

# Master of Counselling (Advanced)

## 1. About the Master of Counselling (Advanced) (MCOUNA20)

Counselling has been practiced since the 19<sup>th</sup> century to enable an individual a confidential space to be heard with non-judgement to express, explore and work through issues that may be preventing them from optimal wellbeing.

Counsellors require a deep knowledge of the theoretical and ethical underpinnings of counselling, delivery methods including telehealth, suicidality, common mental health conditions and the importance of personal and professional self-care and effective boundaries.

The Master of Counselling (Advanced) qualification has been designed to prepare its graduates for employment in a role which leverages counselling and coaching skills within a specialist work environment. The qualification also meets the need of those seeking work in community and business settings to facilitate positive human change.

A Torrens University graduate is capable of providing counselling and support across the life-stages using a range of theoretical and practical skills. This accredited master degree is the highest level of counselling training available in Australia and provides a holistic environment for students to gain hands-on experience practicing their counselling skills.

### Graduate employment opportunities

As a graduate of the Graduate Certificate of Counselling, there are a number of career opportunities available to you:

- Private Practice
- Counselling
- Addictions Counselling
- Case Management
- Child and Family work
- Community Services
- Research
- Corporate health consultancy
- Rehabilitation services
- Writing for journals, textbooks and media

## Course Overview

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Master of Counselling (Advanced)</b>		
<b>Study Options – Domestic Australian students</b>	Full-time or Part-time Dynamic Online Study, on Campus or Blended mode	<b>Study Options – International students</b>	This course is available to international students needing a visa to study in Australia
<b>Start Dates</b>	February, June, September For specific dates visit the <a href="#">website</a> .	<b>Course Length</b>	Full-time: 2 years (6 trimesters) Part-time: 4 years (12+ trimesters).
<b>Payment Options - Domestic Australian students</b>	<p><b>Upfront payment</b> This means tuition fees will be invoiced each semester and payment is required on or before the due date.</p> <p><b>FEE-HELP</b> FEE-HELP is Australian Government’s loan scheme for higher education degree courses. It can assist you in paying for all, or part of, your course fees. Repayments commence via the tax system once your income rises above a minimum threshold. Just like with any other debt, a FEE-HELP debt is a real debt that impacts your credit rating.</p>	<b>Payment Options – International students</b>	<p><b>Upfront payment</b> This means tuition fees will be invoiced each semester and payment is required on or before the due date.</p>
<b>Course study requirements</b>	Each subject involves 10 hours of study per week, comprising 3 hours of facilitated study and 7 hours self-directed study.	<b>Assessment</b>	Essays, reports, presentations scenario and case studies, and reflective journals. Other assessment tasks may include research, collaboration / facilitation of discussion, scenario responses and problem based tasks.
<b>Locations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melbourne (Flinders St),</li> <li>• Sydney (Pymont)</li> <li>• Online</li> </ul>	<b>Delivered by</b>	Torrens University Australia
<b>Provider</b>	Torrens University Australia Ltd is registered as a self-accrediting Australian university by the Tertiary	<b>CRICOS Course Code</b>	102915H

	Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).		
<b>Provider obligations</b>	Torrens University is responsible for all aspects of the student experience, including the quality of course delivery, in compliance with the <a href="#">Higher Education Standards 2015</a>	<b>Accrediting body</b>	Torrens University Australia Limited ABN 99 154 937 005, CRICOS Provider Code: 03389E. RTO No. 41343
<b>Course Fees</b>	For details, refer to the <a href="#">website</a> .	<b>Any other fees</b>	For details, refer to the <a href="#">website</a> .

## 2. Essential requirements for admission

The general admission criteria that apply to Torrens University Australia courses can be located by visiting the Torrens University Australia website - <https://www.torrens.edu.au/general-admission-information-for-torrens-university-australia-ltd>.

