Faculty of Science and Technology

Review Report

1. Programme details

1.1 BSc (Hons) Integrative Counselling

1.2 Validated Programme with Matrix College. The programme runs at Iceni, Ipswich and Steiner School, Norwich.

1.3 Entry award:
BSc (Hons) Integrative Counselling

1.4 Exit awards:
BSc (Hons) Integrative Counselling
DipHE Integrative Counselling
CertHE Integrative Counselling Skills

1.5 The programme was reviewed to run in Full Time mode only.

1.6 This is a six-yearly review.

1.7 Date of next enrolment: Autumn 2018.

1.8 The programme consists of the following existing modules, all of which were reviewed at the event. No modules were reviewed to run in Distance Education mode:

Module Code	Module Title	Level
1	Introduction to integrative principles and self-awareness	4
2	Introduction to counselling theories and skills	4
3	Practitioner reflexivity and professional ethics	4
4	Working at relational depth	5
5	Development of the Self and Intersubjectivity	5
6	Anti-oppressive practice and creating a personal integrative framework	5
7	Co-creation of the therapeutic relationship	6
8	The fragile client	6
9	Integrating theory and practice	6

1.9 This proposal was approved by the Academic Provision Approval Committee (APAC) to proceed to review on 7th November 2017. APAC ensures the proposal makes business sense in terms of student demand, income generated and resources required to run it. This process also serves to provide advanced notice to the relevant sections of the university about changes to academic provision.

1.10   Collaborative detail

The programme is a collaboration with another institution: validated programme with Matrix College.

2. Date and venue of event

The validation event took place on 31st January 2018 at Matrix College, The Farmers Club, 10 Northgate Street, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1HQ.

3. Conduct of review

The review was conducted via a full one-day event and through a series of meetings with student representatives, the Senior Team and the Programme Team. These meetings explored matters relating to the quality and standards of the programme and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. Videos were shown of the facilities at Iceni Ipswich and of the proposed new teaching venue in Norwich, and a demonstration of Moodle resources was delivered.

The following people attended the review event:

1. Panel Members		
Panel Chair	Tina Moore	Senior Lecturer in Work Based Learning & Adult Nursing, Faculty of Health and Education, Middlesex University
University Representative	Daniel Sosnowski	Faculty Technical Manager, Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries, Middlesex University
External Assessor	Clare Marshall	Clinical Psychologist in Adult Mental Health Services, Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Trust
External Assessor	James Spence	Psychotherapist/Counsellor, Suffolk Psychotherapy
Officer	Michael Greener	Quality Enhancement Officer, Faculty of Science & Technology, Middlesex University
2. Senior Staff		
Fiona Paul	Head of Training, Matrix College	
Alison Dart	Deputy Head of Training, Matrix College	
David Westley	Associate Professor & Director of Programmes for Collaborative Provision & Placement Learning, Department of Psychology, Middlesex University	
3. Programme Team		
Fiona Paul	Head of Training, Matrix College	
Alison Dart	Deputy Head of Training, Matrix College	
Bronwen Rees	Yr 1 Ipswich Programme Lead	
Anne Gisby	Yr 2 Ipswich Programme Lead	
Sara Jackson	Yr 3 Ipswich Programme Lead	
Henry Adeane	Yr 3 Norwich Programme Lead	
Louise Bowden	Tutor	
Nikkita Welman	Administrator	
David Westley	Associate Professor & Director of Programmes for Collaborative Provision & Placement Learning, Department of Psychology, Middlesex University	

4. Evidence base

The following documents were presented to the Panel in advance of the event:

Paper 1	Officer Paper on the Context of the Event
Paper 2	APAC Form with the extract of the APAC minute of approval
Paper 3	Critical Review Document describing the operation of the programme
Paper 4	Programme Handbook
Paper 5a Paper 5b Paper 5c	QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Counselling and Psychotherapy QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications: Level Descriptors Curriculum Design: Academic Policy Statement APS18
Paper 6a Paper 6b	Annual Monitoring Reports, Board of Study minutes, External Examiner reports and responses: • 2016/17 • 2015/16
Paper 7	Graduate Framework Mapping Grid
Paper 8	List of library resources • Ipswich • Norwich
Paper 9	Report of the previous review
Paper 10	Guidance on Diversity in relation to validation and Review
Paper 11	Programme Staff CVs

5. Proposal design and standards

5.1 The panel met with four current Year one students from the Ipswich and Norwich venues and Year two and three students from Ipswich, together with four alumni. The students had been informed of the proposed changes to the curriculum included in this review, and reported that these were being introduced in response to feedback from students, including changes to the assessment scheme in year Three and to the teaching and assessment of reflective practice throughout the programme; issues with the case study, for example, had been raised by students and had been resolved by the proposed changes. The students felt that this reflected a culture at Matrix of staff being highly responsive to the student voice.

