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PATHWAY TO ACCREDITATION

Policy and Framework

for Student Counsellors, Pre-Accredited Counsellors and Full Counsellor Accreditation

Irish Counselling, Psychotherapy & Allied Healthcare Professionals Association

Promoting Excellence in Counselling, Psychotherapy & Allied Healthcare in Ireland

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1. Introduction and Purpose

The Irish Counselling, Psychotherapy & Allied Healthcare Professionals Association (ICPHAA) is committed to the highest standards of professional practice, public protection, and ethical conduct in the counselling, psychotherapy, and allied healthcare professions in Ireland. The Pathway to Accreditation Policy sets out the structured, progressive route by which a person aspiring to practise as a counsellor or psychotherapist may, in stages, become a fully accredited member of the Association.

Accreditation is not merely an administrative status; it is a public affirmation that a practitioner has completed an approved programme of academic education, has accumulated supervised clinical experience, has internalised the ethical commitments of the profession, and is fit to practise safely, competently, and accountably with members of the public. The ICPHAA pathway has been designed to reflect international best practice while remaining grounded in the legal, cultural, and clinical context of Ireland.

This policy describes three sequential stages of membership. The first stage, Student Counsellor Membership, is open to those who are actively enrolled on an ICPHAA-recognised training programme. The second stage, Pre-Accredited Counsellor Membership, is the transitional category for graduates who have completed their core training and are now accumulating the post-qualification client hours required for full accreditation. The third and final stage, Full Accreditation, confers the right to use the post-nominal designation MICPHAA and to appear on the public Register of Members.

The pathway is intentionally rigorous. The ICPHAA recognises that members of the public who seek counselling or psychotherapy are often at vulnerable points in their lives, and that the trust they place in a practitioner must be earned through demonstrable competence, ethical integrity, and a sustained commitment to ongoing professional development. The standards described in this document have been calibrated to align with the developing statutory regulation framework under CORU, with the standards of peer regulators in the United Kingdom and Europe, and with the ICPHAA's own Code of Ethics and Professional Practice.

This policy is read alongside the ICPHAA Code of Ethics, the ICPHAA Supervision Policy, the ICPHAA Continuing Professional Development Framework, and the ICPHAA Disciplinary Procedures. Where any inconsistency arises between this policy and another ICPHAA policy, the matter shall be referred to the Membership and Accreditation Committee for clarification, and the interpretation that best serves public protection and the welfare of clients shall prevail.

This policy will be reviewed at intervals not exceeding three years, or sooner where developments in legislation, regulation, or professional standards require revision. Members, applicants, training providers, and other stakeholders are warmly invited to submit comments to the Membership Services team at info@icpa.ie. Further information, application forms, and supporting guidance are published at www.icpa.ie.

2. Scope, Definitions and Guiding Principles

This policy applies to all individuals seeking ICPHAA membership in the categories of Student Counsellor, Pre-Accredited Counsellor, and Accredited Counsellor or Psychotherapist. It also applies to

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ICPHAA-recognised training providers, to accredited supervisors who oversee the clinical practice of students and pre-accredited members, and to the Association's own Membership and Accreditation Committee, which administers the pathway on behalf of the Board.

Key definitions

A Student Counsellor is a person who is currently enrolled on an ICPHAA-recognised training programme in counselling or psychotherapy, who has not yet completed the academic award, and who is undertaking supervised client work as part of a structured placement.

A Pre-Accredited Counsellor is a person who has successfully completed an ICPHAA-recognised training programme, who has been granted Pre-Accredited Membership of the Association, and who is in the process of accumulating the supervised post-qualification client hours required for full accreditation. Pre-Accredited membership is a transitional and time-limited status.

An Accredited Counsellor or Psychotherapist is a person who has satisfied all requirements of the ICPHAA Pathway to Accreditation, has been granted full accreditation by the Membership and Accreditation Committee, and is entitled to use the post-nominal designation MICPHAA. Accredited members appear on the public ICPHAA Register and are subject to annual renewal and continuing professional development requirements.

