



## **PACFA REQUEST FOR TENDERS FOR**

**A comparative analysis of evidence relating to the  
online training of counsellors and psychotherapists**

**Closing Date: 8 MAY 2023**

**For Further information contact:**

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# Statement of Requirement

## Overview

PACFA represents and regulates Counsellors, Psychotherapists and Indigenous Healing Practitioners across Australia. With more than 6000 members, PACFA has the highest standards for membership and registration. 67% of our membership are postgraduate qualified. PACFA is the only counselling organisation with full membership of Allied Health Professionals Australia and is a qualifying member of the National Alliance of Self-Regulated Health Professionals.

PACFA is committed to disseminate and facilitate evidence-informed research to contribute and enhance the evidence base of the Counselling and Psychotherapy profession as well as to ensure best practice in training and practice.

## PACFA's Requirements

### Project aim

The aim of this research project is to evaluate evidence related to the online training of counsellors and psychotherapists to inform future revisions to the Training Standards.

### The questions to be addressed are:

- Which counselling/psychotherapy skills and competencies required by PACFA are best acquired online?
- Which counselling/psychotherapy skills and competencies required by PACFA are best acquired face-to-face?
- Are counselling and psychotherapy competencies acquired online transferable to working with clients face-to-face?
- Are counselling and psychotherapy competencies acquired face-to-face transferable to working with clients online?
- What is the best format of online training? (*class size, weekly workshops, flipped classroom model, training hours, course content etc.*)
- Evidence of negatives of online training (*possibly the ability to read physical cues, confidentiality, lack of peer development, sense of community, mentoring, issues in engagement and participation, learning activities, technological challenges, socialization, etc.*)
- Evidence of positives of online training (*convenience, accessibility, privacy in breakout rooms, etc.*)
- Feedback from graduates of their experience of online training and face-to-face training
- Feedback from employers of online trained counselling and psychotherapy graduates versus face-to-face trained graduates

## **Target**

The tender will be awarded to the person or group of people who are able to demonstrate the ability to conduct research, successfully address the research questions and outcomes, write at the desired academic standard, keep to the required timeline, and have no vested interests in a particular outcome.

## **Project Methodology**

The suggested methodology for the research project is detailed below. Any proposed changes to the suggested methodology should be detailed in the submission when addressing the evaluation criteria.

The purpose of the research project is to evaluate and compare evidence related to the online, blended, and face-to-face training of counsellors and psychotherapists. The researchers will undertake a computer-assisted literature search of relevant databases, articles, journals, books and websites critically analysing, summarising, and reviewing literature relevant to online counselling and psychotherapy training and potentially other relevant professions as well as a mixed-methods research to identify best practices in online psychotherapy and counselling training.

## **The literature review**

The review should describe and critically analyse the characteristics of relevant studies and their findings and conclusions, as well as compare and contrast relevant studies and findings to determine their veracity. The review should also identify any knowledge gaps in the research. It is important that the findings of the review focus on the relevance to counselling and psychotherapy practice.

In light of the time constraints, where possible, the primary focus should be on literature released in Australia over the last 10 years and internationally in the last 5 years related to counselling and psychotherapy training, which can be extended to relevant other health professions (*e.g. psychologists, social workers, AOD workers, if the search yield is insufficient*). This timeframe could be extended; however, if there is a gap in effective research undertaken within this timeframe.

The literature review should include one or more summary tables that set out the findings of relevant studies. It is suggested these tables could include the following (as appropriate):

- Study name and authors
- Year of publication
- Design (e.g. repeated measures or controlled study, with or without randomisation)
- Name of intervention

- Duration of training (sessions and time)
- Characteristics of training (e.g. content, class size, format, technologies used, synchronous, asynchronous etc)
- Number of students per subject
- Characteristics of students (any relevant characteristics such as age, cultural background etc.)
- Pedagogy applied in the training.
- Outcome measures (e.g., competencies acquired, gaining employment as a counsellor/psychotherapist etc)

**The mixed-methods study should focus on counselling graduates and employers of counselling graduates.**

The mixed-methods study should focus on:

- How well graduates felt prepared for their work as counsellors and/or psychotherapists through their online training
- What graduates value about their online training
- How well graduates felt prepared for their work as counsellors and/or psychotherapists through face-to face training
- What graduates valued about their face-to face training
- What employers valued about the skills/competencies that graduates demonstrated
- How well employers thought graduates were prepared for their work through online/face-to face training

**Project deliverables**

Following the awarding of the tender, the person or group will conduct a research project, addressing the research questions and outcomes outlined, will collect copies of all the resources in a suitable format, and will write a 5,000 word paper that is publishable as a refereed journal article in the Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia (PACJA) or an equivalent journal. The paper will be delivered within 6 months of execution of the Funding Agreement for the project.

The publishable paper plus the list of resources in pdf form will be accepted as the final report. The tendered fee will be provided once the project is finalised to the satisfaction of the PACFA Research Committee.

**Conflict of interest**

It is intended to publish the literature review using the author(s) names with an acknowledgment that the funding for the project was provided by PACFA. Any conflicts of interest must be declared in the tender application.

### **No contract or undertaking**

This tender is not a contract or an offer of a contract. It is not legally binding. However, a funding agreement will be developed for the successful tenderer.

### **Intellectual property**

The funding agreement for the project will specify that PACFA will have ownership of intellectual property arising from the project.

### **Evaluation of tenders**

All tenders will be evaluated by the PACFA Research Committee. In the event of a disagreement, the advice of External Consultants to the PACFA Research Committee will be sought.

### **Evaluation criteria**

All tenders should provide the following information to be considered:

- give contact details including phone number(s) and email address(es) of researcher(s) involved in project;
- Provide details of professional affiliations that may be relevant to the tender; and
- Provide details of any potential conflicts of interest.

All tenders need to address the following **evaluation criteria** to be considered:

- demonstrate the capacity within the organisation to conduct the required research.
- demonstrate the experience of the researcher(s) in both conducting research and writing for publication;
- list previous referred journal articles and other publications by researcher(s);
- outline how they would address the proposed research questions and research outcomes;
- outline any proposed changes to PACFA's suggested methodology.
- detail the budget for the project, which for this research may be up to \$10,000.

### **Lodging tenders**

All tenders can be lodged in .pdf form by email to [alexandra.bloch-atefi@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:alexandra.bloch-atefi@adelaide.edu.au) by 5pm on 8 May 2023. If you do not receive email

notification of receipt of the tender, it is the tenderer's responsibility to check that it has been received.

The tender must not exceed eight pages (A4 and Times New Roman or Calibri 12-point font). The tender must include a response to each of the evaluation criteria. The list of publications of the researcher(s) is not included in this page limit.

Late tenders will not be accepted, unless under exceptional circumstances. PACFA reserves the right to extend the deadline for tenders.