



Entry level and requirements

Entry to the training programme is assessed on the basis of personal development as well as prior experience and academic aptitude. The notion of contact, dialogue and the 'I-Thou' relationship are all central Gestalt concepts and principles. In line with research evidence, we believe that the person of the therapist and the strength of the relationships they are able to make are the most important factors in predicting good therapeutic outcome. As a consequence, it is a requirement that students have undertaken personal or group therapy prior to their acceptance on the programme.

The Gestalt Institute of Ireland offers personal development workshops to potential applicants and to the wider professional field. These workshops give applicants for the training programme an experience of our model of Gestalt Psychotherapy in practice before they embark on an expensive, challenging and long-term commitment. It also helps to ensure that students fully understand not just the theoretical model in which they wish to train but also some of the personal challenges they will encounter during training. People often attend these workshops and subsequently apply for a place on the programme.

All applicants are interviewed by at least two members of the programme team. They also spend time with two senior students who are asked to make an assessment of the applicant's suitability for psychotherapy training.

In order to be accepted for the programme students must demonstrate that they are:

- able to fulfil the academic demands of the programme. This is normally demonstrated by having a degree or equivalent in a related discipline. In cases where the applicant does not have a first degree relevant prior learning (RPL) and life experience is taken into consideration (see below for details).
- able to commit to the emotional and time demands of the programme;
- able to reflect on theoretical and practical aspects of psychotherapy;
- willing to continue in personal therapy for the duration of the programme;

- aware of their own process and ready to risk working with their unfinished business;
- good communicators;
- able to be self-supporting most of the time;
- open and non-defensive to both positive and negative feedback;
- able to listen to and absorb intense emotional experiences in a non-judgemental manner;
- able to respond to the above in a caring and professional manner;
- aware of and alert to ethical issues and issues of diversity.

Where students do not have a first degree (or equivalent) in a relevant subject an assessment of prior learning is made. This includes:

- submission of a personal statement which clearly explains why they wish to become a therapist;
- an assessment of the qualities, skills and knowledge which make them suitable for training;
- verified evidence of any in-house, informal training or work experience which supports their application;
- provision of appropriate and supportive references;
- an interview with at least two programme staff;
- meeting with senior students.