An Accredited Supervisor, for the purposes of this policy, is a counsellor or psychotherapist who holds full accreditation with the ICPHAA, the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP), the Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP), or the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), and who holds a recognised qualification in clinical supervision.

Guiding principles

The pathway is built on five guiding principles. The first is public protection: the standards required at every stage are calibrated to ensure that practitioners are competent, ethical, and accountable when they meet members of the public in the therapeutic encounter. The second is fairness: every applicant is entitled to clear, transparent, and consistently applied criteria, and to a reasoned decision in writing on each application.

The third principle is developmental progression: the pathway is a structured journey of growth rather than a single examination, and the Association is committed to supporting practitioners at each stage of their professional formation. The fourth is ethical formation: technical competence is necessary but not sufficient; the ICPHAA expects practitioners to internalise the ethical values of the profession and to demonstrate them in everyday practice. The fifth is lifelong learning: accreditation is not an endpoint but a commitment to continued reflection, supervision, and continuing professional development throughout one's career.

3. The Three-Stage Pathway: Overview

The ICPHAA Pathway to Accreditation is structured as three sequential and developmentally progressive stages. Each stage builds upon the foundations laid by the previous stage, and each stage

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carries its own membership rights, obligations, and professional standards. A person may progress to the next stage only when the requirements of the present stage have been demonstrably and verifiably satisfied.

Stage One — Student Counsellor Membership

The first stage commences when a person enrols on an ICPHAA-recognised training programme and applies for Student Counsellor Membership. Student members benefit from the support of the ICPHAA community throughout their training, including access to student CPD events, mentoring, regional networks, reduced-rate professional indemnity insurance, and guidance on placement and supervision. Student members may use the descriptor 'Student Member of ICPHAA' but are not entitled to any other designation suggesting accredited status.

Stage Two — Pre-Accredited Counsellor Membership

The second stage begins on successful completion of the core training programme. The graduate applies for Pre-Accredited Counsellor Membership and, once accepted, may commence in independent or salaried clinical practice while continuing to accumulate the post-qualification client hours and supervised practice required for full accreditation. Pre-Accredited members are subject to mandatory supervision, mandatory Garda Vetting, and an annual continuing professional development requirement.

Stage Three — Full Accreditation (MICPHAA)

The third stage is reached when a Pre-Accredited member has accumulated four hundred and fifty supervised post-qualification client hours, has maintained the 1:10 supervision ratio continuously throughout that period, has met the continuing professional development requirement, and has satisfied all other criteria set out in this policy. Application for first-time accreditation is made to the Membership and Accreditation Committee, which assesses the application against the published criteria and, where satisfied, confers Full Accreditation and the right to use MICPHAA.

Indicative pathway timeline

The typical pathway from the commencement of an undergraduate degree to full accreditation is between five and seven years. A four-year, Level 8 undergraduate degree in counselling and psychotherapy ordinarily includes a supervised clinical placement of at least one hundred and twenty hours in the latter two years of study. Following graduation, the typical pre-accredited period required to accumulate four hundred and fifty post-qualification client hours is between eighteen months and three years, depending on the practitioner's caseload and circumstances. The pathway is intentionally not designed for speed; it is designed to produce safe, competent, ethical practitioners over time.

4. Stage One — Student Counsellor Membership

Student Counsellor Membership is the foundational stage of the ICPHAA Pathway to Accreditation. It is designed to welcome aspiring practitioners into the professional community at the earliest possible point in their formation, to support them throughout their academic studies, and to ensure that, by the time they graduate, they are already familiar with the ethical, supervisory, and professional standards of the Association they will later seek to join in a fully accredited capacity.

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Eligibility for Student Membership

An applicant is eligible for Student Counsellor Membership where they are currently enrolled, in good academic standing, on a counselling or psychotherapy training programme that meets the ICPHAA Course Recognition Criteria. The minimum acceptable academic level for entry to the pathway is a programme leading to an award at Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, ordinarily of not less than four years' duration, validated by QQI or a recognised university.

Applicants from non-recognised programmes may, exceptionally, be considered for Student Membership where the Membership and Accreditation Committee is satisfied that the programme in question meets the substantive requirements of the ICPHAA Course Recognition Criteria. In such cases, additional documentation may be requested, and the decision rests with the Committee.

