# Self-Assessment Exercise (SAE)

## Introduction

This document has been designed to be a ‘how to’ guide to completing the assignment. Below you will find different sections to guide you through the different stages and about what is expected. All documents associated with this assignment can be found on the Self-Assessment Exercise (SAE) webpage of the programme handbook.

The SAE has been designed to foster an adult learning approach to self-development from the start of the programme. It asks you to appraise your starting point in relation to the ten assessed domains (which between them cover most of the programme learning outcomes) when you begin the programme, and then via a series of self-facilitated tasks and feedback from a range of formative exercises you will undertake. You are expected to use these learning opportunities to develop insight and understanding of your personal, professional and self-development challenges, and to develop strategies to address these.

The assignment is also designed to specifically assess some of your abilities that fall into a number of the identified domains (outlined below) and to facilitate the development of an individual training plan (not formally assessed) upon which later self-development meetings can be based. Qualified clinical psychologists are expected to engage in lifelong learning and continuing professional development, and this assignment aims to prompt you to engage with this requirement from the very beginning of your career.

## Domains actively assessed

The activity you undertake in the SAE should be thought of separately from the assessment of it as an assignment. Although the SAE asks you to **reflect** on all domains, only certain skills falling into a subset of these domains are actively being assessed in the assignment.

The SAE actively assesses the following domains –

1. ‘Gathering’ - Collating information and knowledge for specific purpose

2. ‘Analysing’ -Critical analysis & synthesis

3. ‘Deciding’ - Strategy for application

5. ‘Responding’ - Responsive to impact & learning from experiences

6. ‘Communicating’ - Communicating information effectively

Please see the mark sheet for details of the kinds of behaviours that are assessed within each of these domains for this assignment.

## Preparing for and structure of the assignment

The assignment comprises four distinct phases: conduct an initial self-appraisal of your knowledge and skills and write about this; engage in a series of self-evaluative exercises; write about this and construct a written development strategy, and attend an assessed meeting to discuss and reflect on the whole process with the markers. These are set out in turn below, together with the associated processes needed to complete the assignment.

### 1. Initial self appraisal

This stage is designed to help you think broadly about what skills, knowledge and expertise you have brought with you to the programme. You are asked to use the Trainee initial self-appraisal form to prompt you as to what areas to consider. You do not have to answer every prompt question; they are there for you to facilitate your thinking and to make notes from. The self-appraisal form is divided up using the ten domains we use to evaluate assignments. Between them, they cover most of the programme learning outcomes, and also cover most of the competencies you will need as a clinical psychologist.

You are asked to make a first attempt at completing the self-appraisal form prior to a first meeting with your clinical tutor so that you can discuss your thoughts and reflections on it in that meeting. Your clinical tutor can act as a ‘sounding board’ to enable you to identify what your main/key strengths are and key/main areas warranting further investigation to understand your development needs better.

After meeting with your clinical tutor you will need to draft out a 500 word (maximum) initial self-appraisal. This text should be entered into the first section of the SAE form which you will submit later (see below). You will need to write concisely with a good balance between outlining your strengths and areas for development, the latter of which will inform the next task in the process. An example can be seen in Appendix 1.

### 2. Self-assessment process

In the first few weeks of training you will undertake a number of formative self-evaluative exercises which are mandatory (‘essential exercises’), the outcomes of which need to be included in the appendices to the SAE form. A full list of the essential exercises can be found on the SAE form. There is also an opportunity to undertake other optional formative/self-evaluative exercises. If you do undertake any optional exercises, please remember to include the outcomes in the appendices on your SAE form. Examples of optional exercises can be found on Moodle. However you may also wish to find and use other self-evaluation exercises which are not on this list. If you do so and they appear useful, please let the assignment coordinator (Fiona Eccles and Emma Munks) know, as we can then let other trainees know about them. By undertaking a range of self-evaluation exercises you will be gathering more information about your strengths and identifying areas for development. Please undertake no more than 5 optional exercises in total. Please also aim to spend a maximum of 5 hours in total on these tasks, the aim is to sample a range of experiences to aid self-assessment.

