

Special considerations for students affected by COVID-19

Why have we created this document?

The following guidance has been created to support Heartwood students who experience difficulty in attending face to face training due to the coronavirus pandemic.

These special considerations apply to current cohorts and are for coronavirus related difficulties only.

Where possible, and safe, students are required to attend classes at the college if the college is open.

The college is adhering to government guidance around all aspects of coronavirus safety protocols and directives.

The college recognises that some students cannot attend face-to-face classes as they may need to temporarily isolate. We want to be as flexible as we can in order to find alternative provision to support all students with special considerations, however, it is important that we provide clear parameters to ensure that the training experienced by our students is sufficient to match the accreditation level of the course.

We have sought guidance from the leading governing bodies, and have put together the following parameters, which will ensure that the proficiency of all qualifying students has not been affected by any alterations in delivery methods, and will support all of our students to be able to qualify with the accreditation standard set for their course.

The measures set out below must only be used by students who have a serious and bona fide reason not to attend college. These measures should not be used in preference to attending face-to-face classes, and students may be asked to supply evidence of their situation to support the request for special considerations. Any misuse of these measures could call into question the student's conduct and ability to qualify.

But what about students who cannot attend face-to-face classes?

Students who have concerns about attending face-to-face training will be able to talk over their concerns with our Centre Director, who will attempt to find alternative solutions to support the student and avoid students being disadvantaged as a result of the coronavirus.

One alternative that the college may offer is the provision of some online classes that offer an opportunity for students to catch up on missed course days. These online classes will not always be available in line with a student's training schedule, and may involve waiting until the missed class is available to access online, and in some cases this might take several months.

These online classes will be delivered by our most senior teaching staff.

Competency to Practise

In order to ensure that any adaptations the college makes to the delivery of the training, does not interfere with the student's route to qualify, or access the Professional Standards Register for counsellors and psychotherapists via membership of a governing body, we will be implementing some additional assessment measures where necessary.

There are currently several factors, which will potentially lead to students being required by the college to undertake additional assessments:

- An increased number of online taught sessions.
- A large proportion of their placement hours conducted online.
- Being emotionally affected by the pandemic, and affected resilience.
- A delay in access to placement provision.
- Difficulty accessing personal counselling.

The college will carry out individual student assessments, and provide additional measures to assess the proficiency to practise of each student.

Students will receive tutorials with their own tutor to establish if any/which of the additional measures of assessment will be required.

These additional measures will be implemented to uphold a consistent high standard of proficiency, and might include the following measures:

- Requesting additional placement hours in order to gain more direct experience. The additional amount will be decided by the tutor and will be unique to that student.
- Requesting a 'Focused Conversation' with a tutor. This is a recorded conversation where the tutor asks specific questions in order to focus the student to demonstrate knowledge in a specific area.
- Additional supervision may be requested, and more direct input from supervisors may be sought to provide reassurance of practice ability where required.
- A recorded skills practice session, assessed by a senior tutor.
- Additional personal counselling.

What are the plans if we go into a further lockdown?

We have been working to provide a high standard of online educational provision, which mirrors (as closely as possible) the quality of training students receive at Heartwood.

If we are advised by the government to close the college, we will continue our course delivery using the Heartwood Online Platform (HOP). All students are registered onto the HOP automatically in order to aid a smooth transition from 'face-to-face' training to 'online' training.