Education Strategy

Education at Metanoia is a partnership between Counselling/Psychotherapy Research and Pedagogical Research Evidence

Section A: Introduction, Context, and Scope

Metanoia Institute is a leading international provider of psychotherapy, counselling, psychological therapies and related education. Our programmes span levels 3-8 including degrees at undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels. They are designed to deliver inclusive, purposeful and impactful education to transform the lives of our students, enhance society and contribute to the national and international mental health landscape.

Our educational ethos is grounded in:

- Innovation in teaching, professional practice, and service delivery.
- Collaboration across sectors, communities, and professional bodies.
- Inclusion, ensuring equitable access to learners from all backgrounds and
- Enterprise, fostering sustainable, socially responsible graduates who make a tangible difference in their professions and communities.

Central to our vision is the cultivation of a culturally responsive, inclusive, and highly skilled psychological workforce. We are committed to ensuring that therapy is accessible to all sectors of society, using innovation to foster positive, long-term change.

Through our combination of academic rigour, research-led teaching, and practical knowledge exchange, we aim to create pathways that broaden access to underrepresented groups and open up new markets. Our commitment to enterprise and innovation is intended to support employability, help shape a diverse workforce and deliver psychological support that

resonates with the communities we serve. By partnering with employer networks, alumni, membership bodies, and professional organisations, we aim to actively promote awareness and application of psychotherapy and counselling, support community impact as well as help build sustainable and impactful professional careers for our graduates.

This Education Strategy should also be seen to be inter-connected with and support, other key institutional strategies, policies and practice guidance related to:

- Programme development and approval
- Clinical competency development and monitoring
- Staff development
- Research activities
- Education Leads
- Student Voice
- EDI
- Access and participation
- Student support
- Digital technology

Section B: Institutional Strategic Aims

This Education Strategy informs the work of the Institute's approach to Education across all its constituent departments and articulates our Institutional mission, values and Strategic Plan in this area. Our Values (Community, Inclusion, Openness, Responsibility, Challenge and Growth) inform the operation and implementation of our key strategic pillars which in turn shape our strategic objectives for Education.

Each component of the Education Strategy directly supports the following institutional Strategic pillars:

Pillar 1 Inclusion: To foster a culture of inclusion that promotes diversity, equity and belonging for all students and staff through inclusive teaching practices, an inclusive curriculum, and an inclusive environment.

Pillar 2 Innovation: To drive innovation across all aspects of our institution by modernising education design and delivery methods, upgrading supporting infrastructure, enhancing our brand and marketing efforts, and leveraging digitisation.

Pillar 3 Intelligence led: To become an intelligence-led institution that prioritises data-driven decision-making, evidence-based education and practice and a student-centred approach whilst staying ahead of emerging trends in Higher Education.

Pillar 4 Sustainability: To ensure long-term sustainability by becoming an autonomous organisation, maximising growth and income opportunities, and embedding sustainable development principles across all our plans, including financial security.

For ease, the relevant sub-statement beneath these pillars is contained in a box at the start of each component.

Section C: Educational Strategy Components

Our Education will be:

1. Built on Pedagogical Research Evidence
2. Grounded in Evidence from Counselling and Psychotherapy Research
3. Inclusive and Accessible
4. Fostering a Sense of Belonging, Mattering and Connection
5. Embracing Digital Learning
6. Clinically Aligned and Future Focused
7. Sustainable

1. Our Education will be Built on Pedagogical Research Evidence

'Pedagogy' refers to the ways in which a teacher 'teaches'. In our context, we are committed to learning from research about best practice in teaching adults and best practice in preparing trainees for a career in Counselling or Psychotherapy.

This contributes to the following Metanoia Institute Strategic Aims:

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 2.1
Introduce innovative education design and delivery methods such as personalised and adaptive learning to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 3.5
Develop and implement a strategic plan that aligns teaching research and strategic decision-making with emerging trends and best practices in Higher Education

By design

Our programmes will be designed in line with our policies and practice guidance for developing and approving new programmes.

