

*Graduate School of*  
**COUNSELLING**



**EXCELSIA  
COLLEGE**  
— Sydney —





# Master of COUNSELLING

2 years full-time (D&I) Up to 4 years part-time (D)

The Master of Counselling, a Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) accredited program, aims to develop essential clinical competencies, foster reflective awareness and provide a sound theoretical foundation for a career as a professional counsellor. The degree which integrates contemporary counselling theory, research and practice, contextualised within a Christian worldview and a mental health framework, develops counsellors who understand the personal, cultural, relational, psychological, social and spiritual domains of human experience and functioning; who are professionally and ethically informed; who will be sensitive to the diversity and uniqueness of individuals, families, and communities; and who will value and promote the dignity, potential and well-being of all people.

Further, the degree emphasises reflective practice - thoughtful, discerning and compassionate engagement with contemporary mental health issues, resulting in graduates able to work across a range of populations within both secular and non-secular settings (e.g. counselling agencies, welfare organisations, community centres, schools/educational institutions,) including private practice.

# Graduate Diploma of COUNSELLING

1 year full-time (D&I) Up to 2 years part-time (D)

The Graduate Diploma of Counselling is ideal for anyone in a helping, allied health, educational, ministry, and/or community support and welfare profession who desires to integrate counselling skills and mental health knowledge into their current vocation. Students are exposed to contemporary theory, research, and clinical practice, equipping them to confidently provide quality relational care and support to those encountering life difficulties in an empathic, ethical and therapeutic manner.

# Graduate Certificate of COUNSELLING

6 months full-time (D&I) Up to 1 year part-time (D)

The Graduate Certificate of Counselling is ideal for those wanting to explore counselling as a new career or vocation direction, with completion of the course providing time to determine if their interest in counselling merits further study. The course may also be of interest to those in helping related professions whose occupations include an incidental counselling component (e.g., education, ministry, nursing, occupational therapy, pastoral work, policing, paramedics etc), providing an opportunity for them to improve or extend their current relational skill set by learning how to counsel and support others more effectively.

The course is also helpful for those without prior undergraduate studies who are interested in counselling and would like to determine if they can manage post-graduate level studies.

Available for

(D&I) Domestic & International Students (D) Domestic Students

## Core Units

### Counselling Practice I - IV

Set within a Person-centered framework **Counselling Practice I** develops foundational counselling skills and competences necessary for effective counselling practice. In **Counselling Practice II** and **III** students are exposed to a selection of contemporary evidence-based modalities while continuing to consolidate their foundational skills. Finally, in **Counselling Practice IV** students work with advanced and challenging clinical issues, concurrently consolidating their professional identity as a counsellor. Together the four counselling practice units prepare students for client work in their counselling placements.

### Counselling Practicum I - II

**Counselling Practicum I** marks the transition from student to intern counsellor, working with clients, peers and supervisors. Located in various agency settings, interns are exposed to all aspects of life as a professional counsellor, completing 200 hours of direct client contact hours and 50 hours of clinical supervision across the two units, encountering varied clinical presentations. **Counselling Practicum II** continues this transition, students increasingly integrating their counselling knowledge and skills, learning to successfully function in-situ as a novice counsellor, preparing for future employment as a professional counsellor.

### Counselling Theories & Models

Counselling theories and models provide frameworks for conceptualising and interpreting clients' histories, issues and experiences, and are used to guide and inform approaches to working with clients. Students will examine both historical and contemporary theoretical frameworks, exploring the implications of different theoretical emphases on client care. They learn how to apply theory when working with specific clients with various life challenges, and to formulate case conceptualisations which underpin client care and client outcomes.

### Development & Diversity

Employing bio-psychosocial and socio-cultural lenses, students examine how humans grow and change across the lifespan, considering the contribution of developmental and socio-cultural factors to normative outcomes. They examine major theories of human development, including the interface between the individual and his/her broader historical, socio-cultural context. They consider how the spiritual domain affects development for those with a faith worldview, and how different experiences of society and culture including factors such as racism, bias and discrimination, oppression, power and privilege, and prejudice can adversely affect individual development and present as clinical issues. Finally they develop an awareness of the importance of socially and culturally sensitive counselling practice.

### Ethical Issues

Counsellors are in a unique, influential and privileged position in the lives of their clients who are often vulnerable and unprotected. Students learn how to ethically and responsibly manage this position, becoming conversant with all relevant regulatory codes and Australian legislative requirements that govern the Health sector. They explore ethical principles in professional decision-making processes, reflect on the benefits of professional association membership, and are encouraged to be aware of, and thoughtful about, how their personal moral stance and ethical framework informs and influences their professional practice.



### Introduction to Grief Counselling

Counselling offers a means by which individuals can seek support and education about their grief, over time learning how to integrate loss, finding meaning and purpose in the resolution and integration of this challenging experience. Students examine historical and contemporary models of bereavement, grief and mourning, and associated processes and types of grief. They explore various loss contexts and aspects of dying, death and end-stage care. They consider assessment and treatment approaches for different groups experiencing various losses, with an emphasis on resolution, integration, meaning making and post-loss transformation. Along the way they reflect upon their own loss history, including a consideration of cultural and spiritual heritages in grief work.