Application requirements

1. Completed Student Membership application form (available at www.icpa.ie).
2. Written confirmation of current enrolment from the training provider, including programme title, NFQ level, year of study, and expected award date.
3. Photographic identification (passport or driving licence) and proof of address.
4. A signed declaration of acceptance of the ICPHAA Code of Ethics and Professional Practice.
5. The applicable annual Student Membership fee, as set out in the current ICPHAA Fee Schedule published at www.icpa.ie.

Rights and obligations of Student Members

Student Members are entitled to the descriptor 'Student Member of ICPHAA' on personal communications, to attend student-rate CPD events, to access the Members' Area of the ICPHAA website, to participate in regional student networks and special interest groups, and to receive reduced-rate professional indemnity insurance arrangements negotiated by the Association on members' behalf.

Student Members are obliged to comply with the Code of Ethics from the outset of their membership, to engage in regular supervision with an accredited supervisor during any client placement work, to undertake the personal therapy required by their training programme, and to report promptly to the ICPHAA office any change in their enrolment status, including any interruption, withdrawal, or transfer of training.

5. Student Placement and Supervised Practice

Supervised clinical placement is the cornerstone of professional formation in counselling and psychotherapy. It is the point at which theoretical learning is integrated with the lived complexity of clinical practice, and at which the student begins to develop the self-awareness, ethical sensibility, and relational capacity that distinguish a competent practitioner from a merely well-read one. The ICPHAA expects that all student members undertake supervised placement in accordance with the standards set out in this section.

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Placement requirements

Student Members are required to complete a minimum of one hundred and twenty hours of supervised client work during the placement phase of their training programme. Placement client hours are ordinarily commenced only after the student has completed at least two academic years of the core programme, has finished the required minimum of fifty hours of personal therapy with an accredited therapist, and has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the training provider, the readiness to engage in clinical work with members of the public.

Placement settings must be appropriate to the level and experience of the student, with structured oversight, clear protocols for managing risk, and adequate safeguarding arrangements. Suitable settings include community counselling services, addiction and bereavement services, low-cost counselling centres, voluntary organisations, schools (with appropriate safeguarding), and university or college counselling services. The training provider retains overall responsibility for the management of all placement client work undertaken by students enrolled on its programme.

Supervision during placement

All client work undertaken by a Student Member during placement must be supervised by an Accredited Supervisor as defined in Section 2 of this policy. Supervision must be provided in a structured and regular pattern, with a minimum frequency of one hour of supervision for every ten client contact hours, and not less than one hour of supervision per month during any month in which client work is being undertaken. The supervisor's role is to support the student's clinical learning, to monitor the welfare of clients, and to alert the training provider to any concerns about the student's fitness to practise.

Supervision arrangements may comprise a mixture of individual one-to-one supervision and group supervision, but at least seventy-five per cent of supervision time during placement must be in individual one-to-one supervision. The supervisor must hold accredited supervisor status with the ICPHAA, IACP, BACP, or IAHIP (subject to the date-of-accreditation conditions specified in Section 2). The training provider, the student, and the supervisor enter into a written supervision contract that sets out the frequency, format, fee, and ethical framework of the supervision relationship.

Personal therapy

Student Members are required by their training providers to engage in personal therapy with an accredited therapist for a minimum of fifty hours during the course of training. Personal therapy supports the practitioner's self-awareness, emotional resilience, and capacity to be present with the suffering of others, and is regarded by the ICPHAA as an essential element of professional formation rather than an optional extra.

6. Stage Two — Pre-Accredited Counsellor Membership

Pre-Accredited Counsellor Membership is the transitional stage between the completion of core training and the achievement of full accreditation. It is a time-limited category designed to support the graduate as they consolidate their clinical practice, accumulate the post-qualification client hours required for accreditation, deepen their reflective and ethical capacities, and prepare themselves for the independent professional life that full accreditation will confer.

