



The only awarding body
run *by* counsellors
for counsellors

2026 - 2027

Candidate Guide

Level 2 Award in Effective Listening Skills (ELSK-L2)

This RQF qualification is regulated by Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland.

Qualification/learning aim number: 500/7794/6

Counselling & Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB)

P.O. Box 1768

Glastonbury

Somerset

BA6 8YP

Tel. 01458 850 350

Website: www.cpcab.co.uk

Email: contact@cpcab.co.uk



Contents	Page
1. Introduction for Candidates	3
2. Qualification Structure	3
3. Internal Assessment	4
4. Equal Opportunities and Reasonable Adjustments	5
5. Appeals and Complaints	5
6. Candidate Feedback	6

Appendices	Page
1. Candidate Portfolio Cover Sheet	7
2. Candidate Portfolio	8
3. Completion Statement	18
4. Candidate Guidance for meeting the Learning Outcomes	19
5. Candidate Evaluation Form	21

Please note:

This document, along with candidate support materials, can be downloaded from the [CPCAB website](#). These provide you with the information needed to enable you to maximise your learning on this course and to complete the qualification successfully. If you need help with the accessibility of this document, please email contact@cpcab.co.uk with your request.

Find us on [Facebook](#)

Find us on [LinkedIn](#)

Watch us at [CPCAB Videos](#)

Discover new & interesting things at [CPCAB News](#)

1. Introduction for Candidates

You are undertaking a course that leads to a nationally regulated qualification awarded by the Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB) – the only nationally regulated awarding body to specialise in the field of counselling and supervision.

This qualification is designed for candidates who wish to develop their listening skills for use in a variety of personal and professional contexts to:

- Improve communication.
- Improve work relationships.
- Enhance personal relationships.
- Promote better community relations.

2. Qualification Structure

This qualification is made up of 7 learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria. This structure is based on the 7 processes of the [CPCAB's Model](#).

Tip:

Think of the assessment criteria as learning tasks which you must complete and then record so that your trainer can see you have achieved the task.

There are brief notes beside each assessment criteria in the [Candidate Guidance for Meeting the Learning Outcomes](#) to help you understand what is being asked for.

Your trainer will also help and guide you to meet criteria, but it is your responsibility to record your learning in your candidate portfolio.

To achieve the qualification, you **MUST** be internally assessed by your trainer as **Proficient** in all seven learning outcomes.

Tip:

Your personal development is a very important part of the course. Take some time each day to notice how you are feeling.

This qualification is eligible for fully in-person, blended or online delivery.

3. Internal Assessment

At the back of this guide is your [Candidate Portfolio](#). All three parts of the portfolio need to be completed. Your portfolio is a record of all that you learn on the course. Keeping a portfolio of your coursework will not only provide your trainer with evidence of your learning, but also really help you with the learning process itself.

Your portfolio has three parts:

1. **Documents** – This section has two parts. The first part is the self-review. This has seven questions and each question is worth 1 mark. You must get 4 marks out of a possible 7 to pass this part of the portfolio. When answering the questions in the self-review please try to use examples from actual listening sessions.

The second part of this section is for journal notes and is a space for you to record your thoughts and feelings from the course and to acknowledge and record what you learnt.
2. **Trainer observation** – During the course your trainer will observe you practising the skills you are learning. After observing you they will complete the trainer observation section in your portfolio.
3. **Testimony** – One of your peers will also observe you practising your skills and will then complete the testimony section of your portfolio.

Once all these tasks are completed you will have completed your portfolio and your trainer will finish assessing your work and give you feedback. Your portfolio will then be sent off to CPCAB for independent verification. You need to keep a copy if you want one for your own records.

- See [ELSK-L2 Specification](#) for a summary of minimum assessment requirements.

Tip:

It is a good idea to read through your portfolio a couple of times to become clear about what is required.

You may wish to write your answers in rough before entering them into your portfolio.

Tip:

Meeting the assessment criteria is important, but the experience of learning about listening skills should be much richer than this. Try to keep a balance.

