ICPHAA

Irish Counselling, Psychotherapy & Allied Healthcare Professionals Association

ACCREDITATION, EDUCATION & QUALITY

Regulatory & Accreditation Infrastructure

The structures, roles and records through which ICPHAA sets its professional standards, makes accreditation decisions, verifies members' status and holds itself to account.

REFERENCE	ICPHAA-POL-12	VERSION	1.0
EFFECTIVE	9 November 2026	NEXT REVIEW	9 November 2027
POLICY OWNER	ICPHAA Board of Directors		

Regulatory & Accreditation Infrastructure

APPLIES TO	ICPHAA members, Board members, staff, volunteers and panel members, and training providers with an ICPHAA accreditation relationship.
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

- ICPHAA is a voluntary, not-for-profit professional association, not a statutory regulator.
- The Board of Directors owns the policy framework; the Accreditation Department, led by the Accreditation Manager, runs accreditation.
- The ICPHAA Registry keeps membership records and the public directory accurate.
- Anyone can check a member's current status at www.icphaa.ie/verify-certificate.
- Standards are changed through a documented, consulted and published process.

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1. Purpose

This policy describes the infrastructure through which the Irish Counselling, Psychotherapy & Allied Healthcare Professionals Association (ICPHAA) sets professional standards, accredits members and training programmes, keeps reliable records, and responds when standards are not met. It explains who does what, how decisions are recorded and published, and how the Association relates to statutory regulation in Ireland.

Clear infrastructure matters because the value of professional membership depends on trust. Clients, employers, training providers and the public need to know that ICPHAA's standards are set carefully, applied consistently and checked properly, and that a member's stated status can be relied on. High-quality professional governance is a precondition of high-quality therapeutic care.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all ICPHAA members, in every membership category, including allied healthcare members;
- the ICPHAA Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and members of any panel or committee convened by the Association; and
- training providers that hold, or are seeking, ICPHAA accreditation for a programme, and other organisations with which ICPHAA has a formal relationship.

Compliance with this policy is a condition of membership and, where applicable, of accreditation. ICPHAA provides guidance and support to help members and providers understand what the policy requires of them.

3. The status of ICPHAA

ICPHAA is a voluntary, not-for-profit professional membership association in Ireland. It sets standards for its members, accredits members and programmes against those standards, and acts on membership where the standards are not met.

> **WHAT ICPHAA IS NOT**
>
> ICPHAA is not a statutory regulator. It does not license anyone to practise, and ICPHAA membership or accreditation is not statutory registration. The Association has no power to prevent a person from practising in law; its powers relate to membership of the Association only.

CORU is Ireland's regulator for health and social care professionals under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005, and statutory registration of counsellors and psychotherapists is being introduced by CORU. ICPHAA supports members in preparing for statutory registration but does not speak for CORU. Members should rely on CORU's own published guidance and timelines.

4. The infrastructure at a glance

COMPONENT	ROLE
ICPHAA Board of Directors	Owns the policy framework; approves standards, policies and accreditation requirements; appoints panels; makes interim decisions where there is a serious risk to the public; and is accountable to the membership.
Accreditation Department	Led by the Accreditation Manager. Publishes the ICPHAA accreditation requirements; assesses applications for membership categories, accredited role categories and programme accreditation; carries out renewal checks and audits.
ICPHAA Registry	The Association's administrative centre, contactable at admin@icphaa.ie. Receives applications, renewals, notifications and complaints; maintains membership records; keeps the public directory and verification service up to date.
Accreditation requirements	The published document that sets out the figures and criteria for each category, such as supervised practice, supervision and CPD requirements.
Public directory and verification	Shows each member's current category and status. Anyone can check a member's status at www.icphaa.ie/verify-certificate.
Complaints, fitness to practise and discipline	The Complaints Procedures, Fitness to Practise Policy and Disciplinary Procedures, through which concerns about members are assessed and acted on.
Policy framework and document control	The suite of ICPHAA policies, each with a reference number, version, owner and review date, managed under the Document Control Policy.

5. How standards are set and changed

Changes to ICPHAA's standards, accreditation requirements or policies follow a documented process, so that members and the public can see how and why a standard was set.

