Non-standard / Direct entry to MSc 1

Applicant handbook and evidence portfolio | Clinical MSc psychotherapy programmes

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1. Choosing your route

For most students, the fastest route into a clinical MSc is to complete Metanoia's Integrative Humanistic Psychotherapy Studies (UKCP Preparatory Year). This route still enables students to complete the full MSc training pathway within four years.

Direct entry to MSc Year 1 is a non-standard route for applicants whose recent training and experience already demonstrate learning equivalent to the UKCP Preparatory Year. It is available across the clinical MSc psychotherapy programmes, subject to programme-specific assessment and available places. It is not an entitlement or an automatic exemption.

2. Mandatory eligibility criteria

Applicants must meet ALL five requirements below. An application cannot be supported where any one is not met.

- Equivalent learning: Training and/or experience equivalent to every Programme Learning Outcome of Metanoia's UKCP Preparatory Year (outlined in point 6 of this document).
- Recency: The relevant training must have taken place within the four academic years before commencing Metanoia study (for example, 2023–24 or later for a 2027/28start).
- Personal therapy: At least 25 hours of personal therapy during that same four-academic-year period.
- Academic level: A qualification at QAA Level 6 or above, or convincing evidence of the ability to work academically at Level 6.
- Readiness for practice: A separate signed confirmation from a tutor at the institution where the foundation training took place, following a formal, structured assessment of readiness to begin a clinical placement. This is separate from the academic reference and must name the assessor, date or period of assessment, training organisation, and contact details.

Required declaration: 'I verify that, in my professional opinion, the candidate is ready to become a Psychotherapy trainee and begin practice placement.'

IMPORTANT: If you do not meet every criterion, we cannot support direct entry to MSc 1. You are welcome to apply for the UKCP Preparatory Year if you hold a Level 5 qualification or higher in any subject.

3. English language and recognition of prior learning

If English is not your first language, you will normally need IELTS 7.0 overall, with at least 6.5 in each component, unless you have a previous higher education qualification taught in English. Metanoia offers a supportive process for considering equivalence of qualifications or experience (APL/APEL).

Applicants are expected to hold a qualification at Level 6 or above. In exceptional circumstances, we may consider applicants who can demonstrate equivalent academic ability through previous study or relevant experience. However, acceptance through this route is unlikely and would require a detailed assessment of the evidence provided.

4. How to apply and how evidence is assessed

The transfer of learning approach recognises relevant learning gained through formal qualifications, accredited training and professional or experiential learning. What matters is demonstrable learning, not attendance, years of service or job title alone.

Initial discussion

Contact Admissions to discuss the intended MSc, prior training, recency and likely eligibility.

Application and evidence

Submit the programme application, a learning-outcome mapping portfolio, certificates/transcripts, evidence of the 25 personal therapy hours and the separate signed readiness-for-practice confirmation.

Interview and academic assessment

The programme team may interview you and assess your evidence against all seven Preparatory Year outcomes, academic readiness and clinical suitability. Further evidence may be requested.

Decision

The programme and relevant Institute approval processes determine the outcome. A positive assessment of prior learning does not by itself guarantee an offer or placement approval.

Previous handbook routes included certified, accredited and experiential prior learning. Evidence may include verified training records, assessed work with feedback, reflective writing, professional development records, learning journals and signed corroborating statements. A testimonial alone is not sufficient evidence of achievement.

5. Preparing your portfolio

For each learning outcome in Section 6, set out: (a) the relevant training or experience and dates; (b) what you learned; (c) a critical reflection showing how you meet the outcome; and (d) the precise supporting document, page or appendix. Cross-reference evidence where it supports multiple outcomes.

Applicants should provide the learning outcomes from their previous training, together with a signed declaration from their training provider confirming that they have successfully completed the relevant training and achieved these outcomes.

These will be assessed against the learning outcomes of Metanoia Institute's UKCP Preparatory Year. Where the previous training does not fully address one or more of our learning outcomes, applicants will be asked to provide supplementary evidence demonstrating how they have achieved the required learning through other relevant training or experience.

All evidence should be valid, authentic, recent, sufficient and reliable. Any references to clients or other individuals should be anonymised unless appropriate permission has been obtained.