The final assessment of your work is recorded on the [Completion Statement](#) at the end of your Candidate Learning Record.

Please note that all the work you include in your portfolio is *assessable material*, so it may be seen not just by your trainer but also by all those involved in your training centre's internal assessment process or any associated appeal or complaint. Such people will include the internal moderator and verifier as part of internal quality assurance (IQA) as well as the CPCAB verifier.

4. Equal Opportunities and Reasonable Adjustments

In order to make sure that assessment is fair to all candidates, CPCAB requires all registered centres to have an effective candidate support system in place and to make appropriate arrangements to meet individual assessment needs. You can ensure that your own learning and assessment needs are being met by discussing your own needs/difficulties with your trainer, who can ensure that you receive the appropriate support at your centre. Please talk to your centre prior to your enrolment and about any additional support that you may need regarding learning and assessment.

Please see CPCAB's [Reasonable Adjustment Guidance for Centres](#).

Both CPCAB and centres are required to recognise and comply with both the spirit and the word of equal opportunities legislation. Previous Acts were amalgamated into the [Equality Act 2010](#).

See [CPCAB's Equal Opportunities Policy](#).

5. Appeals and Complaints

CPCAB are committed to maintaining standards across our recognised centres so that the public can have confidence in us and our qualifications. We provide our own complaints and appeals policies for the benefit of centres and candidates.

- Please view our policies on Complaints, Appeals and Whistleblowing on the [CPCAB website](#).

All CPCAB approved centres are required to have a complaints and appeals procedure which is available to candidates. Candidates must address all appeals about internal assessment or complaints about any aspect of their learning experience on the course via the centre's own internal complaints and appeals procedures. It is the centre's responsibility to make these procedures available to candidates.

Candidates who contact CPCAB directly on these issues will normally be directed back to their centre.

6. Candidate Feedback

Your feedback is vital to CPCAB to ensure the ongoing quality of our qualifications. Feedback enables us to meet our requirements as a regulated Awarding Organisation and contributes towards our annual qualification review process. Please ensure that you complete the online feedback survey at the conclusion of your course.

Please click on this link to access the survey - [Candidate feedback](#).

Appendix 1: Independent Verification Candidate Portfolio Cover Sheet

ELSK-L2 Level 2 Award in Effective Listening Skills

This form is to be completed by the candidate and trainer. Please attach this to the candidate portfolio samples sent to CPCAB for Independent Verification to support the assessment and quality assurance of this candidate's work.

Failure to provide ALL this information will delay the Independent Verification and certification of the group.

Centre name and number:	Candidate number:
-------------------------	-------------------

I confirm that I have personally completed this portfolio and that it is a true and accurate record of my own work.

Candidate name:

Candidate signature:

Date:

I confirm that this portfolio is the candidate's own work.

Trainer name:

Trainer signature:

Date:

External Quality Assurance

CPCAB Independent Verification

Independent Verifier name:

Signed (for by CPCAB Head Office):

Date:

Appendix 2: Candidate Portfolio

Portfolio requirements

Your portfolio is made up of three parts. All three parts need to be completed.

Part 1 – Document section:

This section has two parts. The first part is a Self-Review, which has seven questions. Each question relates to one of the seven learning outcomes. Each question is worth 1 mark. You must get 4 marks out of a possible 7 in your self-review to pass this part of the portfolio.

The second part of this section is for your journal notes, where you can summarise your thoughts and feelings in relation to your learning.

Part 2 – Trainer observation:

During the course your trainer will observe you practising your skills. Your trainer will complete this part of your portfolio.

Part 3 – Testimony:

One of your peers will also observe you practising your skills. They will complete this part of your portfolio.

Once all the tasks in your portfolio have been completed, your trainer will assess your work and give you feedback. Your portfolio will be sent to CPCAB to be independently verified. Remember to keep a photocopy if you want one for your own records.



Advice to candidates:

- Complete all of the questions in your portfolio.
- Read the question carefully before responding. Some questions ask for actual examples of when and how you used your new skills.
- Please write clearly. You may wish to draft your answers in rough before writing in your portfolio.
- Think about all you have discussed and learnt during the course to help you answer the questions.