1. **Identifying the need.** A change may be prompted by new legislation, developments in statutory regulation, learning from complaints or audits, feedback from members or providers, or developments in professional practice and research evidence.
2. **Drafting.** The Accreditation Department, or another person or group nominated by the Board, prepares a draft, noting the reasons for the change and its likely effect on members, providers and the public.
3. **Consultation.** Where a change materially affects members or providers, they are consulted and given a reasonable opportunity to comment.
4. **Approval.** The Board of Directors considers the draft and any consultation responses, and approves, amends or rejects it. The decision is recorded under the Records of Decision Policy.
5. **Publication.** Approved changes are published on www.icphaa.ie with a new version number and effective date.

6. **Transition.** Where a change raises a requirement, members and providers are given reasonable notice and, where appropriate, transitional arrangements.

Detailed procedural guidance that supports this policy is published on the ICPHAA website and updated whenever the policy or its procedures change.

6. Records, credentials and verification

Reliable records are the backbone of the accreditation system. ICPHAA keeps an accurate record of each member's category, accredited role categories, accreditation date, renewal status and any conditions, suspension or removal from membership.

- **Membership credentials.** Certificates and other credentials issued by ICPHAA state the member's category accurately and are not to be altered or used after membership ends.
- **Public directory.** Only members in current, active membership appear on the directory. A member's category is always shown, so that prospective clients can see, for example, whether a member is a student who may not practise independently.
- **Verification.** Clients, employers and others can confirm a member's current status at www.icphaa.ie/verify-certificate. ICPHAA updates the directory and verification service without delay when a member's status changes.
- **Data protection.** Membership and accreditation records are processed in line with the Data Protection Acts 1988–2018 and the GDPR, and kept only for as long as necessary, as set out in the Legal & Data Governance Policy.

Any person who believes that the directory contains inaccurate information should tell the Registry at admin@icphaa.ie, and ICPHAA will respond promptly.

7. Independence and fairness of decisions

The credibility of the infrastructure depends on decisions being made fairly and without improper influence. ICPHAA therefore applies these safeguards:

- accreditation and complaints decisions are made against published criteria and recorded with reasons;
- anyone with a personal, professional or financial connection to an applicant, a member under consideration or a training provider declares it and takes no part in the decision, in line with the Conflict of Interest Policy;
- the people who decide an appeal have had no involvement in the original decision;
- members of panels and committees act under written terms of reference and report to the Board; and
- accredited training providers do not take part in decisions about their own accreditation.

8. Responsibilities

Members

- Keep their contact details, category and practice details up to date with the Registry.
- Describe their ICPHAA status accurately and never present it as statutory registration or a licence.
- Co-operate with renewal checks, audits and requests for evidence.

Accredited training providers

- Describe their ICPHAA accreditation accurately and report material changes to the programme to the Accreditation Department.
- Take part in monitoring and periodic review as required.

ICPHAA

- Maintain the structures described in this policy and resource them adequately.
- Keep the directory, verification service and records accurate.
- Publish standards, policies and changes clearly, and explain the Association's status honestly.

9. Concerns about how this policy is applied

Members, providers or members of the public who believe that this policy is not being applied consistently or fairly are encouraged to raise the matter with the ICPHAA Registry at admin@icphaa.ie. Concerns about the Association's own administration are handled separately from complaints about members, and ICPHAA aims to deal with them promptly and fairly. Concerns about a member's conduct or practice are handled under the Complaints Procedures and, where relevant, the Fitness to Practise Policy and the Disciplinary Procedures.

10. Monitoring, review and accountability

Compliance with this policy is monitored through the annual membership renewal process, accreditation reviews and audits, and the complaints, fitness to practise and disciplinary processes. Information from these sources is collated, analysed and used to improve the Association's standards and procedures, as set out in the Quality Assurance Policy.

ICPHAA is accountable to its members and to the public for the effectiveness of its standards and governance. The outcome of each policy review is reported to the Board and communicated to members. Requests for information about the Association's policies and governance are dealt with in line with the Public-Facing Transparency Policy and data protection law.

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

- Professional Standards & Accreditation Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Emerging Regulation (CORU) Policy
- Document Control Policy
- Records of Decision Policy
- Public Protection Policy

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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