## 3. Admission Criteria

<b>Title of course of study</b>	<b>Master of Counselling (Advanced)</b>
<b>Applicants with higher education study</b>	<p>Combining online study with mandatory residential on campus classes in a hybrid learning format, the course is ideally suited to individuals with a prior degree in any discipline wishing to gain an industry-recognised qualification whilst continuing to meet their work and family commitments.</p> <p>To qualify for entry to the course applicants must usually hold a Bachelor's degree or equivalent in a relevant discipline or hold a Bachelor's degree and complete the Torrens Work Life entry form demonstrating their interest in and suitability to gain entry to the course. Relevant disciplines include, but are not limited to: counselling, psychology, social work, nursing, teaching, human resources, life coaching, community services, children's services, youth work, care for the aged, care</p>

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	for the disabled, residential client care, welfare studies, human welfare studies, pastoral care and medicine.  Students who do not have a prior degree in a related field must successfully complete the Graduate Certificate prior to enrolling in the Graduate Diploma, Master or Advanced Master. This is a professional accreditation requirement.
<b>Applicants with vocational education and training (VET) study</b>	Not applicable
<b>Applicants with work and life experience</b>	Demonstrated skills and knowledge gained through paid or unpaid employment, formal learning and/or non-formal learning (presented on a current resume with attached cover letter).
<b>English Language Proficiency</b> (applicable to international students, and in addition to academic or special entry requirements noted above)	Equivalent IELTS 6.5 (Academic) with no skills band less than 6.0 (or equivalent TOEFL, CAE or PTE).
<b>Applicants with recent secondary education (within the past two years) with ATAR or equivalent*</b> (for applicants who will be selected wholly or partly on the basis of ATAR)	Not applicable

## Other admission options

*(For applicants who will be selected on a basis other than ATAR)*

<b>Special Entry</b>	Not applicable
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## 4. How to apply

Via direct application to the institution

<https://apply.torrens.edu.au/>

## 5. Advanced standing/academic credit/recognition of prior learning (RPL)

You may be entitled to credit for prior learning, whether formal or informal. Formal learning can include previous study in higher education, vocational education, or adult and community education. Informal learning can include on the job learning or various kinds of work and life experience. Credit can reduce the amount of study needed to complete a degree.

Applicants admitted based on prior higher education study may be eligible for Advanced Standing in the form of credit and/or recognition of prior learning (RPL) under the Torrens University Australia [Credit Policy - \(https://www.torrens.edu.au/policies-and-forms\)](https://www.torrens.edu.au/policies-and-forms)

- Students with completed subjects may be eligible for specified credit and/or elective exemptions
- Students who have completed a qualification at AQF level 5 (diploma) or above may be eligible for block credit (where a block credit agreement exists)
- Students with a mix of formal study and informal and/or non-formal learning may be eligible for recognition of prior learning in addition to any credit approved.

Credit will not be applied automatically. Applicants must apply for credit and/or RPL as early as possible prior to each study period, with applications not accepted after week 2.

For further information about credit and recognition of prior learning please see <http://www.torrens.edu.au/apply-online/course-credits>.

## 6. Where to get further information

- Torrens University Australia (TUA) Website <https://www.torrens.edu.au/>
- Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) Website <https://www.uac.edu.au/>
- Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) Website <https://www.qilt.edu.au/>

## 7. Additional Information

### Course Structure

The course comprises 16 subjects with a value of 10 credit points each.

Core subjects = 11

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Information provided in this document is current at the time of publishing (March 2021).

Electives = 5 (specified or unspecified research electives).

**Note:** the subjects TAC402, ACS504A, TIP611 when studied online, require students to attend a compulsory intensive at either the Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne Sydney campus.

The Master of Counselling (Advanced) program follows a trimester model of 12-week teaching periods. An academic year consists of three trimesters. Full time students would normally undertake 2 -3 subjects per trimester which will equate to 8 subjects for a year. Part – time students normally undertake 4 subjects per year.

The course structure can be viewed or downloaded at the Student Hub, Course webpage  
<https://studenthub.torrens.edu.au/Hub>

## Course Rules

To graduate with the Master of Counselling (Advanced), students must satisfactorily complete 16 totaling 160 credit points.

