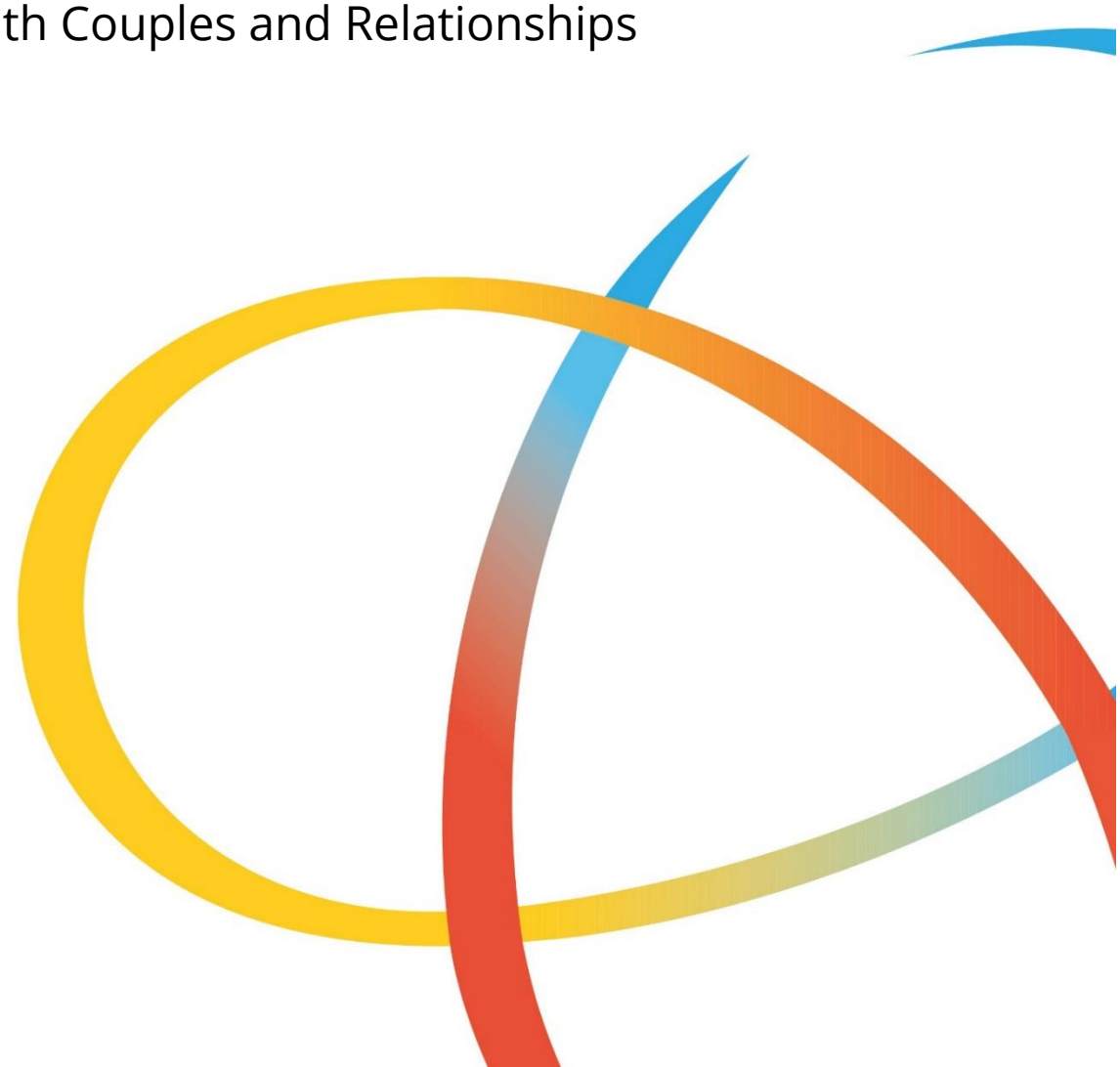
Crossfields Institute
Qualifications | Education | Development

Qualification Specification

Level 5 Diploma in Working Therapeutically with Couples and Relationships



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Summary of changes

1.1 – added unit 4 & made adjustments to GLH/TQT for other units.

