

# IRISH ASSOCIATION OF HUMANISTIC AND INTEGRATIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY

## BYE LAW 6

### STANDARDS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING COURSES

#### Preamble

##### **Definition of Humanistic & Integrative Psychotherapy**

The Association's definition of humanistic and integrative psychotherapy is a worthwhile opening to a document addressed primarily to training providers who would be interested in receiving formal recognition for training courses they provide in humanistic and integrative psychotherapy that meet the standards of training required by this Association for trainees aspiring to become accredited members of the Association:

*Humanistic and integrative psychotherapy emphasises that persons are self-regulating, self-actualising and self-transcendent beings, who are responsible for themselves. While recognising the tragic dimensions of human existence, it emphasises the ability of persons to grow and change and realise their true nature more fully. Its focus is on individuals seeking fuller integration of body, feelings, intellect, psyche and spirit, both within themselves and in their relationships with other people and with the wider society. Based on a phenomenological view of reality, the emphasis is on experience and the therapeutic relationship is seen as a meaningful contact between equals.*

*Humanistic and integrative psychotherapy acknowledges the validity of a variety of approaches to the individual. While accepting the contribution of many approaches, it is concerned with discovering and working with the essential elements of the functioning individual as these are understood and made sense of in a humanistic perspective. It is open to the exploration of the inter-relationship and inter-connection of theory and method in two or more approaches and may employ these as is judged appropriate, or it may attempt to integrate these as one organised and coherent approach.*

#### **1. Formal Recognition**

The Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy will offer formal recognition to psychotherapy training courses that it judges can enable trainees on those courses to achieve the necessary understanding, personal awareness, skills, and ethical orientation needed to practise effectively and ethically as humanistic and integrative psychotherapists. Such formal recognition does not extend to other courses provided by the applicant training provider.

##### **1.1 This Bye Law states the basic principles and criteria used by the Association in**

evaluating which psychotherapy training courses may receive formal recognition. As well as embodying the Association's view of what is good practice in training, it is in accord with the Association's understanding of, and commitment to, the standards agreed for all member organisations of the Irish Council for Psychotherapy and the European Association for Psychotherapy, and with the specific criteria for recognition and registration as Psychotherapist set out in the submission to Government made by the Psychological Therapies Forum (Counselling & Psychotherapy) in April 2008.

## 2. **Minimum Conditions**

In order to be eligible for formal recognition a training course must meet certain minimum conditions.

2.1 One such condition concerns the philosophy or approach to learning on which the training is based. A guiding principle of humanistic and integrative training is that the trainees' learning should be rooted in their own experience, and that they should be encouraged to integrate the various components of their training experientially. Adherence to this principle shall be one of the factors to be taken into account in considering the eligibility of courses for formal recognition.

2.2. As well as adhering to this fundamental principle, formal recognition requires that a number of other conditions be fulfilled. Some of these are detailed in the clauses that follow below. Other very important conditions, which are not repeated in this bye law, shall be the same as those required under Bye Law 11 for any course to be acceptable as a "qualifying training course" (Phase 1 of overall psychotherapy training) for those applying for individual accredited membership of the Association. These conditions relate especially to the length, structure and content of the course and to responsibilities that must be accepted by those running the course. The course must meet all such conditions in a way that ensures that trainees successfully completing the course have *ipso facto* met the accreditation requirements relating to Phase 1 of their training.

2.2.1 The fact that an individual has been accredited on the basis of having attended a "qualifying course" as specified in Bye Law 11, in no way implies that that course has been recognised by the Association in the sense dealt with in this present bye law.

2.3 No course shall be recognised unless all of the course trainers, supervisors and any others who make a significant contribution to the training programme agree to observe the principles embodied in the various Codes of Ethics and Practice of the Association.

## 3. **Recognition Process**

Details of how the principles stated in this Bye Law are to be applied shall be as the Association decides from time to time but shall normally be as provided by the Association's *Recognition of Training Courses Manual*.

