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for counsellors

2026 - 2027

Candidate Guide

Level 3 Certificate in Life Coaching Studies (LCS-L3)

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

Qualification/learning aim number: 600/6961/2

Counselling & Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB)

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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.

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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 for candidates who:

- Want to take the first step in training to be an independent life coach.
- Want to use life coaching skills and techniques in a variety of settings and roles.

This qualification leads to employment in a broad range of settings including health and social care, human resources, mentoring and support. It provides additional skills for those already in employment and is likely to lead to increased opportunities for promotion and advancement and progression towards higher-level qualifications such as LC-L4.

Candidates undertaking LCS-L3 can apply for Associate Membership with the [Association for Coaching](#) which has its own ethical framework.

Tip:

A dream becomes a goal when action is taken toward its achievement. **Bo Bennett**

2. Qualification Structure

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

Tip:

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

To achieve the qualification, you **MUST** be internally assessed by your tutor as **Proficient** in all 7 learning outcomes.

Tip:

All personal achievement starts in the mind of the individual. Your personal achievement starts in your mind. The first step is to know exactly what your problem, goal or desire is. **W. Clement Stone**

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

3. Internal Assessment

Art students keep a portfolio of their coursework which they use to show other people what they, as artists, have learnt. In a similar way you need to keep a portfolio of your coursework, which you can use to show your tutor what you have learnt. Keeping a portfolio of your coursework will not only provide your tutor with evidence of your learning, but also really help you with the learning process itself.

You also need to complete your ([Candidate Learning Record \(CLR\)](#)), which should be placed at the front of your portfolio to signpost the evidence for each assessment criterion. The CLR has brief notes beside each assessment criterion to help you understand what is being asked for and guidelines on how to record your learning.

You must give **two** pieces of evidence for each criterion. In addition, the CLR (when complete) must include references to the following three types of course work¹:

1. **Documents** – You must include your learning and life change journal, 1 self-review (see section below on the tutor-assessed self-review), plus two written assignments consisting of a case study and a written presentation of a project that you've researched. You might also include tutorial records (when written by you) and notes on your personal development.²
2. **Tutor observation** – You must include records of tutor feedback on (a) your life coaching practice sessions and (b) your presentation. You might also include here tutorial records (when written by your tutor), and tutor feedback on group discussions (including contributions to seminars, group-work and group training supervision).
3. **Testimony** – You must include records of peer feedback on your life coaching practice sessions. You might also include, for example, peer feedback on presentations and group discussions (including contributions to seminars, group-work and group training supervision), and peer evaluation/feedback.
 - See [LCS-L3 Specification](#) for a summary of minimum assessment requirements.
 - See the CPCAB film on [How to build a student portfolio](#).

¹ Please note that if it is appropriate you can reference the same section of your portfolio, or the same piece of work, a number of times.

² Your personal development may result from insights gained from the course, other personal development work, tutorial records or from personal life coaching/counselling.

Tip:

It is a good idea to outline possible sections in your portfolio, for example:

- Document: learning and life change journal
- Tutor observation: tutor feedback on life coaching practice
- Testimony: peer feedback on life coaching practice

An example reference in your CLR might read: *Learning and life change journal p 21, para 3, lines 3-6*

(document) Peer feedback, sheet No 6 line 29 (testimony)

CPCAB recommends that you attach [Criteria Assessment Sheet \(CAS\)](#) to any work you hand in to your tutor for assessment. Your tutor can use the CAS to tell you which criteria you have met and to give you helpful feedback throughout the course. In this way you can gradually collect evidence as you go along and keep track of what evidence you still need to look out for.

Self-review

Towards the end of your course your tutor will support you to complete a self-review of your learning. A template document is available on the [CPCAB website](#). This will allow you to reflect on what you have learnt and show your understanding of life coaching skills. Your tutor will assess your self-review and provide you with feedback on how you are progressing towards competence in all 7 areas. If you need to undertake any specific activities to address areas for development your tutor's feedback will explain how to do so.

