



## **BCA / BPC individual application for registration - Guidance Notes**

### **Introduction**

The Birkbeck Counselling Association (BCA) is a member institution (MI) of the British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC) and has agreed a process for appropriately qualified and experienced BCA members to register with the BPC as Psychodynamic Counsellors if they meet the agreed criteria.

Ongoing, the BPC requires registrants to comply with its Continuing Professional Development (CPD) standards and with its Ethical Code and Complaints Procedure. BCA members who register with the BPC must remain members of the BCA or their BPC registration will lapse.

These guidance notes are intended to explain and help applicants through the process that has been agreed. Please bear in mind that the overall aim is to protect the public and maintain public confidence in the profession.

### **Organisation**

The BCA has set up a Scrutiny Committee (SC), as a sub-committee of the BCA Executive Committee. Nikky Sternhell is chair of the SC which is composed of about seven members drawn from BCA and BPC. Its remit and protocols have been agreed with the BPC and its task is to scrutinise applications and to assist applicants in meeting the criteria. There is also a facility for appealing the Scrutiny Committee's decisions.

### **Criteria**

#### **1. Training:**

Applicants must have successfully graduated from one of the following trainings:

MSc in Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy (previously called MSc in Psychodynamic Counselling)

MSc in Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy with children and adolescents (previously called MSc in Psychodynamic Counselling with children and adolescents).

You will be asked to supply some documentary confirmation of your graduation (for example a scan or photocopy of your degree certificate or an official letter from Birkbeck).

BCA members who have a different training that they feel is comparable to the Birkbeck MSc courses are welcome to seek advice from the chair of the SC before applying. Decisions about comparability are made by the scrutiny committee on a case by case basis and will require you to provide details of your level of knowledge, clinical experience, professional development and duration of personal therapy for comparison with the levels expected of Birkbeck MSc graduates.

There is a separate application form with guidance notes for a 'comparability of training' assessment, which would be a preliminary requirement before applying for BPC registration if you have not completed one of the Birkbeck MSc trainings.

## **2. Clinical work**

Applicants will normally have completed two psychodynamically or psychoanalytically supervised long-term psychodynamic counselling cases (of one year's duration or longer) where clients/patients were seen weekly (or more frequently) and the work was regularly presented and discussed in supervision throughout the year. The work may have taken place during training and/or subsequently. If any of these requirements cannot be fully met, please discuss with your application advisor as soon as possible.

The scrutiny committee does not lay down a precise minimum number of sessions for a long-term case as this may vary according to the setting. However, an appropriate case would rarely consist of fewer than 40 sessions, except possibly in an academic setting which offers counselling only during term time. In this situation an appropriate case would rarely consist of fewer than 30 sessions.

Applicants will normally be engaged currently in psychodynamic counselling work for which they receive regular psychodynamic or psychoanalytic supervision. If this does not apply to you, you may still be able to register in the 'deferred' category - please discuss with your application advisor.

Applicants are expected to arrange for their supervisor(s) to submit references to cover their two long-term cases and their current work. If your current supervisor did not supervise either of your long cases, you will need a separate reference to cover your current work, so this may involve up to three separate references, or even more if your supervision arrangement changed during one or both of your long cases. Please make clear to your supervisor(s) exactly what clinical work you wish them to comment on. If you are unsure what references you need, please discuss with your application advisor.

If you only have one supervised long-term case or no long-term cases, you are welcome to seek advice from the scrutiny committee about your particular circumstances, preferably before applying as you will probably need to take on a further case or cases. If you have already begun your application, please discuss with your application advisor before proceeding.

Applicants are normally expected to have been with their current supervisor for at least six months. If you have been with your current supervisor for less than six months, we would advise you to wait to submit your application. You may wish to discuss this with your application advisor as in some circumstances we may be able to accept a recent previous supervisor's reference.

The scrutiny committee's decision will normally be based only on your application form and references but, in some circumstances, you may be asked to write about your clinical work or attend an interview. Your application advisor will discuss this with you if it is required.

## **3. General (non-clinical) Reference**

You will need to supply one general reference (eg from a tutor if you are a recent graduate, or from a line manager). Your referee should not be your spouse, partner or a relative.

