

NSW Child Sex Offender Counsellors Accreditation Scheme

The NSW Child Sex Offender Counsellors Accreditation Scheme promotes the well-being of children and young people by establishing a public register of counsellors with the necessary knowledge and skill to work with people who sexually offend against children.

Counsellors wishing to be listed on this register need to apply for accreditation. Applications are considered by an independent panel of experts who will grant accreditation at the appropriate level for a period of up to two years. Simple procedures allow for renewal of existing accreditation.

Client Groups

The skills and knowledge counsellors need to work with children are different from those needed to work with adults. Counsellors need to indicate which client group they seek accreditation for, and to demonstrate the relevant skills and experience for working with that client group. Some counsellors will be able to work with both groups.

Applying at Associate Level

Associate level is available to qualified counsellors currently working with the target group. Applicants for accreditation at associate level need to demonstrate:

- 1. Currency of practice:** an applicant must currently be working in a professional counselling capacity with sexual offenders.
- 2. Qualifications:**
 - Psychologist - eligible for registration with the NSW Psychologists Registration Board; or a registered member of the Australian Psychologist Association
 - Social Worker - eligible for membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers
 - Psychiatrist - a current member of the Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatry.
 - Related qualifications, eg. nurse or allied health professional - eligible for registration with the relevant NSW registration board, or relevant professional association.

Applicants must verify their registration or membership (through a copy of their registration or membership card, or listing of their registration or membership number). Applicants must provide original or verified copies of their academic record.

- 3. Standards:** An applicant must agree to uphold the ANZATSA (Australian and New Zealand Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers) Code of Conduct and Ethics.
- 4. Character:** An applicant must:
 - not be a risk to children and young people: applicants must provide a National Criminal History Record Check. This Check is available from NSW Police for a fee of \$50. Details on how to obtain the Check are on the NSW Police website at www.police.nsw.gov.au. Find the Criminal Records section of the website and complete Form P799. Select the box "Other" in part B of the form and write "NSW Child Sex Offender Counsellor Accreditation Scheme".
 - be of good character as attested to by way of reference: applicants need references from three appropriately qualified professionals who are familiar with, and can attest to, the applicant's relevant counselling experience and character. and
 - be considered competent, as determined by the Accreditation Panel.

5. Supervision: Applicants must currently be receiving supervision specific to their work with clients who have sexually offended against children. The nominated supervisor must either be an accredited counsellor or one who could become accredited if they wished. Applicants need to include a signed copy of their current supervision contract that details:

- total hours of supervision;
- length of work experience with this client group;
- identification of goals and targets for the counsellor.

Applying at Clinical level

Counsellors who have meet the requirements for Associate level and additional education and training requirements can be accredited at Clinical level. The additional requirements are:

6. Education and Training: An applicant must demonstrate that they have received at least 50 hours of training in child sex offender issues, with at least seven hours on each of the following specific areas:

- Core training in sexual assault - victim issues
- Aetiology/developmental issues of sex offending behaviour
- Assessment of clients who sexually offend against children
- Treatment of clients who sexually offend against children
- Legal issues relating to sexual offending and practise in client management
- Treatment outcomes and issues related to recidivism and program evaluation
- Accreditation specialty (working with children aged 10-17 or working with adults)

Applicants must provide original or verified copies of certificates indicating their attendance and successful completion of training courses. The Panel will consider self-education through reading recognised published works or viewing or listening to relevant audio-visual recordings as part of the total training hours. No more than 10 hours for each of these activities can be included in the total. Self education needs to be verified as follows in a self education diary that shows:

- Publication details - the title, author / producer, full publication details, date of publication / release;
- Time spent reading / listening/ watching, and dates when the activity occurred;
- Receipts for purchase of hire of materials.
- Signature of supervisor or peer reviewer.

An example of appropriate log book can be found the Australian Association of Social Workers website: http://www.aasw.asn.au/adobe/profdev/CPE_logbook_2006.pdf. Members of the Australia Psychological Society may use its log book available at:: <http://www.psychology.org.au/>

Where an applicant has attended 'in-house' training, the employer must certify both the subject areas covered, length of time spent on each relevant module, the employee's attendance, and successful completion of the course.

7. Professional Experience: Applicants must document a record of at least 1000 hours of post qualification clinical experience in the delivery of face to face clinical assessments or treatment service with child sex offender clients.

8. Extended Supervision: Applicants must present a record of at least 100 hours face-to-face supervision across their 1,000 hours of experience. Up to 50 hours of the supervision may be obtained in a group setting of up to six counsellors. As well as providing the supervision contract as specified at point 5, applicants for Clinical level accreditation need to provide an assessment by their supervisor of their capacity in the treatment of clients.

For applicants in regional or remote locations whose location presents difficulties in meeting the full number of supervision hours required, the Panel will consider up to 25 hours of supervision

by telephone, email or other similar methods. The applicant must provide documents that demonstrate these hours of supervision.

Applying at Supervisor level

Counsellors who qualify for Accreditation at Clinical level may apply for accreditation at Supervisor three years after Clinical level accreditation if they can demonstrate ongoing work with child sex offender clients throughout these years.

Renewing Accreditation

Accreditation is for two years. The specific requirements for renewal are:

9. **Continued Supervision:** Applicants for renewal at all levels must provide evidence of continued supervision, as required for their initial accreditation. A minimum 20 hours of supervision is required over two years. The nominated supervisor must either be an accredited counsellor or one who could become accredited if they wished.

10. **Continuing Education:** Applicants for renewal at all levels must demonstrate a minimum of three days (21 hours) of training in the treatment, assessment and management of people who sexually offend against children over the previous two years. Applicants must provide original or verified copies of certificates indicating their attendance and successful completion of training courses, seminars or workshops. Details about the ways to demonstrate training and education requirements are set out under point 6 above.

Advertising your CSOCAS Accreditation

11. **Advertising your CSOCAS Accreditation:** When advertising your CSOCAS accreditation it is important that you describe your accreditation accurately. That is you state your level of Accreditation; ie Associate, Clinical or Supervisor and your area of speciality with either adults or children or both.