3.1 Recognition by IAHIP of psychotherapy training courses shall be an evidence-

- based process. It shall determine whether psychotherapy training courses meet with the standards set down in this and other bye laws of the Association. The process shall embrace the widest possible range of humanistic and integrative approaches to selection, staffing of courses, course content, assessment, external examinership and the protection of trainees' rights. The onus shall be on applicant psychotherapy training courses to demonstrate systematic and clear processes of obtaining and maintaining evidence that the course meets all of the standards set down in the bye laws of IAHIP and to make such evidence available for course recognition purposes.
- 3.2 Recognition of psychotherapy training courses shall be for renewable periods of seven years, subject to adhering to the conditions of recognition throughout each such period and to satisfying all requirements for re-recognition at renewal time.
- 3.3 Details of the structure and operation of the committee charged with carrying out evaluations of training are given in Bye Law 12 (the Psychotherapy Training Course Recognition Committee).
- 3.4 If a course has been refused recognition the specific reasons for the refusal shall be given, and a new application may be made if and when it is believed that the issues raised have been dealt with.
- 3.5 A decision to refuse recognition to a course may be appealed. Details of the appeals process are given in Bye Law 13 (the Psychotherapy Training Course Recognition Appeals Committee).
- 3.6 Recognition of a training course may in certain circumstances be withdrawn by the Association. Possible grounds for such withdrawal are:
- (i) the course has changed in ways that mean that it no longer fulfils the conditions required for course recognition; or
  - (ii) the structures and procedures that maintain training standards are not being appropriately used or have been changed in inappropriate ways; or
  - (iii) the structures and procedures that protect trainees' interests are not being appropriately used or have been changed in inappropriate ways; or
  - (iv) a situation has arisen where it is deemed that either the interests of the trainees, or the protection of the reputation of the Association, would be best served by a withdrawal of recognition.
- 3.6.1 The initial judgement as to whether recognition should be withdrawn from a course will be made by the Psychotherapy Training Course Recognition Committee. That Committee may take account of information received from trainees, trainers, supervisors, members of the Association or members of the general public. If there is good reason to believe that any of the circumstances mentioned in clause 3.6 above may exist, the Committee may bring their concerns to those in charge of the course and conduct any investigation it believes necessary to judge whether withdrawal of recognition is or is not warranted. In

- forming its judgement the Committee will consider especially the right of potential clients to know that psychotherapists are trained to an appropriate level, the right of trainees to be treated justly and to be given an appropriate training, and the right of members of the Association to protect the reputation and good name of the Association and of the profession of psychotherapy.
- 3.6.2 If the Psychotherapy Training Course Recognition Committee judges that withdrawal of recognition is not warranted, no further action will be taken. If it judges that withdrawal may be warranted, it may suggest ways in which the course or its structures or its personnel could be changed to avoid such withdrawal. If it judges that recognition should be withdrawn, it will provide those in charge of the course with a written explanation of the reasons for the judgement. It will also inform them of the right of appeal.
- 3.6.3 A judgement of the Psychotherapy Training Course Recognition Committee that recognition should be withdrawn may be appealed to the Psychotherapy Training Course Recognition Appeals Committee. The procedure for making an appeal shall be the same as that laid down in Bye Law 13. The Psychotherapy Training Course Recognition Appeals Committee shall review all aspects of the case. An appeal will be upheld only if the Psychotherapy Training Course Recognition Appeals Committee judges that the Psychotherapy Training Course Recognition Committee acted unfairly or did not take important information into account. The judgement of the Psychotherapy Training Course Recognition Appeals Committee shall be final.
- 3.6.4 The Psychotherapy Training Course Recognition Committee or, in the event of an appeal, the Psychotherapy Training Course Recognition Appeals Committee, shall inform the Governing Body of their judgement that recognition should be withdrawn from a course, and the Governing Body shall formally withdraw recognition and inform those providing the course, and any other individuals or groups it considers appropriate, of its action.
4. **External Examiner**  
Each course shall have an independent external examiner who shall be a professional in the field. The external examiner needs to be, and to be seen as, independent and unbiased, and so he or she should have no other current association with the course or the organisation that runs it, and no current significant personal relationship with any of the training staff.
- 4.1 It shall be the duty of the external examiner to bring to the attention of the trainers, the training provider and, where deemed appropriate, IAHIP any ways in which, in his or her view, any aspects of the procedures or work of the course are
- (a) in breach of any of the Codes of Ethics of the Association, or
  - (b) are in breach of the provisions of this bye law, or
  - (c) are, in particular, failing to provide for trainees on the course a training that can, as specified in clause 1 above, “enable them to achieve the necessary understanding, personal awareness, skills, and ethical orientation

needed to practise effectively and ethically as humanistic and integrative psychotherapists”, or  
(d) are unfair to trainees or prospective trainees or to staff.