Tip:

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

After you have completed your portfolio your tutor will look at the evidence you have referenced in your [Candidate Learning Record \(CLR\)](#) and assess whether or not you have completed the assessment criteria, achieved the learning outcomes and met all the other qualification requirements. They may well decide that you are not yet Proficient – and will identify what you still need to complete/achieve and how you might work towards doing this.

- Your tutor will give you further guidance on developing your portfolio, the three types of coursework and filling in the Candidate Learning Record.

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

Tip:

It is important to realise that simply presenting evidence to meet criteria may not be sufficient to meet the overall learning outcomes and/or the qualification requirements. Your tutor may have observed substantive evidence which indicates that a specific assessment criterion or learning outcome has not been met despite evidence you have submitted. If that is the case, they may record a final result of Not Proficient on the basis of contraindications.

Please note that all the work you include in your portfolio is *assessable material*, so it may be seen not just by your tutor 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 external verifier.

4. Equal Opportunities and Reasonable Adjustments

In order to make sure that assessment is fair to all candidates, CPCAB requires all recognised 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 tutor, who can ensure that you receive the appropriate support at your centre. Please talk to your centre prior to your enrolment 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. Additional Qualification Requirements

In addition to meeting the assessment criteria and learning outcomes, you need to meet the following additional course requirements:

Group Training Supervision

You are required to take part in group training supervision as part of your course. You will be expected to present work from your life coaching practice sessions, receive supervisory support and challenge from both your tutor and peers, and learn from and challenge other candidates in the group. The emphasis here is to reflect on and develop life coaching knowledge, skills and techniques. There is a qualification requirement for 10 hours of group training supervision.

Personal life coaching or therapy

There is no requirement for personal life coaching or therapy work. However, it is strongly suggested that you participate in some form of personal development outside of the course. Options for this might include workshops, group work, webinars, discussion forums, life coaching or counselling/therapy.

Personal tutorials

You will be offered tutorials throughout your course to support your progress and development. Your tutor may also use tutorials to raise any concerns likely to affect the outcome of your assessment. You need to keep a record of your tutorials in your portfolio.

7. 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: Candidate Learning Record

Level 3 Certificate in Life Coaching Studies (LCS-L3)

Instruction:

Print out (or otherwise detach) this Candidate Learning Record (CLR) and the Completion Statement which follows it. Then insert both documents in the front of your portfolio.

When you have completed your Candidate Learning Record please tick the following box to confirm that you have provided evidence all three types of coursework (i.e. documents, tutor observation and testimony): ☐

LCS-L3		
LEARNING OUTCOME:	1. Work within an ethical framework for life coaching work	
Assessment criteria	Candidate guidance to criteria	Portfolio references
1.1 Apply understanding of an ethical framework to practice	- Consider what ethics mean in relation to life coaching work. - Reflect on personal ethics in relation to life coaching. - Apply your code of ethics and practice to life coaching practice sessions.	
1.2 Differentiate the life coaching role from both friendship and other professional support roles	- Clearly distinguish the life coaching role from other support roles - e.g. counsellor, mentor, teacher. - Explain the differences between a friend and a life coach.	
1.3 Work within own limits of proficiency	- Explain why it's necessary to know your limits of ability. - Clarify the nature of life coaching work and its appropriateness to a range of life's issues, problems and emotional/psychological states. - Practice explaining your role in life coaching practice sessions.	
1.4 Identify vulnerable clients and assist them to find appropriate support	- Appreciate why life coaching may not be appropriate for all. - Understand the role and purpose of referral. - Identify and practise skills necessary to make a sensitive and appropriate referral where appropriate.	

