

# **SEG Awards Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Skills**

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## **Qualification Guidance**

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**England**

**Level 3 Certificate – 500/9286/8**

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## About Us

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At Skills and Education Group Awards we continually invest in high quality qualifications, assessments, and services for our chosen sectors. As a UK leading sector specialist we continue to support employers and skills providers to enable individuals to achieve the skills and knowledge needed to raise professional standards across our sectors.

Skills and Education Group Awards has an on-line registration system to help customers register learners on its qualifications, units and exams. In addition it provides features to view exam results, invoices, mark sheets and other information about learners already registered.

The system is accessed via a web browser by connecting to our secure website using a username and password: [Skills and Education Group Awards Secure Login](#)

## Sources of Additional Information

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Skills and Education Group Awards website <https://skillsandeducationgroupawards.co.uk/> provides access to a wide variety of information.

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This document may be copied by approved centres for the purpose of assessing learners. It may also be copied by learners for their own use.

## Specification Code, Date and Issue Number

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The specification code for Level 3 Certificate is C4101-03

The date of this specification is April 2026. The Issue number is **1.3**

Version	Date	Details of change
1.0	April 2022	Qualification Guide published in new format
1.0	April 2022	Indicative Content removed and added to ORS (on-line registration system)
1.1	May 2023	Guided Learning (GL) and Total Qualification Time (TQT) revised and updated
1.2	August 2025	New qualification review date
1.3	April 2026	Total Qualification Time (TQT) updated

This guide should be read in conjunction with the Indicative Content document **version 1.0** which is available on our secure website using the link above.

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This is a live document and as such will be updated when required. It is the responsibility of the approved centre to ensure the most up-to-date version of the Qualification Guide is in use. Any amendments will be published on our website and centres are encouraged to check this site regularly.

## Introduction

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Skills and Education Group Awards Counselling qualifications have been in operation for over 20 years and were developed in response to the need to provide a structure for the approval of Counsellor Skills and Counselling training programmes.

**The SEG Awards Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Skills, or equivalent, is a pre-requisite for admission to the Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling. Learners will develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of self.**

The SEG Awards Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Skills is made up of credit rated units developed in association with Skills for Health, the Sector Skills Council for the Health and Social Care Sector, and awarding organisation partners. Learners will develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of self.

Prospective learners should be made aware that this level of qualification is not intended to train counsellors and that they will not be qualified to practice as a counsellor on completion of these qualifications. To do this, learners will need to undertake further training and they will need to check with centres offering this training what their entry requirements are.

## Pre-requisites

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No formal entry requirements but prospective learners should be aware, either by interview or other suitable methods, that the course involves experiential learning and self-awareness exercises, which will be demanding of the self in interaction with others.

Skills and Education Group Awards expects approved centres to recruit with integrity on the basis of a learner's ability to contribute to and successfully complete all the requirements of a unit/s or the full qualification.

## Aims

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The ultimate aim of the qualification is the improved performance of those who use counselling skills. It is intended that learners be given the opportunity to develop a range of counselling skills and skills in self-awareness and self-assessment. These skills will be more effectively developed through a process which encourages learners to assume an active responsibility for their own learning and which enables them to establish principles and good practice from a shared analysis with fellow learners and staff of experiences on the course and related experiences.

The SEG Awards Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Skills aims to:

- Develop a repertoire of counselling skills at a consistent level
- Underpin these skills with an understanding of one major therapeutic model

- Increase the self-awareness of the person and their awareness of the impact that they have on people.

## Target Group

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This qualification is designed for those learners who:

- Seek the course as an entrance to their training to become a qualified professional counsellor
- Wish to acquire a repertoire of counselling skills for use in other work areas, and who have no wish to become a professional counsellor, e.g. Nurses, social workers and teachers.

Skills and Education Group Awards expects approved centres to recruit with integrity on the basis of a learner's ability to contribute to and successfully complete all the requirements of a unit(s) or the full qualification.

## Content Overview

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The SEG Awards Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Skills qualification covers four topics looking at:

**CSL3U1 – Understanding the Context for the use of Counselling Skills** – This unit is intended to deepen the learners' understanding of the significant differences between a person who uses counselling skills in another occupation and a fully trained and qualified counsellor. Learners will explore key legal and ethical issues based on an ethical framework for counselling and psychotherapy in a multi-cultural and diverse society. The need for and the importance of casework supervision will be highlighted.

