

Admissions Policy

1. Prospective applicants are provided with a detailed and accurate prospectus about the course. This prospectus includes the following information for each level of the training programme.
 - a) Course structure and contact teaching hours.
 - b) BACP background.
 - c) Aims and objectives.
 - d) English competency entry requirements and I.T. requirements.
 - e) Assessment requirements.
 - f) Fees, including costs for supervision, personal therapy, BACP student membership, professional indemnity insurance and DBS Enhanced Certificate.
 - g) Study time commitment.
 - h) Course management and tutors.
2. Life-Force School of Counselling is situated in Colchester, Essex. The School's venue is the LIFE-FORCE Centre which has disabled access and facilities.
3. Prospective applicants are invited to attend an optional Open Day where in the morning they can meet the Course Director and Level 4 Course Leader, and in the afternoon can meet the Course Director in relation to Level 2 & Level 3 and ask questions regarding the three-year course programme and view the relevant Student Handbooks.
4. Due to evidence that indicates the potential emotional impact on the individual, their relationship and the group, through exposure to counselling training, partners and persons in close relationship to another applicant are not able to apply for the same group cohort.
5. Applicants should ensure they have not had personal counselling with any of course tutors, for a period of at least 6 months, before applying for any Level of the course programme.
6. Applicants must check all course dates prior to application as during the interview procedure they must confirm that they are available and committed to attending all course dates.
7. Applicants must submit their application in writing and in so doing give their consent for their personal information to be held by the School solely for selection purposes and for this to be safely stored for 1 year at the end of the course/selection procedure when it will be destroyed by shredding. All applications must be received before the applicable closing date specified in the course prospectus. Applicants need to complete a Course Application Form and also write a Self-Reflective Statement, according to the specified Guidance Topics, about themselves which explains in what way they consider themselves ready to undertake the relevant level of counselling training. This also applies to all Life-Force School students who wish to progress through the programme from Level 2 to 3 and from Level 3 to 4, as there is no automatic entry procedure for current students. Applications received after the closing date will be placed on a waiting list and will only be invited to an interview if a place becomes available before the course start date.
8. Applicants are encouraged to declare any medical or learning disabilities or special needs they have when completing the Application Form and before attending an interview. This is because it is the applicant's best interests for the Course Director to contact them to ensure the School can provide any required reasonable adjustments or additional needs on the interview day. (**Ref. Additional Needs Policy**)
9. Applicants must have sufficient competency in English Language to meet the academic requirements of the course and therefore need to provide evidence of English competency equivalent to or above O Level Grade C / CSE Grade 1 / GCSE Grade C or 4. Applicants who do not have English as their first language will need to provide evidence of meeting an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) standard level of 6.5 or equivalent.
10. Applicants for Level 3 & 4 must have: a good internet connection, ongoing access to internet/email facilities, suitable technology/devices, technical ability to work online, and consider themselves to have sufficient Information Technology skills to be able to create word-processed documents, communicate online and undertake research via the internet.

