ICPHAA

Irish Counselling, Psychotherapy & Allied Healthcare Professionals Association

ACCREDITATION, EDUCATION & QUALITY

Education & Governance Policy

How ICPHAA governs its education, training and accreditation work: lines of accountability, conflicts of interest, the people who carry out the work, and equality, diversity and inclusion.

REFERENCE	ICPHAA-POL-14	VERSION	1.0
EFFECTIVE	9 November 2026	NEXT REVIEW	9 November 2027
POLICY OWNER	ICPHAA Board of Directors		

ACCREDITATION, EDUCATION & QUALITY · ICPHAA-POL-14

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APPLIES TO	ICPHAA's Board, staff, volunteers and panel members, all members, and training providers with ICPHAA programme accreditation.
VERSION	1.0 · effective 9 November 2026 · next review 9 November 2027
POLICY OWNER	ICPHAA Board of Directors
CONTACT	ICPHAA Registry · admin@icphaa.ie

AT A GLANCE

- Clear accountability runs from members and panels to the Board, and from the Board to the membership.
- Anyone involved in an education or accreditation decision declares conflicts of interest and steps aside.
- Accreditation decisions are kept separate from the delivery of training.
- Staff and volunteers work under fair, lawful and respectful arrangements, with protection for those who raise concerns.
- Equality, diversity, inclusion and cultural competence are built into membership, education and accreditation.

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1. Purpose and scope

Good governance is the foundation of the credibility, effectiveness and sustainability of the Irish Counselling, Psychotherapy & Allied Healthcare Professionals Association (ICPHAA). Governance means the systems, structures, processes and values through which the Association is directed, controlled and held accountable. This policy applies those principles to ICPHAA's education, training and accreditation work.

The policy covers the accreditation of training programmes, the Association's own events and CPD, the setting of educational standards for membership categories, and the people who carry out this work. It applies to the ICPHAA Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and members of any panel or committee, to all members, and to training providers that hold or seek ICPHAA programme accreditation.

2. Governance structure and accountability

ICPHAA's governance framework is built on accountability at every level.

- **The Board of Directors** owns the policy framework and the Association's educational and accreditation standards, and is accountable to the membership through transparent reporting on the Association's activities.
- **The Accreditation Department**, led by the Accreditation Manager, is accountable to the Board for the fair and consistent running of accreditation and for the quality of educational standards.
- **Staff and volunteers** are accountable to the Board through regular reporting and supervision of their work.
- **Panels and committees** work to written terms of reference and report to the Board.
- **Members** are accountable through the ICPHAA Code of Conduct for Members and the Association's complaints, fitness to practise and disciplinary procedures.

Decisions are recorded with reasons under the Records of Decision Policy, so that they can be reviewed and explained.

3. Governing education and training

ICPHAA's role in education is to set standards, to accredit programmes that meet them, and to support members' continuing development. To protect the integrity of that role, the Association applies the following rules.

- **Separation of functions.** Decisions about the accreditation of a programme are made by people who are independent of that programme's delivery. A training provider never takes part in decisions about its own accreditation.
- **Published standards.** Educational requirements for each membership category, and criteria for programme accreditation, are published and applied to every provider in the same way.
- **Accurate description.** Accredited providers must describe their ICPHAA accreditation accurately and must not imply that it confers statutory registration or a licence to practise.
- **Learner protection.** Accredited providers must give students clear information, before enrolment, about the programme, its assessment, its appeals procedures, and what the qualification will and will not allow them to do.
- **ICPHAA's own events and CPD.** Events and training delivered or endorsed by ICPHAA are planned against the standards in the Events & Training Policy, with presenters declaring any interest connected with the content, and are evaluated through participant feedback.

- **Competent decision-makers.** People who assess accreditation applications or sit on accreditation panels have relevant knowledge and experience, receive an induction to ICPHAA's standards and procedures, and are supported to apply them consistently.
- **Statutory developments.** CORU is introducing statutory registration of counsellors and psychotherapists. ICPHAA keeps its educational standards under review in light of CORU's published requirements, and encourages providers and students to follow CORU's own guidance and timelines.

4. Conflicts of interest

Managing conflicts of interest is central to good governance, especially where people involved in ICPHAA also teach, supervise, examine or hold roles with training providers.

