



# Student Codes & Procedures

2022-23



## Guidance for Use

All student and graduate members of Matrix are required to abide by the Codes of Ethics and Professional Practice contained within these Codes and Procedures.

A student member of Matrix is a Matrix Student or a Matrix Graduate (who is working towards registration).

Student and graduate members are advised to read these Codes and Procedures in conjunction with the Student Handbook.

The term student member used in these Codes and Procedures refers to both a Matrix Student and a Matrix Graduate (working towards registration).

The term 'Practitioner' used in these Codes and Procedures applies to all of the above.

Student members are advised to familiarise themselves both with these Codes and the Codes of all other professional bodies to which they belong.

Compliance with these Codes and Procedures is a term of the student, so any non-compliance may give rise to disciplinary action.

Matrix is a Training Member Organisation of the UKCP, in the PCIPC College of the UKCP, and as such undertakes to abide by the UKCP's code of ethics document.

All student members of Matrix are also subject to the UKCP's Code of Ethics. This can be found at:

<https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/media/bkjd33f/ukcp-code-of-ethics-and-professional-practice-2019.pdf>

# Code of Ethics and Professional Practice

For:

- **Student**

- **Graduate Member working towards UKCP Registration**

1. a) The practice of counselling and/or psychotherapy is an activity involving the acceptance of professional responsibilities towards clients, colleagues and society as a whole. The welfare of clients is of the utmost importance.  
  
b) Practitioners shall be aware that, in essence, the responsibilities assumed in working with clients continue after the ending of the therapeutic relationship.
2. a) Ethical standards comprise such values as integrity, respect and impartiality. Anti-discriminatory practice underpins these basic values of counselling. Practitioners acknowledge the value and dignity of all humanity, regardless of such differences as gender, race, age, culture, class, sexuality, religion, size and disability.  
  
b) Practitioners need to respect the dignity and worth of their clients as individual human beings, and to facilitate their clients' self-development and autonomy.
3. a) Graduate members are expected to commit to continuing professional development.  
  
b) Practitioners have a responsibility to maintain their effectiveness, and ability to work with clients. They are expected to monitor their own personal functioning and to seek help and/or withdraw from their role as a practitioner, whether temporarily or permanently, when their personal resources are sufficiently depleted to require this.  
  
c) Practitioners shall maintain appropriate levels of supervision as a requirement of their training and in preparation for UKCP Registration as detailed by Matrix and the UKCP.  
  
d) Practitioners are required to work with only clients who fall within their range of competence. The training only qualifies you to work with adults, 18 years old and over.
4. Practitioners shall not make derogatory statements that may bring Matrix and its staff and/or other professional bodies or professional members in the field into disrepute, without good cause or intention.
5. The ethical practice of counselling involves a commitment between client and counsellor. This shall take the form of a contract for working together, which will be freely negotiated with both parties. The practitioner will be responsible for making clear to the client the boundaries that exist in their contract.
6. Practitioners shall be aware of their power within the therapeutic relationship, and must not use or exploit their clients legally, financially, sexually, emotionally or in any other way. Sexual relationships with clients are unethical and are never permitted, even after the termination of counselling.

