

1. Introduction

Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute (henceforward referred to as SPTI) is a not for profit educational organisation specialising in training counsellors and psychotherapists and offers professional and academic qualifications, ranging from introductory through to masters level programmes in counselling and psychotherapy. Our mission is to provide a wide range of courses all of which combine academic rigour with high standards for clinical practice.

In order to train skilled, competent and safe practitioners, our aim is to select and recruit students who have the necessary academic and intellectual ability, who have relevant professional, work and life experience and who have the personal qualities and capacities to complete what are intellectually and personally demanding training programmes.

SPTI recognises and values the fact that we exist in a community rich in diversity and difference and aims to reflect and support this diversity and difference within the student community. To this end we aim to ensure that our recruitment, selection and admissions procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission and will take every possible step to ensure that applicants and students are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin, gender and gender identity, disability, age, sexuality, social class, political or religious beliefs or other unreasonable grounds.

This policy covers all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes leading to awards currently validated by our validating partner Staffordshire University. It also covers admission to other introductory and diploma level courses offered by SPTI.

B2 Indicator 1 Recruitment and selection and admission policies are informed by the strategic priorities of the higher education provider. Higher education providers promote a shared understanding of their approach among all those involved in recruitment selection and admission.

2. Responsibility for admissions

The responsibility for recruitment, selection and admission lies with the admissions team and the academic team at SPTI and they work closely together to provide effective and fair admissions services and processes. Once students have completed the SPTI selection and recruitment processes, responsibility for enrolment of students lies with the admissions teams of SPTI and registration of students lies with admissions teams of the Validating partner.

The admissions team consists of the Director of Finance, Marketing and Recruitment, the Marketing and Recruitment Coordinator and the Admissions Administrator. They are responsible for managing and developing admissions policies and procedures, handling enquiries relating to admissions from prospective and current applicants, processing applications and handling recruitment of students from enquiry through to enrolment. All members of the team have significant experience in recruitment and selection, have a clear understanding of the principles of fair admission, and have received training in diversity and equal opportunities.

The admissions team work collaboratively with the academic team which includes the Head of Training, Programme Leaders and Tutors. The academic team are responsible for setting entry and assessment criteria, assessing applications and making offers and also

for updating course information on an annual cycle. Where there is any question about suitability of an application this is appropriately referred to either the Director of Finance Marketing and Recruitment or to the Head of Training.

B2 Indicator 2 Recruitment selection and admissions procedures are conducted in a professional manner by authorised and competent representatives of the higher education provider.

3. Entry Requirements

SPTI has clear documented entry requirements for all programmes which aim to ensure that applicants are suitably qualified and experienced for the level of training for which they are applying. The entry requirements for each course can be found on our website at www.spti.net, are detailed in course information and FAQs documents which are sent out to all enquirers and are explained in detail at information days to which all prospective applicants are invited.

The nature of psychotherapy training is primarily relational and as such it is important for applicants to disclose any pre-existing relationships with SPTI staff and/or members (and other applicants where known) at the point of application. This provides the opportunity to address potential implications for this at the interview stage thereby ensuring professional standards when attending to dual relationships, which Professional Bodies (for example, BACP and UKCP) recommend be avoided to prevent detrimental effects and promote professional accountability at all stages of training and practice. We aim to ensure that this does not provide an unnecessary barrier to recruitment. Therefore, in cases of pre-existing relationships with current students and/or training staff adjustments may be suggested; this could include an alternative entry point or in some cases an alternative programme of study.

Because the BSc and MSc programmes lead to dual qualifications, both an academic award and also professional registration and accreditation as psychotherapist and counsellors, entry requirements and assessment criteria include academic requirements, work and life experience, personal qualities and also disclosure and barring requirements. Applicants are invited to read our disclosure and barring policy statement at enquiry point and this is also available on our website at <http://www.spti.net/training/application.shtml>

Applications are welcomed from those who may not have the necessary academic qualifications but who have sufficient work or life experience to support their application and who can demonstrate the ability to study at the relevant academic level. Such applications will be considered on an individual basis and will involve submission of an academic essay for assessment.

Applications are also welcomed from those with an existing psychotherapy/counselling qualification and experience who may apply via an Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) application process. This route is detailed in our APL policy and procedure which is sent to applicants upon enquiry.

SPTI is not a UK Home Office registered Sponsor with approval to admit overseas students. SPTI can only consider applications from applicants who satisfy HOME fee residential status criteria e.g. UK/EU/EEA including Switzerland.