## Subjects

### **ATC401 - Advanced Therapeutic Communication**

Communication skills are fundamental to therapeutic relationships. This subject explores the nature of interpersonal communication including different communication channels and barriers to effective communication. The role of self-perception and culture in interpersonal communication, listening and reflection play in effective communication will be critically appraised.

Students will examine how different types of relationships both personal and professional can be enhanced through more effective communication. This subject concludes with a discussion of power in interpersonal relationships, and how and when confidentially and the therapeutic responsibility to exercise 'duty of care' might conflict

Students will demonstrate micro-skills, attending and communication process skills, verbal and non-verbal communication, nuanced listening and reflecting skills, and the use and abuse of questions.

### **TAC402 - Theoretical Approaches to Counselling**

This subject introduces a variety of counselling approaches. Students are required to explore approaches to theories, modalities and practice skills.

Students are introduced to a selection of counselling theories, including:

- Person-centred Therapy
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Dialectical Behavioural Therapy and Solution Focused techniques
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Narrative Therapy and Mindfulness based practice

Students will participate in different experiential learning scenarios to develop their understanding of various counselling interventions This subject also establishes a firm foundation for the concepts and techniques developed in later subjects.

### **LSD403 - Life Stages and Development**

The subject introduces the field of developmental psychology and explores why people behave in certain ways, what drives or motivates human behaviour, and links between developmental experience and trauma. Students will examine the key life stages of birth, early and later childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, mid-life, aging and death in their social and cultural contexts.

The subject provides an opportunity for students to explore how theories of attachment, cognitive and social development explain human development across the lifespan with particular reference to the effects of trauma. The influences of biology, gender, culture, ethnicity and socio-political contexts in these development periods will also be investigated.

### **SDR404 - Self Care & Developing Resilience**

Resilience, a quality that allows individuals to recover from times of difficulty and crisis and can be developed through understanding and practice. The subject covers the principles of social, emotional, physical and psychological wellbeing as they relate to health behaviours. Students will analyse the role of capacity building and the promotion of wellbeing through strategies to enhance personal and professional self-care. The impact of vicarious trauma and the effects of burnout for professionals will be explored.

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Students will be required to critically self-reflect applying theories and practice skills to personal lived experience and history and use this knowledge to develop a cohesive self-care plan suitable to future industry practice.

### Level 500 subjects

#### **MEH505 - Mental Health**

In this subject, students will develop the knowledge and understanding of how to work effectively with people with a mental illness. Students will gain an understanding of common types of mental illness and the social and psychological determinants of mental health. Reduction of lethal risk and domestic abuse are key components of this subject. Common personality disorders will be outlined and explored.

#### **DGC506 - Digital Counselling**

Understanding digital culture and its impact upon intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intercultural experience in a globalised society is fundamental to therapeutic relationships.

This subject examines the ways in which technology influences thinking and behaviour introducing phenomena such as disinhibition, net-worked relationships, multiple, contingent and mobile identities, dissociative imagination and behaviours, and the desire for liminal experience. Through a critical analysis of the impact of technology this subject assists students to utilise traditional face-to-face counselling theories and methods in digital environments, including apps, SMS, videoconferencing, and virtual reality as it applies to counselling.

This subject provides students with the tools to create, and manage, a digitally competent ethical and professionally appropriate interpersonal online presence and strategies for managing client privacy and security. Current and future trends in social media and information communication technology and their impact on practice will also be considered.

#### **CPS507 - Clinical Practice & Supervision**

Clinical practice and supervision. Students will receive 48 hours of supervision and experience face to face counselling. The importance of ethics, professional boundaries, counselling theories and practice will be covered.

Particular attention is devoted to client assessment and treatment planning; to skills of dealing with client resistance; assessing risk and to issues of transference and counter-transference. Students will be required to write up cases to professional standard.

#### **ACS504 - Advanced Counselling Skills**

This subject introduces a variety of counselling approaches. Students are required to explore approaches to theories, modalities and practice skills.