1. Board members, staff, volunteers and panel members declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest at the earliest opportunity.
2. Declarations are recorded in a register of interests, which is kept up to date and reviewed regularly.
3. A person with a personal, professional or financial interest in a matter, including a connection with a training provider, applicant or member under consideration, takes no part in the discussion or decision.
4. Where a conflict cannot be managed by stepping aside, the matter is referred to the Board, which decides how it will be handled and records its decision.

Further detail is set out in the Conflict of Interest Policy.

5. The people who do the work

Where ICPHAA engages staff or volunteers, it is committed to being a fair, respectful and lawful organisation to work with. Its people framework includes:

- recruitment and selection that is consistent with equality law;
- clear written terms that set out rights and responsibilities;
- a commitment to dignity at work, with no tolerance of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment;
- supervision and review of work, with support for development; and
- clear procedures for raising concerns and grievances.

Volunteers, including panel members and event contributors, are held to the same standards of conduct as staff. They receive a clear written agreement, an appropriate induction and access to the Association's policies.

Anyone who raises a concern about wrongdoing or a governance failing in good faith is protected, in line with the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 (as amended) and the Organisational Integrity policy. Reprisals against a person for raising such a concern are not tolerated.

6. Equality, diversity and inclusion

ICPHAA is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion across all of its work, including membership, governance, education, accreditation and public-facing activities. This commitment rests on the Association's values, on the ethical principle of justice in the ICPHAA Code of Conduct for Members, and on Irish equality law, including the Equal Status Acts 2000–2018 and employment equality legislation.

ICPHAA does not discriminate on any of the grounds protected by Irish equality law, which include gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Traveller community.

The Association recognises that the counselling and psychotherapy professions have not always reflected the diversity of the people they serve, and that this matters for clients who seek practitioners who share or understand their identity and experience. ICPHAA therefore works to:

- remove unintended barriers to membership, training and governance roles;
- make reasonable adjustments so that people with disabilities can take part in its processes and events;
- encourage diversity among members, panel members and accredited training cohorts; and
- review its own practices regularly to identify and address any unintended exclusion.

7. Cultural competence

Cultural competence is a core professional requirement for all ICPHAA members. Practitioners must be able to work effectively and respectfully with clients from diverse cultural, ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds, and should maintain and develop this competence through CPD.

ICPHAA builds cultural competence into its educational standards. Accredited programmes must include diversity, equality and cultural competence in their curriculum, and the Association provides guidance and resources to help members develop in this area.

Cultural competence also shapes how ICPHAA itself works. Panels and accreditation teams are encouraged to reflect a range of backgrounds and experience; materials are written in plain language; and the Association considers the needs of people whose first language is not English, including Irish speakers and members of migrant communities, when it designs its processes and events.

8. Responsibilities

ICPHAA Board of Directors

- Owns this policy, sets educational and accreditation standards, and oversees the management of conflicts of interest.
- Makes sure that adequate resources, training and support are available for the Association's education and accreditation work.

Accreditation Department

- Applies educational standards consistently and keeps accreditation separate from delivery.
- Monitors accredited providers and reports to the Board.

Staff, volunteers and panel members

- Act with integrity and impartiality, declare interests, and follow the Association's policies.

Members and accredited providers

- Engage with education and CPD honestly, describe qualifications and accreditation accurately, and treat everyone with dignity and respect.

9. Concerns, monitoring and review

Concerns about governance, conflicts of interest, equality or the fairness of an education or accreditation decision can be raised with the ICPHAA Registry at admin@icphaa.ie. Concerns about the conduct of a member are handled under the Complaints Procedures and, where relevant, the Fitness to Practise Policy and the Disciplinary Procedures.

The application of this policy is monitored through Board reporting, the register of interests, accreditation reviews and feedback from members and providers, as set out in the Quality Assurance Policy.

The ICPHAA Board of Directors owns this policy. It is reviewed by the review date shown in the document control table, and sooner if law, statutory regulation or professional practice changes. Suggestions for improvement are welcome at admin@icphaa.ie.

READ ALONGSIDE

- Organisational Governance
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Professional Standards & Accreditation Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Events & Training Policy
- Organisational Integrity

DOCUMENT CONTROL

VERSION	DATE	CHANGE	APPROVED BY
1.0	9 November 2026	Reissued in the ICPHAA policy framework (replaces the former ICPA version).	ICPHAA Board of Directors

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