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Eligibility for Pre-Accredited Membership

An applicant is eligible for Pre-Accredited Counsellor Membership where they have successfully completed an ICPHAA-recognised programme of training at the appropriate NFQ level (ordinarily Level 8 or above), have received their final transcript or award letter from the training provider, and have arranged for ongoing supervision with an Accredited Supervisor in accordance with Section 7 of this policy. Applicants from non-ICPHAA-recognised programmes may apply, with the Membership and Accreditation Committee determining eligibility on a case-by-case basis having regard to the Course Recognition Criteria.

Application requirements

1. Completed Pre-Accredited Membership application form.
2. A certified copy of the final award certificate, signed and stamped by the training provider, or a confirmation of award letter where the certificate is not yet available.
3. Evidence of current professional indemnity insurance to the minimum levels specified in the ICPHAA Insurance and Liability Policy.
4. Confirmation of a signed supervision contract with an Accredited Supervisor.
5. A signed declaration of acceptance of the ICPHAA Code of Ethics and Professional Practice.
6. Confirmation of current and valid ICPHAA Garda Vetting (or application for same on submission of the membership application).
7. The applicable Pre-Accredited Membership fee.

Garda Vetting

All Pre-Accredited Members must hold current and valid ICPHAA Garda Vetting. The ICPHAA is registered with the National Vetting Bureau and is responsible for conducting its own vetting of all members, regardless of whether the member has recently been vetted through another organisation. Vetting remains valid for a period of three years from the date of issue. A processing fee, as set out in the current ICPHAA Fee Schedule, applies. Applicants are advised that vetting applications typically take between four and twenty weeks to process, depending on demand at the National Vetting Bureau.

Duration and renewal

Pre-Accredited Membership is renewed annually until the member achieves full accreditation. It is the ICPHAA's expectation that members will progress to full accreditation within a reasonable period, typically not exceeding five years from the commencement of Pre-Accredited Membership. Where progression is significantly slower, the Membership Services team may engage with the member to understand the circumstances and to offer appropriate support or guidance.

7. Supervision Requirements for Pre-Accredited Members

Supervision is a cornerstone of safe and ethical practice and is a non-negotiable requirement of Pre-Accredited Membership of the ICPHAA. The supervision relationship provides the practitioner with a structured, reflective, and supportive space in which to examine their clinical work, to consider the

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ethical dimensions of practice, to attend to their personal responses to client material, and to develop the integrated clinical sensibility that characterises an accredited practitioner. The standards set out in this section apply for the full duration of Pre-Accredited Membership.

The Accredited Supervisor

Pre-Accredited Members must be supervised by an Accredited Supervisor as defined in Section 2 of this policy. To preserve the objectivity of the supervision relationship and to avoid any conflict of interest, post-training supervision must not be undertaken with an Accredited Supervisor who was the member's personal therapist during training, or who had any involvement in the training programme, college, institute, or organisation during the period of the member's training. The exclusion in respect of involvement with the training provider extends for two years following the termination of the supervisor's engagement with that provider. External individual supervisors contracted with during placement are exempted from this restriction.

Frequency and ratio

Individual supervision must take place for at least one hour per month during any month in which the member is actively seeing or available to see clients. The required minimum ratio of supervision is one hour of supervision for every ten client contact hours, applied continuously throughout the Pre-Accredited period, with no more than ten client hours occurring between any two supervision sessions. At the point of application for first-time accreditation, the member will be required to provide a yearly breakdown of client work confirming that the 1:10 supervision ratio has been maintained.

Forms of supervision

Supervision may take place either online or in person and may comprise individual one-to-one supervision or group supervision. Individual supervision encompasses any of the following formats: one-to-one discussion of cases; the supervisor sitting in on a session followed by a structured review; the supervisor observing the practitioner through a window or by video, followed by a review; or the use of case notes, verbatim notes, or audio recordings of sessions (always with the informed written consent of the client). Group supervision is supervision in which the supervisor takes responsibility for the supervision of two or more counsellors or psychotherapists together.

During the four hundred and fifty hours of post-qualification practice required for full accreditation, at least seventy-five per cent of the member's supervision time must be in individual supervision. The remaining proportion may be in group supervision, where the educational benefits of peer learning and exposure to a range of clinical material are recognised.