7. All information shared between clients and practitioner is confidential within professional boundaries, such as supervision and training. Information can usually only be disclosed outside this with the client's consent. There may be times, for a student, that issues around individual client work needs to be shared with a tutor, who also has a professional code of conduct to follow.
8. Clients must be informed that practitioners discuss their work with supervisors. They will also discuss and write about their work during the training. The client's identity will remain confidential to the therapeutic relationship.
9. Practitioners shall be aware that there are situations where exceptions to the confidentiality contract may arise, e.g., if the safety of the client or others is threatened, or where practitioners may be required to break confidentiality in order to comply with current legislation.
10. Students must gain explicit permission from client in order to write about them in academic work. If a client does not agree then the work with them cannot be written about. The anonymity of clients whose material is used for the purpose of publication, teaching and seminars is of paramount importance. The consent form for this is on Moodle (some placements may have their own).
11. It is an ethical requirement that all students inform their clients they are currently in counselling training; students can describe themselves as a 'student counsellor' or 'trainee counsellor'. Student status does not end until the award of BSc (Hons). UKCP trainee status remains until the award of Full Registration as a Psychotherapeutic Counsellor. Practitioners are required to disclose their qualifications when requested and must not make any false claim or misleading statements concerning their experience, qualifications or relationship to Matrix or their supervisor(s) and tutor(s).
12. Any professional practice which falls short of the standards expected of a practitioner or any violations of ethical conduct that brings the college, or the profession of counselling into disrepute may result in the either the Disciplinary Policy or the Fitness to Study and Practice Policy and Procedure being instigated.
13. Students are required to inform the Principal if they are under investigation, or subject to any sanction, brought against them by any other professional body.
14. No Matrix student can work in private practice until they have passed their BSc viva successfully with no added sanctions. This will be before the Middlesex University endorsement at the Assessment Board. The only exception to this is if a student enters Year 3, via APL, having already achieved BACP accreditation.
15. All students must take out adequate professional indemnity insurance prior to seeing clients if they are not covered by their Placement's own insurance.
16. All students have a role to play in identifying students and peers who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. Any concerns should be reported to the Prevent Lead at Matrix, Fiona Paul.
17. All students must follow either the UKCP Code of Ethics and Professional Practice (2019) or the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions (2018) depending on which professional body they are a member of.

## **Additional points for Graduate members:**

### Advertising

Advertising by practitioners is to be confined to a descriptive statement about services available, and the qualifications of the practitioner(s) providing them. Advertising materials should not include testimonials or make comparative statements. Practitioners must not claim or imply qualifications they do not possess. Practitioners shall, when asked, inform clients of their qualifications and experience as a counsellor.

### Working arrangements

- a) Practitioners have a responsibility to charge fees appropriate to their qualifications and level of experience, and to inform clients of the range of other psychotherapeutic services available as appropriate.
- b) Practitioners should inform clients of the terms and conditions of counselling practice at the outset – including such matters as fees, confidentiality, arrangements for appointments etc.
- c) Practitioners must ensure that their working accommodation and conditions are suitable for the practice of counselling or psychotherapy.

### Medical back-up

Where it is indicated, either in assessment or later, that there may be potentially serious medical/psychiatric issues the practitioner must ensure that they have adequate medical back up for the continuation of treatment. Normally this would take the form of making contact with the client's GP, with the client's knowledge, and such situations should be taken for supervision/consultation. In these cases, it is normal practice to obtain from clients the details of their GP.

### Record keeping

- a) Client records are confidential and should be kept safely under locked conditions to ensure privacy, and in a form that can be inspected by the client if they so request.
- b) Practitioners need to inform themselves about the requirements of the GDPR and register with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) if appropriate. Practitioners need to be aware that client records can be required by the Courts, and are advised to consider keeping records intact for a period of six years.
- c) Practitioners shall make provision for an executor of their professional estate in the case of accident or death.

### Insurance

Practitioners shall take out adequate professional indemnity insurance.

## **Matrix College – Working Positively with Diversity**

At Matrix we welcome and celebrate a richness of diversity in ability including: age, belief, ethnicity, experience, gender, size, life stage, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and other areas where individuals experience discrimination and judgement.

We recognise that having an aspect of identity which is or has been stigmatised can cause trauma, fear or shame. Students are encouraged to raise any concerns with the group and can rely on the support of Matrix tutors.

Identifying with one strand of diversity does not give any of us the right to judge, discount, discriminate against or make assumptions about someone because they are in a different strand.

In remaining open, curious and respectful, and in aiming to learn from our collective differences we equip ourselves to work positively with a great variety of people in a positive and non-oppressive way.

Students should not discriminate under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

If a student is found to have behaved in an oppressive way to either another student, tutor, member of staff or visitor at Matrix either the Fitness to Study and Practice policy and procedure or the Student Conduct and Discipline policy will be instigated.

If a student requires extra support, they should, in the first instance, contact their Programme Lead who may put them in touch with the Learning Support tutor or Principal.

