACI utilises

an educational recognition allocation framework akin to that of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). This framework awards credits for activities related to (i) professional development, (ii) lifelong learning, (iii) professional governance and (iv) professional regulation. All potential members are required to submit and pass a formal Garda vetting process.

Membership Criteria

ACI Membership criteria offers the five different grades of membership of the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG, the conditions attaching to these grades including annual registration, and how to apply for membership.

Membership Grades include:

- 1 Associate.
- 2 Pre-accredited.
- 3 Accredited.
- 4 Inactive.
- 5 Accredited Clinical Supervisor.

1. Associate Membership

Associate Membership is open to anyone who supports the aims of the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG.

The benefits of Associate Membership include:

- 1.1 Receipt of on-going information relevant to the Association.
- 1.2 Notification of seminars and workshops.
- 1.3 Inclusion on the Association's mailing list.
- 1.4 Support from a National Body representing their interests.

Associate members may not:

- 1.5 Represent themselves as Accredited Members of the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland.
- 1.6 Refer to their Associate Membership on stationary.
- 1.7 Refer to their Associate Membership in any publicity or advertisement.
- 1.8 Represent themselves as speaking for or on behalf of the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland.

2. Pre-Accredited Membership

Pre-accredited Membership is assigned to an individual who:

- 2.1 Has successfully completed a recognised core training course in Addiction Counselling at QQI Level 8 approved by or accepted by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG which fulfils the criteria outlined in 2:2 to 2:7 below.
- 2.2 The training course must be a minimum of 500 course hours of staff-student contact including theory, skills training and self-development modules. The 500 hours shall include 100 hours of addiction counselling practice which 100 hours shall be supervised. Clinical Supervisors must be accredited by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG. Clinical Supervision shall be based on a minimum client ratio of 1-hour Clinical Supervision for every four hours clinical work (25 hours).
- 2.3 The course shall include a detailed study of at least one model of chemical and process dependency/addiction, combined with a core model of counselling and an introduction to other schools/models of addiction and counselling for comparison purposes.
- 2.4 Theoretical study of process/behavioural addictions i.e., sex, pornography, gambling, etc.
- 2.5 Theoretical study of harm reduction.
- 2.6 Theoretical study of relapse prevention.
- 2.7 A minimum of 50 hours of personal therapy is required during the educational component of the Addiction Counselling Course. These hours may include certified participation in a personal therapeutic group process to a maximum of 50% of

the total requirement (i.e., 25 hours of personal therapeutic group process may be combined with 25 hours of 1:1 personal therapy. Personal therapeutic engagements may occur in person or online. Trainee counsellors may be given credit for personal therapy undertaken within the previous 5-year years (subject to approval by the ACI accreditation committee)

2.8 Accept and work within Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG Code of Ethics and Practice.

2.9 Subscribe to the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland Constitution.

2.10 Where the member is in private practice, he/she must submit evidence of Professional Personal Indemnity Insurance.

2.11 The Accreditation Committee may invite any applicant for interview as part of the Accreditation process.

2.12 Pre-accredited Members may represent themselves as such on letterheads and/or in advertisements.

2.13 For those wishing to apply for Accredited Membership see Section 3.1 to 3.10.

2.14 Members must be pre-accredited for 12 months prior to applying for Accreditation Membership.

3. Accredited Membership

Accredited Membership is assigned to an individual who:

3.1 Is a fully paid up Pre-accredited Member of the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland.

3.2 Has successfully completed a recognised core training course in Addiction Counselling at QQI Level 8 approved by or accepted by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG and fulfils the criteria outlined in 2.1 to 2.7 above.

3.3 Has completed 400 hours of counselling work, on a 1:10 supervision basis, which must reflect a variety of presenting addiction problems. This supervision must be undertaken on a 1:1 basis with an accredited supervisor either in person or online.

3.4 During these 400 hours of clinical work the applicant is required to have clinical Supervision on a ratio of 1-hour Clinical Supervision for every 10 hours client work. The Clinical Supervisor must be accredited by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland

CLG. (Total 40 hours Clinical Supervision). This supervision may be undertaken either in person or online.

3.5 Submit a Clinical Supervisor's report confirming the completion of 100 hours of clinical practice during the educational component of 500 hours is required.