Continuity of supervision

Pre-Accredited Members must be supervised by the same Accredited Supervisor in the twelve months immediately preceding their application for first-time accreditation. An explanation must be provided in the application for any change of supervisor during this twelve-month period, and any such change will be reviewed by the Membership and Accreditation Committee. Supervisors are required, on request, to submit a Supervisor's Report to accompany the application for full accreditation.

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8. Stage Three — Full Accreditation (MICPHAA)

Full Accreditation is the destination of the ICPHAA Pathway. It is the formal recognition by the Association that a practitioner has completed an approved programme of training, has accumulated the required volume of supervised post-qualification clinical experience, has demonstrated a sustained commitment to ethical practice and continuing professional development, and is now fit to practise as an independent, accountable counsellor or psychotherapist. Full Accreditation confers the right to use the post-nominal designation MICPHAA and to appear on the public ICPHAA Register of Members.

Minimum requirements for Full Accreditation

1. Successful completion of an ICPHAA-recognised programme of counselling or psychotherapy training, ordinarily at NFQ Level 8 or above and of not less than four years' duration.
2. Continuous current membership of the ICPHAA from Student or Pre-Accredited entry to the point of application for full accreditation.
3. A minimum of four hundred and fifty supervised post-qualification client contact hours, accumulated over a period of not less than eighteen months and not more than five years.
4. Maintenance of the 1:10 supervision ratio continuously throughout the post-qualification period, with at least seventy-five per cent of supervision time in individual supervision.
5. Completion of at least ten hours of continuing professional development per annum throughout the Pre-Accredited period, of which not more than three hours may be supervision received.
6. A current Supervisor's Report from the Accredited Supervisor with whom the applicant has been supervised in the preceding twelve months.
7. Current and valid professional indemnity insurance to the minimum levels specified in the ICPHAA Insurance and Liability Policy, with confirmation that cover extends to all of the activities undertaken in the applicant's practice.
8. Current and valid ICPHAA Garda Vetting.
9. A signed declaration confirming acceptance of and commitment to the ICPHAA Code of Ethics and Professional Practice and the conditions of full accreditation.

Use of the MICPHAA designation

Following the granting of Full Accreditation, the member is entitled to use the post-nominal designation MICPHAA in all professional contexts, including stationery, business cards, marketing materials, professional correspondence, websites, and other public communications. The designation may be used only while accreditation is current and in good standing. Should accreditation lapse, be suspended, or be terminated, the right to use MICPHAA ceases immediately.

9. Application Procedure for Full Accreditation

The application for Full Accreditation is a structured process designed to confirm, through documentary evidence and where necessary clarifying enquiries, that the applicant has satisfied each of the requirements set out in Section 8 of this policy. The Membership and Accreditation Committee is

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responsible for the assessment of all applications and operates in accordance with the principles of fairness, transparency, proportionality, and consistency.

Documents required

1. Completed Application for First-Time Accreditation form, available at www.icpa.ie.
2. A photocopy of the core training course certificate or transcript, signed and verified by the Accredited Supervisor.
3. A detailed Client Hours Log, showing for each year of post-qualification practice the number of client contact hours completed, the place of practice, and the nature of the client work undertaken, totalling not less than four hundred and fifty hours.
4. A detailed Supervision Hours Log, showing for the same period the number of supervision hours received, the name and accreditation body of the supervisor, and whether supervision was individual or group.
5. A Supervisor's Report from the Accredited Supervisor of the preceding twelve months, addressing the applicant's clinical competence, ethical practice, use of supervision, and readiness for independent accredited practice.
6. Confirmation of professional indemnity insurance (insurer name, policy number, expiry date, levels of cover).
7. A current Continuing Professional Development record covering the Pre-Accredited period.
8. A reflective statement of not more than two thousand words, in which the applicant reflects on their development as a practitioner, on a significant ethical or clinical challenge encountered in practice, and on their plans for continuing professional development following accreditation.
9. The applicable First-Time Accreditation application fee.