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Key Facts

Qualification Title	CFI Level 5 Diploma in Working Therapeutically with Couples and Relationships
Qualification Number (QAN)	610/4266/3
Qualification Type	VRQ
Sector	1.3 Health and Social Care
Level	5
Rules of Combination	All units are compulsory
Total Qualification Time	410 hours
Guided Learning Hours	243 hours
Minimum age of learners	18
Assessment Methods	Portfolio of evidence
Grading system	Pass/Fail
How long will it take to complete?	12 months
Developed by	The qualification has been developed by CFI with subject-specific expertise provided by Brighter Teaching Ltd.

Section 1: About this Qualification

1.1 Why take this qualification?

This objective of this CFI Level 5 Diploma in Working Therapeutically with Couples and Relationships is to provide trained counsellors with a deeper understanding of the specific challenges that apply to working with couples and other relationships, and to help them develop the skillset to respond to these challenges appropriately and effectively. It will enable participants to understand the dynamics of different kinds of relationships, and will give them the tools to support inclusiveness and safety when working directly with clients.

The Diploma places a particular emphasis on reflective practice, providing a space in which participants can look critically at their own work in the context of relevant underpinning theory, come to a better understanding of themselves and their role, and put together a plan which will inform their professional development going forwards.

This qualification also gives learners an opportunity to conduct original research into an area of working with couples and/or relationships in their choosing. They will plan, prepare and share this with others, and will evaluate their own proposal and make recommendations as to any future research that might be carried out in this area.

1.2 What are the entry requirements?

Equality of opportunity is a key and integral part of our vision. We aim to be a truly open, accessible and diverse organisation, and are committed to the principle of equality of opportunity in education. This qualification has been designed to provide access to anyone capable of achieving the required standards, without any unnecessary barriers to entry, access and progression.

Guidelines for entry requirements are listed below:

- Learners must hold a counselling qualification, either at Level 4 or 5, which is Ofqual-regulated
- If English is not your first language, proof of competency at a level equivalent to IELTS 6.5/CEFR B2 will be required

1.3 What does the qualification cover?

This qualification comprises four units, and covers the following topics:

- Working with couples and other diverse relationships

- Reflective practice and professional development
- Working with couples and relationships in a therapeutic environment
- Counselling Research

As part of this qualification, 50 hours of clinical practice need to be completed while working with a diverse range of couples, relationships and presentations. Students need to be supervised by an appropriately-trained supervisor who has experience working with couples and relationships. Those working in private practice will need to confirm their competence with their supervisor before going ahead and working with couple and relationships privately. Although students are trained counsellors, when engaging in a therapeutic relationship with a couple or relationship, they must inform them they are student couples-and-relationship therapists.

This qualification is at Level 5 as defined by Ofqual:

Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition - Section E - Design and development of qualifications - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Knowledge descriptor (the holder …)	Skills descriptor (the holder can …)
Has practical, theoretical or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to find ways forward in broadly-defined, complex contexts. Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information, concepts and ideas. Is aware of the nature and scope of the area of study or work. Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them.	Determine, adapt and use appropriate methods, cognitive and practical skills to address broadly-defined, complex problems. Use relevant research or development to inform actions. Evaluate actions, methods and results.

1.4 What are the assessment methods?

You will create a portfolio of evidence throughout your time working towards this qualification. This may include:

- observation of practice by experienced tutors
- written assignments

- reflective practice, e.g. a learning journal or self-reflective journals
- peer observation or feedback as witness testimony
- artefacts

The portfolio must be your own work and centres will be responsible for verifying that work has been authenticated. CFI takes any reports of suspected plagiarism or other forms of malpractice seriously and will investigate any such reports via the Malpractice Policy which is available on our website.

