

# Family Law Council Manual for Processing License Applications

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# Preamble

## 1: What is this Manual For?

The Family Law Council (hereafter referred to as the Council) under the Family Law Act, 2003 (hereafter referred to as the Act), has the authority to give official recognition to:

- Individuals applying as a Family Law Division 'counsellor'.
- Organisations that can apply for the ability to provide official recognition to individuals that might apply through these organisations instead of the Family Law Council.
- Organisations that give educational courses relevant to counselling skills in the Family Law Division.

This manual is a guide to the requirements that each of these kind of applications should fulfil in order to maintain a minimum set of standards of professionalism for clinical counselling. It is a guide to members of the Council, who may not have a strong background in the professionalism of counselling. This does not cover legal counselling (termed conciliators), see section 2.1.1.

This document needs to be seen as a 'guide' and not a 'directive'. Although there needs to be some leeway as to how applications are processed and approved (or not), the guides have been formulated in order to provide a reasonable amount of protection so that the Council does not inadvertently license inappropriate people, organisations or accredit the wrong educational institutions. By following these guidelines, there is a reciprocal degree of protection against the Council being accused of making unprofessional judgements, if indeed they have followed these guidelines.

### 1.1: Revision of this Manual

This manual and any supporting documentation should be revised no longer than 5 years after its introduction (currently the start of 2011).

### 1.2: Manual Overview

There are four sections to this manual. This introductory section outlines the terminology used. The second section outlines the guidelines for individuals applying for a license. The third outlines the guidelines for organisations applying to be a licensing body. The final fourth section outlines the guidelines for organisations seeking recognition to teach relevant counselling skill programmes.

## 2: Terminology

The terminology that the Council uses when talking about recognition of individuals or organisations.

Individuals apply for a <i>License</i> :	refers to the ability for an individual to act as a 'counsellor' as defined in the Act. This is essentially what the individuals need to acquire before they can be employed under the Act.
Organisations apply for a <i>License</i> as a <i>Licensing Body</i> for individuals:	An organisation can also apply for a 'license' to function as a proxy for the Council in giving out licenses to individuals.
<i>Certification</i> :	An additional level of counselling specialisation referred to in the Act. Child counsellor & Family counsellor.
<i>Accreditation</i> :	An educational organisation receives recognition in delivering an approved training course that meets the licensing standards.

Table 1: Terminology terms used in Family Law Division

An individual seeks a *License*; they either apply directly to the Council, or they apply through a licensed organisation. Some of the applicants may seek additional *Certification* to practice a specialisation as either a *Child Counsellor*, or a *Family Counsellor*. Individuals whose training and/or qualifications and/or endorsements, come from an *Accredited* body (such as a University or a professional body) will be able to apply with more confidence in receiving a license from the Council.

### 2.1: Levels of Counselling Skills Terminology

#### 2.1.1: Clinical Counsellors vs. Legal Conciliators

**Counsellors** act more in the interests of acknowledging the emotional side of managing relationships (so called 'clinical' counselling').

**Conciliators** have a legal focus. The latter are capable of drawing up legal documents establish parenting plans or agreements on asset division. The original founding *Family Law Report* refers to 'Conciliators', but it is absent from the Act.

However it is important to recognise that these are in fact two distinct sets of core skills. They should not be confused. If a person is able to do both skills then this would suggest that they have had professional training in both professions. The following conceptual diagram represents the differences.