Students are introduced to a selection of counselling theories, including:



- Person-centred Therapy
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Dialectical Behavioural Therapy and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- Solution Focused Therapy, Narrative Therapy and Mindfulness based practice

Students will participate in different experiential learning scenarios to develop their understanding of various counselling interventions. This subject also establishes a firm foundation for the concepts and techniques developed in later subjects.

## Level 600 subjects

### **RES602A - Advanced Social Research Methods**

This subject introduces students to research in the social sciences. Students will be guided in the process of preparing a research proposal that they may then choose to use in the subsequent subject RES603 Research Project. Students will be given an opportunity to explore their ontological position and how this then relates to the epistemology of their own research practices. They will investigate different qualitative and quantitative research methods and data analysis techniques for each; students will also consider the application of mixed modes.

This subject will assist students to understand the process of research, including developing proposals before undertaking research, specifying research questions, selecting the most appropriate research methods for the research questions, research ethics and protocols, sampling, data collection, data analysis and reporting. A range of research paradigms and case studies of published research reports will be presented to allow an examination of the relationship between that which is under study and the research method(s) used. At the conclusion of the subject, students will have prepared a research proposal to final draft stage.

### **GRL610 - Group Leadership**

This course aims to introduce students to principles, practices and theories of working with groups in a therapeutic context. The aim of this course is to provide a balance of theory and practice to assist student to gain knowledge and confidence in leading groups.

### **TIP611 - Trauma Informed Practice**

The effects of trauma are seen across spectrums of human experience. This course begins with a definition of trauma and the impact that traumatic experience may have on a person. The neurobiology of trauma including the impact on the nervous system and polyvagal theory will be explored. The idea of an optimal window of tolerance for the autonomic nervous system and that adaptations such as drug and alcohol abuse and eating disorders may simultaneously be functional for survival and a problem for the individual will be explored. Research shows that the adversity we experience as children can affect us into adulthood. Students will learn about domestic abuse, applying risk assessment tools and understand the impact of domestic abuse on family, friends and community.

Students will be required to demonstrate core skills that enable health professionals to apply successful trauma counselling techniques whilst maintaining appropriate boundaries and adequate self-care.

**ELECTIVE: POA612 - Positive Aging**

This subject provides students with an overview of positive aging with a focus on aging well and in optimal emotional and physical health. In this subject transition to older age is understood as a developmental stage impacted by social and emotional determinants.

Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of emotional issue relating to aging and of counselling approaches applicable to positive aging. Techniques for working with older people including digital technologies, phone and telehealth, robot companionship and simulated presence therapy will be critically explored.

**ELECTIVE: GAL613 - Grief and Loss**

This subject prepares the student for working with clients through the processes of loss, grief, and change. The effects of grief in terms of human suffering and the associated costs for providing support are critical issues that need to be addressed in counsellor training. This subject provides a holistic approach to grief and loss counselling.

Students learn the various experiences and stages associated with the process of grieving. Students learn the required skills to work compassionately with people who suffer psychological fall-outs and face existential questions following multiple losses such as those associated with relationship loss, declining physical and mental health, loss of role function and identity, migration and cultural status and death and dying including bereavement counselling and end of life plans. Students learn the distinction between grief and complicated grief whilst recognizing and respecting the uniqueness of each client's experience.

**ELECTIVE: CPP614 - Coaching & Positive Psychology**

In this subject, the usefulness, relevance and relationship of coaching and positive psychology to counselling will be explored.

Positive psychology will be reviewed and its contribution as an approach to the 'helping relationship' investigated.

As part of their exploration of the key positive psychology theorists, students will begin to develop an understanding of how they can synthesise that work into their potential coaching practice. They will also learn a range of particular coaching skills, including solution-focused and strengths-based approaches, as well as goal-setting and personal development coaching.

This subject will balance theory and practice in its delivery and students will be encouraged to engage in interactive learning through discussion and experiential practice.