B2 indicator 7 Selection processes for entry into higher education are underpinned by transparent entry requirements, both academic and non-academic, and present no unnecessary barriers to prospective students

4. Assessment and Selection

Each application is considered on an individual basis against the entry requirements and assessment criteria for the course which are set by the academic team and reviewed on an annual basis.

The selection process will include the following:

- Application form which requests relevant information about education, professional training, work experience and voluntary activity. It includes a personal statement to demonstrate evidence of commitment to the subject area and personal attributes which will support the programme of study and training. It also includes a requirement to sign a personal statement regarding any previous criminal convictions.
- Two references are required to confirm potential to study at the relevant level and also personal qualities.
- Interview process - an interview with the relevant Programme Leader which is assessed against agreed assessment criteria.
- Applicants who do not meet the ideal academic requirements may be asked to complete a short essay in addition to providing details of other qualifications.

B2 Indicator 6 Higher education providers make clear to prospective students how the recruitment, selection and admission process will be conducted and what prospective students have to do

5. The Application Process

B2 Indicator 5 Recruitment activities undertaken by higher education providers assist prospective students in making informed decisions about higher education

5.1 Applications are invited for all programmes during the academic year prior to training commencement. However places are allocated on a first come first served basis so early applications are encouraged. Application forms can be downloaded from the website at www.spti.net or sent by the admissions office following initial enquiry when all admissions information is sent via template email with course details, application forms, reference requests and FAQs. All prospective applicants will also be invited to attend an information day which is a key part of the applications process.

Applications are invited following initial enquiry and attendance at an information day. Both of these processes are to assist all prospective students to make informed decisions about the courses available and their suitability for training. Applications are assessed by the Marketing & Recruitment Coordinator and the relevant Programme Leader in relation to entry and assessment criteria to decide if an applicant should be invited to interview.

B2 Indicator 8 Higher education providers determine how decisions and the reasons for those decisions are recorded and conveyed to prospective students

If selected for interview applicants will receive a range of communications including the following:

- Invite to interview letter, clearly detailing the interview and information requirements at this stage.
- Letter with confirmation of a conditional or unconditional offer of place, this will include any conditions of the offer made
- Letter confirming if the applicant has not been offered a place
- Confirmation of receipt of deposit and acceptance of place
- Starter/enrolment pack containing a student document checklist of documents to be returned and including DBS information and application form, student learning agreement (SLA) and Code of Professional Conduct & Fitness to Practice (FTP)

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B2 Indicator 10 Higher education providers give successful applicants sufficient information to enable them to make the transition from prospective student to current students

5.2 Speed of response - We always aim to respond as quickly as possible to an application and we aim to respond within one month of a receipt of application. However occasions may arise where we are not able to respond or make decisions within this time frame. In these circumstances we would advise the applicant and let them know when they may expect a decision.

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5.3 Offers of entry - Successful applicants will receive an offer of entry letter. The offer made will be unconditional or conditional. If the offer is conditional, the terms and conditions will be explained.

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5.4 Completion of enrolment – Prospective students will only have their place confirmed upon receipt of the written acceptance of the place and payment of the deposit. In cases where written acceptance is received but no deposit payment, the place will not be secured. All students (with the exception of Year 1 MSc students) are expected to complete registration with Staffordshire University, the awarding body.

5.5 Applicants with disabilities or long term health conditions - We welcome applications from prospective students with a disability or long term health condition, and encourage applicants to give information about their access or learning needs at an early stage, i.e. at the application stage. This is in order to discuss necessary support arrangements and ensure that necessary adjustments can be made during the admissions process, and prior to commencement of training. Where information is given, we will ensure that this will not adversely affect the admissions process – suitability for training, selection for interview and the offer of a place is made based solely on the entry and assessment criteria for the course.

Necessary adjustments for attendance on the course will be discussed on an individual basis and as a separate issue and wherever possible, all reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure equal access to the training.

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5.6 Applicants with criminal convictions - SPTI actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the necessary mix of skills, qualifications, experience and potential and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates including those with criminal records. Under home office regulations, SPTI is entitled to seek criminal records checks for entry to our BSc and MSc counselling and psychotherapy programmes. Applicants are therefore required to declare any criminal convictions on their application form and any declarations will be assessed before an offer is made. All applicants will be provided with the Policy and Procedure on the Monitoring of Criminal Records prior to interview to ensure they fully understand the process and responsibilities.

DBS checks are carried out at enrolment and induction for all students enrolling on the BSc and MSc programmes and any failure to declare a criminal record which later becomes evident may lead to termination of studies. The responsibility to declare spent or unspent conviction rests with the applicant and therefore any student in this circumstance who is required to terminate their studies after commencement of training would remain liable for their fees.