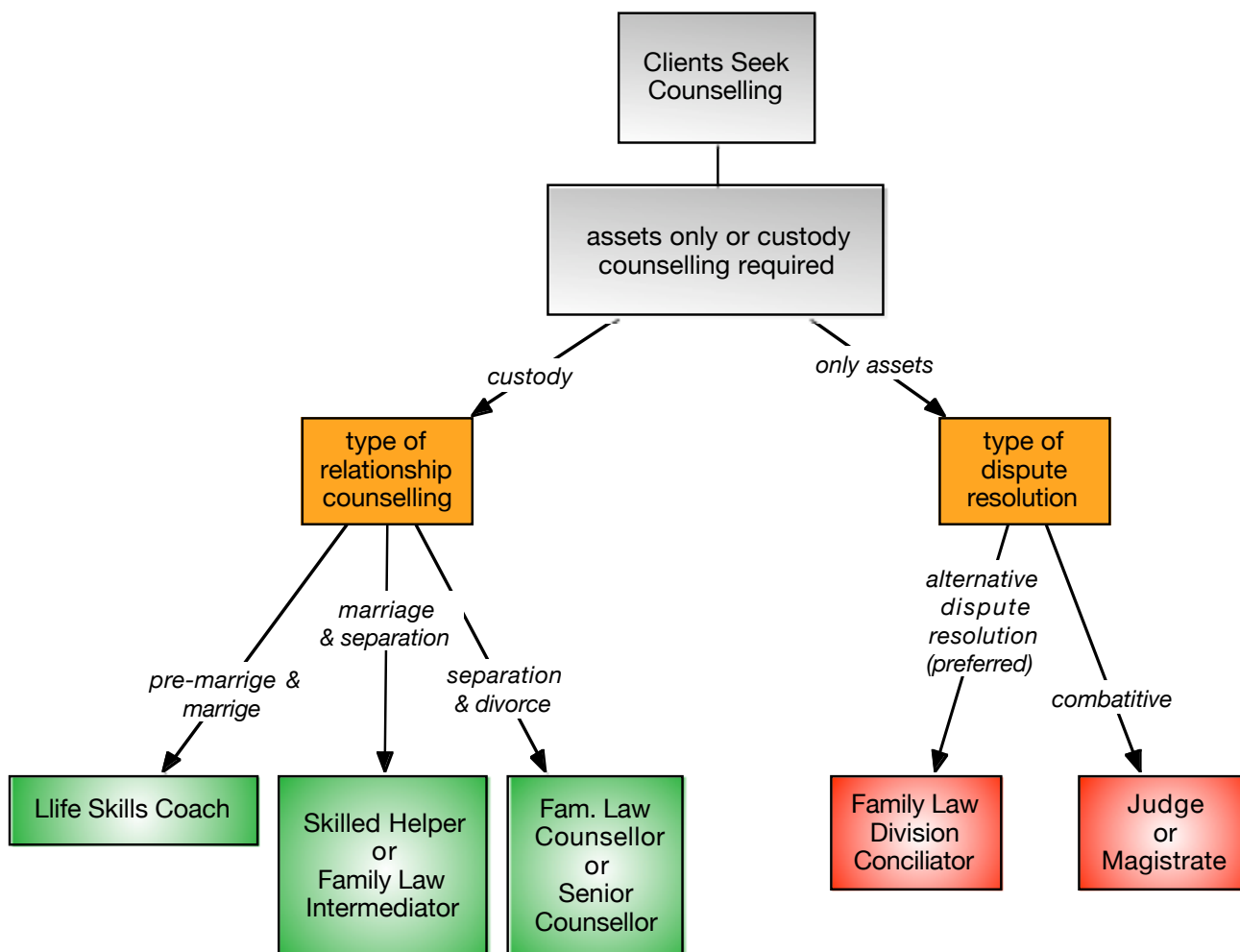


Figure 1: Conceptual diagram of different levels of counselling within the Family Law Division.

### 2.1.2: Counsellors become ‘Family Law Counsellors’

Counsellors that operate within Fiji under the jurisdiction of the Family Law Division are for the most part identified as *Family Law Counsellors*. The purpose of this is two fold. The first is to identify the counsellors with a specific aim or purpose. This means that they will not be confused with generic counsellors. The second reason relates to this and that is that the term does not try to claim international parity with what would be recognised as professional counsellors in the international arena.

The reality is that the generic internationally recognised ‘counsellors’ have a longer training period and broader grounding in counselling in general. Since Fiji is not on the position to insist on having this degree of training (it can afford neither the time and training, or the expected salary for such a qualified person), it has to make do with individuals who have been trained for the specific purposes of the Family Law Division. At the same time, but not using the generic term ‘counsellors’, Fiji cannot be accused of applying ‘lax’ standards. In other words this terminology means that counsellors within the Family Law Division are not identified identified by title as being the same as a qualified generic counsellor.

This change in title actually maintains international parity, and yet work with the realism of extensive training and expense that would otherwise be required if Fiji if it used the term 'counsellor' in a loose sense.

### 2.1.3: The term 'Intermediator' is used

One of the levels in this scheme has been termed an *Intermediator*. This is done to avoid confusion with the term *Mediator*, which is used exclusively in Australian Family Law Courts to mean someone with some formal legal training in addition to their counselling skills training.