Note: Plagiarism This means claiming work to be your own which has been copied from someone or somewhere else. All the work you submit must be your own and not copied from anyone else unless you clearly reference the source of your information. This includes the use of AI (please see our AI policy for further information). If there is evidence that your work is copied from elsewhere, it will not be accepted, and you may be subject to a disciplinary procedure.

Section 2: Units

2.1 Unit List

This qualification has 4 units in total, each of which contributes to the learner's development of knowledge, understanding and skill.

All units are mandatory.

Unit title	Ofqual ref	Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	Total qualification time (TQT)	Credits
Working with couples and other diverse relationships	T/651/1822	30	60	6
Reflective practice and professional development	Y/651/1823	20	40	4
Working with couples and relationships in a therapeutic environment	A/651/1824	115	220	27
Counselling Research	Y/650/7404	78	90	9
Qualification total		243	410	41

Unit 1: Working with couples and other diverse relationships

Unit reference	T/651/1822	**Guided Learning Hours (GLH)**	30
Unit level	5	**Total Qualification Time (TQT)**	60

Unit aim

This unit provides learners with an understanding of the key considerations, challenges and skills required when working with couples and other relationships, as well as an awareness of the differences between these and those that apply when working with individual clients. Learners will develop a strong appreciation of the theory that underpins this area, and will gain an understanding of the ways in which issues related to diversity may impact upon their work.

Learning outcomes The learner will:	Assessment criteria The learner can:
1. Understand the key issues involved in working with couples and relationships in a therapeutic setting	1.1 Compare the key differences between working with individual clients and working with couples/relationships
	1.2 Describe the presentations couples/relationships will bring to therapy
	1.3 Evaluate the key challenges and risks when working with couples/relationships
	1.4 Describe the use of assessment to measure outcomes when working with couples/ relationships

2. Understand the theory behind couples/relationships therapy, and the key counselling tools and techniques that it requires	2.1 Analyse the key components of models/theory of couples/relationships therapy
	2.2 Describe tools and techniques that can be used as interventions when working with couples/relationships
	2.3 Describe the counselling skills used when working with couples/relationships to build, maintain and bring to an end the counselling process
3. Understand issues of diversity that apply to couples/relationships counselling	3.1 Analyse the importance of understanding equality, diversity and inclusion when working with couples/relationships
	3.2 Evaluate the importance of different intersections and cultural competence when working with couples/relationships
	3.3 Analyse how issues of equality and diversity might impact on their self
	3.4 Describe three common mental health problems that they may see presenting in couples/relationship work
	3.5 Evaluate ways of responding to conflict in couples/relationship work

Additional Delivery Information

1.4
This may include reference to e.g. the GAD7 Anxiety Test Questionnaire, or other similar assessments.

2.1
Learners will explore the different theories and models of working with couples and relationships, from Cognitive Behavioural, Humanistic and Psychodynamic modalities. Other models will include working with Gender, Sexuality and Relationship Diversities.

N.B.
Learners will explore their feelings and behavioural patterns in their past and present relationships. As part of undertaking this qualification, it is important for learners to access personal therapy, completing 12 hours over the 15 months of the course.

Unit 2: Reflective practice and professional development

Unit reference	Y/651/1823	**Guided Learning Hours (GLH)**	20
Unit level	5	**Total Qualification Time (TQT)**	40

Unit aim

This unit encourages participants to reflect upon themselves as an individual, and enables them to understand how awareness of their competencies, limitations and personal values may inform their work and their role. They will be able to apply their learning reflexively to better understand themselves, and will also form a plan for their own development that will allow them to further their progress as a counselling professional.

Learning outcomes The learner will:	Assessment criteria The learner can:
1. Understand how their own values impact upon their work as a counsellor	1.1 Explain how their own values and beliefs might influence their work with couples/relationships
2. Be able to demonstrate self-awareness with respect to their background, skills and future development in their role	2.1 Analyse how theories and skills related to couples/relationships counselling have increased their awareness of self in their own relationships, including patterns and their own personal history
	2.2 Evaluate their own limitations and competencies, describing the referral and signposting process

	2.3 Describe the importance of Continual Professional Development in counselling
3. Be able to plan their own professional development	3.1 Apply an understanding of their limitations and competencies to the formation of a series of development goals
	3.2 Explain how they will reach the stated goals within a given and suitable timeframe

Additional Delivery Information

3.1, 3.2

These goals should be expressed as part of a 12-month personal development plan which highlights areas for ongoing development in relation to working with couples/relationships.