Applicants must also provide separate confirmation of their readiness to begin clinical practice, using the required declaration form.

6. UKCP Preparatory Year – Programme Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes are reproduced from the supplied UKCP Preparatory Year document, which is marked 'Subject to validation'. Applicants must demonstrate equivalence across all seven.

PLO 1 – Diversity, Power and Mental Health

Critically evaluate how diversity, culture, power, privilege, discrimination and intersectionality shape mental health, wellbeing, relationships and access to support across therapeutic, community and organisational contexts, and apply this understanding to ethically informed counselling practice

PLO 2 – Reflexivity, Positionality and Professional Identity

Demonstrate advanced reflexivity through critical examination of personal identity, values, beliefs, culture and worldview, recognising how practitioner positionality influences perception, communication, ethical decision-making and therapeutic relationships

PLO 3 – Therapeutic Relationship and Change

Critically analyse the therapeutic relationship as a central mechanism for change and growth, integrating theoretical understanding with awareness of cultural competence, ethics, power dynamics and relational processes over time

PLO 4 – Theoretical Integration and Philosophical Foundations

Demonstrate critical understanding of the philosophical and theoretical foundations underpinning humanistic, psychodynamic and integrative approaches to counselling and psychotherapy, and evaluate how these inform contemporary practice contexts and personal theoretical orientation

PLO 5 – Ethical, Inclusive and Anti-Oppressive Practice

Apply ethical and professional frameworks, including digital and remote practice considerations, to communicate and build inclusive, non-discriminatory and anti-oppressive relationships within therapeutic, educational and professional settings

PLO 6 – Reflective Practice and Relational Awareness

Critically use reflective practices (including interpersonal process recall, group process and journalling) to monitor relational effectiveness, emotional responses, biases and interpersonal patterns, demonstrating a phenomenological and non-defensive stance towards self and others

PLO 7 – Developing Professional and Clinical Competence

Demonstrate developing professional and clinical practice aligned with SCoPEd competencies, including safe and ethical engagement in supervised clinical practice, application of foundational relational skills, participation in supervision and personal therapy, and informed decision-making regarding progression to postgraduate training

7. Confirmation of readiness for clinical practice

Readiness must be confirmed by a tutor or lecturer who formally and structurally assessed the applicant during their previous foundation training. The confirmation must state that the applicant has sufficient knowledge and skills to begin seeing clients in a clinical setting. It must be signed, dated and supplied separately from the academic reference.

Use Appendix B. The signed document should be returned to admissions@metanoia.ac.uk. The readiness confirmation supports assessment for admission; it does not replace subsequent Metanoia placement approval, supervision or safeguarding requirements.

8. Additional requirements during clinical training

Personal counselling or psychotherapy

Students on programmes with a clinical component must remain in personal therapy throughout their training. Required hours vary by programme; confirm the applicable requirements with your Head of Programme. Counselling students must undertake face-to-face therapy with a BACP- or UKCP-accredited counsellor or psychotherapist; psychotherapy students must undertake at least 51% face-to-face psychotherapy with a UKCP-registered psychotherapist. For postgraduate study, exceptions for therapists with equivalent training and experience may occasionally be approved by the Programme Leader. Check any additional programme requirements. Personal therapy is funded separately from tuition fees.

Supervision

Once you begin seeing clients (usually at the beginning of MSc year 1), fortnightly supervision is required. Some placements provide supervision; if yours does, you must nevertheless attend at least one session per month with an approved Metanoia supervisor. The supplied general guidance specifies at least 35 hours before graduation for counselling courses and 150 hours for psychotherapy courses. Your academic coordinator can provide a list of approved supervisors. Supervision costs are not included in tuition fees.

Clinical practice and placements

From MSc year 1 onwards, students are normally required to begin clinical work with adult clients (18+). Metanoia Counselling and Psychotherapy Service (MCPS) offers in-house placements (subject to availability), and dedicated placements and development staff, a placement database and noticeboard help students find other opportunities. The supplied guidance specifies a minimum of 150 client hours for counselling students and 450 for psychotherapy students (750 for TA students on the CTA pathway), through at least 51% face-to-face work with adults. Supervisors must regularly sign clinical practice logs. Programme-specific and professional-body requirements should be checked before relying on these figures.