## 3: How to Use This Manual

This manual is meant to be used as a practical check list of guidelines that Council members can simply refer to in being able to quickly determine if an application is in the right arena for consideration of recognition by the Council. There is another accompanying document called the *Licensing Individuals and Organisations for the Family Law Division* which provides a background and more in-depth treatment of the underlying rationale for why there are different levels of counsellors identified. The pivotal role of the decision making processes by the Council is also spelt out in more detail. Aside from inducting Council members into their roles, this latter document may assist members when applications fall into *grey* areas because they will have a better understanding of what the reasoning and rationale of the licensing procedure was.

# Individuals Applying for Licenses

## 4: Levels of Clinical Counselling

Six 'levels' of Family Law Counsellor have been identified. They provide a graduated approach which allows for recognition of many people within Fiji who have been offering counselling services (at a variety of expertise levels) often for many years. And yet it also identifies qualifications that would be recognised by most modern countries with an established counselling profession. The titles used here are to identify the minimum psychological skills that a person can offer. The titles are NOT official job titles but rather a title that identifies skill levels attained in counselling. The skills levels are presented below:

Title	Approximate skills description	Approximate Employment/ Location
<b>Life Skills Coach:</b>	someone who has had a minimum set of skills training to let them listen effectively & offer general or rudimentary advice on overall life skills strategies.	Religious organisations. non-governmental organisations concerned with Families. Life Skills Coaches would be probably primarily offering pre-marriage guidance counselling, and maybe some initial marriage guidance counselling.
<b>Skilled Helper</b>	someone who has had relatively intense formal training. Alternatively they may have had considerable vocational experience, which enables them to give grounded guidance and counsel. Some minimal top up training might be required to provide theoretical skills to supplement their experience.	As above. In addition commercial companies that might establish themselves to offer professional help and guidance. Skilled Helpers are probably most likely to give help in marriage guidance' or reconciliation counselling.
<b>Family Law Intermediator:</b>	someone with qualifications that allows them to offer effective impartial but relevant mediation between parties who are having difficulty negotiating an agreement. They have some minimum background legal training relevant to the Act.	The minimum skill level of Family Law Division 'counsellors'. Welfare officers in Social Welfare. Senior nursing and prison staff. Other Governmental Officers.
<b>Family Law Trainee Counsellor:</b>	someone who has the theoretical and practical training as a counsellor, and who is in a qualified supervision programme in their career track to become a qualified counsellor.	Family Law Division. Commercial Counselling Services.
<b>Family Law Counsellor:</b>	someone who would be acknowledged as having the core training and qualifications as an internationally recognised 'counsellor'.	Family Law Division Commercial Counselling Services.
<b>Family Law Senior Counsellor:</b>	someone who has had further training to be able to offer professional supervision and advice for counsellors.	Family Law Division Commercial Counselling Services.

Table 2: Identified counselling skill levels offered as part of the overall Family Law Act.

The minimum qualifications required for each of these levels is given roughly in the following table.

Level	Qualifications Required	Tertiary Degree required	Experience	Confidential Referees Report
<b>Life Skills Coach</b>	Completed a short course (minimum of 2 days) on Basic Communication Skills	no	None	None
<b>Skilled Helper</b>	Any Introduction to Counselling Theory & Skills course	Yes, single introductory course	Minimum six months	2 preferred
<b>Family Law Inter-mediator</b>	Basic Theory and Skills course & supervised Practicum course	Yes, certificate and above	Minimum one year	2 preferred
<b>Family Law Trainee Counsellor</b>	Recognised degree in counselling, or alternative dispute resolution	Yes	Supervised practicum course & current on-going supervision	2
<b>Family Law Counsellor</b>	Recognised degree in counselling, or alternative dispute resolution	Yes	enough to obtain a internationally recognised degree (approx. +750 hours)	2
<b>Family Law Senior Counsellor</b>	Recognised post-graduate degree in counselling, or alternative dispute resolution	Yes	5 years clinical practice.	2

Table 3: Expected qualifications and/or experience required for each of the skill levels.



## 5: Counselling Skill Level Explanations

### 5.1: Life Skills Coach

The course that would be offered would be something that essentially allowed the *Life Skills Coach* to:

1. Listen objectively.
2. Learning enough about themselves to withhold placing personal value judgements.
3. Communicate effectively whether they have understood the situation the client has told them.
4. Understanding the difference between empathy and sympathy. Showing some skills in the former rather than the latter.
5. Offer practical common sense advice without placing too much of the *Life Skills Coach's* own personal objectives/criteria on them.
6. Understanding the need for client confidentiality.
7. Understanding when a client needs to be referred to a counsellor with more extensive training.

#### 5.1.1: Check List:

Attendance of an accredited course for Life Skills Coach or above (also see section 9).



