



Qualification Specification for:

OCN NI Level 1 Award in Introduction to Counselling Skills

➤ **Qualification No: 603/0650/6**

Qualification Regulation Information

Qualification Title:	OCN NI Level 1 Award in Introduction to Counselling Skills
Qualification Number:	603/0650/6
Operational start date:	01 October 2016
Operational end date:	30 June 2025
Certification end date:	30 June 2026

Qualification operational start and end dates indicate the lifecycle of a regulated qualification. The operational end date is the last date by which learners can be registered on a qualification and the certification end date is the last date by which learners can claim their certificate.

All OCN NI regulated qualifications are published to the Register of Regulated Qualifications (<http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>). This site shows the qualifications and awarding organisations regulated by CCEA Regulation and Ofqual.

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Foreword

This document explains OCN NI's requirements for the delivery and assessment of the following regulated qualification:

→ **OCN NI Level 1 Award in Introduction to Counselling Skills**

This specification sets out:

- Qualification features
- Centre requirements for delivering and assessing the qualification
- The structure and content of the qualification
- Unit details
- Assessment requirements for the qualification
- OCN NI's quality assurance arrangements for the qualification
- Administration

OCN NI will notify centres in writing of any major changes to this specification. We will also publish changes on our website at www.ocni.org.uk

This specification is provided online, so the version available on our website is the most up to date publication. It is important to note that copies of the specification that have been downloaded and printed may be different from this authoritative online version.

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About Regulation

OCN NI

Open College Network Northern Ireland (OCN NI) is a regulated Awarding Organisation based in Northern Ireland. OCN NI is regulated by CCEA Regulation to develop and award professional and technical (vocational) qualifications from Entry Level up to and including Level 5 across all sector areas. In addition, OCN NI is regulated by Ofqual to award similar qualification types in England.

The Regulated Qualifications Framework: an overview

The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) was introduced on 1st October 2015: the RQF provides a single framework for all regulated qualifications.

Qualification Level

The level indicates the difficulty and complexity of the knowledge and skills associated with any qualification. There are eight levels (Levels 1-8) supported by three 'entry' levels (Entry 1-3).

Qualification Size

Size refers to the estimated total amount of time it could typically take to study and be assessed for a qualification. Size is expressed in terms of Total Qualification Time (TQT), and the part of that time typically spent being taught or supervised, rather than studying alone, is known as Guided Learning Hours (GLH).

Qualification Summary

The OCN NI Level 1 Award in Introduction to Counselling Skills qualification is aimed to introduce learners to the concept and purpose of counselling, as well as the ethical considerations and skills used in a counselling situation.

Qualification Objectives

The objectives of this qualification are to provide learners with the knowledge and skills to:

- understand the nature of counselling
- develop personal communication and interpersonal skills
- promote self-development

This qualification will give learners an introduction to counselling skills that they will find useful in a variety of complementary and helping roles such as care assistant and support worker.

The OCN NI Level 1 Award in Introduction to Counselling Skills qualification enables progression to further learning in this area typically, Level 2.

Grading

Grading for this qualification is pass/fail.

Sector Subject Area

1.3 Health and social care

Qualification Target Group

This qualification is for learners who want to understand the counselling process, are interested in counselling as a career, want to develop counselling skills or are returning to education.

Entry Requirements

There are no specific or formal entry requirements for this qualification however learners should be at least 16 years of age.

Progression Opportunities

The OCN NI Level 1 Award in Introduction to Counselling Skills qualification enables progression to further learning in this area typically, Level 2, where they can gain more specific knowledge, skills and understanding.

Qualification Support

A Qualification Support pack is available for OCN NI centres within the login area of the OCN NI website (<https://www.ocnni.org.uk/my-account/>), which includes additional support for teachers, eg planning and assessment templates, guides to best practice, etc.

Delivery Languages

This qualification is available in English only at this time. If you wish to offer the qualification in Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge) then please contact OCN NI who will review demand and provide as appropriate.

Centre Requirements for Delivering the Qualification

Centre Recognition and Qualification Approval

New and existing OCN NI recognised centres must apply for and be granted approval to deliver these qualifications prior to the commencement of delivery.

Centre Staffing

Centres are required to have the following roles in place as a minimum, although a member of staff may hold more than one role*:

- Centre contact
- Programme co-ordinator
- Assessor
- Internal Verifier

*Note: A person cannot be an internal verifier for any evidence they have assessed.

Centres must ensure that staff delivering, assessing and internally verifying qualifications are both qualified to teach in Northern Ireland and competent to do so.

Tutors

Tutors delivering the qualification should be occupationally competent, qualified to at least one level higher than the qualification and have a minimum of one year's relevant experience.

Assessors

The qualifications are assessed within the centre and are subject to OCN NI's quality assurance processes. Units are achieved through internally set, internally assessed, and internally verified evidence.