(Please see Policy and Procedure on the Monitoring of Criminal Records and SPTI Statement on the recruitment of students declaring a relevant criminal conviction)

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5.7 APL procedure for entry to years two of the BSc and years two/three of the MSc programmes - Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is offered by SPTI to candidates who have studied similar training elsewhere in order that they do not have to repeat topics when they join a new programme. Via the APL process, applicants can achieve exemption from stages of the programmes if they can demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes and clinical competences through equivalent training elsewhere. The APL process is available upon request from the admissions office and applicants must also satisfy all standard entry and assessment criteria.

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5.8 Fraud - In the event that an application is found to contain fraudulent information, including omission of any key information, then we reserve the right to withdraw any offer made. In the event that a student has been enrolled on the basis of fraudulent information, they may have their studies terminated.

6. Financial information

As part of the application process, applicants are required to pay a deposit upon acceptance of their place. This is a non-refundable deposit and will only be refunded in the event that it becomes necessary to make significant changes or discontinue the course applied for.

Once students enrol, they become liable for the full fees for the year and refunds are not given in case of early withdrawal. Hence to ensure prospective students make clear informed decisions regarding finances prior to enrolment, financial information is accessible on the website at www.spti.net, in the FAQs document provided at point of enquiry and via a briefing on all information days.

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7. Changed or discontinued courses.

It is unlikely that significant changes would be made to courses between application and enrolment, and SPTI would always endeavour to maintain courses in the format

advertised. However in the event that changes or course withdrawal become necessary, SPTI would inform prospective students at the earliest opportunity. Applicants would then have the opportunity to apply for other courses or to withdraw without financial costs being incurred i.e. without forfeit of the deposit payment.

B2 Indicator 9 Higher education providers inform prospective students at the earliest opportunity of any significant changes to a programme to which they have applied. Prospective students are advised promptly of the options available in the circumstances

8. Applicant data

SPTI complies with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the purposes for which prospective student data may be held and processed by SPTI are: recruitment and marketing, statistical analysis to comply with the requirements of validating and accrediting bodies and equal opportunities monitoring. For successful students enrolled onto training programmes the data then also forms part of the data held on the student's record.

Enquirer and applicant details (prospective student) details will be maintained live on the SPTI database for 1 year and then retained for statistical analysis purposes only for 6 years. The exception is where applicant requests removal of information and this request must be received in writing.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, information held in applications will not be discussed with any third party not directly involved in the recruitment process. Discussion relating to applications will only be held with applicants themselves or with third parties with the written permission of the applicant.

(Please see SPTI Data Protection Policy and Information Management Policy)

9. Feedback and Appeals

Feedback may be provided upon request to applicants whose applications have been unsuccessful. This must be requested during the academic year of application.

If an unsuccessful applicant wishes to appeal against a decision, the appeal must be received before the course is full and based on the following a) the applicant believes they have received discriminatory treatment compared to equivalent applicants for the same course b) additional information which was not available at the time of application, this would not be considered if the applicant had the information but failed to include it in the initial application c) the applicant believes stated procedures of the Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute (SPTI) have not been followed.

There is no right of appeal against the professional judgement of the assessor (usually the Programme Leader) or on academic grounds.

B2 Indicator 3 Higher education providers have procedures for handling appeals and complaints about recruitment, selection and admission that are fair and accessible. Appeals and complaints procedures are conducted expeditiously and in accordance with a published timescale.

10. Complaints

If an applicant believes that there have been errors in processing of their application or the service given during the admissions process, the applicant has the right to make a complaint. This should be made in writing to the Quality Assurance & Business Development Manager within one month of the application process. In case of complaints, the SPTI student complaints procedure applies and this would be provided upon request.

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11. Monitoring and review

This policy and the admissions procedures of the Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute (SPTI) are the responsibility of the Director of Finance, Marketing and Recruitment. They will be reviewed regularly in relation to the strategic aims of SPTI and The UK quality code for Higher education.

Appendices:

Associated policies and procedures – to be read and referred to in conjunction with this Admissions Policy

- Policies
 - Data Protection Policy
 - SPTI Statement on the Recruitment of Students Declaring a Relevant Criminal Conviction
 - SPTI Policy and Procedure on the Monitoring of Criminal Records of Trainees
 - Information Management Policy
 - APL Policy and Procedure
 - SPTI Students Complaints Procedure

- Documents
 - Application Form
 - Interview Assessment Form
 - Student Learning Agreement
 - Code of Professional Conduct & Fitness to Practice