## 5.2: Skilled Helper

This is a level of counselling skills offered that would have introduced the counselling person to an intensive programme that introduces the theory and skills required for introductory counselling.

An individual an intensive programme that introduces the theory and skills required for introductory counselling. Typically, such a course would cover the following basic areas:

- An understanding of the Skilled Helper's own personal values and attitudes that may directly impact on the counselling process.
- Understanding what is going on in the interaction process during 'counselling' or 'interview' or general 'interaction' processes.
- To have exposure to and some practice with basic skills required in counselling. This would include (but not exclusively): engineering trust to communicate truthfully with clients; demonstrating genuine empathy; providing effective challenges to clients; coping with clients that are 'resistive' to help or change.
- To have a basic understanding of major personality theories (psychodynamic, behavioural & humanistic).
- To understand the philosophical basis of the counselling practice that they are engaged in and therefore to understand how that might impact, or be relevant to the Fiji/Pacific context in which is it practised.
- To have an understanding of basic ethical principles that are internationally recognised when engaged in providing professional counselling skills.

### 5.2.1: Check List:

Attendance of an accredited course for that of Skilled Helper (see section 10).	<input type="checkbox"/>
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### 5.3: Family Law Intermediator

This person has done the same as the *Skilled Helper*, but in addition has done a practicum course that has a minimum of 40 hours supervised counselling. This translates into the following: for every 7 hours counselling conducted, an hour is spend with an approved supervisor, reviewing and debriefing on the counselling conducted.

They have also explored further aspects of counselling skills and theory such as case management; domestic violence, suicide and addictions.

The *Family Law Intermediator*, should be considered the minimum level that a person must have to be considered as a counsellor who can operate within the Family Law Division in court proceedings.

#### 5.3.1: Check List:

Attendance of an accredited course for Skilled Helper (see section 11).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attendance of an accredited <i>practicum</i> course that includes 40 hours of supervised counselling practice (also see section 11).	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 5.4: Family Law Trainee Counsellor

The applicant must have a degree in Social Work, Psychology or Counselling (undergraduate or postgraduate). Two courses in that programme should deal specifically with counselling skills. One of the courses should be directly related to couples and family counselling.

In addition, if not already covered in the degree, the applicant should have a course in *Human Development*.

In addition, if not already part of the degree, the applicant must also have a course in *Professional Orientation*. This is a course (or component of another course) that deals with issues such as moral behaviour, ethical standards, professional practices and bodies set up to provide such standards; counselling and obligations to the legal practice (of the land); the interaction between the professional counselling practice and legal practices.

### 5.4.1: Check List:

Appropriate undergraduate degree (psychology, counselling, social work) that has two courses that deal with counselling directly (see section 12).	<input type="checkbox"/>
One of the counselling courses should be directly related to couples and family counselling.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course on <i>Human Development</i> if it is not included in the undergraduate degree above (see also section 12.1).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course on Professional orientation (see also section 12.6).	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 5.5: Family Law Counsellor

The same as a *Family Law Trainee Counsellor*, plus supervised practice.

The applicant should have done a minimum of 500 supervised hours of counselling. A minimum of 160 hours should be direct couple of family counselling. 500 hours of supervised counselling should be translated as follows. For every 20 hours of counselling, one hour of debriefing needs to be conducted with the approved supervisor. That means that in fact the applicant would have done a minimum of over 476 counselling sessions, and a further 24 hours are taken with the supervisor.

#### 5.5.1: Check List:

The same as the Family Law Trainee Counsellor		<input type="checkbox"/>
Appropriate undergraduate degree (psychology, counselling, social work) that has two courses that deal with counselling directly.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Course on <i>Human Development</i> if it is not included in the undergraduate degree above.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Course on professional orientation		<input type="checkbox"/>
500 hours of accredited supervised counselling with approved Family Law Senior Counsellor (see also section 13)		<input type="checkbox"/>

### 5.6: Family Law Senior Counsellor

The same as a *Family Law Counsellor*. In addition this person would have taken a recognised qualification that allows them to act as a clinical supervisor to counsellors.