Matrix College will endeavor to make all reasonable adjustments necessary to ensure the student has a positive learning experience. Unfortunately, we are not able to allow students to tape any of the teaching at Matrix and no phones or iPads may be out during training.

# Student Complaints and Grievance Procedure

*This procedure concerns a complaint or grievance a student may have against Matrix College.*

The Student Complaints and Grievance Procedure describes how Matrix College ensures the equitable, transparent and timely consideration of student complaints or grievances in relation to any aspects of their student experience, student services, administration, financial matters, and information for their programme of study. It is designed to provide a means of examining a grievance or a complaint about an aspect of procedure within the training or where an issue arises between a student and a member of staff. This is different from an ethical complaint.

This Procedure aims to explain the reasonable due course that students are required to consider and follow when submitting a complaint or grievance.

Matrix encourages all students to discuss any concerns they may have at the earliest opportunity to avoid delays and unnecessary escalation of matters. Most issues can usually be resolved quickly at the lowest level without going through the complaints and grievances procedures. The objective is to first see if the complaint can be resolved through frank and informal discussion amongst the people concerned as soon as possible.

These procedures are designed for exceptional circumstances where it has not been possible to resolve the complaint through such discussion. Unless circumstances are exceptional, it is expected that the informal stage will be invoked within six months of the incident that causes the complaint.

Matrix:

- is committed to ensuring that students are not disadvantaged as a result of bringing a complaint.
- expects all parties to act reasonably and fairly towards each other, and to treat the processes themselves with respect.
- confirms that academic decisions with regard to assessment of work cannot be altered as a result of any complaints procedure.

## Informal stage

- a) In the first instance you should discuss your concerns directly with the relevant individual to see if the issue can be resolved:
  - If you do not feel you can do that then you are advised to discuss the issue with your Programme Lead, who becomes your appointed representative.
  - If your concerns are with your Programme Lead please contact the Principal.
  - If the complaint is about the Principal please contact the Head of Clinical Practice.
- b) The staff member you have contacted or appointed will make brief notes of your concern and will talk to the individual about your grievance on your behalf. There will be a strong attempt to arrange an informal discussion between parties to find a resolution to the matter.

- c) If there is no resolution to the issue after a discussion between the parties a meeting will be set up with three parties present to discuss the issue and see if it is possible to move forward.
- d) Any resolutions and actions that are agreed informally in a three-way discussion with the student will be kept on record and communicated to all parties in writing within 10 working days.

If the above fails to achieve resolution the Programme Lead or member of staff can offer advice on whether there might be another route to resolution or, if the issue is serious enough, recommend a move to the formal stage of the complaints procedure.

Issues of concern handled within this informal stage shall be dealt with usually within four weeks in term time (or twelve weeks if it incorporates a holiday break).

If the informal stage does not lead to a resolution then the matter becomes a complaint and takes on a more formal approach.

Please note: the actions above are usually the procedure, however, it is recognised in some serious circumstances, for instance in complaints of an assault, this may not be an acceptable or expected process. If so, the Formal stage will be in operation from the outset.

### **Formal Stage**

- a) The complainant makes a submission to the Principal outlining a summary of the complaint within two weeks of the meeting in which the complaint could not be resolved.
- b) The Principal shall acknowledge receipt of the letter within two weeks.
- c) The Principal, or a person appointed by her, shall provide the student or staff member subject to the complaint copies of the written complaint.
- d) If the complaint is against the Principal, she shall refer it to the External (or the external Chair of Ethics if there is no External Moderator in post). The external Moderator (or Chair of Ethics) shall refer the complaint to an experienced person who is external to Matrix for assessment. This external independent assessor will be a practitioner of long standing or experience. The student may object to the choice of independent assessor in writing to the Principal (or External Moderator, or Chair of Ethics), another person will be chosen. Objections may be raised twice only.
- e) The external independent assessor will consider the evidence, written and other, and if necessary, hold discussions with the complainant and anyone else they think appropriate – they may ask for further information in order to fully investigate the complaint.
- f) Having investigated the complaint over a period of usually no longer than six weeks the external assessor will decide whether:
  - i. The complaint is disallowed. This means he/she thinks there is no evidence to support the complaint, in which case the procedure is complete.

