



AIMQUALIFICATIONS

Handbook

for centre staff



AIM Qualifications

Level 6 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling (Informed by Research) (603/3989/5)

“

I felt it was a well-structured and detailed qualification with a good mixture of theory, background and practical work. As well as learning about well-established theories and models, we also spent time looking at more recent research and statistics.

I liked the combination of journals, essays and examinations as it was a good mixture of making sure we were self-aware, carrying out research and revising.

I now feel ready to start thinking about paid employment.”

AIM Level 4 Counselling Learner

Document Version History

Version Number	Date	Description
2	20/05/2019	Geographical coverage updated to include Wales and Northern Ireland (page 8)
3	08/07/2019	Deadline submission dates for externally marked coursework amended to 14th January and 14th June (page 23)
4	Sept 2019	Rebrand - 'AIM Awards' changed to 'AIM Qualifications' Qualification family added to qualification details grid (page 8)
5	December 2019	Information on how to access mandatory assignments briefs added (page 25).
6	October 2020	Added 'Extended ERF Adaptation - Counselling' to Appendix (page 25) Added information about adapted qualifications to 'About this Qualification' section (page 9)
7	May 2021	Removed 'Extended ERF Adaptation' and replaced with VCRF adaptation/guidance (page 9) (page 25)
8	October 2022	Removed 'VCRF adaptation/guidance' (from page 5)



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Introduction

Welcome to the AIM Qualifications Level 6 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling (Informed by Research) qualification handbook. This handbook contains everything you need to know about this qualification and is intended for tutors, assessors, internal verifiers and other staff involved with the planning, delivery and assessment.

This is a live document and as such will be updated when required. You will be informed via email when changes are made and it is your responsibility to ensure the most up-to-date version of the Qualification Handbook is in use.

About us

AIM is a national and international Awarding Organisation. We offer a large number of regulated qualifications at different levels and in a wide range of subject areas, Access to Higher Education Diplomas and End Point Assessments.

Our products are flexible enough to be delivered in a range of settings, from small providers to large colleges and in the workplace both nationally and internationally.

We pride ourselves on offering the best possible customer service, and are always on hand to help if you have any questions. Our organisational structure and business processes enable us to be able to respond quickly to the needs of customers to develop new products that meet their specific needs.

Section one

Qualification overview



About this qualification

The AIM Qualifications Level 6 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling (Informed by Research) is based on the learner's own research from the AIM Qualifications Level 5 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling. Knowledge will be gained of research methods, ethics approval processes and current literature through the production of a 10,000-12,000-word dissertation. This will focus on either the learner's own counselling practice or a topic relevant to the field of counselling.

The AIM suite of counselling qualifications are available from Level 2 to Level 6 and are available for learners at different stages of their careers in counselling. The suite has been designed taking into account professional counselling bodies' requirements for the accreditation of counsellors and is structured to ensure their requirements in terms of guided learning hours and practicum are covered.

Our qualifications to support a career in counselling are:

- AIM Qualifications Level 2 Award in Introduction to Counselling Skills
- AIM Qualifications Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills
- AIM Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in Counselling
- AIM Qualifications Level 4 Diploma in Counselling Practice
- AIM Qualifications Level 5 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling
- AIM Qualifications Level 6 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling (Informed by Research)

Qualification details

Qualification	
AIM Qualifications Level 6 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling (Informed by Research)	
Qualification Family	Professional
Assessment	See Section 3 for further information
Grading	Fail, Pass, High Pass, Merit, High Merit, Distinction
Geographical Coverage	England, Wales and Northern Ireland
Operational Start Date	1st August 2019
Review Date	31st July 2024
Sector	1.3 Health and Social Care
Qualification Number	603/3989/5
Learning Aim Reference	60339895
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	70
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	506
Minimum Learner Age	19
Rules of Combination	Learners must achieve two mandatory components components to achieve this qualification.

Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

Total qualification time (TQT) is the number of notional hours it takes a typical learner to achieve the full qualification and is made up of two elements:

- the minimum number of qualification guided learning hours (GLH) - the number of tutor-led contact hours
- the number of hours spent on preparation, studying and the assessment that is non-guided

For example, the number of tutor-led contact hours (GLH) for a qualification is 30 and the number of hours spent by the learner (non-GLH) on preparation, studying and the assessment is 6 hours. Therefore the total qualification time (TQT) for the qualification is 36 hours.



Progression opportunities

This qualification has been designed as a step in the ladder for professional development for aspiring and practising counsellors.

Entry guidance

It is recommended that learners have Level 2 literacy skills, or English GCSE or equivalent. It is also recommended that learners have achieved the AIM Qualifications Level 5 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling before embarking on the Level 4 Diploma. This will equip the learner with the prerequisite level of knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to embark on a course at this level.