3.6 Accredited Members, as well as Pre-accredited Members who have completed their educational and post training experiential work but are not yet accredited as full members, are obliged to have Clinical Supervision for a minimum of 1 hour on a monthly basis. Clinical Supervisors must be accredited by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG.

3.7 Accept and work within the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland Code of Ethics and Practice.

3.8 Subscribe to the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG Constitution.

3.9 Where the member is in private practice, he/she must submit evidence of Professional Personal Indemnity Insurance.

3.10 The Accreditation Committee may invite any applicant for interview as part of the Accreditation process.

4. Inactive Membership

4.1 This category is the domain of Accredited Members who for the time being, have ceased to be actively engaged in addiction counselling.

4.2 Members must declare their inactive status on their annual registration form.

4.3 Members who wish to re-activate full membership status need to engage in client work and have 3 Clinical Supervision sessions with a Clinical Supervisor accredited by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG and comply with C.P.D. requirements.

4.4 Inactive Membership is for a maximum of 2 years unless there are exceptional circumstances for an extension.

5. Clinical Supervisor Accreditation

Applicants for accreditation as Clinical Supervisors by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG are required to have:

5.1 Successfully completed a core training course which contains a minimum of 100 hours of staff-trainer contact; studied at least one model of Clinical Supervision in detail as well as an introduction to other schools/models for comparison and contrast.

5.2 The course will have a balance of theoretical knowledge, professional development, skills and supervised professional practice consistent with the course theoretical model or approach.

5.3 Applicants must be a fully accredited counsellor with Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG at **QQI Level 8** for a minimum of 5 years prior to date of application.

5.4 In addition to the 100 hours core training, applicants are required to complete 50 hours work as a Clinical Supervisor within the duration of the course. These 50 hours may be made up of one-to-one, peer or group Clinical Supervision (formally contracted in a ratio of 25 hours internal and 25 hours external). *Please note that this overall 50-hour requirement is in addition to the 100 hours of core training, so the total training course will be a minimum of 150 hours, including the supervisory practice element.*

5.5 The Clinical Supervisor during training must be accredited as a Supervisor by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG and be a fully paid-up member of Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG for a minimum of five years and have a knowledge of addiction.

5.6 Two Clinical Supervisors' reports, one from the training college confirming that during training the supervisee's work of 25 hours was supervised and assessed, and a report from the external Clinical Supervisor confirming Clinical Supervision of the remaining 25 hours, must be submitted.

5.7 Post the successful completion of the educational component the applicant must be in on-going Clinical Supervision with a Clinical Supervisor accredited by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG.

5.8 Submit evidence of Professional Indemnity Insurance.

5.9 Agree to abide by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland Code of Practice for accredited Clinical Supervisors.

6. Annual Registration

6.1 All membership categories must register on an annual basis.

6.2 Registration must be renewed by 31st July of each year by payment of a non-refundable registration fee.

6.3 All Accredited and Pre-accredited Members must achieve a minimum of 30 credits annually to maintain accreditation as stated in the CPD Framework.

6.4 Except in exceptional circumstances, a Pre-accredited Member, Accredited Member or an Accredited Clinical Supervisor who does not renew membership within six months after the due date of July on which it is due, shall forfeit his/her membership. Renewal Certificates are dated, and members are not covered by Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG after 1st August of that accrediting year.

Declaration

ACI supports the objective of statutory regulation and is currently engaging with CORU and relevant government departments in this regard.

How to Apply

Application forms are available, on request, from the Membership Co-ordinator, Addiction Counsellors of Ireland, Denshaw House, 120/121 Baggot Street Lower, Dublin 2.

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Appendix (i);