Assessors must:

- be occupationally competent and qualified to at least one level higher than the qualification
- have a minimum of one year's relevant experience
- have direct or related relevant experience in assessment
- assess all assessment tasks and activities

Internal Verification

OCN NI qualifications must be scrutinised through the centre's internal quality assurance processes as part of the recognised centre agreement with OCN NI. The centre must appoint an experienced and trained internal verifier whose responsibility is to act as the internal quality monitor for the verification of the delivery and assessment of the qualifications.

The centre must agree a working model for internal verification with OCN NI prior to delivery of the qualification.

Internal Verifiers must:

- have at least one year's occupational experience in the areas they are internally verifying
- attend OCN NI's internal verifier training if not already completed

Internal verifiers are required to:

- support tutors and assessors
- sample assessments according to the centre's sampling strategy
- ensure tasks are appropriate to the level being assessed
- maintain up-to-date records supporting the verification of assessment and learner achievement

Structure and Content

OCN NI Level 1 Award in Introduction to Counselling Skills

Learners must successfully complete both units in the qualification for a total of 3 credits.

Total Qualification Time (TQT) for this qualification: 30 hours
 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for this qualification: 27 hours

Unit Reference Number	OCN NI Unit Code	Unit Title	TQT	Credit Value	GLH	Level
A/615/2825	CBD683	Introduction to Counselling	10	1	9	One
F/615/2826	CBD684	Introduction to Counselling Skills	20	2	18	One

Unit Details

Title	Introduction to Counselling	
Level	One	
Credit Value	1	
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	9	
OCN NI Unit Code	CBD683	
Unit Reference No	A/615/2825	
<i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to understand the nature of counselling and associated benefits and limitations.		
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria	
1. Understand the basic elements of counselling.	1.1. Define what is meant by counselling. 1.2. Outline how counselling may address common issues. 1.3. Give an example of how counselling may be used in conjunction with other therapies and treatments. 1.4. Outline how an individual can access counselling services.	
2. Recognise the benefits and limitations of counselling.	2.1. List the benefits and limitations of counselling and associated consequences.	
Assessment Guidance		
The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.		
Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion

Title	Introduction to Counselling Skills	
Level	One	
Credit Value	2	
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	18	
OCN NI Unit Code	CBD684	
Unit Reference No	F/615/2826	
<i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to understand the skills and attributes of effective counselling.		
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria	
1. Understand the skills and attributes of an effective counsellor.	1.1. Outline the skills and attributes of an effective counsellor. 1.2. Give an example of a barrier to effective communication in a counselling situation and how this may be overcome.	
2. Be able to apply skills used in counselling.	2.1. Apply counselling skills in a range of scenarios identifying areas for improvement.	
Assessment Guidance		
The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.		
Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log

Quality Assurance of Centre Performance

External Verification

All OCN NI recognised centres are subject to External Verification. External verification visits and monitoring activities will be conducted annually to confirm continued compliance with the conditions of recognition, review the centre's risk rating for the qualification and to assure OCN NI of the maintenance of the integrity of the qualification.

The External Verifier will review the delivery and assessment of this qualification. This will include the review of a sample of assessment evidence and evidence of the internal verification of assessment and assessment decisions. This will form the basis of the External Verification report and will inform OCN NI's annual assessment of centre compliance and risk. The External Verifier is appointed by OCN NI.

Standardisation

As a process, standardisation is designed to ensure consistency and promote good practice in understanding and the application of standards. Standardisation events:

- make qualified statements about the level of consistency in assessment across centres delivering a qualification
- make statements on the standard of evidence that is required to meet the assessment criteria for units in a qualification
- make recommendations on assessment practice
- produce advice and guidance for the assessment of units
- identify good practice in assessment and internal verification

Centres offering units of an OCN NI qualification must attend and contribute assessment materials and learner evidence for standardisation events if requested.

OCN NI will notify centres of the nature of sample evidence required for standardisation events (this will include assessment materials, learner evidence and relevant assessor and internal verifier documentation). OCN NI will make standardisation summary reports available and correspond directly with centres regarding event outcomes.

Administration

Registration

A centre must register learners within 20 working days of commencement of a qualification.

Certification

Certificates will be issued to centres within 20 working days of receipt of correctly completed results marksheets. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that certificates received from OCN NI are held securely and distributed to learners promptly and securely.

Charges

OCN NI publishes all up to date qualification fees in its Fees and Invoicing Policy document. Further information can be found on the centre login area of the OCN NI website.

Equality, Fairness and Inclusion

OCN NI has considered the requirements of equalities legislation in developing the specification for these qualifications. For further information and guidance relating to access to fair assessment and the OCN NI Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policies, centres should refer to the OCN NI website.

Retention of Evidence

OCN NI has published guidance for centres on the retention of evidence. Details are provided in the OCN NI Centre Handbook and can be accessed via the OCN NI website.

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