For information about MCPS placements, consult the Institute's placement team or website.

Insurance, professional membership and data protection

Metanoia insurance covers clinical work undertaken within MCPS, not external placements or private practice. If your placement does not insure you, arrange your own appropriate cover. Student membership of BACP or UKCP, as appropriate to the programme's accreditation, is strongly recommended. When you begin seeing clients, consider whether you need to register with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) under the Data Protection Act 2018; check current registration obligations and fees directly with the ICO.

Transactional Analysis Psychotherapy

Applicants seeking direct entry to MSc Year 1 in Transactional Analysis Psychotherapy must also have successfully completed the TA101 introductory course.

Applicants should check the requirements of their chosen programme and provide evidence of any additional qualifications or training required.

Appendix A – Applicant evidence mapping form

Applicant name	
Proposed MSc programme	
Proposed entry academic year	
Prior training institution(s) and dates	
Academic qualification / Level 6 equivalence evidence	
Personal therapy dates and verified hours	
Readiness form attached (yes/no)	
Academic reference attached (yes/no)	

PLO 1 – evidence mapping

Relevant learning and dates	
Critical reflection on how the outcome is met	
Evidence / appendix references	

PLO 2 – evidence mapping

Relevant learning and dates	
Critical reflection on how the outcome is met	
Evidence / appendix references	

PLO 3 – evidence mapping

Relevant learning and dates	
Critical reflection on how the outcome is met	
Evidence / appendix references	

PLO 4 – evidence mapping

Relevant learning and dates	
Critical reflection on how the outcome is met	
Evidence / appendix references	

PLO 5 – evidence mapping

Relevant learning and dates	
Critical reflection on how the outcome is met	
Evidence / appendix references	

PLO 6 – evidence mapping

Relevant learning and dates	
Critical reflection on how the outcome is met	
Evidence / appendix references	

PLO 7 – evidence mapping

Relevant learning and dates	
Critical reflection on how the outcome is met	
Evidence / appendix references	

Appendix B – Confirmation of readiness for clinical practice

To be completed by a tutor/lecturer who formally assessed the applicant's readiness for clinical practice during their foundation training. This must be separate from the academic reference.

Applicant's full name	
Programme on which applicant was enrolled when assessed	
Training institution and address	
Date of assessment or assessment period	
Name of assessor	
Role/title of assessor	
Email address and telephone number	

Declaration

I verify that, in my professional opinion, the candidate is ready to become a Psychotherapy trainee and begin practice placement.

Assessor signature	
Date of signature	

Return the completed and signed form to Metanoia Admissions: admissions@metanoia.ac.uk

Appendix C – Training and personal therapy verification

To be completed by the previous training institution or relevant verifying professional, as applicable.

Applicant name	
Training organisation and address	
Course title	
Training start and completion dates	
Training hours	
Clinical practice hours (if any)	
Supervision hours (if any)	
Personal therapy hours and dates (verified separately where necessary)	
Verifier name and role	

Verifier email and telephone	
Signature and date	

Appendix D – Applicant declaration and submission checklist

- Completed programme application and evidence mapping against PLOs 1–7
- Relevant certificates, transcripts, assessed work and reflective evidence
- Evidence of training within the required four academic years
- Verification of at least 25 hours of personal therapy in that period
- Evidence of Level 6 qualification or academic equivalence
- Separately signed confirmation of readiness for clinical practice
- English-language evidence, where applicable

I confirm that the work and information submitted are accurate, my own where indicated, and appropriately acknowledged. I have respected confidentiality and understand that all eligibility requirements must be met and admission remains subject to assessment.

Applicant signature	
Date	

Document note: This general handbook replaces the TA-specific transfer of learning framing for direct entry to MSc 1. The supplied Preparatory Year outcomes are marked subject to validation. Historic TA-only deadlines, fees, named staff and higher-year transfer provisions have not been carried forward as current programme-wide policy. Confirm current programme requirements and any changes with Admissions before publication.