### Introduction to Trauma-informed Counselling

The long-term and adverse effects of trauma on the development of self and subsequent psychological functioning are recognised as significant contributors to clinical presentations in counselling settings. Students learn about experiences which significantly disrupt normal functioning and development, develop an understanding of the neurobiology of trauma, learn to recognise the trauma-mental health link, and become familiar with the DSM-5. They also consider the effects of trauma in its various presentations among different clinical groups and examine various trauma-focused treatment protocols.

### Mental Health Issues in Adulthood

Employing a bio-psycho-social-spiritual framework and associated approaches, students learn about the aetiology, diagnostic presentation, assessment and evidence-based interventions for a range of mental health issues. They reflect on personal assumptions relating to mental illness, including the relationship between spirituality and mental illness, also considering how stress and vulnerability predispose some individuals to mental health episodes. Finally, they explore the role of social and family contexts in the onset of mental-health disorders and their management.

### Relational Dynamics

Relational dynamics are at the heart of human engagement and communication, counsellors and clients influenced and affected by significant relationships in their lives. Students learn about the importance of processing the adverse effects of relational experiences, this informed by intrapersonal, interpersonal and relational theory, with an emphasis on interpersonal neurobiology, attachment and systemic theories. They critically reflected on their personal relationship experiences, become conversant with their own affective regulation, reflective functioning and relational capacity, and develop an understanding of how and when their own, and their clients' relational histories and current experiences may affect therapeutic outcomes.

### Research I - II

Counselling research and counselling practice are intrinsically linked, research findings informing day-to-day clinical decision-making in the therapeutic space. Research I: Method and Application is the first of two research-focused units wherein students develop an understanding of the link between professional practice and professional knowledge and its production. During Research II: Research Project students work on small group projects, learning to apply the research skills developed in Research I, at the conclusion of which they submit an individual research paper.

## Elective Units

- Introduction to Group Work
- Introduction to Couples Work
- Christianity and Counselling
- Special Topic in Counselling
- Introduction to Psychodynamic Psychotherapy
- Introduction to Chronic and Complex Trauma
- Introduction to Working with Children and Young People

More detailed information about our Master of Counselling Core and Elective Units can be found on our website at: [excelsia.edu.au/courses/counselling/master-of-counselling/](http://excelsia.edu.au/courses/counselling/master-of-counselling/)



*My time at Excelsia gave me an excellent grounding in the theory of counselling and also equipped me with many opportunities to develop skills through practical experience in class and in the workplace.*

Melissa Adams - Master of Counselling / Counsellor & Occupational Therapist



## Application Process

### Applicants for admission must:

- Provide evidence of completion of an accredited undergraduate degree\*.
- Demonstrate their suitability for counsellor training by participation in an admission interview designed to explore interpersonal skills, and via completion of a counsellor readiness questionnaire.
- Provide two personal references from persons able to comment on the applicant's suitability to work within a helping profession.
- Provide a Working with Children's Check and a National Criminal History Check at time of application.

\*Applicants without undergraduate qualifications can apply for admission via the Mature-entry pathway which may consider other forms of study completed in the higher education and vocational sectors, volunteer activities, contribution to church life, professional development relevant to counselling; Mature-entry students are also required to provide the information and participate in the processes outlined above.

## Why Study

## COUNSELLING

## at Excelsia?

### READY FOR PRACTICE

- PACFA Accredited – industry recognised
- Upon graduation ready to practice as a counsellor.
- Integrating a Christian world view with contemporary counselling theory, research and reflective clinical practice.
- Course includes provided counselling placements, 200 direct client contact hours and 50 hours of clinical supervision, along with free personal counselling.
- State-of-the-art Counselling Facility

### INDUSTRY RESPECTED

- Equipped with a range of clinical frameworks, skills and professional values central to the life of a professional counsellor.
- Delivered by experienced, passionate and reflective practitioners currently in private practice and counsellor-educators with Masters and PHD qualifications in counselling, psychology and psychotherapy.

### FLEXIBLE DELIVERY

- Delivered with a focus on flexibility and achieving balance with other areas of students' lives.
- Accommodating family life and employment responsibilities
- Part-time and full-time study options – Classes Friday 2–7pm and/or Saturday 10am–3pm.

# CONTACT US

For more information about admission requirements, course suitability and career pathways please contact us using the email or phone number below:

[INFO@EXCELSIA.EDU.AU](mailto:INFO@EXCELSIA.EDU.AU)

+61 2 9819 8888

[EXCELSIA.EDU.AU](http://EXCELSIA.EDU.AU)

**69-71 WATERLOO ROAD  
MACQUARIE PARK  
SYDNEY**

ABN: 50 360 319 774 CRICOS CODE: 02664K