LEARNING OUTCOME:	2. Manage the life coaching alliance	
Assessment criteria	Candidate guidance to criteria	Portfolio references
2.1 Work within professional boundaries	• Appreciate the role and purpose of professional boundaries. • Agree what boundaries are needed to ensure safe and effective practice. • Identify the risks of overstepping boundaries. • Reflect on the differences and similarities between personal and professional boundaries.	
2.2 Establish, develop and end the life coaching alliance	• Reflect on the aims and objectives of each of the 3 stages of the life coaching alliance. • Describe and practice the knowledge, skills and qualities needed to negotiate each stage of the life coaching work. • Be aware of the risks of not managing each stage effectively.	
2.3 Understand how to integrate life coaching within another role	• Show that you understand how to integrate life coaching in different roles. • Identify how you integrate life coaching knowledge, skills and techniques in your work with others. • Reflect on the benefits of incorporating life coaching in different settings.	
LEARNING OUTCOME:	3. Work with client diversity in life coaching work	
Assessment criteria	Candidate guidance to criteria	Portfolio references
3.1 Respond appropriately to client diversity	• Be aware of the ways people differ. • Explore the range of ways in which people experience discrimination. • Work towards developing own empathic understanding by identifying and exploring own blocks to empathy. • Appreciate how the qualities of understanding and acceptance promote the clients' well-being. • Take account of diversity issues when forming a life coaching alliance.	
3.2 Explore and challenge own issues, fears and prejudices concerning working with client diversity	• Honestly identify and explore personal prejudices and stereotypes. • Be aware of your own thoughts and feelings towards people who are different to you e.g. different culture, colour, gender, sexuality. • Reflect on the risks of making assumptions. • Explore the role of fear in relation to diversity.	

LEARNING OUTCOME:	4. Support clients to reach their goals	
Assessment criteria	Candidate guidance to criteria	Portfolio references
4.1 Agree goals and associated tasks for the life coaching work	• Understand the importance of finding out what is important to the client rather than coming from your own agenda. • Explore a range of goal setting techniques and styles and apply them where appropriate in life coaching practice sessions. • Support the client in prioritising what they want to achieve from the work (goals). • Support the client to identify specific tasks needed to achieve their goals.	
4.2 Work collaboratively with clients on their goals and tasks	• Understand what constitutes a collaborative relationship. • Identify and demonstrate a range of skills and techniques designed to support clients in reaching their identified goals. • Appreciate the need to stay focused without being directive. • Reflect on own and peers' experience to raise awareness of what can prevent, or hinder goals and tasks being met.	
4.3 Facilitate client hope and motivation	• Define hope and its role in life coaching work. • Reflect on your own relationship with hope. • Understand the need to foster hope in life coaching work without creating false expectations. • Reflect on the difference between motivating and "rescuing" or "enabling". • Reflect on the role and nature of motivation and how to use life coaching skills to optimise motivation and focus.	
4.4 Identify and work with client strengths	• Identify a range of human strengths. • Reflect on why an appreciation of own and other strengths and weaknesses is important when setting and working towards goals. • Use appropriate life coaching skills and strategies to identify and work with client strengths.	
LEARNING OUTCOME:	5. Apply understanding of self to life coaching work	
Assessment criteria	Candidate guidance to criteria	Portfolio references
5.1 Use personal development tools to understand own personality, relationships and personal history	• Identify a range of personal development tools and activities. • Commit to learning more about yourself, your relationships and personal history. • Choose and commit to personal development activities that suit your own learning style.	
5.2 Identify and implement own healthier lifestyle choices	• Reflect on personal lifestyle and identify areas that could be improved. • Set and work towards manageable personal lifestyle goals. • Explore any blocks to achievement and reflect on how to move towards a healthier lifestyle. • Practice being your own life coach.	