Unit 3: Working with couples and relationships in a therapeutic environment

Unit reference	A/651/1824	**Guided Learning Hours (GLH)**	115
Unit level	5	**Total Qualification Time (TQT)**	220

Unit aim

This unit, which includes the 50 hours of clinical practice, gives learners an overview of how best to conduct client interactions, and the importance of upholding a client's privacy and confidentiality when it comes to maintaining appropriate records. It will enable learners to look reflectively at the sessions they have conducted, encouraging them to evaluate the effectiveness of their work – and it will also allow them to consider the importance of supervision and feedback, both in a general sense and with respect to the specific feedback they have received from their own supervisor.

Learning outcomes The learner will:	Assessment criteria The learner can:
1. Understand how to maintain appropriate client records	1.1 Explain how to complete and maintain accurate client records *This should include reference to both therapeutic contracts and supervisory relationships*
	1.2 Analyse how to uphold the privacy and confidentiality of a client when completing and maintaining a couple's/relationship's records.
2. Be able to conduct client interactions	2.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of the therapeutic contract, ensuring they are responding appropriately with each individual

	2.2 Analyse ways in which they have applied relevant theoretical concepts and skills in their counselling practice *This must cover a minimum of six sessions and consider the use of the core modality, integrated with others, using key terms and tools relating to working with couples and relationships, ensuring all parties are seen equally*
	2.3 Evaluate what was effective/ineffective in the application of theoretical concepts used with couples/relationships within the six sessions
	2.4 Explore diversity issues that they have encountered while working with the couples/relationships
	2.5 Analyse the skills used to conclude a therapeutic relationship
	2.6 Evaluate their ethical practise within their client's work considering: • boundaries • confidentiality • environment • ethical decision-making • autonomy • beneficence • non-maleficence
3. Understand the importance of supervision and feedback	3.1 Describe the importance of supervision and feedback
	3.2 Analyse the learning and self-awareness gained from supervisory interactions in

	relation to their counselling work and their own personal history when it comes to relationships
	3.3 Reflect on feedback from their supervisor in relation to skills, ethics and theory

Additional Delivery Information

3.3

This unit requires learners to undertake a placement for which they will need an appropriate contract with their agency and a supervisor. Once 50 hours of supervision has been completed, feedback should be obtained from the learner's supervisor.

Unit 4: Counselling Research

Unit reference	Y/650/7404	**Guided Learning Hours (GLH)**	78
Unit level	5	**Total Qualification Time (TQT)**	90

Unit aim

In this unit, learners will carry out a research project on an appropriate topic chosen by them, so long as it is conducted with couples and/or relationships in mind. They will be able to plan, prepare and research a proposal, and present and share this with others. They will also be able to evaluate their proposal and consider any future work in this area.

Learning outcomes The learner will:	Assessment criteria The learner can:
1. Be able to prepare for counselling research	1.1 Explain the need for research in counselling practice
	1.2 Produce a proposal for counselling research
	1.3 Explain the aims and objectives for the research topic
	1.4 Justify research design and methodologies
	1.5 Explain the considerations needed when dealing with potential ethical issues in counselling research
2. Be able to present and evaluate	2.1 Collect a range of primary and secondary research data to support research

findings of research	
	2.2 Analyse the research data that has been collected
	2.3 Present research findings appropriately
	2.4 Summarise the conclusions of the research
	2.5 Make recommendations for future research within the topic
	2.6 Evaluate how the research has influenced their own practice

Additional Delivery Information

This unit requires learners to complete six days of workshops in a variety of fields which will feed into their research project. These workshops are each approximately 4 hours in duration.