These documents have clear guidance on:

- Bench-marking against National standards
- Constructive alignment
- Universal Design for Learning (to support inclusive and accessible teaching, learning and assessment - see Inclusive and Accessible)
- Spiral approaches (to enable students to make conceptual connections between apparently disparate elements of their wider programme - see REAL strategy)
- Regular opportunities for reflection (to enable students to develop a clear picture, or narrative, of their overall learning journey and to analyse their personal progress and future goals - see REAL strategy)

- The requirement for oversight and expertise, throughout the process, from Education Leads at Metanoia who are tasked with staying ahead of emerging trends and evidence related to best practice and innovation in programme and module design

Those designing provision at Module level will be directly supported by Heads of Programmes, Associate Directors of Education and the Director of Education to design sections of learning within modules that meet the carefully designed programme and modules specifications whilst embracing innovative and evidence-led approaches to episode design.

In practice

Our academic teaching staff will be supported to facilitate educational experiences that are innovative and utilise evidence-led approaches to pedagogy.

This will be achieved through:

- An innovative PGCert in Counselling and Psychotherapy Education. This programme draws from both seminal and recent pedagogical research in a critical and constructive way. All staff are expected to undertake this, or achieve Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy within two years of taking a teaching contract with us
- Workload allocations for teaching staff to work with their Head of Programme, Metanoia Education Leads and their peers to:
    - develop pedagogical approaches that are rooted in pedagogical research evidence
    - be innovative in developing pedagogical approaches that are drawn from evidence and adapted to the needs of our discipline and specific cohorts
- Team teaching, peer review and lesson study approaches that are normalised in practice and embedded in PDR processes
- Education Leads who are tasked with engaging in Higher Education pedagogy networks to stay abreast of innovative ideas, contemporary evidence and emerging trends

2. Our Education will be Grounded in Evidence from Counselling and Psychotherapy Research

Counselling and Psychotherapy approaches are constantly reviewed by both individuals and research teams. In order to best prepare our trainees for a career in this field, we need to draw on both seminal work and recent, innovative, theories and research findings. By analysing a range of perspectives in the research with our trainees, we aim to scaffold our students to make their own decisions about their practice that are grounded in proven practice but open to innovation and new ideas.

This contributes to the following Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim:

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 3.2
Foster a culture of evidence-based education and practice by providing academic staff with the necessary resources and training to incorporate research findings into their teaching and professional development activities

By design

Our programmes will be designed in line with our policies and practice guidance for developing and approving new programmes.

At all academic levels, these documents require that:

- Both seminal and recent counselling/psychotherapy theories and research findings are identified and linked to each module
- Research learning, teaching, practice and scholarship is embedded throughout the student journey
- There are planned opportunities for students to critically consider the cultural context, language, potential influences and implicit values associated with research
- All assessments require engagement with literature at a level described by the QAA
- At least one assessment is designed to be directed at a specific scholarly audience
- Opportunities are created to enable students to publish work with members of staff
- Programmes provide opportunities for students to engage with students on different programmes, to discuss research and current debate in Counselling/Psychotherapy
- All programmes are structured to create a related sequence of opportunities for research and enquiry, so that students steadily build up their abilities and confidence. This includes:
    - Enabling students to develop a clear picture, or narrative, of their overall learning journey and to analyse their personal progress and future goals
    - Providing opportunities for students to meet researchers and prominent scholars within the institute

- Providing opportunities for students to take part in research enquiries within the institute and publish with academic staff

In practice

- Scholarly enquiry will be embedded throughout teaching and learning
- Students will be scaffolded to critique research (as appropriate to their QAA level) to:
  - understand the underpinning methodology
  - examine its application to clinical practice
  - explore the cultural context, language, potential influences and implicit values
- Students will be invited to engage in both internal and external scholarly networks and will be supported to do this
- Academic staff will stay abreast of current research and feel able to flexibly bring new debates and ideas to their teaching

3. Our Education will be Inclusive and Accessible

Metanoia is committed to providing Education which is widely accessible at the point of entry and is then inclusive throughout the journey to ensure an equitable opportunity for students to be successful regardless of their background or approaches to learning. We expect a commitment to learning and engaging from all students, and in turn, our students can expect a commitment from us that we will scaffold and enable success based on this engagement.