## **4. Continuing Professional Development**

Clinical practitioners on the BPC Register have to meet ongoing specific CPD requirements annually. Completion of the requirements is monitored at the end of every calendar year. Applicants will be asked how they intend to meet these requirements. The basic requirement is



for 30 hours of CPD, divided between 15 hours of clinical supervision and 15 hours of other activity related to clinical practice, such as attending lectures, workshops, preparation for teaching (but not the teaching itself), reading psychoanalytic books/papers etc. Most practitioners exceed these requirements. Full details are on the BPC website:

[Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\) - British Psychoanalytic Council](#)

It is a requirement that your CPD return should be counter-signed each year by an experienced clinical practitioner who has heard you present your work over a period of time - this would normally be your supervisor, who would normally be a BPC registrant. If you are accepted onto the BPC register and your current supervisor is not BPC registered but is either a member of UKCP's Council for Psychoanalysis and Jungian Analysis College (CPJAC) or is a BACP accredited psychodynamic or psychoanalytic practitioner, they may also countersign your CPD return, although you will need to agree this with BPC's Professional Standards Committee when making your annual CPD return. BPC selects a proportion of CPD returns each year for audit (which means you would be asked to provide greater detail about your CPD activities) and those with non-BPC registered counter-signatories are more likely to be selected for audit.

## **5. Ethical Code and Complaints Procedure**

Applicants will be asked to confirm their acceptance of the BPC Ethical Code and Complaints Procedure, including their future updating. Full details are on the BPC website. Please make sure you read them.

[Ethical framework - British Psychoanalytic Council](#)

[Concerns - British Psychoanalytic Council](#)

Current Professional Indemnity Insurance is required (unless all your work is covered by an employer's or agency's professional indemnity insurance).

If appropriate, (for example if you work with children) DBS (CRB) certification is required.

BPC registrants will be required to provide the names of two clinical trustees (unless all their work is covered by an employer's or agency's arrangements). The information will be held by the BCA. Your clinical trustees would be responsible for notifying your clients if you became unable to work (e.g. because of serious illness or your death), and helping them to make other arrangements.

Please use the Additional Information space (section 9) on the application form to tell the scrutiny committee anything that you feel they should know. If you do not disclose a material fact that later turns out to be relevant to your professional standing or practice, your BPC registration could be affected. If you are unsure about what might be relevant, please discuss with the scrutiny committee chair or your application advisor.

## **6. Continuing membership of the BCA.**

Applicants are required to continue their membership of the BCA or their BPC registration will lapse. You will be asked to pay BCA membership fees by standing order or other regular automatic payment and you may be asked to provide evidence of having set up the payment.

There is no restriction on the membership of other professional bodies.



### **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

The application process requires you to provide information about yourself and your work, some of which may be categorised as 'special category data' for the purposes of the General Data Protection Regulation. The information you provide will be used only for the purpose of determining your application for BPC registration. It will be shared between members of the BCA/BPC scrutiny committee and any BPC member who has good reason to be involved with your application (for example a member of an appeals panel should the circumstance arise). Your referee(s) will also be asked to provide information about you in their reference(s). If you apply for BPC registration, it will be implicit that you consent to the information that you and your referee(s) provide being used in this way.

### **Changes to the criteria for BPC registration from Autumn 2025**

The Birkbeck MSc courses require students to be in once-weekly (or more frequent) personal therapy from the end of the first term until graduation. Birkbeck defines criteria for the suitability of therapists in terms of their qualifications and experience. Similarly, Birkbeck either approves placement supervisors or may require additional, external supervision during students' placements. The scrutiny committee currently considers that therapists and supervisors who are acceptable to Birkbeck during training are also acceptable for BPC registration.

However, **from 2025** the BPC will require all registrants to have been in therapy throughout their training with a BPC registered psychoanalytic psychotherapist or psychoanalyst, and similarly to have been supervised throughout their training by a BPC registered psychoanalytic psychotherapist or psychoanalyst.

Students who began their Birkbeck MSc course before Autumn 2022 will not necessarily be expected to meet the new criteria as they could not have been aware of them from the beginning of their training. If you are unsure which criteria for therapists and supervisors apply to you, please discuss with the chair of the scrutiny committee, preferably before you apply, or with your application advisor if you have already started your application.

### **Application Process**

If you would like to apply for BPC registration please contact Nikky Sternhell, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee. She will arrange with you how you would like to pay the application fee (by cheque or by direct bank transfer), and will then refer you to a member of the committee who will be your application adviser as your point of contact and to help you through the process. Nikky will also inform you of the outcome of your application.

Your application advisor will send you a set of application forms for you to return electronically, including referees' forms and guidance notes, together with details of where to send any supporting documents you are unable to send electronically.

Because some of the information on the application form can go out of date if there is a delay in obtaining your references, it would be best not to submit your application form until your referee(s) are ready to provide the reference(s). If your application advisor receives the the references more than three months after the application form, you may be asked to complete part or all of the application form again.

BCA's initial application fee for the scrutiny process is £230

The current annual fee for inclusion on the BPC register can be found on BPC's website

[Joining Our Register - British Psychoanalytic Council](#)



It is pro-rated if you join part way through a year. There is a reduction in the annual fee if you graduated within the last two years.

Nikky Sternhell  
Chair, BCA/BPC Scrutiny Committee,

[n.sternhell@btinternet.com](mailto:n.sternhell@btinternet.com)