Assessment and timescales

Applications are acknowledged in writing within ten working days of receipt. The Membership and Accreditation Committee will ordinarily reach a decision on a complete application within sixty working days of receipt. Where additional information or clarification is required, the applicant will be notified in writing and a revised timetable communicated. The Committee may grant accreditation, may grant accreditation subject to conditions, may defer the application pending further evidence, or may refuse the application with reasons.

All decisions are communicated to the applicant in writing with reasons. The applicant has a right of appeal against an adverse decision under the ICPHAA Membership and Accreditation Appeals Procedure (see Section 13 of this policy).

10. Continuing Professional Development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the structured, ongoing process by which a practitioner maintains and develops the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and ethical sensibilities required for safe and

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competent practice throughout their professional career. CPD is an integral component of the ICPHAA Pathway to Accreditation and a non-negotiable requirement of continued accredited membership.

Minimum CPD requirements

Pre-Accredited Members are required to complete a minimum of ten hours of CPD per annum, calculated from the date of commencement of Pre-Accredited Membership. Of these ten hours, up to three hours may be in the form of supervision received, with the remainder comprising structured learning activities. Full Accredited Members are required to complete a minimum of thirty hours of CPD per annum, comprising a mixture of structured and reflective learning activities, with at least half of the total being in structured learning formats.

Examples of recognised CPD

- Attendance at workshops, conferences, and seminars on counselling, psychotherapy, allied healthcare, or related professional topics.
- Completion of accredited short courses, diplomas, certificates, or postgraduate awards.
- Publication of peer-reviewed articles or chapters in counselling, psychotherapy, or allied disciplines.
- Presentation of papers or workshops at professional conferences or training events.
- Engagement in peer learning groups, journal clubs, or case discussion groups facilitated by an accredited practitioner.
- Structured personal therapy beyond minimum training requirements, where this is undertaken with reflective intent for professional development purposes.
- Self-directed reading and reflective learning activities, supported by a written reflective log.
- Mandatory training on safeguarding, GDPR, Children First, and other statutory or regulatory topics required for ethical practice.

Recording and audit

Members are responsible for maintaining their own CPD records in the format published by the ICPHAA in the Members' Area of the website. CPD records must include, for each activity, the date, duration in hours, the nature of the activity, the learning outcomes achieved, and a brief reflective note. The ICPHAA conducts an annual audit of a random sample of members' CPD records; members selected for audit are required to submit their records and supporting documentation within twenty-eight days of being notified.

Failure to meet the CPD requirement may result in the lapse of accreditation, the imposition of a remedial CPD plan, or, in serious or repeated cases, referral to the Disciplinary Procedures. The ICPHAA recognises that members may, from time to time, face circumstances that interfere with their capacity to complete CPD requirements, and is committed to dealing with such circumstances flexibly and with appropriate compassion.

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11. Maintaining and Renewing Accreditation

Full Accreditation is not granted once and for all but is renewed annually, subject to the member's ongoing compliance with the standards of the Association. Annual renewal is the principal mechanism by which the ICPHAA assures itself, its members, and the public that those entitled to use the MICPHAA designation continue to meet the requirements that underpin that designation.

Annual renewal requirements

At each annual renewal, the Accredited Member is required to provide evidence of current professional indemnity insurance to the levels specified in the ICPHAA Insurance and Liability Policy, confirmation of ongoing supervision at the appropriate ratio, a record of CPD activity for the year just ended totalling at least thirty hours, confirmation of continued compliance with the Code of Ethics, and payment of the applicable annual membership fee.

Inactive and retired accredited membership

Members who, for reasons of family, ill health, career interruption, or other personal circumstances, are not currently in clinical practice may apply to be placed on the Inactive Accredited Register. Inactive members retain accredited status but are not entitled to use the MICPHAA designation in active clinical practice unless they return to practice. Members permanently retired may apply for Retired Accredited Membership in recognition of their lifetime contribution.

Lapse, suspension and reinstatement

Where a member fails to complete annual renewal by the due date, their membership is marked as lapsed and they may no longer represent themselves as a current member of the ICPHAA. A member whose membership has lapsed for less than twelve months may apply for reinstatement upon submission of all outstanding documentation and the applicable fee. Where lapse exceeds twelve months, reinstatement is subject to review by the Membership and Accreditation Committee, which may require additional documentation, recent CPD evidence, or recent supervised practice.