- When answering the questions, try and use actual examples of when and how you used your new skills.
- Write your answers in the space provided. If you need additional space, please use the '[Additional learning notes](#)' page at the back of your portfolio, making sure you write what question you are responding to. **Do not attach any additional notes or pages to your portfolio.**
- If you are unsure about any of the course requirements, please ask your trainer for guidance.

Portfolio Part 1a: Document section – self-review

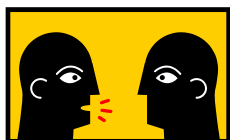
Please complete the sections below in the space provided. Each of the seven questions is linked to a corresponding learning outcome.

Question 1:

In a listening activity, what did you say to explain the limits of the help you can offer?

Question 2:

What would you say or do to make someone feel welcome and able to talk about their concerns?



Listening is an attitude of the heart, a genuine desire to be with another which both attracts and heals - J. Isham

Question 3:

Why is it important not to be judgemental?

Question 4:

Describe two of the listening and responding skills you used to encourage someone to talk about their worries and feelings.

Question 5:

Why might you need support after listening to someone's concerns?

Question 6:

Give three examples of where an individual you are helping could find additional support.

Question 7:

Describe one important thing you have learned on this course which will help you be a better listener?



Welcome the challenges. Look for the opportunities in every situation to learn and grow in wisdom - Brian Tracy

Portfolio Part 1b: Document section – journal notes

Summary of key learning:

Date	What have you learnt?	How did you feel?

Portfolio Part 2: Trainer observation section

Trainer feedback form

Your trainer will complete this part of your portfolio.

Did the helper:

Begin the session and create a safe space for someone to talk (including explaining limits)?	
Help someone to talk about their concerns?	
Use non-verbal prompts (nodding, facial expression, eye contact, minimal encouragers, open body language)?	
Allow silence for thought and reflection (not interrupting)?	
Ask open questions?	
Paraphrase?	
Communicate empathy (show understanding, reflect)?	
End the session sensitively?	
Further comments:	

Overall, was the candidate proficient in skills practice? Yes ☐ No ☐ Please tick one

Trainer name: Signature:

Portfolio Part 3: Testimony section

This section is to be completed by one of your peers.

Name of peer observer:

The observations should be assessed as follows:

(1) Good (2) Just OK (3) Needs more practice

Beginnings

Welcoming	1	2	3
Makes limits of ability clear	1	2	3

Able to demonstrate accurate listening

Appropriate eye contact	1	2	3
Appropriate non-verbal responses	1	2	3
Does not interrupt	1	2	3
Accurately reflects content	1	2	3
Accurately reflects feelings	1	2	3

Able to use empathic responses appropriately

Uses appropriate tone of voice	1	2	3
Communicates understanding	1	2	3

Able to summarise during and at the end of a session

Suggests other sources of support	1	2	3
Ends appropriately	1	2	3

Any other comments:

Candidate additional learning notes:

[illegible]

Appendix 3: Completion Statement

This is to be completed by the trainer. It is for centre internal assessment decisions only:

Portfolio Part 1a – Marks for self-review:	
Portfolio Part 1b – Journal entries present (Y or N)?	
Portfolio Part 2 – Trainer observation of skills (P or NP): P = Proficient NP = Not Proficient	
Portfolio Part 3 – Peer feedback present (Y or N)?	
Trainer name:	
Trainer signature:	
Internal moderator name:	
Internal moderator signature:	
Final result (P or NP): P = Proficient NP = Not Proficient	

Internal moderation comments:

Trainer additional comments:

Appendix 4: Candidate Guidance for Meeting the Learning Outcomes (ELSK-L2)

All learning outcomes will be assessed via the candidate portfolio:

Learning outcomes The learner will/will be able to:	Assessment criteria The learner can:	Learner guidance Write your responses in your candidate portfolio
1. Create a safe space for an individual to talk	1.1 Find a safe place and explain any limits to the listening activity.	Think about: - The type of help you can provide in your role as listener. - The limits of your support. - What helps a person to feel safe (and reflect on what you need to feel safe)?
2. Help an individual to talk about their concerns	2.1 Help an individual feel welcomed and able to talk. 2.2 Reply to what the individual is saying, showing an understanding of their worries and feelings.	- Reflect on how you can help someone feel welcome and comfortable. - Use attending skills, open questions and responding skills to encourage an individual to express their concerns and feel heard and understood.
3. Understand the importance of being non-judgemental	3.1 Demonstrate a non-judgemental approach.	- Identify how you are similar to and different from your peers, family and friends. - Identify and challenge personal prejudices and stereotypes. - Reflect on how it feels to be accepted and valued.
4. Listen attentively	4.1 Use attending skills to let the individual know they have been heard.	- Reflect on what the following terms mean (how confident do you feel using them in skills practice?): - Non-verbal communication, minimal encouragers, open posture, paraphrasing, reflecting, open questions, empathy. - Identify personal blocks to listening.
5. Understand the importance of self-awareness	5.1 Write about how the listening activity affected them. 5.2 Describe why they might need support after listening to someone.	- Notice how you feel after listening to a peer in the group. - Be aware of feelings that are difficult and challenging to listen to. - Identify a source of personal support if you did need help following a listening activity.

6. Manage the listening activity sensitively	6.1 Use listening and responding skills to manage the listening activity. 6.2 List other sources of support an individual might find helpful.	- Practice as much as possible your use of: - Open body language - Non-verbal encouragers - Open questions - Attentive silence - Listening and responding skills - Compile a directory of local services that offer support: it can cover a range of services from advice, counselling, health etc.
7. Use reflection to develop effective listening skills	7.1 Write reflectively about their use of skills in order to develop these skills.	- Think about your strengths and weaknesses in relation to using listening and responding skills. - Is there a specific area you would like to develop and grow in?

Where do you plan to progress once you've finished this qualification?

Please enter corresponding number here:

- Employment as a Counsellor (Full Time, Part Time or Self Employed)
- Employment within Allied Professions (Full Time, Part Time or Self Employed)
- Employment in Non Allied Professions Sector (Full Time, Part Time or Self Employed)
- Further Study in Further Education (Counselling related subjects)
- Further Study in Higher Education (Counselling related subjects)
- Further Study in Further Education (Non-Counselling related subjects)
- Further Study in Higher Education (Non-Counselling related subjects)
- Voluntary Work – Counselling Sector
- Voluntary Work – Allied Professions*
- Voluntary Work – Non-Counselling/Allied Professions
- Not in employment
- I don't know

*Example list of allied professions (not an exhaustive list):

- Advice and advocacy support
- Befriender role
- Care worker
- Childline administrator
- Contact centre advisor
- Customer facing role
- Customer relations advisor
- Customer service representative/ advisor/ officer
- Family support worker
- Healthcare professionals
- Helpline operator
- Home care assistant
- Housing support worker
- Mentoring and support worker
- Promotion in current role
- Public services, including probation, substance misuse agencies and criminal justice sector
- Roles in health and social care
- Welfare and advice worker
- Youth worker

Appendix 5: Candidate Evaluation Form for ELSK-L2 & USM-L2

We hope you have enjoyed your training. Please complete this evaluation form to provide CPCAB with your feedback. You can include your name if you like or keep your feedback confidential.

Which qualification? Please mark appropriate box: ELSK-L2 ☐ USM-L2 ☐						
Candidate name:						
Centre name:						
Date you started:						
Date your course will finish:						
For the questions below, please mark the box that best matches your experience of the qualification.	Definitely agree	Slightly agree	Not sure	Slightly disagree	Definitely disagree	Not applicable
I found the course content was right for the qualification						
I found the assessment clear and understandable						
I found the course was long enough for me to meet all the requirements						
I found the coursework enabled me to demonstrate my knowledge, understanding and skills						
I found that the course met my individual learning needs						
This course has helped my confidence in the subject area						
I have enjoyed my study						
Any other comments about the qualification						