

Specialist Diploma in Counselling

Frequently Asked Questions

About the Course

Q1: What is the structure of the course?

A: The Specialist Diploma includes 330 classroom training hours taught over a 1-year Duration (Mon, Wed, Thurs evenings, 3hr class each) plus a 125 hours of clinical practice (to commence after completion of the first 2 modules) comprising of 100 hours of infield attachment to agencies in the counselling setting and 25 hours of supervision which will involve discussion of cases encountered during the practicum with NYP appointed supervisors.

Q2: Which modules in the course are examinable?

A: The examinable module is "Working with Children and Adolescents". As per the other modules, there will also be in-class assessments in each module of the course. This is conducted through a combination of written reports, assignments, individual and group presentations and written tests.

Q3: What is the structure of the clinical practice?

A: The total number of hours for clinical practice is 125 hours. This includes 100 hours of face-to-face counselling with clients from an assigned centre, 10 hours of individual supervision and 15 hours of group supervision.

Q4: Do I need to source for clinical practice opportunities on my own?

A: Participants are encouraged to find their own attachment agencies to fulfil the clinical practice hours. NYP will provide assistance where needed for participants that require help in sourcing for relevant attachment agencies. If you know of any agency (e.g.: through your voluntary services), you can inform the Module Coordinator (MC) for approval. If you are currently working in a counselling agency, you can choose to complete your clinical practice at your work place.

Q5: Who is my clinical supervisor?

A: Each student will have a clinical supervisor (CS) assigned to you. The CS will most likely be from your attachment agency. The role of the CS is to guide you in the assessment and intervention with clients, as well as to help you integrate theory with practice. In the event that the agency does not have a suitable CS, an external CS will be assigned to you. In this case, the agency will have a coordinator to ensure that you are assigned cases and follow agency protocols when handling these cases. If you are currently working at a counselling centre and have cases and a supervisor, you will need to check that your supervisor meets the requirements set by NYP for clinical supervisor for this programme.

Q6: Are there minimum number of hours I need to clock in per week for clinical practice?

A: Students are strongly encouraged to spend at least 45 hours per week in the attachment agency. Some time can be spent understanding the agency field of work and protocols. The 100 hours of clinical practice can only be clocked through face-to-face counselling with clients. Counseling clients may come from different cultural backgrounds and a variety of contexts such as personnel from medical settings and other social or government agencies.

Q7: Will there be makeup lessons if I miss classes?

A: Students can arrange with lecturers on how best to address doubts/queries if they miss classes.

Q8: Why is the Specialist Diploma open only to degree holders?

A: In the development of the Specialist Diploma, NYP and SSTI have consulted closely with the Singapore Association for Counselling (SAC) which is the counselling professional body that sets the recommended standards for practice and education qualification in the counselling profession in Singapore. The SAC has started a system of accrediting counselling training programmes that will meet the requirements set in line with international benchmark for a recognised counselling qualification. One of the requirements for the Specialist Diploma to obtain accreditation from SAC is that it needs to be on a postgraduate level programme. As such, NYP and SSTI have set the programme at graduate entry so that the programme would be accredited and participants' qualification will be recognised by the professional body.

Q9: Am I considered a qualified Counsellor on completion of the Specialist Diploma?

A: The SAC considers those who are Registered Counsellors with them as having the relevant qualification in keeping with the professional standard of counselling in Singapore that the SAC aims to advance. According to SAC's Pre-Employment Training (PET) framework for Counsellors, graduates who have completed a post graduate qualification in counselling meeting requirements they have set (which this Specialist Diploma will fulfil), can become a Registered Counsellor upon accumulating 600 counselling hours within 3 years + 60 hours of supervised counselling hours (these hours are counted after completion of the Specialist Diploma for new entrants to counselling field and once the Specialist Diploma commences for those already in the counselling/social service practice).

About Course Fees & Subsidy/Grants for Participants

Q10: Can I pay by instalment for the course fee?

A: Participants who are offered a training place by NYP are required to pay the full course fee before they enrol for the course. This is usually done about 3 weeks before the course starts.

Q11: Who is eligible for the MOE subsidy?

A: All Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents are eligible for the subsidy.

Q12: Will there be refund of course fee if I withdraw from the course?

A: Candidates who withdraw during the first week of the course will be refunded 75% of the course fee. Thereafter, there will be no refund.

Q13: What if I repeat a module?

A: You will be required to pay the full fees for each repeat module. The fees for each module will be determined by the module hours. There will not be any MOE subsidy for repeat modules.

More about Counselling As a Profession

Q14: What is a SAC Registered Counsellor?

A: (Ref: <http://www.saccounsel.org.sg/constitution.html> , under SAC Constitution). Every Ordinary Member* of SAC will automatically be placed upon the register when they are granted membership. Registered members may call themselves **SAC Registered Counsellors**.

NCSS, the national coordinating body for VWOs in Singapore, encourages VWOs to employ SAC Registered Counsellors.

*[*Extracted from SAC website: To become Ordinary Members of SAC, candidates should satisfy the SAC Executive Committee that they have approved training and experience in counselling in accordance with one of the following sets of requirements (a) or (b):*

(a) Shall be a graduate from an accredited institute of higher learning and has also completed recognized training courses in counselling theory. The counselling content (of a minimum of 300 hours altogether) must include:

i. Counselling Theory, which includes the principles, concepts, and practice of counselling and orientation to basic counselling models;

ii. Counselling Content Areas may include: Human Growth and Development, Helping Relationships, Group Work, Appraisal and Research, Career and Lifestyle Development, Professional Orientation and Ethics, Marriage and Family Work and other specialization topics.

iii. Counselling Practicum or Internship as part of the degree programme, which includes a minimum of 100 hours in the practice of face to face counselling under supervision. The supervision will consist of at least one hour of supervision for each ten hours of counselling practice.

iv. He/She should complete 600 hours of face-to-face counselling within three years of completing the training. The recording of hours will begin only when coursework has been completed. The supervision will consist of at least one hour of clinical supervision for each ten hours of counselling practice.

OR

(b) Is presently a social and counselling service provider/practitioner before having taken this option. Shall have completed recognized training courses in counselling theory and skills practice (of a minimum of 300 contacts hours altogether) from an accredited educational or training institute.

i. Counselling Theory, which includes the principles, concepts, and practice of counselling and orientation to basic counselling models;

ii. Counselling Content Areas may include: Human Growth and Development, Helping Relationships, Group Work, Appraisal and Research, Career and Lifestyle Development, Professional Orientation and Ethics, Marriage and Family Work and other specialization topics.

iii. He/She must complete 600 hours of face-to-face counselling within three years of completing educational requirements. Recording of hours may begin when course work begins. The supervision will consist of at least one hour of clinical supervision for each ten hours of counselling practice.

(For further information on how to apply to become Ordinary Member of SAC, visit SAC website at <http://www.saccounsel.org.sg/download.html>.)

Information correct as at 19 Dec 2009. NYP and SSTI reserve the rights to amend to the FAQs whenever necessary.