**CSL3U2 – Understanding Counselling Theory** – In this unit, learners will study one major therapeutic model of counselling in depth to empower the learner to reflect constructively on its value and use when working with people. They will also reflect on two other therapeutic models of counselling to raise awareness of other models.

**CSL3U3 – Using Counselling Skills** – Through practice, learners will explore a range of skills used within the counselling profession. Additionally they will understand that sessions in which counselling skills are used are professionally managed activities with a start, middle and end. Cultural differences are recognised, acknowledged and worked with.

**CSL3U4 – Personal Development for Users of Counselling Skills** – In this unit, learners reflect on how the study of counselling theory, the use of counselling skills and feedback received can inform personal development and growth, in particular their understanding of self.

## Qualification Structure and Rules of Combination

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### Rules of Combination: Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Skills

Learners must achieve 18 credits from the 4 mandatory units.

Unit	Unit Number	Level	Credit Value	GL
Mandatory Units				
Understanding the Context for the use of Counselling Skills	T/601/7567	3	3	31
Understanding Counselling Theory	R/601/7575	3	4	34
Using Counselling Skills	K/601/7579	3	7	66
Personal Development for Users of Counselling Skills	K/601/7582	3	4	34

If learners achieve credits from units of the same title (or linked titles) at more than one level, they cannot count credits achieved from both units towards the credit target of a qualification.

## **Assessment**

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Internal assessment, internal and external moderation. Specific requirements and restrictions may apply to individual units within qualifications. Please check unit and qualification details for specific information.

Centres must take all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a learner (including any internal quality assurance and invigilation) being undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment.

## **Practice Assessment Material**

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Skills and Education Group Awards confirm that there are no practice assessment material for this qualification.

## **Teaching Strategies and Learning Activities**

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Centres should adopt a delivery approach which supports the development of all individuals. The aims and aspirations of all the learners, including those with identified special needs or learning difficulties/disabilities, should be considered and appropriate support mechanisms put in place.

## **Progression Opportunities**

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Learners who complete this qualification may be able to progress onto the SEG Awards Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling.

Centres should be aware that reasonable adjustments which may be permitted for assessment may in some instances limit a learner's progression into the sector. Centres must, therefore, inform learners of any limits their learning difficulty may impose on future progression.

## **Tutor / Assessor Requirements**

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Skills and Education Group Awards require those involved in the teaching and assessment process to be suitably experienced and / or qualified. In general terms, this usually means that the assessor is qualified in the subject / occupational area to a level above that which they are assessing.

Assessors should also be trained and qualified to assess or be working towards appropriate teaching qualifications.

Centres must take all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a learner (including any internal quality assurance and invigilation) being undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment.

Those responsible for Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) must be knowledgeable of the subject/occupational area to a suitable level to carry out accurate quality assurance practices and processes.

## **Language**

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These specifications and associated assessment materials are in English only.

## Qualification Summary

<b>Qualification</b>								
SEG Awards Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Skills – 500/9286/8								
<b>Qualification Purpose</b>	Prepare for further learning or training and/or develop knowledge and/or skills in a subject area							
<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Pre 16</b>		<b>16-18</b>	✓	<b>18+</b>	✓	<b>19+</b>	✓
<b>Regulation</b>	The above qualification is regulated by Ofqual							
<b>Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal assessment</li> <li>Internal and external moderation</li> </ul>							
<b>Type of Funding Available</b>	See FaLa (Find a learning aim)							
<b>Qualification/Unit Fee</b>	See Skills and Education Group Awards website for current fees and charges							
<b>Grading</b>	Pass/Fail To achieve a Pass grade, learners must achieve all the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria in all the units completed							
<b>Operational Start Date</b>	01/04/2011							
<b>Review Date</b>	31/12/2028							
<b>Operational End Date</b>								
<b>Certification End Date</b>								
<b>Guided Learning (GL)<sup>1</sup></b>	165 hours							
<b>Total Qualification Time (TQT)<sup>2</sup></b>	180 hours							
<b>Skills and Education Group Awards Sector</b>	Counselling							
<b>Ofqual SSA Sector</b>	1.3 Health and Social Care							
<b>Stakeholder Support</b>	Skills for Health							
<b>Administering Office</b>	See Skills and Education Group Awards website							

