

College of Psychotherapy Application: Frequently Asked Questions



I am already a PACFA member and have an AQF 7–9 degree. Will my previous training volume count when I apply for joining the College of Psychotherapy?

- › All training included in the College of Psychotherapy application (450 hours) must be additional to the training undertaken to register with PACFA originally (400 hours).

Why the focus on experiential training?

- › Experiential training is fundamental in psychotherapy, involving learning through reflection on personal experiences and awareness. This method goes deeper into the nervous system, helping trainees integrate and apply their knowledge to real-world situations. It prepares psychotherapists to handle complex clinical presentations and achieve better outcomes for their clients.

Why is personal psychotherapy required to join the College?

- › Personal psychotherapy is essential, as the "instrument of psychotherapy" is the psychotherapist themselves. Engaging in personal psychotherapy helps psychotherapists understand their own processes, develop self-awareness, and ensures they can provide the best support for their clients without doing harm. Psychotherapists need to have experienced change in themselves, to have a personal experience of what it is like being with, and working through intense and difficult emotions, so they can best understand and support their clients.

Why the demand for personal psychotherapy if I feel fine?

- › Personal psychotherapy is not just for addressing problems or trauma. It is a developmental process that enhances self-awareness and personal growth, which is essential for being an effective psychotherapist. Even if you feel fine, personal psychotherapy, in the modality that you train in, is part of the journey to becoming a well-rounded and competent professional in the field.

Applying for Membership

How do I apply for membership of the College of Psychotherapy?

- › Complete the College of Psychotherapy Application Form and email this (along with supporting documents) to collegeapplication@pacfa.org.au.

Where can I find information on the College of Psychotherapy's Membership Criteria?

- › The College of Psychotherapy Membership Eligibility Criteria resource on the [College of Psychotherapy webpage](#) and the application form offer a detailed breakdown of these requirements.

How long will it take to process my application?

- › The application process occurs over several stages, including an eligibility screening and assessment by the Membership Assessment Panel (MAP). Throughout this process, you may be contacted to discuss your application, and PACFA and/or the MAP may request additional documentation. The processing time for applications is approximately 4–6 weeks.

What application or membership fees will I need to pay?

- › PACFA's Colleges offer certification of advanced specialist training to registrants who meet the Colleges' entry requirements. Annual membership of the College of Psychotherapy is available to eligible registrants (application and membership fees apply). For the current College application fee and membership fee rates, please refer to the [Schedule of Fees](#) on the PACFA website.

Who are the College of Psychotherapy applications assessed by?

- › Applications are assessed by the Membership Assessment Panel (MAP). The MAP comprises a frequently rotating roster of College of Psychotherapy's Leadership Group.

How are the College of Psychotherapy applications assessed?

- › Refer to the [College Application Journey](#).
- › Applications are received by PACFA's Administration team, who carry out an initial eligibility screening.
- › Applications are de-identified prior to the Membership Assessment Panel session.
- › The MAP will assess the de-identified application and make a decision based on the information supplied.

What supporting documentation do I need to attach to the application?

Further information on supporting documentation can be found in the Application Form, this list is a guide as to the documents that should be included as part of the application.

- › Certified copies of your transcript(s) and testamur(s)/graduation certificate(s) for each course included in the application (*Course handbooks are not mandatory; however, these can be helpful for assessment*).
- › Evidence of supervision hours.
- › Evidence of personal psychotherapy hours.
- › A written case study.

Which psychotherapy modalities are accepted by the College of Psychotherapy?

Psychotherapy is a diverse and multifaceted field, offering numerous therapeutic modalities tailored to individual needs and preferences. The College of Psychotherapy acknowledges that psychotherapy trainings vary over time and place and are continually evolving.

- › To support applicants, the College has created a resource listing modalities considered to be psychotherapy modalities by the PACFA College of Psychotherapy. Refer to the resource [here](#).
- › Feel free to email the College of Psychotherapy if you are unsure about your chosen modality or if it is not listed.