11. Applicants for Level 3 and Level 4 must have ongoing access to a private, quiet and confidential space, free from interruptions for the purpose of attending online training days should a period of lockdown occur. Level 4 applicants also need access to this same type of confidential space for the purpose of attending two Online Phone Therapy (OPT) training days during the course and for conducting OPT sessions with clients, if required to do so while on clinical placement.
12. Applicants for Level 3 and 4 need to provide two satisfactory references; one personal and one professional from a previous counsellor training tutor, prior to acceptance onto the course programme. Life-Force School students will be provided upon request, with a training reference from their personal tutor on the last day of the current course programme.
(Ref. Training Reference Format Guidelines)
13. Applicants should note that the application fee is non-refundable for withdrawn applications, successful and non-successful applicants and the interview fee is non-refundable post interview.
14. All applicants are required to attend the interview process in person, which for Level 2 is an individual and/or group interview and for Level 3 and 4 is an interview day comprised of a group and an individual interview with the relevant course tutor(s).
15. The tutor(s) select students based on the following generic attributes or the potential for developing them, as deemed appropriate for the applied level of training:
 - a) Self-awareness, maturity and stability.
 - b) Ability to make use of and reflect upon life experience.
 - c) Capacity to cope with the ranging emotional demands of the course.
 - d) Ability to cope with the intellectual and academic requirement.
 - e) Ability to form a working alliance with clients.
 - f) Ability to be self-critical and use both positive and negative feedback.
 - g) Awareness of the nature of prejudice and oppression.
 - h) Awareness of issues of difference and equality.
 - i) Ability to recognise the need for personal and professional support.
 - j) Competence in generic professional skills including: literacy, numeracy, information technology, administrative, self-management, communication and interpersonal skills.
16. Tutors will ensure that applicants' primary need is not for personal therapy or personal growth. However the course requirement for personal therapy during Levels 3 & 4 will be made explicit.
17. Before the start of the Level 2, 3 and 4 interview days the Course Director makes the application forms available online to the relevant course tutors. She then divides the application forms into 2 halves and writes the applicants' names on an Interview Process Form, one for each tutor, and as such this determines which applicants each tutor will interview. She also allocates an interview time slot to each applicant by writing the applicants' names on an Interview Timetable Form. The completed Interview Timetable Form is put up on the notice board at the start of the interview day.
18. During the interview process an Interview Questionnaire Form is completed. All applicants are required to complete Section A of this form and in so doing, whether or not successful, give their explicit consent for their personal and special categories information provided during the interview process to be safely stored by the School up until the end of the course, when it will be destroyed by shredding. During the individual interviews the tutor conducting the interview scores the applicant's responses on a scale of 1-5, writes down their answers on Section B of the Interview Questionnaire Form, adds up their total score and fills in their Interview Process Form before interviewing the next applicant. At the end of each individual interview if either tutor has any concerns about the applicant's responses then they can request the applicant returns at the end of the day and meets with both tutors in order to further ascertain their suitability to join the course at the applied level.
19. At the end of the interview day together both tutors compare their Interview Process Forms and all the applicants' overall interview scores. The tutors then meet with the Course Director to review all these overall scores and discuss any concerns or outstanding documents for each applicant. Places are offered to applicants who have provided a fully completed application and have attained a minimal overall score rating which reflects their ability to meet the demands of the training course.

Successful applicants for Level 2, 3 and 4 are offered a place on the next course in writing by email within 2-5 working days.