#### 5.6.1: Check List:

The same as the Family Law Counsellor		<input type="checkbox"/>
Appropriate undergraduate degree (psychology, counselling, social work) that has two courses that deal with counselling directly.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Course on <i>Human Development</i> if it is not included in the undergraduate degree above.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Course on professional orientation		<input type="checkbox"/>
500 hours of supervised counselling with approved Family Law Senior Counsellor		<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognised postgraduate qualification that allows them to act as a clinical supervisor to counsellors.		<input type="checkbox"/>

## 6: Certification

The separate issue of certification needs to be considered by the Council to identify *specialisations* within the counselling services that focus on a particular arena or context. Two of particular interest within the Act would be a *Child counsellor* and a *Family counsellor*. The Act conflates the two into a single generic counsellor but the reality is that they are different specialisations. Depending on the context the Judge, Magistrate or Director of Counselling need to understand the differences and availability of these different sorts of counsellor.

No consideration should be given to certification if the bare minimum of being a *Family Law Counsellor* has not been met.

### 6.1: Child Counsellor

Although this is a specialisation and there a number of different routes to this specialisation, any assessment as to the suitability of being granted a license certificate, ought to include the following topic areas as a bare minimum.

#### Advanced Human Development Focussing on Children/Youth

Focussing particularly on the human development cycle up to young adulthood at the post-graduate level.

#### Cultural Studies

An advanced course in studies that helps a counsellor to help understand the different socio-economic and ethno-cultural backgrounds that children grow up and exist in. Relevant courses might occur in social psychology, sociology or anthropology courses with an emphasis on the helping relationship.

#### Personality Theory & Theories of Abnormality

A final year undergraduate or post-graduate course focussing on different personality theories including the aetiology and/or theories of so called *abnormal behaviour*.

#### Post-graduate Research Skills

A further course in research skills to know how to set up an evaluation programme and be able to analyse the data to confirm whether it is effective (or not).

#### Appraisal & Counselling Techniques for Children

Either as a separate course or part of a larger encompassing course, applicants should have a course (separate or part of a larger curriculum) that focusses on the ability to sensitively test a child in an appropriate and sensitive manner. Examples might include art diagnosis and therapy and play diagnosis and therapy.

### 6.2: Family Counsellor

The following areas should be considered a bare minimum as a pre-requisite to an individual applying for a Family Counsellor certification.

### **Family Structure**

An course that explores the theoretical understanding of the family as a unit. The development of a family along with it's cycles. The sociology of the family unit, cross ethno-cultural perspectives. System theory in exploration of families.

### **Family Dysfunction**

Understanding the phenomenology of dysfunctional families. Understanding of absolute, universal and relative values in the definition of dysfunction.

### **Counselling in a Group/Family Context**

Theoretical and practical application of family counselling techniques in relation to individuals within the family, as a couple, from the children's perspective.

Effective appraisal methodology to chart progress of therapy on whole family.

Recognition of healthy and dysfunctional families. Issues covered should include (amongst others) issues related to:

- gender (including sexual orientation)
- violence
- substance abuse
- sexual abuse

### **Post-graduate Research Skills**

A further course in research skills to know how to set up an evaluation programme and be able to analyse the data to confirm whether it is effective (or not).



# Organisations Applying for Recognition as a Licensing Body

## 7: Applying for Licensing Powers

Organisations under the Act, can apply for recognition to be a Family Law Division Licensing Body. That is these organisations would act as a *proxy* for the Council in having applications submitted and processed for individuals seeking a license as a Family Law Division counselling officer.

Just like individuals applying for a license at a specified level, organisations can apply for recognition to license up to a particular level. The Council when deciding whether to give due recognition to an organisation applying to act as a licensing body, the consideration should be two-fold:

1. Does the organisation have the professional competence to, not only recognise the qualifications of applicants, but also to validate the applicant's qualifications properly?
2. Do they have an organisational infrastructure that allows them to guarantee the Council access to the relevant original applicant submission and organisational processing within a 72 hour period?

The first qualification is obviously important as the organisation is acting as the Council's proxy. The second is equally important in order for the Council to cross check any individual that has been granted a license by that organisation, pretty much if the need arises.

Depending on the nature of the organisation, the body may follow the guidelines exactly as the Council has for individual applications, or they may follow a different set of guidelines that are pertinent to the organisation but have demonstrated equivalence or exceed the Council's requirements. An example of the former organisation might be a non-government organisation such as a religious body, or a women's advocacy group, that simply wants to be able to process applicants to a specified level. An example of the second group, would be a professional body that has counselling as an automatic core concern of it's professional remit, such as a professional psychology, counselling or social worker organisation. These groups are likely to have pre-existing professional qualifications that cover counselling in general rather than counselling specific to the Family Law Division. However, their identified skill levels should have an identified equivalence to those of the Council.

### 7.1: Organisation Must be a Legally Recognised Body

The organisation must be an existing legally recognised body in order to apply successfully.

