

For student counselling

For student counselling professionals of
the Corvinus University of Budapest

Budapest, 2025.



Counselling: a relatively short-term, interpersonal, theory-based professional activity guided by ethical and legal norms, the main aim of which is to help psychologically healthy individuals to solve their developmental and situational problems.

Responsibilities of the counsellor:

It is the ethical duty of the counsellor to provide support, guided by the following principles:

- Respect for human dignity and for the person seeking counselling;
- A focus on problem-solving;
- A commitment to a person-centered approach;
- Strict confidentiality, with information used solely to support resolution;
- A counselling attitude that adapts to the needs of the client;
- Ensuring that control over their own issues remains, as much as possible, in the client's hands;
- Practicing within the bounds of their best knowledge, professional conviction, and legal framework.

Professionals working within the framework of the Student Well-being and Community Centre— including psychologists, mental health professionals, special education teachers, or other specialists — hold responsibility for their own health and mental well-being. To maintain effectiveness and prevent burnout, they avoid sustained overwork and use academic breaks for rest and professional renewal (e.g., training, reading professional literature). They also participate regularly in supervision.

Legal Framework and Ethical Regulations

Confidentiality, Documentation, and Data Protection in Psychological Counselling

In the context of higher education, an individual who voluntarily participates in the counselling process and is invested in their personal development is considered a client.

All counselling situations are subject to the same standards of confidentiality and personal data protection as are expected in any general psychological counselling context. The counsellor, as the professional responsible for the process, bears responsibility for ensuring that any other personnel (e.g., administrative staff) who have access to client information also understand and adhere to these obligations.

It is both the right and the duty of the counsellor to clarify the rules of confidentiality with any individuals who may access student data (e.g., administrators, assistants, IT personnel) and to enter into a written confidentiality agreement with them.

A fundamental expectation is that from the moment a client engages with the counsellor/psychologist, all personal and psychological information shared — whether directly or indirectly — is treated with strict confidentiality. These data fall within the scope of professional secrecy and may only be disclosed to authorized individuals. This obligation of confidentiality continues even after the professional relationship with the client has ended.

The counsellor commits to protecting the confidentiality of personal data and service participation. Maintaining client anonymity and avoiding identification is essential in the course of professional work. The counsellor is not required to provide qualitative reports (e.g., the nature of clients' problems or process characteristics); only anonymized, quantitative statistical data may be shared — if formally requested — with the institution's leadership or other official bodies.

The counsellor's/psychologist's duty of confidentiality may be overridden if required by law or if the protection of the client or others necessitates disclosure. In such cases, information may be shared with the appropriate authorities even without the client's consent.

The psychologist/counsellor is legally obligated to report to authorities when, in their professional judgment, the information disclosed poses a threat to human life, or is related to homicide, acts of terrorism, or cases involving corruption.

If the psychologist/counsellor determines that the student poses a serious risk to their own life, they may notify emergency services or a healthcare institution and seek hospital intervention to protect the student.

If the counsellor believes that the student may be a danger to others, they may contact the person at risk, the police, emergency services, or a hospital in order to help keep everyone safe and ensure appropriate support is provided.

Ethical Framework and Professional Standards

Psychologists and counselling professionals working in higher education student support services are required to perform their duties in accordance with the Professional Ethical Code of Psychologists and are bound by confidentiality obligations.

The principles outlined in the Code must also be individually extended to non-psychologist counsellors and administrative staff working within the counselling service. Confidentiality obligations must be formally included in their job descriptions and confirmed in writing.

The Code serves as the ethical foundation for the protection of personal data, including matters related to documentation and case consultations.

In the course of psychological and counselling activities, any notes, records, or other forms of documentation containing psychological or personally identifiable information obtained during the course of care are considered psychological records.

As part of their professional work with clients, the psychologist or counselling professional may keep case notes and maintain a case registry. Case-related documentation may be stored separately from registry data to preserve client anonymity and ensure that personal identification is not possible.

The Counsellor–Student Relationship

Maintaining confidentiality throughout the entire counselling process is of fundamental importance. At the outset of the counselling relationship, it is especially critical to clearly outline the framework of the process, assess needs and goals, and review the available options. Clarifying any questions or uncertainties at this early stage forms the basis for effective collaboration. To ensure appropriate service provision, verification of the student's enrolment status is recommended.