1 See Glossary of Terms

2 See Glossary of Terms

## Unit Details

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## CSL3U1 – Understanding the Context for the use of Counselling Skills

<b>Unit Reference</b>	<b>T/601/7567</b>
<b>Level</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Credit Value</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Guided Learning (GL)</b>	<b>30 hours</b>
<b>Unit Summary</b>	This unit is intended to deepen the learners' understanding of the significant differences between a person who uses counselling skills in another occupation and a fully trained and qualified counsellor. Learners will explore key legal and ethical issues based on an ethical framework for counselling and psychotherapy in a multi-cultural and diverse society. The need for and the importance of casework supervision will be highlighted.
<b>Learning Outcomes (1 to 4)</b> <i>The learner will</i>	<b>Assessment Criteria (1.1 to 4.3)</b> <i>The learner can</i>
1. Understand what is meant by counselling skills.	<p>1.1. Define counselling skills.</p> <p>1.2. Outline different roles within which counselling skills may be used.</p> <p>1.3. Outline different situations in which counselling skills may be used.</p> <p>1.4. Explain the difference between someone who uses counselling skills and a qualified trained counsellor.</p>
2. Understand the need to work within an ethical framework.	<p>2.1. Explain the key features of one recognised ethical framework for counselling and psychotherapy used by qualified trained counsellors.</p> <p>2.2. Compare their chosen ethical framework with the requirements of one other professional body or employing organisation.</p>

<p>3. Understand the environment in which counselling takes place.</p>	<p>3.1. Explain the importance of the following when using counselling skills in a formal setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional conduct</li> <li>• Ethical issues</li> <li>• Confidentiality</li> <li>• Boundaries</li> <li>• Legal responsibility</li> <li>• Negligence</li> <li>• Diversity and difference</li> </ul> <p>3.2. Explain when, how and why confidentiality and boundaries may be breached.</p> <p>3.3. Explain, using examples, the importance of the right physical environment when using counselling skills.</p> <p>3.4. Explain the importance of ensuring the emotional and mental safety of both speaker and listener when using counselling skills.</p>
<p>4. Understand the importance of casework supervision.</p>	<p>4.1. Explain the difference between casework supervision and other forms of supervision.</p> <p>4.2. Explain why casework supervision is important for a trainee and a qualified trained counsellor.</p> <p>4.3. Using examples, explain the possible effects of good and bad casework supervision on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work being done with counselling clients</li> <li>• The personal development of the trainee and the qualified trained counsellor</li> </ul>

### **Mapping to National Occupational Standards**

Links to Skills for Health Mental Health Competencies  
MH14, MH100, MH101

Links to ENTO NOS for Counselling 2007  
CLG 1.1, CLG 3.1, CLG 3.2, CLG 5.2, CLG 8.1, CLG 18.1, CLG18.2, CLG17.1

## CSL3U2 – Understanding Counselling Theory

<b>Unit Reference</b>	<b>R/601/7575</b>
<b>Level</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Credit Value</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Guided Learning (GL)</b>	<b>34 hours</b>
<b>Unit Summary</b>	In this unit, learners will study one major therapeutic model of counselling in depth to empower the learner to reflect constructively on its value and use when working with people. They will also reflect on two other therapeutic models of counselling to raise awareness of other models.
<b>Learning Outcomes (1 to 2)</b> <i>The learner will</i>	<b>Assessment Criteria (1.1 to 2.2)</b> <i>The learner can</i>
1. Understand a major therapeutic model of counselling.	<p>1.1. Explain the historical development of one major therapeutic model, including the people influential in its development.</p> <p>1.2. Explain the philosophical basis of the chosen model.</p> <p>1.3. Explain the key concepts, principles of the chosen model.</p> <p>1.4. Explain how the chosen model would inform the practice of a qualified trained counsellor.</p> <p>1.5. Explain how the chosen model influences the understanding of the development of the concept of self.</p> <p>1.6. Explain why it is important to have an understanding of a therapeutic model before using its methods and techniques.</p>
2. Understand the principles of other therapeutic models of counselling.	<p>2.1. Explain the key features of two other therapeutic models.</p> <p>2.2. Compare and contrast these models with the main model chosen.</p>