### 7.2: Ability to Recognise Appropriate Counselling Skill Levels.

The organisation must have a structure that identifies the appropriate skill level that the Council as, as the bare minimum. The organisation making the application may in fact insist on additional pre-requisites for it's own purposes but they must not be less than that of the Council.

In addition, they may have a different nomenclature for the different skill levels that they offer, but as long as they are identified appropriately as to their equivalents in the Council's structure, this should not pose an impediment.

### 7.3: Procedures

The organisation must explain fully the procedure that they would follow if a person was to apply for a license through the organisation. This includes the forms that they would fill out, the signed declarations that they would make, additional documents that they would be required to submit.

### 7.4: Verification of Applicant's Documentation

The organisation must outline what steps it takes to acquire reliably verified documents and what steps it takes to cross check with the institution that awarded the qualification. The organisation also needs to ensure that the decision in processing an application is recorded faithfully to ensure future reliability that the cross check was (or was not) successfully carried out. Copies of the original documents should be verified by a *Justice of the Peace* or equivalent.

### 7.5: Applicant Submission and Associated Document Storage

#### 7.5.1: Storage

The organisation must outline what physical storage facilities it has for applications that is safe and secure against fire and theft. The documents might be stored on location of the offices of the professional body, but it must be in a fire secure safe. Alternatively, the documents might be held in a secure deposit such as that of commercial banks that has security of the same or above. This is of particular importance when the organisation is applying to license individuals at the level of *Skilled Helper* and above.

#### 7.5.2: Access to Applications Made Through Organisation

The organisation must be able to forward verified copies of all relevant documents on request by the Council within a 72 hour period.

#### 7.5.3: Access to Original Documentation in Application

The Council must have reasonable access to physically see the organisation's received original documentation – also within a 72 hour period, instead of just a copy regardless of it's verified status.

### 7.6: Annual Procedural & Financial Audit

The Act requires that the organisation submit an annual financial audit. However, it is suggested that the organisation should also provide annual documentation of all of the above procedures.

#### 7.6.1: Physical Inspection

The Council may and should, conduct a physical inspection/audit to verify that the infrastructure and procedures documented are in fact a true reflection of what actually happens. This might be less frequent but as a guideline once for the initial application and perhaps no later than every 5 years after that.

## 8: Organisations Application Check List

The following attributes should be ascertained for any organisation applying for recognition as a licensing body for the Family Law Division.

Organisation is a legally recognised body	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognised equivalent or beyond of appropriate counselling skill level applied for.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Life Skills Coach <input type="checkbox"/>
	Skilled Helper <input type="checkbox"/>
	Family Law Intermediator <input type="checkbox"/>
	Family Law Trainee Counsellor <input type="checkbox"/>
	Family Law Counsellor <input type="checkbox"/>
	Family Law Senior Counsellor <input type="checkbox"/>
Application procedure adequately outlined.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proper procedures in place to verify accompanying documents in applicant's submission.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secure/safe storage of applicants documents and organisations processing of the application (particularly against fire and theft)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annual audit of procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical inspection of proeedures (at least once every five years)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date of last physical inspection: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 8.1: The Special Case for Applying for Life Skills Coach Licensing Body Recognition

Bearing in mind that the Act extends quite far into the community, the practical considerations suggest that the applications to become a licensing body are likely to be largest for *Life Skills Coach* level of counselling. For the same reason of the rationale behind the Life Skills Coach individual application, the Council should be trying to encourage this too. That does not mean that an organisation should not be critically evaluated. However, a realistic expectation of the level of counselling that such bodies would be awarding licenses to, must be considered.

The one issue that **must** be stressed very strongly though, is the obligation of the licensing body to enforce the procedure of their licensed counsellors to explain precisely what is that they are capable of delivering professionally – and what they cannot deliver.

Applications by organisations need to be considered as something that helps to enable the community to partake in the Family Law Division. As long as their licensed *Life Skills Coaches* clearly announce that they can do little more than listen effectively and then refer onwards (if necessary), then to some extent there is relatively little harm that properly trained *Life Skills Coaches* can do in the community. One might be so bold as to say, that although the Council needs to maintain a correct degree of balance in evaluating an application, if there is to be a leaning one way or the other, then the bias should be towards giving the benefit of the doubt towards the organisation making the application.

This is in contrast to the organisations trying to apply for licensing body recognition for *Skilled Helper* and above where the balance should fall towards the conservative side. In other words, if there is any doubt do not award a license to an organisation that does not seem or 'feel' that they are capable of delivering to a minimum standard.