In the context of higher education counselling, the counsellor prioritizes the client's personal growth and development. An individual is considered a client if they voluntarily participate in the counselling process in relation to their own concerns.

The outcomes of counselling are co-created through the joint efforts of the client and the counsellor. Participation in the process is a matter of the client's autonomous decision and personal responsibility.

The counsellor may not disclose any information about the counselling process without the client's prior consent and consultation, except in cases where, in the counsellor's or psychologist's professional judgment, there is a threat to life or safety that necessitates disclosure.

Dual Relationships

Counsellors working in higher education are expected to adhere to standard ethical guidelines that prohibit dual relationships with clients.

This includes both personal relationships (such as friendships or romantic involvement) and professional academic roles within the university setting (such as teacher–student or supervisor–subordinate dynamics).

Accordingly, a counsellor must not engage in both a counselling relationship and a teaching or supervisory role with the same student at the same time.

Referral

The higher education counsellor exercises professional judgment in determining which concerns fall within the scope of university counselling services and which cases can be safely and effectively supported within this setting.

If, due to the nature or severity of the issue, the counsellor concludes that the student's needs cannot be adequately met within these boundaries, they may initiate a referral to an appropriate external service (e.g. outpatient psychotherapy clinic). In urgent cases, this may take the form of an active intervention.

All referrals are made with careful consideration of the student's best interests and individual needs.

Framework of the counselling

In-Person Sessions

Students can request a counselling appointment through the official online platforms of the Student Well-being and Community Centre, by completing the registration form available on the Corvinus University website or via e-mail. Participation in counselling is always based on the student's voluntary engagement and cooperation.

Counsellors aim to respond to student inquiries within a working day.

Individual counselling sessions are typically held in designated offices affiliated with the Student Well-being and Community Centre at Corvinus University of Budapest.

Each session lasts approximately 45–50 minutes. The overall number of sessions is limited and is determined jointly by the student and the counsellor at the beginning of the process. Adjustments to the session plan can be made later by mutual agreement.

The official and sufficient means of communication between student and counsellor is via email, using the student's Corvinus email address.

If the student is unable to attend a scheduled session, they are expected to notify the counsellor via email at least 48 hours in advance. Cancellations made with less than 48 hours' notice may be considered a completed session, except in cases of force majeure.

If the counsellor is unable to attend a scheduled session, they will notify the student at least 48 hours in advance via email, except in cases of force majeure.

Within a planned counselling process, one cancellation or rescheduling request is permitted. Additional requests may not be accommodated and may be counted as completed sessions at the counsellor's discretion.

These guidelines are in place to support the effectiveness and continuity of the counselling process and should be interpreted in that spirit.

Online Sessions

Students may request counselling appointments through the official online platforms of Student Well-being and Community Centre by completing the registration form available on the Corvinus University website or via e-mail. Participation in counselling is always based on the student's voluntary engagement and cooperation. Counsellors aim to respond to student inquiries within a working day.

Individual online counselling sessions are primarily conducted via video conferencing using Microsoft Teams. Students can join the session by clicking the link included in the Microsoft Teams invitation sent by the counsellor. Outside of scheduled sessions, communication with the counsellor is maintained exclusively via email, as the Teams platform is not intended for ongoing contact. An exception applies if technical issues arise during an online session, in which case the counsellor and student may communicate through the Teams chat function to resolve the problem.

Ensuring a stable internet connection is a shared responsibility between the student and counsellor, as is maintaining confidentiality and privacy—such as a quiet, private, and interruption-free environment during sessions.

Each session lasts approximately 45–50 minutes. The total number of sessions is limited and agreed upon collaboratively by the student and counsellor at the outset of the process. Changes to the agreed session plan can be made later by mutual consent.

The official and necessary means of communication is email.

If the student cannot attend a scheduled session, they must notify the counsellor via email at least 48 hours in advance. Failure to do so will result in the session being counted as completed, except in cases of force majeure.

If the counsellor is unable to attend a scheduled session, they will notify the student at least 48 hours in advance by email, except in cases of force majeure.

Within the planned counselling process, one cancellation or rescheduling is permitted. Additional requests may not be accommodated and may be considered as completed sessions at the counsellor's discretion.

These guidelines are designed to support the effectiveness and continuity of the counselling process and should be understood in that context.