This contributes to the following Metanoia Institute Strategic Aims:

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 1.3
Implement inclusive teaching practices that create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students, regardless of their backgrounds, by providing differentiated instruction, diverse instructional materials, and promoting student-centred learning

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 2.1
Introduce innovative education design and delivery methods such as personalised and adaptive learning to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes

At entry

Our programme portfolio will align with the principles, actions and targets of our Access and Participation Plan by providing multiple points of entry, exit and fast-track. Both clinical and academic progression will be carefully considered across all three of these areas.

We will offer a range of open event formats, both in-person and online, to maximise the accessibility of the information about our courses. Our open events will include presence from our student support services to enable applicants to more accurately consider the suitability of our offer for their needs.

By design

The design of our programmes will be inclusive and accessible in line with our policies and practice guidance for developing and approving new programmes.

- These documents require that the principles for Universal Design for Learning are designed into structure and assessments
- Programme teams are supported throughout the process by the Education Leads at Metanoia who are tasked with staying ahead of emerging trends and evidence related to best practice and innovation in inclusive and accessible programme and module design
- Proposed Programme and Module specifications will be reviewed using our EDI review system to further improve the inclusivity and accessibility of our programme and module design

In practice

Our academic teaching staff will be supported to facilitate inclusive and accessible educational experiences through:

- A focus on inclusion and accessibility in our PGCert in Counselling and Psychotherapy Education. All teaching staff are expected to undertake this within two years of taking a teaching contract with us, or to achieve Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (which includes inclusivity and equity of opportunity in its descriptors)
- All teaching staff will receive ongoing training in:
    - Inclusive pedagogy (such as differentiated instruction and diversity in access routes to instructional materials)
    - Promoting student-centred learning (including through methods such as personalised and adaptive learning to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes)
    - How to create a safe and supportive environment for a range of learning approaches and needs
- Team teaching and lesson study paperwork will be based on both Teaching Standards and established models of good pedagogical practice. These consistently emphasise the need for accessible and inclusive practice, therefore our paperwork will reflect this, encouraging teaching staff to apply this lens to their reflections
- Student voice systems will focus on inclusion and accessibility of curricula, assessments and practice. The EDI Committee is tasked with reviewing student voice in these areas and making institute or programmes level recommendations
- Specialised Education Leads who will be focused on accessibility and inclusion in education

4. Our Education will Foster a Sense of Belonging, Mattering and Connection

Extensive recent research has shown that success in learning depends not only on teaching approaches but on fostering a sense of belonging, mattering and connection in communities of learners.

This contributes to the following Metanoia Institute Strategic Aims:

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 1.2
Develop an inclusive curriculum that reflects the diversity of our student body and the world around us, and that fosters cultural awareness and understanding

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 1.3
Implement inclusive teaching practices that create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students, regardless of their backgrounds, by providing differentiated instruction, diverse instructional materials, and promoting student-centred learning

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 1.4
Create an inclusive environment that values and respects the experiences, perspectives, and identities of all members of the Metanoia Community by implementing policies and practices that promote equity and belonging

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 1.6
Encourage and enable tutors to incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences into their teaching by providing them with access to inclusive materials and resources

At entry

In line with the principles, actions and targets of our Access and Participation Plan, our marketing materials will include a range of student and staff profiles to maximise prospective students feeling a sense of belonging and connection when they are considering Metanoia as a place to study. We will offer a range of open events, both in-person and online to diversify the opportunities for applicants to feel a connection with our academic and support services teams. Our application process will be designed to be relational, creating a sense of mattering throughout the process.

By design

We will foster belonging, mattering and connection in our students from the start of their programme through carefully designed inductive activities at the start of each entry point. These draw on research evidence in this area and are deliberately designed to foster belonging.