# Educational Organisations Seeking Accreditation

Organisations that seek accreditation for their taught courses, need to cover a minimum set of theoretical and practical skills. This section outlines the minimum course contents for appropriate counselling skills.

When considering applications for accreditation the Council might seriously consider seconding an educational expert onto the Council, if there is no such person already on it, in order to give expert opinions relating to the educational institution's submission.

There should also be an audit of the courses for institutions but these would be on a 5 year basis, or sooner if there is a significant change to the course or programme structure.

Section 15, talks more generally about the set up and infra-structure of a tertiary institution that teaches counselling skills from the *Family Law Trainee Counsellor* and upwards.

## 9: Life Skills Coach

Educational organisations that apply for accreditation to teach Life Skills Coach would normally be expected to conduct a two day workshop. The workshop is light on theory and heavy on demonstrated skills that include:

1. The ability to 'listen' and demonstrate to a potential client that they have indeed listened accurately.
2. The ability to show some rudimentary skills in empathy.
3. The ability to suspend personal value judgements when working with a client
4. Understanding the need for client confidentiality
5. Being able to explain to a potential client what a Life Skill Coach can and cannot do under the auspices of the Family Law Division.
6. An understanding of the different sections of Family Law Division so as to advise when a referral is appropriate.

## 10: Skilled Helper

Organisations giving training up to the *Skilled Helper* level, would be taught by at least one member of staff whose qualifications would be recognised by the Council as a *Family Law Counsellor* or a *Family Law Senior Counsellor*. Given the content of the course, it is unlikely that it could be covered in anything less than a three week intensive course (in other words this is all that prospective students study full time for three weeks – such as that of an intensive summer school programme).

This course needs formal assessment, however the assessment cannot be a straight forward 'rote learnt' theoretical demonstration of facts and figures learnt. Part of the course is practical, so these elements need to be demonstrated in a practical manner. The theoretical component that needs to be assessed should be one that shows the ability of the student to contextualize the information into the real world Pacific/Fiji setting. The course would generally consist of the following components.

1. An understanding of the Skilled Helper's own personal values and attitudes that may directly impact on the counselling process.
2. Understanding what is going on in the interaction process during 'counselling' or 'interview' or general 'interaction' processes.
3. To have exposure to and some practice with basic skills required in counselling. This would include (but not exclusively):
  - a. engineering trust to communicate truthfully with clients;
  - b. demonstrating genuine empathy; providing effective challenges to clients;
  - c. coping with clients that are 'resistive' to help or change.
4. To have a basic understanding of major personality theories (psychodynamic, behavioural & humanistic).
5. To understand the philosophical basis of the counselling practice that they are engaged in and therefore to understand how that might impact, or be relevant to the Fiji/Pacific context in which is it practised.
6. To have an understanding of basic ethical principles that are internationally recognised when engaged in providing professional counselling skills.

## 11: Family Law Intermediator

Organisations that teach up to the level of Family Law Intermediator, can do the same as the *Skilled Helper*, but also liaise with the community and provide supervised placements in the community where students can do a supervised *practicum*. The number of supervised hours should be not less than 40 hours. What that means in practice is that for every 8 hours that a student is actually counselling, they spend 1 hour debriefing with an appropriate counsellor. In other words their total time would be 48 hours.

## 12: Family Law Trainee Counsellor

An undergraduate degree that covers the areas outlined below. Appropriate undergraduate degree would most likely be in *Counselling Psychology*, or *Social Work*, however, modern degrees come in many names and core structures. The expectation is that regardless of what the name of the degree is called, they would cover aspects of the following areas which might be individual courses, or they might be substantial aspects of a broader course.

### 12.1: Human Development

A course or programme that gives the counsellor and understanding of human development from a psychological, biological & sociological perspective. The range of ages should most certainly include middle to late adulthood.

## 12.2: Societal & Cultural Foundations

An understanding of the influences that shape individual's lives and shape their behaviour from our societies and different cultures (including ethnic, gender, age etc.).

## 12.3: The Helping Relationship

The 'active' part of being a counsellor. Theory and skills, along with sufficient exploration of the counsellor's own self awareness and understanding. This course (or courses) would be effectively the same as the qualifications as that of the *Family Law Intermediator*.

## 12.4: Groups

Group dynamics, group theory. The ability to work with groups.