This subject will include 2 short courses from EXC603<sup>1</sup> Coaching as a Leadership Activity:

- EXC603\_SC1     The GROW Model for Coaching
- EXC603\_SC2     Reflective Practice

**ELECTIVE: SEW615 - Social & Emotional Well-being in Australian Indigenous Populations**

Connection to land, culture, spirituality, family and community are important elements of social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples.

In this subject students will critically analyse the social determinants of mental health and problems such as grief and loss, trauma, self-harm and suicidal ideation. Ethics and best practice in mental health provision will also be addressed. The link between identity, country, and mental health will be critically appraised. Students will engage in self-reflexive analysis of the impact of personal colonial history, bias, and beliefs impact self and practice with clients.

**ELECTIVE: CRA616 - Consumer Rights and Advocacy**

Beginning with the lived experience of mental health consumers this subject introduces empowerment as a multidimensional social process through which individuals and groups gain better understanding and control over their lives thus enabling them to change their social and political environment to improve their health-related life circumstances. Students will develop an understanding of their role as change agents and advocates for mental health consumers. This subject offers the opportunity to explore and understand advocacy organisations.

**ELECTIVE: WRG617 - Working with at Risk Groups & Suicidality**

In this subject students learn the skills and acquire the knowledge required to safely provide counselling for a suicidal person. The subject will cover definitions of suicide and serious self-harm, including risk factors for suicide with particular consideration of mental illness, domestic abuse and substance misuse. The social determinants of suicidality and the ways in which culture, ethnicity and refugee and migrant status, indigeneity, gender and sexuality, demographics and health status affect risk will be explored. The social impact of suicide, media reporting, health promotion and suicide prevention policy and practice will also be addressed.

Students will learn to work with the recovery approach to suicidality, including the common factors that facilitate recovery; individual responsibility, acceptance, hope, identity, empowerment, and advocacy.

**ELECTIVE: EPA618 - Empowerment & Advocacy**

Beginning with the lived experience of mental health consumers this subject introduces empowerment as a multidimensional social process through which individuals and groups gain better understanding and control over their lives thus enabling them to change their social and political environment to improve their health-related life circumstances. Students will develop an understanding of their role as change agents and advocates for mental health consumers. This subject offers the opportunity to explore and understand advocacy organisations.

## Locations

The Master of Counselling (Advanced) will be available fully online or at the Torrens University Campuses:

- Adelaide campus
- Sydney, Pyrmont campus

## Campus Facilities and Services

All campuses are designed to provide students with professional spaces in which to learn and work. They have been planned with student study needs in mind with well-equipped accessible learning spaces as well as student breakout areas for group work and spending time with friends.

## A positive student experience

Torrens University Australia values the importance of a positive student experience, and therefore has robust processes to resolve student complaints. The Student Complaints Policy, and associated procedures, can be accessed from the [website](https://www.torrens.edu.au/policies-and-forms) (<https://www.torrens.edu.au/policies-and-forms>).

## Paying for your qualification

We offer two payment options for this course:

- **Upfront payment**  
If you want to complete your qualification debt-free you can choose to pay as you go. This means tuition fees will be invoiced each semester and payment is required on or before the due date using EFTPOS, credit card or direct transfer.
- **FEE-HELP**  
FEE-HELP is Australian Government's loan scheme for higher education degree courses. It can assist you in paying for all, or part of, your course fees. Repayments commence via the tax system once your income rises above a minimum threshold (\$45, 881 in 2019-20). Just like with any other debt, a FEE-HELP debt is a real debt that impacts your credit rating.

Further information about FEE-HELP, including eligibility, is available at:

- [FEE-HELP website:](http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-payingmyfees/fee-help/pages/fee-help-)  
<http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-payingmyfees/fee-help/pages/fee-help->
- [FEE-HELP booklets:](https://www.studyassist.gov.au/need-more-information/help-publications)  
<https://www.studyassist.gov.au/need-more-information/help-publications>

## Austudy and Abstudy

Students enrolled in this course may be eligible for government assistance, such as [Austudy](#) or [Abstudy](#).