5.2 Students had enjoyed and benefitted from the range of tutors who delivered the programme, and from being exposed to a diversity of styles and approaches; this was often challenging, which students had welcomed as this encouraged them to question themselves. This diversity, together with the opportunities for discussion with other students with a range of previous experience, had been important in developing reflectivity in the context of an integrative programme. The Programme Leads were also highly approachable throughout the programme. Alumni were offered the opportunity to continue as members of the college, which they had highly valued.

5.3 The students had found that theory and practice had been integrated well, and the fact that tutors were all practitioners had enabled understanding of the application of theory.

5.4 Students had chosen Matrix college on the basis of recommendations from colleagues who reported on the college's high reputation in the area, and the fact

that employers valued graduates from the college. The delivery of the programme at weekend sessions had been valuable as this enabled study to be combined with full-time work, and the inclusion of intense personal counselling content enabled students to become better counsellors. Prospective students had the opportunity to attend taster sessions, which had persuaded them of the high standards at the college.

5.5 The students and alumni commended the excellent level of organisation, communication, teaching and support (especially during placement) which they had experienced and the non-hierarchical culture at the college. Guidelines were provided which advised that any problems should be taken to the Programme Lead, and students felt that this helped ensure continuity. A lot of information was provided on the Moodle virtual learning environment, and questions or issues raised with the Programme Leads were responded to rapidly, normally within 24 hours.

5.6 The provision, at the start of the programme, of a full timetable for the three years had been especially useful.

5.7 The panel began the meetings with Senior Staff and with the Programme Team by commenting on the high standard of the documentation.

5.8 An outline of the proposed changes to the programme was offered by the Senior Staff. Around 20% - 25% of the content was being changed, with the objective to introduce a more modular structure with more focus on the learning outcomes and a clearer outline of what would be taught in each term. More Creativity workshops would be delivered, as well as additional content relating to areas including psyche and soma. The changes had been discussed with the UK Council for Psychotherapy, who agreed that they would provide greater depth.

5.9 Theory, personal development and skills practice were each given an equal weight within the programme in terms of content and time. The three areas were integrated through the continuous maintenance of a learning journal, to include self-reflection and to comment on the skills learned. Conflict was managed through team work, with the tutors at each weekend holding progress discussions with each other, and relationally by tutors asking students to bring to them any conflicts with the college.

5.10 Reflective practice is addressed in seminars and group work, and tutors prepare written comments about each student's reflection after each session. Triad sessions, observed by a tutor, provide students with the opportunity to experience being a client, which is an additional reflective process.

5.11 Senior Staff considered that the distinctive selling points of the programme included its relational nature from the start, the level of communication between staff and students and recognition of the student voice. The college had high professional standards, reflected in the number of organisations who approached Matrix with offers of placements. A rigorous process for application to the programme was applied; fewer places than previously were offered on the basis of the accreditation of prior learning, as it was felt this could be disruptive to existing cohorts. This had resulted in some reduction in student numbers, but also in higher standards.

5.12 The panel noted issues which had been raised at the previous review of the programme regarding the Complaints and Grievance procedure. The Senior Staff responded that the procedure had been revised in response to this.

5.13 Transition of students to the new curriculum was explored with the Senior Staff. The new curriculum would be taught to existing students. This was not expected to be a problem as the new learning outcomes were largely a tighter and better-written version of the existing outcomes, and there would be no gaps between the existing and new content. The panel asked for this to be made explicit by carrying out a mapping exercise of the outcomes for the current and new programmes **(Condition 1c)**,

5.14 The panel also recommended that tracking of the transition process should be considered, to ensure equity of learning experiences for the student **(Recommendation 3)**.

6. Assessment

6.1 Page 35 of the Programme Handbook included a statement that "Personal counselling is not assessed, although there is an expectation upon counsellors that serious doubts of concerns will be communicated to the Head of Training". The Senior Staff explained that this practice was not, in fact, followed and this sentence would be removed **(Condition 1d)**.