- ii. There is reasonable justification for the complaint and some aspect of the organisational or administrative arrangements associated with the training need to be addressed.
- g) The external assessor submits his/her report to the Principal who, in turn, informs the parties of the outcomes. Where a complaint is upheld with a number of conditions the report should stipulate a time boundary in which the issues identified should be addressed.
- h) The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the conditions are met within the time frame.
- i) The Principal will issue a Completion of Procedures letter at the end of the internal Matrix procedure.

### **Review Stage**

- a) The student may refer the complaint to Middlesex University once all the Matrix procedures have been exhausted. Full details of the process can be found at <https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/student-life/your-voice/formal-complaints-procedure>.
- b) The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review students' complaints. Matrix College is a member of this scheme. If you are unhappy with an outcome you may be able to ask the OIA to review your complaint or grievance. You can find out more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.
- c) You normally have to have completed the complaint and grievance procedure before you can complain to the OIA. Matrix College will send you a letter called a 'Completion of Procedures letter' when you have reached the end of our processes and there are no further steps you can take internally. If your complaint or grievance is not upheld, Matrix College will issue you with a Completion of Procedures letter automatically. If your complaint is upheld or partly upheld you can ask for a Completion of Procedures letter if you want one. You can find more information about Completion of Procedures letter and when you should expect to receive one here <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters>.

# Student Conduct and Discipline Policy and Procedure

This policy and procedure concerns the conduct and discipline of students.

Matrix aims is to ensure that all students are treated with respect and courtesy and, in return, treat other members of the Matrix community (including peers, students, tutors, and staff) with respect and courtesy.

This policy and procedure is designed to provide a clear procedure in the event of an issue with student or graduate behaviour.

All students at Matrix are encouraged to engage in their learning process, this includes participating in debate. They are also expected to respect the rights of their peers and other members of the Matrix community, including placements and the wider community where a student is representing Matrix.

## 1. Definition of misconduct

The following is considered misconduct:

- 1.1 Violent, threatening or obstructive behaviour either at a Matrix premises or whilst engaged in an activity as a Matrix student or graduate
- 1.2 Action that is likely to cause injury or impair safety of anyone at a Matrix premises
- 1.3 Damage to a Matrix premises caused intentionally
- 1.4 Misuse of Matrix property
- 1.5 Behaviour which brings Matrix into disrepute
- 1.6 Behaviour which brings the profession into disrepute

Misconduct will be considered if the student concerned was involved in a Matrix activity, was representing Matrix or present at a place by virtue of his or her status as a student of Matrix, including any clinical placement or supervision.

## 2. Consideration of misconduct

It is hoped that an issue can be resolved quickly at the lowest level. The objective will be firstly to see if the misconduct can be dealt with through frank and informal discussion amongst the people concerned as soon as possible.

**Where an issue concerning misconduct arises the following procedure will take place:**

- 2.1 Where an issue of misconduct occurs, it will be referred to the Principal as soon as possible after it has occurred.
- 2.2 If the Principal deems that misconduct has occurred a verbal warning will be given and it will be noted on the student's file.

2.3 If misconduct occurs after a verbal warning a written warning will be issued and placed in the student's file.

2.4 Where issues concerning conduct and behaviour arise after a written warning the Principal will instigate the Fitness to Study process and will inform the student of this action.

## Complaints Against a Student Member Procedure

This procedure concerns complaints that may be received about a student member regarding a breach of ethics and professional practice.

The Complaints against a student member procedure provides a means of examining a complaint about an alleged breach of Matrix's Code of Ethics and Professional Practice for student and graduate members.

The complaint should be made as near as possible to the time of origin. Complaints concerning events that occurred more than two years prior to the first contact with the student will not normally be heard.

- a) Complaints about a practicing student or graduate member's clinical practice will only be accepted from a user of a student member's services in their role as a trainee counsellor.
- b) The complainant will be advised to meet with the complained against student member with a third-party present, if so desired by the complainant and/or the student member concerned.
- c) The student member complained about must be a student member of Matrix at the time of the alleged breach of the Code of Ethics and/or Professional Practice.
- d) Matrix may seek legal advice concerning a complaint.
- e) Matrix will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by either party involved in a complaint.