ACI Pre-Accredited Membership Criteria

The following requirements apply for ACI Pre-Accredited Membership Criteria

- 1 Has successfully completed a recognised core training course in Addiction Counselling at QQI Level 8 approved by or accepted by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG which fulfils the criteria outlined in 2 to 7 below.
- 2 The training course must be a minimum of 500 course hours of staff-student contact including theory, skills training, and self-development modules. The 500 hours shall include 100 hours of addiction counselling practice which 100 hours shall be supervised. Clinical Supervisors must be accredited by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG. Clinical Supervision shall be based on a minimum client ratio of 1-hour Clinical Supervision: four hours clinical work (25 hours).
- 3 The course shall include a detailed study of at least one model of chemical and process dependency/addiction, combined with a core model of counselling and an introduction to other schools/models of addiction and counselling for comparison purposes.
- 4 Theoretical study of process addictions i.e., sex, pornography, gambling, etc.
- 5 Theoretical study of harm reduction.
- 6 Theoretical study of relapse prevention.
- 7 A minimum of 50 hours of personal therapy during the educational component of the Addiction Counselling Course. These hours may include certified participation in a Therapeutic Group process to a maximum of 50% of the total requirement.
- 8 Accept and work within Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG Code of Ethics and Practice.
- 9 Subscribe to the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland Constitution.
- 10 Where the member is in private practice, he/she must submit evidence of Professional Personal Indemnity Insurance.
- 11 The Accreditation Committee may invite any applicant for interview as part of the Accreditation process.
- 12 Pre-accredited Members may represent themselves as such on letterheads and/or in advertisements.
- 13 For those wishing to apply for Accredited Membership see Section 3.1 to 3.10.
- 14 Members must be pre-accredited for 12 months prior to applying for Accreditation Membership.

Appendix (ii); ACI Accredited Membership Criteria

The following requirements apply for ACI Accredited Membership Criteria

Accredited Membership is assigned to an individual who:

- 1 Is a fully paid up Pre-accredited Member of the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland.
- 2 Has successfully completed a recognised core training course in Addiction Counselling at QQI Level 8 approved by or accepted by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG and fulfils the criteria outlined in 2.1 to 2.7 above.
- 3 Has completed 400 hours of counselling work, on a 1:10 supervision basis, which must reflect a variety of presenting addiction problems.
- 4 During these 400 hours of clinical work the applicant is required to have clinical Supervision on a ratio of 1-hour Clinical Supervision for every 10 hours client work. The Clinical Supervisor must be accredited by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG. (Total 40 hours Clinical Supervision).
- 5 Submit a Clinical Supervisor's report confirming the completion of 100 hours of clinical practice during the educational component of 500 hours is required.
- 6 Accredited Members, as well as Pre-accredited Members who have completed their educational and post training experiential work but are not yet accredited as full members, are obliged to have Clinical Supervision for a minimum of 1 hour on a monthly basis. Clinical Supervisors must be accredited by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG.
- 7 Accept and work within the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland Code of Ethics and Practice.
- 8 Subscribe to the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG Constitution.
- 9 Where the member is in private practice, he/she must submit evidence of Professional Personal Indemnity Insurance.
- 10 The Accreditation Committee may invite any applicant for interview as part of the Accreditation process.

Appendix (iii); Requirements apply for ACI Clinical Supervisor Accreditation

The following requirements apply for ACI Clinical Supervisor Accreditation

Applicants for accreditation as Clinical Supervisors by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG are required to have:

- 1 Successfully completed a core training course which contains a minimum of 100 hours of staff-trainer contact; studied at least one model of Clinical Supervision in detail as well as an introduction to other schools/models for comparison and contrast.
- 2 The course will have a balance of theoretical knowledge, professional development, skills and supervised professional practice consistent with the course theoretical model or approach.
- 3 Applicants must be a fully accredited counsellor with Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG at QQI Level 8 for a minimum of 5 years prior to date of application.
- 4 In addition to the 100 hours core training, applicants are required to complete 50 hours clinical work as a Clinical Supervisor within the duration of the course. These 50 hours may be made up of one-to-one, peer or group Clinical Supervision, which will be formally contracted in the ratio of 25 hours internal and 25 hours external.
- 5 The Clinical Supervisor during training must be accredited as a Supervisor by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG and be a fully paid-up member of Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG for a minimum of five years and have a knowledge of addiction.
- 6 Two Clinical Supervisors' reports, one from the training college confirming that during training the supervisee's work of 25 hours was supervised and assessed, and a report from the external Clinical Supervisor confirming Clinical Supervision of the remaining 25 hours, must be submitted.
- 7 Post the successful completion of the educational component the applicant must be in on-going Clinical Supervision with a Clinical Supervisor accredited by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland CLG.
- 8 Submit evidence of Professional Indemnity Insurance.
- 9 Agree to abide by the Addiction Counsellors of Ireland Code of Practice for accredited Clinical Supervisors.

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