Qualification dates

The qualification review date is the date by which we will have carried out a review of the qualification. We work with industry representatives to make any changes necessary to meet industry needs and to reflect recent developments. In most cases, we'll extend the qualification and set a new review date. If we make a decision to withdraw a qualification, we'll set an operational end date.

We will post information relating to changes or extensions to qualifications on our website and centres approved to offer the qualification will be kept updated. The certification end date will be three years from the operational end date.

Resource requirements

Please see the individual components for specific resource requirements.

Qualification structure and components

Section two



Qualification structure and components

This section details the rules of combinations for this qualification. Select the component titles to view the component details.

Rules of combination for: AIM Qualifications Level 6 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling (Informed by Research)			
Learners must achieve two mandatory components to achieve this qualification.			
Component Code	Component Title	Level	GLH
Mandatory Components			
J/617/4262	Research in Counselling	Five	50
R/617/4264	Counselling Research Dissertation	Six	20

Section three

Assessment



Centre staff requirements

As an awarding organisation, we require that:

Tutors have relevant teaching experience and/or a qualification, and experience and/or a qualification in the relevant subject area. Suitable teaching qualifications include:

- Level 3 or 4 Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) or above
- Level 3 Education and Training or above
- Diploma or certificate in education
- Bachelors or Masters Degree in Education

Assessors have an assessor qualification or evidence of recent relevant experience. Suitable assessor qualifications include:

- Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment
- Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement
- A1 Assess Candidate Performance using a Range of Methods
- D32 Assess Candidate Performance and D33 Assess Candidate using Differing Sources of Evidence

In addition, Assessors must hold a counselling qualification at Level 6 or above.

Internal Verifiers (IV) have an internal verification qualification or evidence of recent relevant experience. Suitable internal verification qualifications include:

- Level 4 Award in Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- V1 Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process
- D34 Internally Verify the Assessment Process

In addition, Internal Verifiers must hold a counselling qualification at Level 6 or above.

How the qualification is assessed

Assessment method	Overview
Research Proposal	Externally set and externally marked coursework. Graded: Fail/Pass/Merit/Distinction Learners will produce a research proposal where they will define the topic that they are interested in studying, as well as providing an indication that they have begun to identify and develop an interesting and original research question (or questions) in relation to that topic.
Dissertation	Externally set and externally marked coursework. Graded: Fail/Pass/Merit/Distinction Learners will explore their research and develop their opinion, from the completed Research Proposal.

This section should be read in parallel with this qualification's assignment briefs and mark schemes (in Appendix 2), which contain in depth information on the planning, delivery and assessment of the assessments.

Assessments are to be based on the assignment briefs provided by AIM. A full mapping of components to assignments is available below.



Qualification assessment mapping

Component title	Research proposal	Dissertation
Mandatory Components		
Research in Counselling	✓	
Counselling Research Dissertation		✓

Contribution of assessment to the overall qualification grade

All assessments contribute to the overall contribution graded, as set out in the table below:

Assessment task	Grading model	% of overall qualification Grade
Mandatory assessments		
Research Proposal	Fail/Pass/Merit/Distinction	21%
Dissertation	The score (marks) achieved will be converted to points which contribute to the overall qualification grade	79%

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Assessment: Research Proposal

Please contact AIM for the full assessment brief.

Overview:

This assignment consists of an externally set research proposal (based on our brief found in Appendix 2), is externally marked by an AIM examiner.

Centres must use the assignment brief and learners must use the provided template.

Guidance:

Learners are required to produce a research proposal where they will define the topic that they are interested in studying, as well as providing an indication that they have begun to identify and develop an interesting and original research question (or questions) in relation to that topic.

In the proposal, learners therefore need to demonstrate that:

- they understand the area in which they plan to undertake research
- they are able to identify an interesting and original research question(s)
- they have some understanding of how to conduct research

Assessment: Dissertation

Please contact AIM for the full assessment brief.

Overview:

This assignment consists of an externally set dissertation (based on our brief found in Appendix 2), is externally marked by AIM examiners. Centres must use the assignment brief and learners must use the provided template.

Guidance:

In the writing up of the dissertation, learners should:

- clearly define the topic that you are interested in
- identify, develop and investigate research question(s) in relation to that topic
- show your understanding of the theoretical basis of your topic
- identify previous research on the topic of interest
- show your understanding of how to conduct research – including selection of methodology, data collection and analysis
- clearly demonstrate how the research carried out was conducted ethically
- show your understanding of the importance of research reflexivities

The examiners will be looking for a dissertation that gives a good indication that a viable and realistic piece of research has been conducted with appropriate links to what has gone before in the selected area in addition to careful attention to both research methodology and ethics.



Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a learner to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding. The nature of any reasonable adjustments depends on the particular requirements as well as on the qualification and assessment methods. Reasonable adjustments are generally not appropriate where the learner's particular difficulty directly affects performance in the actual attributes to be assessed.