5.3 Use self-awareness in life coaching work	• Understand the importance of self-awareness when working with others. • Understand how hidden aspects of yourself could impinge on the life coaching work. • Stay mindful and present in life coaching practice sessions.	
LEARNING OUTCOME:	6. Use life coaching skills and theory to enhance practice	
Assessment criteria	Candidate guidance to criteria	Portfolio references
6.1 Use listening and responding skills to enhance practice	• Identify, and use appropriately, skills that facilitate a life coaching session. • Choose and use skills to move an interaction forward from beginning to middle stage and then to a conclusion. • Explore a range of questioning techniques and implement as appropriate. • Use challenge appropriately.	
6.2 Use understanding of theories of change to facilitate change	• Understand a range of theories and models on the process of change. • Apply understanding of change to life coaching work. • Increase your range of skills to support the client in finding ways to implement change. • Reflect on your own experience of change.	
6.3 Apply understanding of healthy lifestyles to practice	• Explore what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. • Reflect on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. • Identify the barriers to living a healthy lifestyle.	
6.4 Use understanding of human strengths, relationships and the life course to inform practice	• Understand the role of theory in life coaching work. • Apply understanding of human strengths, relationships and the life course in life coaching practice sessions. • Investigate relevant research findings. • Reflect on the meaning of well-being.	
LEARNING OUTCOME:	7. Reflect on practice to enhance life coaching work	
Assessment criteria	Candidate guidance to criteria	Portfolio references
7.1 Use professional development tools to reflect on and enhance practice	• Reflect on the role/importance of CPD in professional development. • Identify your own professional development needs. • Develop a plan for meeting your professional development needs.	
7.2 Use feedback to reflect on and enhance practice	• Identify constructive feedback provided by peers and tutors which has informed your learning and practice. • Work towards accepting constructive feedback. • Practice applying others' feedback suggestions in life coaching practice sessions and evaluate their effectiveness. • Identify occasions where feedback has enhanced your practice.	

7.3 Use feedback skills to provide constructive feedback to others	• Understand the nature and purpose of constructive feedback. • Demonstrate your ability to give effective feedback. • Explore your personal blocks to giving honest feedback to peers and colleagues.	
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Where do you plan to progress once you've finished this qualification?

Please enter corresponding number here:

1. Employment as a Counsellor (Full Time, Part Time or Self Employed)
2. Employment within Allied Professions (Full Time, Part Time or Self Employed)
3. Employment in Non Allied Professions Sector (Full Time, Part Time or Self Employed)
4. Further Study in Further Education (Counselling related subjects)
5. Further Study in Higher Education (Counselling related subjects)
6. Further Study in Further Education (Non-Counselling related subjects)
7. Further Study in Higher Education (Non-Counselling related subjects)
8. Voluntary Work – Counselling Sector
9. Voluntary Work – Allied Professions*
10. Voluntary Work – Non-Counselling/Allied Professions
11. Not in employment
12. 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 2: Completion Statement for LCS-L3

Completion statement for Candidate Learning Record Level 3 Certificate in Life Coaching Studies (LCS-L3)			
Learning outcome		Contra-indications present Y/N	Tutor signature if learning outcome has been achieved
1	Work within an ethical framework for life coaching work		
2	Manage the life coaching alliance		
3	Work with client diversity in life coaching work		
4	Support clients to reach their goals		
5	Apply understanding of self to life coaching work		
6	Use life coaching skills and theory to enhance practice		
7	Reflect on practice to enhance life coaching work		

To be completed by tutor:

Where the learning outcome has not been achieved please:

- (a) State clearly which learning outcome this relates to.
- (b) Give specific and relevant reasons why the learning outcome has not been achieved.
- (c) Record proposed course of action agreed between tutor and candidate to address/remedy concerns.

Learning outcome	Details of relevant contra-indications	Proposed course of action

I declare this Candidate Learning Record to be a true and authentic record of evidence submitted in my portfolio:

Candidate name: Candidate signature: Date:

I declare that this Completion Statement is a true record of the candidate's achievement:

I declare that this candidate has achieved all the above qualification requirements for LCS-L3:

Tutor name: Tutor signature: Date:

Appendix 3: Criteria Assessment Sheet (CAS)

Candidate:

Group:

Qualification:

Coursework:

Candidates: In the table below, identify the criteria evidenced in the assignment concerned and cross-reference these in the relevant page margin of your assignment.

Assessors: Grade the robustness of the evidence identified by the candidate against the Assessment Criteria: YES (achieved) or NO (not yet achieved).

For completion by the candidate: Candidate reference to coursework			For completion by the tutor: Tutor assessment	
Unit (CAST-L3 and TC-L4 only)	Criteria number	Page number	YES/NO	Tutor feedback

General comments:

Tutor name: _____ Date: _____