Section 3: Delivering this qualification

3.1 Requirements for Centres

The CFI Level 5 Diploma in Working Therapeutically with Couples and Relationships requires a trained couples therapist who is currently working with clients or supervising other counsellors to oversee the supervisory content of this qualification.

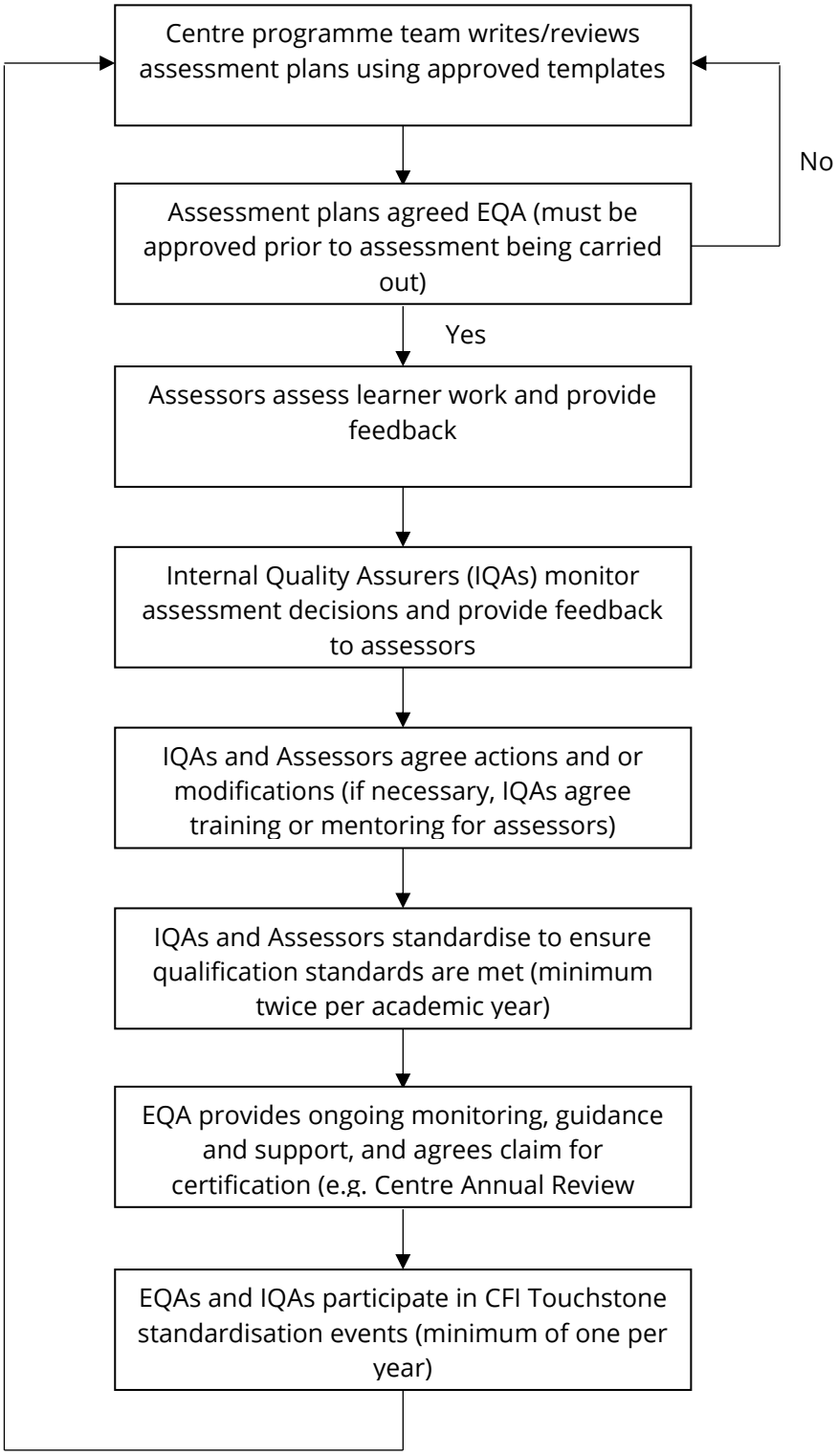
For more information about the process of becoming a centre, please contact us at info@cfiawarding.com

3.2 Quality Assurance

The CFI approach to quality assurance is underpinned by educational values which address the holistic development and transformation of the learner. In these qualifications teaching, learning and assessment should be interconnected in order to support each individual to reach his or her full potential.