6.2 All modules bear 40 credits, and the panel discussed with the Programme Team whether assessment workloads were consistent between modules. The summative assessment for Module 8 The Fragile Client, for example, consists of a 4,000 word journal while that for Module 9 Integrating Theory and Practice lists a 4,000 word journal in addition to a research proposal, 6,000 word case study etc. The purpose of some of these assignments is to prepare for the viva, while some did not relate specifically to this particular module; in such cases the panel asked that either the assignments in question should be removed from the Module Narrative, workloads between modules should be rebalanced, or that consideration should be given to having a different number of credits for each module within a year, while maintaining a total of 120 credits per year **(Condition 1b)**.

6.3 The scheduling of formative and summative assessment is arranged so that students are never required to work on more than one written assignment at a time, other than the continuing work of keeping a journal. Formative assessment is carried out during the semester, with summative assignments at the end of the semester. Tutorials are held early in each semester, which provide the opportunity for students to discuss any problems with written work and this gives an early indication as to whether there may be any issues with progression so that these can be addressed.

6.4 The programme team explained further that workloads are lighter earlier in the programme, as it was found that in the early stages of their studies more work was needed to achieve the same number of credits as for later modules. Modules also involve the preparation of a presentation. The third module in each year includes peer assessment of a written self-appraisal; where this had indicated a student having difficulties with reflective practice, the Programme Lead met with the student concerned and offered support, and this had been found to improve the student's work.

6.5 Criteria were provided to tutors on giving focussed feedback on students' work, and Programme Leads review the written comments for each student. Feedback was also offered in tutorials, and students are given formal feedback on their engagement with the group at the Presentation weekend, as well as on their

written work. The substantive element of feedback took the form of a tutor meeting a student to advise whether they are ready for practice. This might result, for example, in a student agreeing to repeat Year Two.

7. Placement

7.1 The students and alumni commented that they had been encouraged to be self-sufficient in finding placements, but that support in this had been offered by the Programme Leads, who ensured readiness for practice before starting placements. The college has good networks which were used to notify placement opportunities on Moodle, and the students were not aware of any instances of a student being unable to find a placement. In the event of a placement being found not to be suitable for a student, it was felt that there would be no difficulty in finding another placement to move to. Where any problems were encountered in a placement, students would first contact the placement organisation but were also encouraged to keep Programme Leads in the loop. A written agreement was signed by the Programme Lead for each placement, and if the College had any concerns about a placement this would be raised with the organisation, with the student's consent.

7.2 The panel asked that students' progress on placement be further monitored by supervisors providing a written report on progress with counselling clients **(Recommendation 1)**.

7.3 It was further recommended that students' experience on the placement should be further enhanced by having more than one supervisor during their programme **(Recommendation 2)**.

8. Admissions

8.1 The College welcomed applications from BME candidates, and students from varied community groups had successfully undertaken the programme and been well supported. A QAA review had noted that Matrix is above average for the region in terms of the diversity of intake. The latest cohort had raised the ratio of male to female students. Opportunities for bursaries were being investigated.

8.2 The Admissions procedure had been revised with the aim of reducing the dropout rate, firstly by requiring an academic reference from the most recent place of training and secondly by including sections on the application form to list the applicant's strengths and weaknesses, using a minimum of 500 words. Stricter interview criteria had also been introduced.

9. Data

9.1 The panel noted that the student numbers on the APAC form were higher than those listed on the Annual Monitoring Report. The Senior Staff commented that the former included students enrolled on all years, while the latter listed the figure for new enrolments only. Target numbers were higher for future years, as the proposed new venue at Norwich would be large enough to hold two year One groups and additional weekend sessions. Staff resources were available for the additional delivery.

10. Attendance

10.1 Senior Staff confirmed that students failing to reach the 80% attendance rate would be required to repeat the year.

11. Facilities

11.1 The availability of counselling rooms at Ipswich had been welcomed by the students. An issue with temperatures in the rooms had been raised and responded to.

11.2 The Senior Staff explained that in May 2018 the College aimed to move into its own teaching venue in Norwich, subject to approval by Middlesex University. The panel were shown a video of the proposed new premises. Students had been surveyed on the move to the new venue with a requirement for a 75% level of agreement; this had been reached for year Two but the required number of responses had not been received from year Three, and the final year of the programme would therefore be delivered at the current shared premises in Norwich until the end of the 2017-18 academic year. The students confirmed that they had been closely involved and consulted about the proposed move.