For externally marked coursework:

If reasonable adjustments are required for learners undertaking coursework, the centre must gain approval from AIM prior to the date of the submission:

1. The tutor should complete and submit a 'Request for Reasonable Adjustments Form' for each learner with supporting evidence to AIM at least 14 days before the planned assessment submission date
2. AIM will confirm receipt of the form within 2 working days
3. AIM will consider the application and give a decision within 10 working days of receipt. AIM will inform the centre if we will be unable to reach a decision in this timescale.

Types of evidence acceptable:

- Psychologist's report – must be current/valid within two years of the date of the submission
- Specialist teachers assessment report - must be current/valid within two years of the date of the submission
- Medical letter – must be specific AND recommend, in detail, the support being requested. For a long term physical/medical condition which is not going to change i.e. hearing/visual impairment – a letter from a doctor/optician or hospital report is acceptable in most cases. A condition which is not permanent, but will not go away, will require a new letter confirming the diagnosis each academic year.

Further details are provided in our reasonable adjustments and special considerations document available on the AIM website.



Special considerations

Special consideration is consideration to be given to a learner who has temporarily experienced:

- an illness or injury, or
- some other event outside of their control

which has had or is reasonably likely to have had an effect on their ability to take an assessment or on their level of attainment in an assessment. Special consideration is not appropriate for a minor illness or a minor disturbance.

It may not be possible to apply special consideration where an assessment requires the learner to demonstrate practical competence. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date rather than apply special considerations.

In the case of externally marked coursework:

1. The head of centre should complete and submit a request for special consideration form for each learner requesting special consideration with supporting evidence, which may include medical/psychological evidence or a statement from the invigilator/verifier to AIM no later than 24 hours after the submission date
2. AIM will confirm receipt of the form within 2 working days

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process of assessing and validating learning or achievement that has not been certificated or accredited previously towards the qualification being studied.

RPL is not permitted in this qualifications as opportunities for recognition of prior learning can only be considered against internally assessed elements of this qualification.

Marking and grading marked assessments

Learners must achieve the requisite number of components as specified in the rules of combination. Learners must achieve a pass grade or higher in all assessments. Learners are issued grades based on their performance in the external coursework. Learners who do not satisfy all pass criteria are given a fail grade.

Each assessment task carries a weighting towards the qualification grade and some tasks are worth more than others. For each assessment task, a number of points are allocated to pass, merit and distinction grades. Once all tasks are achieved, these points are totalled to arrive at the overall qualification grade. AIM calculates the overall qualification grade at the point of certification. A template detailing the points allocated for each grade and for recording these grades is provided in Appendix 3.



Section four

Operational guidance

Offering this qualification

Centres wishing to offer this qualification must be an AIM recognised centre. New centres can apply to become a centre using the centre recognition application process on our website (www.aim-group.org.uk).

We can advise centres of the best and most efficient methods for offering this qualification. All procedures for the use of this qualification, including approval, registration of learners, verification and certification will be completed through AIM and all centres will have an allocated customer experience advisor to support them.

Approval to offer the qualification

Centres wishing to offer this qualification must complete and submit a Qualification Approval request (found on the AIM website). Some qualifications require centres to have specific resources in place and/or their assessors/ internal verifiers should hold certain qualifications. Where this is the case, centres must provide evidence of resources/staff qualifications when completing the Qualification Approval request.

Registration and certification

Once your centre has approval to offer a qualification, you will be able to register learners using the AIM portal. Learners must be registered onto the correct qualification via the portal. Centres then select their chosen components.

For all registration and certification processes, please refer to the portal guidance document which can be downloaded from our website (www.aim-group.org.uk). Details of assessment, internal verification and external verification can be found in Appendix 1 - A guide to assessing AIM qualifications of this handbook.

Learners achieving a qualification will be issued with a qualification certificate detailing the achieved qualification and components. Learners who have not achieved a qualification will, on request, be issued with a component certificate detailing the components achieved.

Fees and charges

The AIM Fees and Charges brochure includes all qualification charges and is available on our website. Please note that registrations will not be processed if centre fees have not been paid.



Externally marked coursework

This information relates to the Study of Supervised Practice and Research Proposal assessments.

Once externally marked work has been completed:

Externally marked coursework must be submitted to enquiries@aim-group.org.uk on or before the deadline dates below, with the file saved in Microsoft Word on the correct templates (downloadable from our website) with the naming convention – Centre name – Learner name – Run ID

- For the January series, coursework must be submitted by **14th January**
- For the June series, coursework must be submitted by **14th June**

Results of achievement for the externally marked coursework will be confirmed at the same time as confirmation of the externally marked examination results.



Section five

Appendices



Appendices and links

Appendix title

Please click on the below links to access the appendices.

[A Guide to Assessing AIM Qualifications](#)

Assignment briefs (available to assigned counselling contact via secure portal, please contact AIM for further information)

Learner grade record (available to assigned counselling contact via secure portal, please contact AIM for further information)





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