You will have a second meeting about your SAE with your clinical tutor and a research tutor around the end of October or early November. The purpose of this meeting is to help you think through the information you are gathering to enable you to work towards completing the next section in the SAE form. The tutors do not read your form nor are they assessing you at this point.

You are expected to append the outcome of any exercises undertaken as part of the preparation for this assignment. This includes the outcome of a number of essential exercises without which the submission will be considered incomplete.

### 3. Writing about the outcome of the self-assessment process – 1000 words

Using the information gathered during the formative evaluative exercises you should now complete the second part of the Self-Assessment form. For example, what have you learnt about yourself? Have you identified new strengths/insights about yourself? This needs to be written in a narrative format. It needs to be concise so pick out key themes only

The second part of this section is the identification of development needs and strategies about how you **intend** to address the need identified. This section is in a table format to allow you to outline concisely the identified development need and the associated strategy/strategies. An example of how to write this section can be found in Appendix 2. Typically trainees identify 4-10 developmental needs.

You will need to submit the SAE form to MOODLE by 9.30am on the day of the deadline. Details on how to make a MOODLE submission can be found on the [guidance on assignment submission page](https://wp.lancs.ac.uk/dclinpsy/guidance-on-assignment-submission/).

### 4. Self-assessment viva (up to 40 minutes)

You will be allocated a time on a specified day (which you will be informed of approximately one month in advance) when you will be asked to attend the SAE viva meeting. The meeting will be with your tutor pair (and/or their nominated deputies). The meeting is based on your SAE form, which your tutors will have read beforehand. They will ask you questions about what you have put on your form. Questions will include the following: asking you to explain how you have reached the conclusions you have (about your strengths/identified development needs and strategies); seeking clarification about different aspects of your form; asking why you have followed a particular line of enquiry over another, for example why you have chosen particular optional exercises. Your tutors will also explore if there are any other ways you may be able to achieve desired outcomes for your development needs. Your performance in the meeting is assessed by your tutors who will jointly complete a trainee feedback form. The meeting is video-recorded for the purposes of moderation by our external examining team and for your own development (as you will have access it to it after the process is concluded). Whilst the meeting is assessed it is also meant to a helpful conversation about your development rather than an interrogation.

The viva is classed as a formal examination (according to university regulations) so you will require a fit note from your doctor if you are off on the day (self-certification is not sufficient). If you are late on the day due to an unforeseen event (e.g. car breakdown) please inform the programme as soon as possible and we will try and reschedule your viva on the same day if possible or at the next available opportunity.

## Outcome of the SAE

Written feedback will also be sent to you after the viva which will contain the outcome and feedback for each of the domains. The outcome is provisional until ratified by the programme’s exam board, which will take place several months later. If you have been given a PASS mark then you will not need to do anything further on this assignment.

If you have been given a PASS WITH CONDITIONS mark then you will need to make the recommended changes, additions and / or corrections to your SAE form as directed in the SAE Trainee Feedback form you will be sent. You will need to resubmit the amended assignment for your changes to be approved by the nominated deadline.

If you have been given a FAIL mark then you may revise your SAE form and will need to have a second viva, which would be scheduled in the February (full time trainees) or the April (part time trainees) following the first viva. You will be notified in advance of the date/time you have been given. This would be your second attempt at the assignment.

If this submission (attempt 2) is also given a FAIL and this is ratified by the Exam Board you will be asked to attempt the assignment again at a later date. This third submission would be your resubmission attempt at the assignment.

The SAE form will be used as a basis for future Individual Training Plan (ITP) meetings. Further information about the ITP process can be found on the relevant programme handbook webpage. Future ITP meetings are not assessed. They are designed to review your progress through training and to ensure that you are taking responsibility for and meeting your development needs.

## Additional considerations

Trainees who have additional considerations where the programme might need to make adaptations or adjustments to support access to training (e.g. health conditions, dyslexia, neurodiversity, carer responsibilities etc) can request 20% extra words and 20% extra time in the viva to allow discussion of these, if the trainee wishes. The adjusted word counts are as follows:

Initial Self Appraisal = 600 words

Outcome of assessment = 1200 words

Viva/assessment meeting = up to 48 minutes.