11.3 The new venue would enable some weekday teaching in addition to the current weekend sessions, as well as the potential delivery of CPD and a counselling service.

11.4 The venue at Ipswich was currently owned by Iceni, who were moving to new premises, and Matrix College were currently negotiating the use of their new venue in Ipswich.

11.5 The existing and proposed new venues would have disabled access including lifts and stair lifts. The Cambridge Resource Centre was consulted about reasonable adjustments for any students needing additional support.

12. Learning resources

12.1 The college had developed a Virtual Learning Environment using Moodle. Students had found the Moodle resources very useful, and the platform was easy to navigate. Essays were submitted via Moodle, and students and staff had found this to be working successfully. Resources were made available on Moodle following each weekend session, and a forum was provided for students and alumni. The availability of texts in the library had been raised as an issue at a Board of Study, and the students felt that this had been improved due to material being made available on Moodle.

12.2 Although students considered that the library was well-stocked, there was a limitation in only being able to access books when attending the weekend sessions; it was expected that this would be improved when the college opened its proposed new venue in Norwich, as there would be less reliance on access to venues shared with other organisations. There had also been an issue with books being borrowed and not returned. This had been addressed by students volunteering to take turns to act as librarian; books could only be borrowed and signed for at lunchtime, under the supervision of the librarian.

12.3 The College had recently received a CLA licence, and was aiming to introduce the provision of e-textbooks.

13. Student Support

13.1 Support for students with learning difficulties was led by a Learning Support tutor, who had training in areas including dyslexia. Students were asked to

disclose learning difficulties on the application form, and if any issues arose after a student beginning the programme the Learning Support tutor would be involved. Students with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis and Multiple Sclerosis had successfully taken the programme; the students had approached staff to discuss their needs and this had resulted in, for example, triad sessions being re-arranged from the afternoon to the morning to avoid fatigue.

14. Staff resources

14.1 Two training sessions per year were offered to staff. These had addressed areas suggested by feedback from students, including group process, ethics, teaching adults and monitoring. A staff observation rota and an appraisal process were conducted every two years and in the first year of a member of staff's employment. Prospective staff conducted an observed teaching session as part of the interview process. Once engaged, each staff member shadowed a tutor for a weekend session; this was found to enhance a consistency of approach.

14.2 All staff are practitioners, and therefore meet CPD requirements. Regarding research activity by staff, a staff member had recently completed a PhD, and a staff member intended to carry out research into Readiness to Practice criteria. A Research committee had been established, including a student representative, and the research element of the programme was being enhanced by, for example, a re-design of the Research weekend. Two other members of staff had conducted extensive research and further opportunities would be explored.

14.3 The structure of the programme team was explained: the Programme Leader holds regular meetings with the Programme Lead Tutors, and these meetings review the weekend sessions which have been held. Each year has a Programme Lead Tutor in Norwich and Ipswich, who each act as the main contact for students, hold tutorials and read reflective journals and essays, and liaise with all tutors to maintain continuity.

14.4 A briefing session is held before and after each weekend session, and the results handed on to the tutors for the next weekend to provide continuity.

15. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

Two of the student representatives had entered the programme in Year three, following interview and a portfolio of work from previous studies.

16. Additional costs for students

The students reported that any additional costs, such as fees for counselling sessions and for extensions, had been made clear at interview and in the acceptance letter.

17. Subject Benchmarks

The QAA Subject Benchmark statement for Counselling and Psychotherapy 2013 had informed the design of the new curriculum.

18. Programme Handbook

Some typos in the Programme Handbook were noted, and errors such as links not being current, and the panel asked for these to be corrected.

19. Contents of the Programme Specification and module narratives

Comments on the Programme Specification:

19.1 Section 9 Admission criteria: IELTS score requirements to be added. References to "disabled students" to be replaced by a less negative term such as "students with disabilities".

19.2 Section 11 Programme Outcomes: the panel referred to outcome A6 *Have an ability to analyse and understand the research processes*, and discussed with the programme team at what stage in the programme this is taught. A Research weekend is held during Year three, including discussion of the research cycle, ethics, and methodology, and students produce a mock research proposal. The syllabus for Module 9 Integrating Theory and Practice would be expanded to reflect this, and the first item in the syllabus *Counselling research project* would be amended to read *Counselling research methods*.