This will include:

- Induction to our systems and support services to foster familiarisation with the wider support at Metanoia

- Induction to our library and academic support team. These teams are then embedded in programme provision so this early connection with them supports a feeling of familiarisation and safety when these teams contribute to programme provision
- Bespoke support to meet the needs of students beginning a programme for counselling or psychotherapy. This bespoke support is embedded in our curriculum through scaffolded and facilitated opportunities for students to consider their identity and those of others, and reflect on how this may interplay with their journey with us
- Careful introduction of educational processes, such as group process, to develop shared understanding of the role of these spaces and how the group works together to support the group and foster belonging

In line with our policies and practice guidance for developing and approving new programmes, we will design curricula that reflects the diversity of our student body and the world around us, fostering cultural awareness and understanding, and enabling feelings of belonging, mattering and connection across our student body. Our policies and practice guidance for developing and approving new programmes require all curricula to include:

- diverse instructional materials
- opportunities to enable safe spaces for critical reflection on the colonised nature of research and theory in counselling and psychotherapy

In practice

Within the above design, we will further embed feelings of belonging and connection through the structure of our programmes and the practice of our lecturers

We will do this through:

- A focus on diversity and belonging in our PGCert in Counselling and Psychotherapy Education. All teaching staff are expected to undertake this within two years of taking a teaching contract with us, or to achieve Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (which includes inclusivity and equity of opportunity in its descriptors)
- All teaching staff receiving ongoing training in:
    - Cultural humility
    - How to actively value and respect the experiences, perspectives, and identities of all students
    - How to create a safe and supportive environment while facilitating diverse discussions within settings such as Group Process
    - How to incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences into their teaching, instigating difficult conversations that aim to foster cultural awareness and understanding

- Giving Heads of Programmes capacity, through workload and scheduling, to enable them to monitor the practice of their Primary Tutors
- Funding diverse external speakers
- Teaching students predominantly in-person by a single Primary Tutor across the entire academic year. This enables close relationships to be built between peers and the Primary Tutor which fosters feelings of belonging within a community of practice
- Keeping teaching group size small to enable space to build close relationships and foster belonging and mattering within groups
- Student voice systems that focus on diversity of practice, teaching materials and feelings of belonging for all students. The EDI Committee is tasked with reviewing student voice in these areas and making institute or programmes level recommendations
- Team teaching, peer review and lesson study paperwork that includes a focus on diversity and belonging within the teaching space
- Specialised Education Leads who are focused on diversity, belonging and mattering in counselling and psychotherapy education.
- Providing opportunities for students to engage with students in different cohorts and on different programmes, widening their connections and sense of belonging

5. Our Education will Embrace Digital Learning

Digital skills are increasingly essential for a career in counselling and psychotherapy. We are committed to scaffolding students to develop these skills as part of their learning journey with us.

This contributes to the following Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim:

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 2.4
Embrace digitisation by integrating new technologies such as virtual learning, digital library, CRM, and AI into our educational and administrative processes to enhance efficiency and innovation

By design

Our digital learning infrastructure and resources will be designed to:

- Align with our Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Feedback Strategy
- Support learning objectives, while addressing the specific needs of our students
- Provide opportunities for evidencing learning
- Provide inclusive, intuitive and interactive user experience
- Be dynamic and adaptable to education, management and market needs
- Integrate with other platforms and leverage automations
- Remain continuously operational (BAU), complaint and safe.
- Facilitate data collection, monitoring, analysis and reporting

In practice

Our practice will be digitally enhanced through:

- Confident and competent practitioners
- Confident and competent students
- Providing digital technology, at the point of teaching delivery, that is high quality, accessible, intuitive and reliable

6. Our Education will be Clinically Aligned and Future Focused

We are committed to supporting students to attain both academic qualifications and clinical qualifications. We are abreast of ongoing developments related to Counselling and Psychotherapy regulations and we build this into our programmes to ensure that our students graduate from us with up to date clinical qualifications.

This contributes to the following Metanoia Institute Core Purpose:

Metanoia Institute Core Purpose 2

Training: We will deliver programmes that integrate clinical practice with academic rigour underpinned by research to provide well-defined and flexible training pathways that lead to immediate employability across all sectors, allowing graduates to make a meaningful impact from day one.