## 12.5: Individual Appraisals

Projective tests, normative tests. An understanding of the basic statistical issues (i.e. frequency, distribution diagrams, standard deviations, confidence intervals).

## 12.6: Professional Orientation

Moral behaviour, ethical standards, legal perspectives. Professional practices.

## 12.7: Personality Theory & Abnormal Behaviour

A primer on basic personality theory and a theoretical understanding of 'Abnormality'. Skills to identify when serious cases need to be referred to a specialist.

# 13: Family Law Counsellor

The differentiator between a Family Law Trainee Counsellor and the Family Law Counsellor, is the ability for the educational institution to provide at least 500 hours of supervised counselling sessions to the student.

500 hours of supervised counselling should be translated as follows. For every 20 hours of counselling, one hour of debriefing needs to be conducted with the approved supervisor. That means that in fact the applicant would have done a minimum of over 476 counselling sessions, and a further 24 hours are taken with the supervisor.

# 14: Family Law Senior Counsellor

This is a position that is not really appropriate for accreditation. The ability to be classified as a Family Law Senior Counsellor is based on successful and effective experience as a counsellor. A minimum of two years full time professional counselling experience that has occurred not less than 2 years previously. In other words the last time an applicant was counselling in a professional capacity, must not be more than 24 months prior to the application.

## 15: Institutional Infrastructure

For *Family Law Trainee Counsellor* and above there should be an expectation that the educational organisation would have certain infra-structural components in place as an institution, without which it would be impossible to adequately teach the relevant topics to a minimum standard.

### 15.1: Continuity of Programme is Ensured

There needs to be proof that there are adequate resources, financial, personnel and logistical, to ensure that the programme will continue beyond at least one full cohort of students moving through the system. In other words an institution must not be so sensitive as to have the counselling programmes fail because of a change in personnel, all but exceptional circumstances affecting financial planning, or a change in relationships with institutions that might be providing extra-institutional opportunities for properly supervised practical or internship exercises.

### 15.2: Access to Adequate Library Resources

The organisation should demonstrate that it has enough access to adequate library resources to properly service the required courses (or components of the courses). Access might be physical books, journals and papers or it might be electronic (such as over the Internet, or via suitable electronic multi-media components).

### 15.3: Access to Suitable Teaching Technologies

There should be reasonable access to technologies that assist in the learning and teaching process.

Examples would include:

1. access to computers with software to collate and analyse data, to devise and utilise databases; understanding of and application of encryption technologies (to protect client confidentiality).
2. access to recording equipment to record students in counselling situations and the ability to evaluate their own performance: for instance audio as a minimum, but preferably video recording and playback facilities.

### 15.4: Appropriate Teaching Environments

The institution needs to have access to a teaching environment that allows students to trial, experience and receive feedback on the actual counselling process. In other words there needs to be an environment that models a real counselling context, both of individual counselling and group counselling. The rooms must be large enough accommodate any equipment that is used in the teaching/learning process (typically cameras and/or sound recording devices) without dominating or being too intrusive in the environment.

### 15.5: Staff Composition

At least one full time staff member devoted to the counselling programme, who has the qualification of the equivalent of a *Family Law Senior Counsellor*.



Adequate administrative support to helping manage the running of the programme, placement of student in suitable internships, liaising with external supervisors (where appropriate). The expectation is that the administrative support would be the equivalent of a full time support person, although the duties may be split across a number of personnel (such as three people taking on a third of the duties each - one of which would be the overall administrative co-ordinator).

### 15.6: Staff-Student Ratio

The Council should strive to encourage the organisation to have a ratio of 1:15 (one full time staff member to fifteen full time students enrolled in the course) or less. However, in unusual circumstances the ratio may go up to an absolute maximum ratio of 1:20, (one full time staff member for twenty full time students) but this should not be encouraged or sustained for a long period of time (more than a semester).

## 16: Training the Trainers

There exists one category of accreditation that is a bit unusual, namely programmes that 'train the trainers'. That is a course that is able to be conducted to train people to become a training body themselves. In practice this is most likely to express itself in something like a tertiary institution, giving courses on how to train trainers for a course leading to future students becoming *Life Skill Coaches*. Anything after that would require specialised skills which at the time of writing this document, does not effectively exist in Fiji.

To be quite clear on this, as of October 2005, there exist tertiary institutions in Fiji that can teach some counselling skills. However, none of them can run programmes that teach someone how to teach those counselling skills.

When such a possibility exists, the Council may need to commission further expertise in order to draw up guidelines for such a license. This should probably happen regardless when this manual is next reviewed.