19.3 Section 13 Curriculum Map: the panel referred to the guidance document on writing a programme specification in the Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook: "It is not necessary to include the table if all learning outcomes are developed to the highest level appropriate to the award (e.g. level 7 in the case of postgraduate awards, level 6 awards in the case of undergraduate honours degrees). In such cases, please note in this section that "All programme learning outcomes are developed to ... (level number"." If it was confirmed that all programme learning outcomes are developed to Level 6, the table would therefore not be necessary. If the curriculum map was retained, the text of the learning outcomes would be amended to agree with the outcomes as listed in Section 11.

Module Narratives

19.4 It was noted that in some cases the module title differs from that listed in the Critical Review document, and the programme team confirmed that the titles in the Module Narratives are correct.

19.5 The programme team advised that for each module, students are required to pass each summative assessment.

19.6 Individual Module Narratives were considered as follows:

Module 1 Introduction to Integrative Principles and Self Awareness: no comments specific to this module.

Module 2 An introduction to counselling theories and skills: no comments specific to this module.

Module 3 Practitioner reflexivity and professional ethics: no comments specific to this module.

Module 4 Working at Relational Depth: the first summative assessment should read *4,000 word essay*.

Module 5 Development of the Self and Intersubjectivity: The first summative assessment should read "4,000 word essay"

Module 6 Anti-oppressive practice and creating a personal integrative framework: a relatively high assessment workload is listed. The programme team commented that the module has always had this structure, but the workload would be reviewed in line with the discussion regarding workloads relative to the credit weighting of modules.

Module 7 Co-creation of the therapeutic relationship: the assessment workload is high relative to other modules, and would be reviewed.

Module 8 The fragile client: no comments specific to this module.

Module 9 Integrating theory and practice: the assessment workload is high relative to other modules, and would be reviewed.

20. Monitoring and review

The programme was approved for six years.

21. Conclusion

21a. Commendations

1) The relational stance that is embedded in all aspects of the programme and modelled in the teaching, learning and assessment strategies.

2) A well-considered and carefully balanced mixture of theory, skills-based and personal development which reflects the integrative model

3) The current programme is progressive in its approach to the training of psychotherapy students

4) The democratic processes that are involved in the running of the programme and reflects an effective collaborative approach to learning

5) The programme is highly organised and professionally delivered

21b. Conclusions on quality, standards, currency and validity

Approved subject to conditions and with recommendations.

The panel concluded that subject to the conditions and consideration of the recommendations below:
- the intended learning outcomes are being obtained by students, quality and standards are being achieved and the Programme Specification is being delivered
- the programme/subject remains current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline, practice in its application, and developments in teaching and learning.

22. Memorandum of Cooperation

The memorandum of cooperation is to be finalised and signed by the chief executive of the partner institution and for Middlesex University Director of Academic Partnerships before the programme may run.

23. Conditions and recommendations

<u>Conditions</u>

1) To review and amend the Programme Handbook in relation to discussions held at the event:

   a) Correct all errors in the handbook (18, 19)
   b) Rebalance the assessment tasks to ensure consistency of workload for each module (6.2)
   c) To undertake a mapping exercise of the programme outcomes for the current programme and the new programme (5.13, 19.6)
   d) Remove content regarding expectations of Personal Therapists to feed back to the College (page 35) (6.1)

<u>Recommendations</u>

1) To consider a written interim report on students' progress around counselling clients from the supervisor (7.2)

2) Consider the possibility of students experiencing more than one supervisor during their programme (7.3)

3) Consider tracking the transition process to ensure equity of learning experiences for the student (5.14)

Deadline for conditions and recommendations: Revised documentation and compliance statement to be sent to Tina Moore and Michael Greener by Monday 30th April 2018 for consideration by the Chair and External Assessors.

Panel Conditions and Recommendations for the Review of BA (Hons) Integrative Counselling, and the Team's Response

Conditions	Response (please cross-reference with page numbers where appropriate)
1) To review and amend the Programme Handbook in relation to discussions held at the event:	
a) Correct all errors in the handbook (18, 19)	
b) Rebalance the assessment tasks to ensure consistency of workload for each module (6.2)	
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d) Remove content regarding expectations of Personal Therapists to feed back to the College (page 35) (6.1)	
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