If my 450 hours of direct training contact took place over two or more training courses, am I still eligible to apply?

- › You may include a maximum of **two** psychotherapy training courses in your application. No more than two courses will be accepted.
- › The core/primary training undertaken must comprise at least 300 hours.

How many supervision hours are required?

- › At least 50 hours of supervision must be included and evidenced in the application.

What evidence is required for my supervision hours?

- › All supervision hours must be evidenced by a letter from your supervisor, or a signed supervision log.
- › A screenshot of supervision hours logged on PACFA's member portal is unable to be accepted as evidence – a signed letter or form must be supplied.

Can I include group supervision in my application?

- › Group supervision may be included, however a maximum of 50% of the supervision hours may come from group supervision, and from a group size of no more than 6 participants.

Over what period of time can my supervision hours be counted?

- › Your supervision hours must be completed during and post training. In this instance, 'during and post training' is defined as 'within 8 years of the commencement of psychotherapy training'.

Can my supervision hours be undertaken in several modalities?

- › All supervision included in your application must be undertaken in the core modality that you have trained in.

What qualifications or experience is my supervisor required to hold?

- › The supervision must be undertaken with a psychotherapist who holds a qualification in the same modality and must be practicing in the same modality.
- › The supervisor's qualification should be listed on the letter.

How many hours of personal psychotherapy are required?

- › You must include at least 150 hours of personal psychotherapy in your application.

What evidence is required for my personal psychotherapy hours?

- › All personal psychotherapy hours must be evidenced by a letter from your psychotherapist or via PACFA's [Personal Psychotherapy Verification Form](#).

Can I include group psychotherapy in my application?

- › Group psychotherapy may be included, however no more than 30 of the personal psychotherapy hours may come from group psychotherapy, and from a group size of no more than 6 participants.
- › Applicants must undertake a minimum of 120 hours of one-on-one personal psychotherapy.

Over what period of time can my personal psychotherapy hours be counted?

- › Your personal psychotherapy hours may start from one year prior to commencement of training, must run concurrent to training, and must be completed within 5 years from the start of the training (therapy hours should not exceed 5 years in total).

Can my personal psychotherapy hours be undertaken in several modalities?

- › All psychotherapy hours included in your application must be undertaken in the core modality that you have trained in.

What qualifications or experience are required from the 'personal psychotherapist'?

- › The psychotherapy must be undertaken with a psychotherapist who holds a qualification in the same modality and must be practicing in the same modality.
- › The psychotherapist's qualification should be listed on the letter or the [Personal Psychotherapy Verification Form](#).

What information should I include in my case study?

- › For a detailed list of information to be included in the case study, please refer to page 2 of the Application Form.

Does the application involve a face-to-face interview?

- › At this time, the application process does not include a face-to-face interview.

What do I do if I need help with my application?

- › If you would like further clarification on any of the eligibility criteria, please contact the College of Psychotherapy directly at psychotherapy@pacfa.org.au.
- › If you would like to know if your specific qualifications and training are relevant, you will need to submit an application to be assessed. Please read the application form and supporting application resource documents to provide examples and evidence that you feel best fit the assessment criteria. If you have not provided enough information, you will be advised as part of the application process.

** Please note: while the leadership group can support you in completing your application, they cannot advise you if your application will be approved or not prior to the assessment.*

How will I be notified of my application result?

- › If successful, you will receive a welcome letter confirming admission to College of Psychotherapy.
- › If the application does not meet the required criteria (as determined by the MAP) – a member of the Leadership Group will contact you to either seek further information, or to advise that the application does not meet the eligibility criteria at this time.

How do I appeal a decision?

- › An appeal is to be lodged within 28 days of the decision with the PACFA Head of Practice, via practice@pacfa.org.au or by letter to the Head of Practice at the PACFA office. The appeal must clearly state the grounds for appeal. Appeals will be heard by an appropriate appeal panel.

If my application is successful, will I receive a badge?

- › New enhanced College badges are currently in development and due for release in 2024. Watch this space!