In order to fulfil these duties the external examiner shall have a right of access to all aspects of the course, including selection procedures, training procedures, organisation of therapy practice, assessment procedures, complaints and appeals procedures, and procedures for trainee consultation and feedback to training staff.

## 5. **Entry Requirements**

Training courses in humanistic and integrative psychotherapy shall have the following entry requirements:

- (a) Candidates must possess either a relevant first degree based on a course of a minimum of three years and offering a qualification at level 7 or higher in the Irish National Qualification framework, or the equivalent in life-experience and prior learning according to norms acceptable to IAHIP.
- (b) Candidates shall have personal qualities that make them suitable for the profession of psychotherapy. They shall be required to have a commitment to personal development.
- (c) Applicants shall be required to indicate: (i) if they have been expelled from membership of a professional body and if so, why; (ii) if they have had a complaint of a professional nature upheld against them and if so for what reason; (iii) whether they are currently under investigation by a professional body; and (iv) whether they have any criminal conviction, or are currently under investigation in connection with a criminal charge. A positive answer to any of these questions is important information to those selecting candidates but need not preclude acceptance onto a course in all cases.

## 6. **Selection Process**

- (a) Training courses shall have clear entry criteria and a clear selection process. Selectors shall endeavour to be aware of their own bias. The selectors shall adequately assess that the entry requirements (clause 5 above) are met.
- (b) At least two members of the core staff team (who themselves will be members of IAHIP) shall be involved in the selection process, which shall involve some form of interview.
- (c) Selectors have an obligation to bring the demands of a psychotherapy course to the attention of applicants in a meaningful way.

## 7. **Assessment Procedure**

Each training course shall have a clear assessment procedure which may include varying degrees of self-assessment.

- 7.1 Assessment of trainees shall take place at least annually during training and shall involve the assessment of both theoretical and practical work. Those supervising the clinical practice of the trainees shall be involved in the assessment process.

7.2 By the end of the training course the trainee will have to satisfy the assessors that, (a) he or she possesses a minimum of personal and professional maturity, and (b) he or she demonstrates a commitment to working to the ethical standards of IAHIP.

**8. Safeguarding Rights of Trainees**

Training courses shall have mechanisms for safeguarding the rights of trainees including:

- (a) Clear, accurate and appropriate information about the course, about its formal structures and procedures, and about course recognition.
- (b) Commitment to the Codes of Ethics of IAHIP and such ethical requirements for trainers as shall be specified from time to time by IAHIP.
- (c) Adequate and safe opportunities for trainee consultation and feedback to training staff.
- (d) An in-house complaints procedure.
- (e) An assessment appeals procedure.
- (f) Provision to trainees of written statements, and possibly other records, of their progress and status on the course, including recommendations for further development, at the end of each training year.

**9. Course Staff**

Each course shall have enough staff to minimise boundary problems between various roles. The training provider shall be accountable for the work of all course staff.

9.1 At least two of the staff on each course shall be designated “core trainers”. They shall undertake the bulk of the training and shall ensure continuity of oversight of the work and progress of each trainee throughout the training. Normally there will be one core trainer for every eight trainees.

9.2 The core trainers shall be accredited members of IAHIP. Each core trainer shall have a minimum of five years’ experience as a psychotherapist and be practising as a psychotherapist.

9.3 The size of the training group must be congruent with the training objectives and the model of working. Decisions about staff-trainee ratios must take account of the learning objectives and methods of assessment and of the importance of being able to give individual attention and recognition to each course member.

9.4 All trainers working with groups of trainees, and especially those who facilitate the Group Learning component of the training must be familiar with the theory and practice of group work and have considerable experience conducting groups.

9.5 Courses which accept trainees for advanced entry by giving exemptions on the basis of prior learning must take responsibility for ensuring that by the end of the course such trainees will have fulfilled all the course requirements for accreditation (i.e. all the requirements of Phase 1 of their training as laid down in Bye Law 11). The course must be able to show that it has structures or

procedures that ensure that this responsibility is fulfilled.

10. **Collaboration with Other Professionals**

The training course shall endeavour to support trainees in acquiring adequate experience of, and learning opportunities in relation to, psychosocial crisis and collaboration with other healthcare specialists and professionals.