20. Successful applicants, after being offered a place on the course, should confirm their acceptance within 5 working days, by sending in the course registration fee and a completed Medical & Learning Support (M&LS) Form. If required the School can then ascertain if appropriate and adequate reasonable adjustments to support the students learning can be provided. Should it be determined that an adequately supportive learning environment cannot be provided, then the applicant will be informed accordingly, and the offer of a place on the course will have to be withdrawn. On course registration day students are also required to identify any learning difficulties / disabilities they have, when completing the Life-Force School Student Enrolment Form. Applicants with a current or previously diagnosed debilitating physical or serious mental health condition e.g. MS, ME, bipolar, a personality disorder etc., will need to obtain confirmation from their G.P. that in their professional opinion, the applicant is stable enough to work with clients who have psychological needs. This must be obtained prior to the commencement of client work by the student requesting their G.P. signs a Life-Force School Fitness to Participate & Practise Form.
(Ref. Additional Needs Policy)
21. Successful applicants, after being offered a place on the course, must also complete a Life-Force School Criminal Convictions Disclosure Form and return this along with the M&LS Form. If the student declares any past criminal convictions or current criminal allegations then they will be required to apply for a DBS Enhanced Certificate via the Office, prior to application onto the next level of the course programme. If the student has ever been subject to any disciplinary proceedings or has any current or previous criminal conviction(s) this does not necessarily mean they will be unable to complete the course training programme. However, applicants wishing to apply for Level 4, having either of these are required to check their eligibility for professional indemnity insurance and membership of BACP, both of which are mandatory requirements for the Diploma course. Whether a student on placement is deemed suitable for working with clients who are categorised as vulnerable adults will be determined by Life-Force School senior management. Furthermore, all Level 4 students need a DBS Enhanced Certificate prior to commencement of their clinical placement. **(Ref. DBS Enhanced Certificate and Safeguarding Policy)**
22. Unsuccessful applicants with a low overall score rating will be informed in writing, within 5 working days, whether they have been placed on a waiting list or whether they have been declined. Applicants on a waiting list will be offered a place on the course if one becomes available before the start of the course. However depending on the circumstances at the time, the School reserves the right to offer a place after the course start date, provided the applicant can attend the next course training day. In such circumstances the applicant will be required to pay the full course fee which includes the Course Leader and Course Director covering the first course day induction procedure and course material. Should an unsuccessful applicant, who was either placed on a waiting list or was declined, require feedback with regard to this decision, then he/she has the option of writing to the Course Director within 5 working days and requesting such information. The Director will arrange for the tutor to provide verbal feedback to the applicant, during which their overall score rating and the associated reasons for them being unsuccessful will be discussed. The School's policy is not to provide written feedback. The School understands that an unsuccessful applicant may feel upset or disappointed and with this in mind, all feedback is given sensitively, with clear reasons offered as to why the application has been unsuccessful. The tutor may suggest possible courses of action that the applicant could consider either prior to a second interview or to re-application in the future.
23. An unsuccessful applicant has the right to appeal and depending on the reasons for the application being declined then a second interview with both tutors being present may be offered so that further information can be gained in order to establish whether or not the applicant is suitable for the course. The School will inform the applicant if there are any places available on the course, so that he/she can decide whether to take up the offer of the second interview straight away or to wait until a place becomes available. Prior to conducting a second interview and if considered necessary, the student's Training Referee may be sent a Second Training Reference Form requesting further details about the identified areas of concern that arose during the first interview. During the second interview the

tutors should aim to establish if they can help to improve the interview process for the applicant in any way, and then proceed to explore in greater depth the areas of concern they have about the applicant's suitability for the course. The tutors should complete a Second Interview Form and then take into account all the information they have about the applicant prior to making a final outcome decision. If the applicant is successful and a place is available on the course they will be offered this in writing within 5 working days; alternatively they will be placed on a waiting list and then offered a place should one become available. Unfortunately if a place does not become available then the applicant would be welcome to reapply the following year. Applicants who remain unsuccessful following the second interview will be informed in writing within 5 working days and the procedure regarding feedback for this decision is as detailed above.

24. Any unsuccessful applicant who considers themselves under the Equality Act 2010, to either have a medical or learning disability which may have influenced their answers during the interview is invited to write to the Course Director within 10 working days, explaining their condition. If the applicant already has a Medical and/or Specialist Report this should be included with their letter. Alternatively the applicant will need to provide their written consent and GP details so that the School can if necessary write to their GP about their disability, with the possibility of referral to a relevant specialist in order to undergo an assessment and obtain a Specialist Report.

As a training provider the School needs to establish the following:

- a) The specific nature of the applicant's disability.
- b) What if any the implications are for the applicant regarding their ability to meet the demands of the training course level for which they have applied.
- c) What type of reasonable adjustments are recommended by the GP / Specialist in order to support their identified learning needs.
- d) Whether or not these reasonable adjustments can be satisfactorily be put in place, prior to deciding if the applicant can be offered a place on the course.

The School aims to support the medical and learning disability needs of all applicants; however there may be circumstances in which the training course may still remain unsuitable for the applicant, and therefore the offer of a place may not be possible. Unsuccessful applicants should be aware that this assessment process could be lengthy which may result in the applicant deferring a year, should a subsequent place be offered.

Also at any stage in this process, any member of the School's teaching team may require the applicant to attend a second interview in order to clarify the situation and to establish a possible way forward to support the applicant's learning within the Training Organisation.

25. Life-Force School reserves the absolute right to refuse admission onto any part of the three year training programme, or to ask a student to leave should it be deemed necessary for the individuals or groups safety.
26. Any applicant that feels they have been unfairly treated has the right to complain and to pursue their grievances via the School's Complaints Procedure.