By design

Most of our programmes are PSRB facing and need to comply with the requirements of these bodies. Our policies and practice guidance for developing and approving new programmes, provides detailed guidance on maintaining the integrity and compliance of programmes throughout the design process. Our Director of Clinical Training maintains constant contact with our PSRBs and is embedded throughout the process of the design of programmes and modules at Metanoia.

We will integrate clinical practice with academic rigour in the following ways:

- All newly developed programmes will be aligned to the SCoPEd framework, with clear clinical step on and step off points which give students immediate employability
- Clinical Competency development will be embedded across programmes
- Assessment of Clinical Competency will follow a structured, consistent and transparent system
- Systems will be in place to support students to move flexibly through their programme, disentangling Clinical progression from Academic Progression as appropriate to individual need
- We will draw on research related to linking theory and practice when designing our programmes and modules
- We will draw on principles of the Connected Curriculum to support students to connect academic learning with skills for the workplaces
- We will offer flexible training pathways and accessible Recognition of Prior Learning processes to enable students from a diverse clinical background to access our programmes at a suitable clinical point for themselves

In practice

Our academic teaching team are practicing Counsellors and Psychotherapists with PSRB accreditation and/or membership. This puts us in a unique position of being able to organically align our teaching with clinical practice.

To support our team further we will:

- Have a dedicated member of the academic team who works closely with the Director of Clinical Training, Director of Education and our Placement Team to:
    - Oversee clinical competence tracking
    - Ensure compliance
    - Stay abreast of PSRB changes and trends
    - Work with PSRBs to collaboratively change PSRB guidance
- Ensure that our staff development, staff community groups and pedagogy monitoring include recommended pedagogical practice from both the Higher Education sector (approaches to adult pedagogy) and the discipline specific sector (e.g. fishbowl techniques, group process etc.)
- Ensure that our pedagogy monitoring additionally has a focus on the practitioner's approaches to linking theory with practice (with links to key literature in this area), normalising reflexive discussions about this key challenge in vocational Higher Education

7. Our Education will be Sustainable

Navigating adult education in the current climate is challenging for both students and providers. Our curriculum offer therefore aims to create flexibility for students, whilst protecting the long-term viability of our institute.

This contributes to the following Metanoia Institute Strategic Aims:

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 4.1:
Achieve autonomy status by meeting the regulatory requirements for degree awarding powers, enabling us to expand our academic offerings, attract top talent and generate income to support our sustainability objectives

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 4.2:
Pursue growth and diversification opportunities to increase our revenue streams and ensure long-term financial sustainability while staying true to our institutional values and mission

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 4.4:
Create a resilient infrastructure and business continuity plan that is adaptable and able to withstand external shocks, economic downturns, and pandemics

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 4.5:
Generate income through strategic partnerships, research collaborations, Continuing Professional Development opportunities for the profession and other ventures that align with our institutional values and contribute to sustainability objectives

Metanoia Institute Strategic Aim 4.6:
Enhance our brand and reputation, promote achievements, and harness our academic strengths to become a destination for students, academics, and researchers from around the world.

By design

We will create a suite of programmes that:

- Enable a range of academic and clinical entry and exit points in our programmes to:
  - foster growth in student numbers
  - attract a more diverse student body
  - create a more varied and resilient offer
- Enable students to move between phases of study smoothly to:
  - increase the likelihood of us retaining students through multiple programmes
  - create flexibility for students to pursue their entire development at Metanoia
- Have shared modular content between programmes to:
  - share expertise and enrich our provision
  - create more financial resilience
- Incorporate Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses within the optional aspects of our programme offers
- Include fully online programmes to attract a wider body of students and increase accessibility

Our CPD courses will be responsive to need whilst maintaining a core offer.

This approach to our programmatic and CPD course portfolio will support growth, diversification, financial sustainability and reputation. The diversification of our offer will also increase our ability to withstand external shocks, economic downturns and pandemics.

In practice

Our programmes and courses will be enacted in line with our values enabling us to stay true to our institutional values and mission. We will deliver our educational offer in line with expectations of the Office for Students, ensuring that we meet the regulatory requirements for degree awarding powers.