The primary aim of the CFI Quality Assurance Team is to support centres in delivering the best possible learning experience and high levels of achievement for learners. Centres will be allocated an External Quality Assurer (EQA) by the CFI QA Team.

Centres delivering this qualification are required to follow this CFI Quality Assurance process:


Centre programme team writes/reviews assessment plans using approved templates
No
Assessment plans agreed EQA (must be approved prior to assessment being carried out)
Yes
Assessors assess learner work and provide feedback
Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) monitor assessment decisions and provide feedback to assessors
IQAs and Assessors agree actions and or modifications (if necessary, IQAs agree training or mentoring for assessors)
IQAs and Assessors standardise to ensure qualification standards are met (minimum twice per academic year)
EQA provides ongoing monitoring, guidance and support, and agrees claim for certification (e.g. Centre Annual Review
EQAs and IQAs participate in CFI Touchstone standardisation events (minimum of one per year)

3.3 Assessment Planning Guidance

This qualification uses a centre-devised approach to assessment. In planning their assessments, centres should ensure that assessment activities:

- are fit for purpose
- can be delivered efficiently
- meet the assessment criteria
- permit Reasonable Adjustments to be made, while minimising the need for them
- allow each learner to generate evidence which can be authenticated
- allow the specified level of attainment detailed in this specification to be reached by a learner who has attained the required level of knowledge, skills and understanding
- allow assessors to be able to differentiate accurately and consistently between a range of attainments by learners

They should also ensure that:

- sufficient time is allowed for assessment planning
- assessment tasks do not produce unreasonably adverse outcomes for learners who share a common attribute
- methods of assessment are in line with the assessment requirements in this specification
- reasonable timescales for assessment and feedback are given to learners
- a timely quality assurance process is conducted

3.4 Training and Support

To support centres in carrying out high-quality assessment and quality assurance practice, the following training and support measures have been put in place for this qualification:

- All centre assessors and quality assurance staff for this qualification are required to meet National Occupational Standards for assessors and IQAs. National qualifications (NVQs) are available for these roles. CFI can also provide customised assessor and IQA education as well as review of assessor and IQA practice
- Assessors and IQAs must keep an up to date CPD log and be able to demonstrate the relevance of their CPD to this qualification and their role
- Handbooks, exemplars and templates are available from the CFI QA Team
- Where required, a customised Quality Assurance Action and Development Plan will be provided by CFI for centres

Please note: there may be a charge for training and resources provided by CFI.

3.5 Policies and Procedures

Each centre is required to work in partnership with CFI to ensure that all learners have the best possible experience whilst taking this qualification and are treated fairly. Our commitment to this is supported by our Centre Handbook, which all centres should become familiar with.

CFI has policies and procedures in place to support centres and learners. All centres must also implement their own policies, which comply with CFI's requirements – these will be checked during centre approval and in subsequent centre monitoring activities. It is the centre's responsibility to make relevant policies available to learners.

Relevant policies include:

- Learner Complaints Policy: which allows learners to take action if they feel they have been treated unfairly
- Learner Appeals Policy: which allows learners to appeal decisions made by centres
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy: which allows centres to make any necessary adjustments to assessments in the light of learners' individual circumstances at the start of the programme.
- Special Considerations Policy: which allows centres to request extensions for learners in light of learners' individual circumstances which have delayed their completion of the programme
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy: which gives a framework through which concerns about the delivery and assessment of the qualification can be addressed
- Equality and Diversity Policies: which ensures centres treat learners fairly and without any bias

CFI Policies, and other key documents, are available on our website at www.cfiawarding.com or upon request via info@cfiawarding.com