## **Mapping to National Occupational Standards**

Links to Skills for Health Mental Health Competencies  
MH100

Links to ENTO NOS for Counselling 2007  
CLG 1.1, CLG 1.2, CLG 2.2, CLG 5.5

## CSL3U3 – Using Counselling Skills

<b>Unit Reference</b>	<b>K/601/7579</b>
<b>Level</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Credit Value</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Guided Learning (GL)</b>	<b>66 hours</b>
<b>Unit Summary</b>	Through practice, learners will explore a range of skills used within the counselling profession. Additionally they will understand that sessions in which counselling skills are used are professionally managed activities with a start, middle and end. Cultural differences are recognised, acknowledged and worked with.
<b>Learning Outcomes (1 to 3)</b> <i>The learner will</i>	<b>Assessment Criteria (1.1 to 3.1)</b> <i>The learner can</i>
1. Understand the process of a counselling skills session.	<p>1.1. Identify three stages in the counselling skills session.</p> <p>1.2. Explain the importance of opening a session appropriately</p> <p>1.3. Define the following skills which could be used in a session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attentiveness and rapport building</li> <li>• Active listening, including minimal encouragers</li> <li>• Managing silence</li> <li>• Empathic listening</li> <li>• Effective questioning</li> <li>• Paraphrasing and summarising</li> <li>• Focusing</li> <li>• Immediacy</li> <li>• Working at an appropriate pace</li> <li>• Checking understanding with the speaker</li> </ul> <p>1.4. Explain the possible impact of diversity on the use of counselling skills in a session.</p> <p>1.5. Explain the importance of closing a session.</p>

<p>2. Be able to conduct a session with a client in an ethical and safe way.</p>	<p>2.1. Ensure that the environment is suitable and safe</p> <p>2.2. Open the session with the speaker, explaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is on offer</li> <li>• Limits of confidentiality</li> <li>• Length of session</li> </ul> <p>2.3. Develop the session using skills appropriate for the session.</p> <p>2.4. End a session appropriately within agreed time boundaries, showing sensitivity to the speakers' needs and feelings.</p>
<p>3. Reflect on own practice.</p>	<p>3.1. Reflect on the stages of the counselling skills session.</p>

### **Mapping to National Occupational Standards**

Links to Skills for Health Mental Health Competencies  
MH100

Links to ENTO NOS for Counselling 2007  
CLG 5.2, CLG 5.5, CLG 6.1, CLG 8.1, CLG 18.1, CLG 18.2, CLG 19.1, CLG 21.1

## CSL3U4 – Personal Development for Users of Counselling Skills

<b>Unit Reference</b>	<b>K/601/7582</b>
<b>Level</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Credit Value</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Guided Learning (GL)</b>	<b>34 hours</b>
<b>Unit Summary</b>	In this unit, learners reflect on how the study of counselling theory, the use of counselling skills and feedback received can inform personal development and growth, in particular their understanding of self.
<b>Learning Outcomes (1 to 3)</b> <i>The learner will</i>	<b>Assessment Criteria (1.1 to 3.4)</b> <i>The learner can</i>
1. Understand how the study of counselling theory can inform personal development and growth.	<p>1.1. Reflect on ways in which the study of counselling theory has developed their understanding of self.</p> <p>1.2. Reflect on ways in which the study of counselling theory has developed their understanding of life events and their responses to them.</p> <p>1.3. Reflect on ways in which the study of counselling theory has developed their understanding of their relationships, and the way they form, develop, maintain and end them.</p>
2. Use counselling skills practice to understand self.	<p>2.1. Reflect on ways in which the counselling skills practice has impacted on the development of self.</p> <p>2.2. Explain how interaction with others has impacted on self.</p> <p>2.3. Reflect on the impact on self of responding to equality and diversity issues.</p> <p>2.4. Reflect on the impact on practice of responding to equality and diversity issues.</p>
3. Reflect on personal development.	<p>3.1. Identify constructive guidance provided by others which has informed their awareness.</p> <p>3.2. Explain how this feedback has impacted on self.</p>