Matrix will engage with those members involved to see if the concern can be resolved through early resolution. Any resolutions and actions that are agreed informally with the member will be kept on record and communicated to all parties in writing within 20 working days.

### Acceptance of a formal complaint

- a) If an informal resolution cannot be found then the complainant will be advised to make the complaint in writing detailing the nature of the breach of the Codes of Ethics and send it to the Principal marked 'Private and Confidential'. All formal complaints must be submitted in writing to Matrix usually within 10 working days of the informal stage having been completed. Written acknowledgement will be sent within two weeks of receipt. The Principal will provide the student subject to the complaint a copy of the written complaint.
- b) The complaint should include references to specific sections of the Code and give details of the alleged incident.
- c) When the complaint is received it will be passed to the Chair of the Ethics committee and examined against the Code of Ethics. The member complained about will provide a written response usually within four weeks of the date of the letter.
- d) The Ethics Committee will meet to consider the matter. This will usually be within four weeks of the above written response.

- e) The Ethics Committee may decide that
  - a. there may be a case to answer,
  - b. that there is no case to answer, or
  - c. that the matter is not within the remit of the Ethics Committee and the Committee will indicate this in writing to the parties concerned within two weeks of the meeting. If there is no reasonable justification for the complaint the complaint shall be terminated at this stage.
- f) If there is reasonable justification for the complaint the Ethics Committee will consider the complaint to be upheld.

### **If the complaint is upheld**

One or more of the following courses of action may be taken should a complaint be upheld:

- a) An apology be given to the complainant by the student member concerned.
- b) The student member may be required to give an undertaking that they cease to practice in a particular manner and/or cease to work with particular clients, or other type of persons.
- c) The student member may be required to undertake therapy, and/or supervision and/or further training at their own cost. A method of verifying successful completion of the requirements will be agreed between the Ethics Committee and the member.
- d) An informal warning may be given.
- e) A formal warning indicating that further breaches of the Codes of Ethics and/or Professional Practice may lead to removal of Matrix membership.

### **Appeals**

- a) If either party wishes to make an appeal this must be made in writing to the Chair of the Ethics Committee usually within four weeks of the notification of findings.
- b) The party making the appeal will usually be asked to demonstrate new evidence in terms of new information which would support the appeal/ the Chair of the Ethics Committee along with two members of the Committee will decide if there are adequate grounds for granting leave to appeal. Usually, grounds of appeal include procedural irregularity, manifest unreasonableness, as well as new evidence.
- c) Should the appeal be granted the Chair of the Ethics committee will convene an appeals panel of three senior colleagues or professional practitioners, who have had no prior involvement, within four weeks of receiving the new evidence.
- d) The panel will meet to consider the appeal and the evidence presented to them.

- e) The appeals panel will report their conclusions and recommendations to the Ethics Committee usually within two weeks of meeting. Copies of the report will be sent to both parties. The Chair of the Ethics Committee will implement the decision of the appeals panel, which will be final.
  
- f) Student members have the right to complain to the OIA, (Office of the Independent Adjudicator) <http://www.oiahe.org.uk> if the outlined process is still considered to be unsatisfactory to them.

## **The Matrix Ethics Committee**

The function of the Ethics Committee is to administer the Matrix College Complaints Procedure. The Ethics Committee will also revise the Codes of Ethics and Professional Practice regularly in the light of practice and guidelines issued by relevant professional bodies.

The Ethics Committee shall be composed of two senior members of the College and one senior external colleague.

The Ethics Committee has the right to co-opt other external individuals onto the Ethics Committee as necessary.

The Ethics Committee has the right to seek advice from other individuals, both inside and outside Matrix.

The Ethics Committee members are currently:

### **Chair**

John Monk-Steel, RMN, RGN, CTA(P), TSTA(P), UKCP Registered Psychotherapist

### **Members**

Henry Adeane, Programme Lead

Sara Lisamore Programme Lead

Ann Cockburn (lay member)

*Reviewed and amended September 2022*