If you need to consider more information than can be fitted into the available word count then additional points can be raised verbally in the viva meeting or discussed in a separate appendix.

The programme works to ensure that personal information is only shared on a need to know basis. Any information you put in your SAE will only be read by your markers, your tutor pair (if different), and possibly by an external examiner. As per the university guidance, a sample of the SAE submissions are sent to an external examiner for review.

**Trainees are asked to alert the assignment coordinators that they wish to use the extra words/time as soon as possible so this can be factored into word count on submission and scheduling for the viva. When asking for the additional time, the coordinators do not need to know why the additional time/words are being requested.**

Appendix 1: Example initial self-appraisal

| **Strengths** |
| --- |
| During my time as a support worker with people with learning disabilities, I think I developed strengths in empathy, perspective taking and advocacy. Feedback from my team leader highlighted my ability to deliver person-centred care and form and sustain relationships with others, both those for whom I care and other staff members. My experience of caring for a relative has helped me develop organisational and time-management skills, but also led me to appreciate the demands placed on carers and a passion for disability rights. I am learning the importance of self-care and try to monitor the impact of my work and my caring responsibilities on my mental health, though this is perhaps a work in progress. |

| **What I need to develop** |
| --- |
| I have not worked in clinical psychology in the NHS so I need to develop knowledge of NHS organisation and structure and to understand in more detail about the roles of a clinical psychologist in that setting. While I helped implement some behavioural strategies in my support worker role, I need to learn about assessment and formulation that guide the choice of appropriate intervention, as well as the range of therapy techniques that can be applied. I also need to learn about specific psychometric tests and neuropsychology assessment batteries as I am not familiar with these. I have not undertaken any academic work for a while, so need to refresh my academic skills including my ability to appraise work and to undertake academic writing. Feedback from my undergraduate degree suggests I need to develop my critical skills and I can see these will be important for my academic work on the programme. I have always found statistics difficult so I am anticipating I will need to work to develop my understanding of basic statistics, both how to interpret and apply them in a clinical setting. I find conflict hard in personal and professional settings so would like to develop more conflict management skills and how to use these both with clients and colleagues. I have high standards and can be self-critical and I may need to work on this during the programme to prevent over-working when juggling the multiple demands of the course. My academic experience up to now has been quite directed by others, so I will need to develop skills in being more self-directed in my learning and learn how to set my own goals and work towards these independently. |

Appendix 2: Example challenges/development needs section of the SAE form

| Challenges/development need | Strategy to address |
| --- | --- |
| Managing my anxiety in clinical sessions | Discuss with clinical supervisor, keep on supervision agenda. Develop strategies to manage and try them out. Video self and go through session with supervisor. |
| Developing my academic writing skills | Review online materials provided by Lancaster University and complete the associated exercises. To bring feedback from written assignments into future development meetings to review |
| How my diagnosis of dyslexia might impact on my work on the programme | Seek support from Lancaster Student Support Services. Ask for an assessment to know what additional technological support I can access to support me in my academic work. |
| How being a carer of older relative may impact on access to the programme | Make self aware of carer leave policies from LSCFT. Make tutors aware of when need to attend appointments for person who is cared for. Share relevant information to support placement allocation process. |
| What adjustments may be needed due to my health condition and how I bring this to the attention of the programme | Request an in depth occupational health assessment. Consider involvement of Access to Work. Make tutors aware of adjustments that may be needed across programme activities. Share relevant information to inform placement allocation. |
| My anxiety about being videoed for communication skills, role play sessions and clinical sessions | Discuss my anxiety with my clinical tutor/communication skills facilitator and my clinical supervisor. Develop specific strategies to enable me to fully participate in the feedback process. |
| Speaking out in large groups and having confidence in my sharing my opinion | To consider with my tutors the issues which prevent me from speaking out in large groups. To take the issue to my mini-CAT sessions to explore further there. |

Note this is not perceived as a list for the same “person” as Appendix 1, and indeed just gives a range of examples to give some ideas, rather than necessarily representing the completion of a form for one person.