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|  | <p>3.3. Evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses as a person who uses counselling skills.</p> <p>3.4. Plan for and justify future personal development.</p> |
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### **Mapping to National Occupational Standards**

Links to Skills for Health Mental Health Competencies  
MH100

Links to ENTO NOS for Counselling 2007  
CLG 2.1, CLG 2.2

## Appendices

### Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Exemptions, Credit Transfers and Equivalencies

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Skills and Education Group Awards policy enables learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment in a number of ways:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.
- Exemption - Exemption applies to any certificated achievement which is deemed to be of equivalent value to a unit within Skills and Education Group Awards qualification but which does not necessarily share the exact learning outcomes and assessment criteria. It is the assessor's responsibility, in conjunction with the Internal Moderator, to map this previous achievement against the assessment requirements of the Skills and Education Group Awards qualification to be achieved in order to determine its equivalence.
- Any queries about the relevance of any certificated evidence, should be referred in the first instance to your centre's internal moderator and then to Skills and Education Group Awards.

It is important to note that there may be restrictions upon a learner's ability to claim exemption or credit transfer which will be dependent upon the currency of the unit/qualification and a learner's existing levels of skill or knowledge.

Where past certification only provides evidence that could be considered for exemption of part of a unit, learners must be able to offer additional evidence of previous or recent learning to supplement their evidence of achievement.

- Credit Transfer – Skills and Education Group Awards may attach credit to a qualification, a unit or a component. Credit transfer is the process of using certificated credits achieved in one qualification and transferring that achievement as a valid contribution to the award of another qualification. Units/Components transferred must share the same learning outcomes and assessment criteria along with the same unit number. Assessors must ensure that they review and verify the evidence through sight of:
  - Original certificates OR
  - Copies of certificates that have been signed and dated by the internal moderator confirming the photocopy is a real copy and make these available for scrutiny by the External Moderator.
- Equivalencies – opportunities to count credits from the unit(s) from other qualifications or from unit(s) submitted by other recognised organisations towards the place of mandatory or optional unit(s) specified in the rule of combination. The unit must have the same credit value or greater than the unit(s) in question and be at the same level or higher.

- Skills and Education Group Awards encourages its centres to recognise the previous achievements of learners through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Exemption, Credit Transfer and Equivalencies. Prior achievements may have resulted from past or present employment, previous study or voluntary activities. Centres should provide advice and guidance to the learner on what is appropriate evidence and present that evidence to the external moderator in the usual way.

Further guidance can be found in 'Delivering and Assessing Skills and Education Group Awards Qualifications' which can be downloaded from <http://www.awards.co.uk/centres-grid-page-move/policies-procedures/>

## Certification

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Learners will be certificated for all units and qualifications that are achieved and claimed.

Skills and Education Group Awards policies and procedures are available on the Skills and Education Group Awards website.

## Exemptions

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This qualification contains no exemptions. For further details see Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Exemptions, Credit Transfers and Equivalencies.

## Glossary of Terms

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### GL (Guided Learning)

GL is where the learner participates in education or training under the immediate guidance or supervision of a tutor (or other appropriate provider of education or training). It may be helpful to think – 'Would I need to plan for a member of staff to be present to give guidance or supervision?'

GL is calculated at qualification level and not unit / component level.

Examples of Guided Learning include:

- Face-to-face meeting with a tutor
- Telephone conversation with a tutor
- Instant messaging with a tutor
- Taking part in a live webinar
- Classroom-based instruction
- Supervised work
- Taking part in a supervised or invigilated formative assessment
- The learner is being observed as part of a formative assessment

### TQT (Total Qualification Time)

'The number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required, in order for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of a qualification.' The size of a qualification is determined by the TQT.

TQT is made up of the Guided Learning (GL) plus all other time taken in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training but not under the direct supervision of a lecturer, supervisor or tutor.

TQT is calculated at qualification level and not unit / component level.

Examples of unsupervised activities that could contribute to TQT include:

- Researching a topic and writing a report
- Watching an instructional online video at home/e-learning
- Watching a recorded webinar
- Compiling a portfolio in preparation for assessment
- Completing an unsupervised practical activity or work
- Rehearsing a presentation away from the classroom
- Practising skills unsupervised
- Requesting guidance via email – will not guarantee an immediate response