APL Policy (Accreditation of Prior Learning)

Introduction

Applicants can only apply to join the course programme before the start of Level 3 or Level 4 as the School does not have an APL entry route once a cohort has commenced.

The School recognises the importance of maintaining the internal consistency within the course programme and therefore the maximum percentage of outside applicants that may be APLed onto any cohort is 25%. Whilst this limits the number of places available to outside applicants, the School endeavours wherever possible to enable external applicants who meet the eligibility criteria entry requirements to progress and complete their counselling training up to Diploma level.

NB. Students who completed all their previous counselling training at Life-Force School within the last 3 years can apply via the Prior Student Admissions Policy and not via the APL Policy.

APL Eligibility Criteria

The applicant's previous counselling training must have been:

1. Under taken within the School's last 3 academic years.
2. Completed with the qualification being awarded and therefore a formal certificate issued.
3. For Level 3, classroom based training or online live tutor-led training, as eLearning such as AI/computer workbook courses without human interaction are not accepted.
4. For Level 4, class room based training as distance learning and eLearning are not accepted.
5. In an orientation and therapeutic model compatible with the School's training programme e.g. a humanistic/Person-Centred foundation. Psychodynamic training may also be considered depending on the course content, but other types of psychological training are not accepted such as psychoanalysis, psychology or psychiatric nursing etc.
6. Delivered in blocks similar to the Life-Force School course structure, time frame and have included formal academic and skills development assessment procedures. Therefore, fast tracked training and short CPD courses cannot be used to make up the counselling training hours entry requirements which are as follows:

   Application Level: Level 3 Certificate –35 hours required
   Application Level: Level 4 Diploma–175 (35+140) hours required + 16 hours of Personal Therapy.

   Applicants applying for the Diploma who have not completed 16 hours of personal therapy during the year preceding the course start date can attend these whilst on the Diploma prior to the start of their 100 hours of supervised clinical practice.

APL Application Procedure

1. All APL applications must be submitted, prior to the closing date as detailed in the Course Prospectus, and according to the Admissions Policy and must include:
   a) A fully completed and signed Course Application Form along with Application/Interview fee.
   b) An APL: Self-Reflective Statement according to the specified Guidance Questions which include a description of how the applicant has maintained and developed their counselling knowledge and skills during the interim time out.
   c) A copy of previous counselling training certificate(s) detailing the number of contact teaching hours and core model of training. A course prospectus &/or curriculum/syllabus overview must also be provided as supporting evidence of prior theoretical and experiential training.
   d) Two references; one personal reference and one from previous trainer – format on website.
2. When a completed APL application is received it will be assessed by the Course Director against the APL Eligibility Criteria and if these are initially considered to be met then the applicant will be notified and put forward for an in-depth individual APL eligibility online interview with the Course Lead, relevant to the course application level, during which they will need to demonstrate:
   a) Their suitability for the level of training for which they have applied.
   b) Their ability to demonstrate reflective practitioner qualities.
   c) Their ability to form a working alliance with the Course Leader.
3. During the interview the applicant is required to present their previous counselling training portfolio. In order to ascertain if their previous training is compatible with the different levels of the School's

three year course programme they are asked about humanistic theory, the methods of their prior skills training and depth of personal development previously undertaken.

4. The Course Lead completes an APL Interview Form and determines if the applicant can be put forward to attend the interview day for the level applied for, along with all the other School applicants. If successful the applicant's ability to form a working alliance with the current applicants is determined during the group interview process which forms part of the course interview day.

5. Unsuccessful APL applicants can choose to be put forward for a lower course programme entry level i.e., Level 2/ Level 3 and attended the course interview day or to withdraw their application.

Late APL Application Procedure

The submission date for APL Level 3 and Level 4 applications is the middle of October annually. APL applications received after the APL closing date, and before the prior learner closing date in the middle of November, are treated as late APL applications and are processed according to the School's Clearing Procedure as detailed below. APL applications received after the prior learner closing date are not accepted and are returned to the applicant along with the application fee. The exact closing dates are detailed in the Course Prospectus which can be found on the School's website.

APL Applications Clearing Procedure

1. Applicants need to be aware that, when it comes to the allocation of places, priority is given to prior learners and APL applicants whose applications were received prior to the applicable closing dates and who have successfully completed the interview procedure.

2. Upon receipt of a late APL application the Course Director contacts the applicant and advises them of how many places maybe potentially be available on the applicable next cohort. The applicant can then choose to proceed with their application or can decide to withdraw in which case the application fee is refunded.

3. Once the applicant has decided to proceed then their application is treated as per the APL Application Procedure above and the application fee becomes non-refundable.

4. If the applicant's APL application is successful then they placed on a waiting list, in sequential order of APL application receipts, while places are offered to the applicants who applied before the applicable closing dates. This waiting period usually lasts 5 working days, after which they are offered a place if one is available or alternatively as soon as one becomes available. The applicant has 24 hours to accept the place, after which if not accepted will be offered to the next applicant on the waiting list. Applicants should be aware that if no places become available then their application will be unsuccessful and they would need to re-apply in the futute and pay the application fee again.

Conditional Place

1. APL applicants who are currently studying with an outside training provider, on an equivalent Level 2/Level 3 course which as yet has not yet finished, can still proceed with their APL application, provided their current course is scheduled to finish before the start date of the Life-Force School's course for which they have applied. If their APL application is successful then the offer of a place on the School's next Level 3/Level 4 course would be offered on a **'conditional place'** basis subject to them being awarded a pass.

2. Also, the applicant must receive **written evidence** their current training provider confirming they have completed and passed the course, **at least 5 working days before** the School course registration day, as without this the offer of the conditional place is withdrawn and the application fee is non-refundable.

3. These applicants need to be aware that, when it comes to the allocation of places, priority is given to late APL applicants who have already provided certificates of prior training and therefore have submitted a complete APL application.

28th July 2024