Suspension of accreditation may also occur as a sanction under the ICPHAA Disciplinary Procedures. In all cases, the integrity of the public Register and the protection of clients and the public are the primary considerations.

Public Register of Members

The ICPHAA maintains a public Register of Members, accessible at www.icpa.ie, listing every Accredited Member in good standing together with their region of practice and contact details (where the member has consented to publication). The Register is the authoritative source of information for members of the public seeking to verify that a counsellor or psychotherapist holds current ICPHAA accreditation.

12. Alternative Pathways and Recognition of Prior Learning

The ICPHAA recognises that aspiring practitioners arrive at the profession by many different routes. While the standard Pathway described in this policy is the principal route to ICPHAA accreditation, the

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Association is committed to fair and proportionate recognition of equivalent training and experience obtained outside the standard pathway.

Applicants from non-ICPHAA-recognised training programmes

An applicant who has completed a counselling or psychotherapy training programme that is not ICPHAA-recognised may apply for Pre-Accredited or Full Accreditation directly to the Membership and Accreditation Committee. The applicant must demonstrate, by reference to course documentation, that the programme substantively meets the ICPHAA Course Recognition Criteria, including academic level, duration, theoretical underpinnings, supervised placement hours, personal therapy requirement, and assessment standards. Accreditation in such cases is at the discretion of the Committee and is not guaranteed.

Applicants accredited with peer regulators

Applicants who hold current accreditation with the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP), the Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP), the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), or another recognised European or international regulator with which the ICPHAA has a reciprocity arrangement, may apply for transfer to ICPHAA accreditation under a simplified procedure. Such applicants are ordinarily exempted from the detailed evidence requirements of the standard pathway, subject to verification of current accreditation status, professional indemnity insurance, supervision, and CPD compliance.

Applicants from regulated jurisdictions

Applicants who hold a current licence or registration to practise counselling or psychotherapy in a jurisdiction with statutory regulation of the profession (for example, certain states of the United States, certain provinces of Canada, Australia, or New Zealand) may apply for ICPHAA accreditation under the Recognition of Licensure procedure. The Committee will consider the equivalence of the regulatory regime under which the applicant is licensed and may, where appropriate, grant accreditation subject to confirmation of standards.

Allied healthcare professionals

The ICPHAA welcomes applications from allied healthcare professionals who have completed counselling or psychotherapy training of a recognised standard and who wish to incorporate counselling and psychotherapy practice within their professional scope. Allied healthcare professionals must demonstrate that their training meets the ICPHAA Course Recognition Criteria in its own right, separately from their primary professional qualification, and must hold professional indemnity insurance appropriate to the integrated scope of their practice.

Recognition of prior learning

In all alternative pathways, the Committee may, at its discretion, recognise relevant prior learning, prior supervised clinical experience, or prior CPD, where this can be evidenced to an appropriate standard and is consistent with the public protection rationale of the ICPHAA Pathway.

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13. Appeals, Reviews and References

Right of appeal

Any applicant or member who is the subject of an adverse decision under this policy has a right of appeal to the ICPHAA Membership and Accreditation Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel is constituted independently of the Membership and Accreditation Committee, and includes at least one accredited practitioner and at least one lay member. Appeals must be submitted in writing to info@icpa.ie within twenty-eight days of the decision, setting out clearly the grounds on which the appeal is based.

Recognised grounds of appeal include a material error of fact, a procedural irregularity that materially affected the outcome, disproportionality of the decision, or the availability of new and significant evidence not before the Committee. The Appeals Panel may uphold, vary, or substitute the original decision, or remit the matter for reconsideration. Its decision is final within the Association's internal processes, without prejudice to any rights under Irish law.

Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed at intervals not exceeding three years, or sooner where legislative, regulatory, or professional developments require revision. Reviews are conducted by the Membership and Accreditation Committee in consultation with members, training providers, accredited supervisors, and other stakeholders, and any substantive revisions are subject to approval by the ICPHAA Board of Directors.

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