



# MA SPECIAL AND ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

**School of Childhood and Social Care,  
University of East London**

In collaboration with

**The Institute of Child Education  
and Psychology (ICEP) Europe**



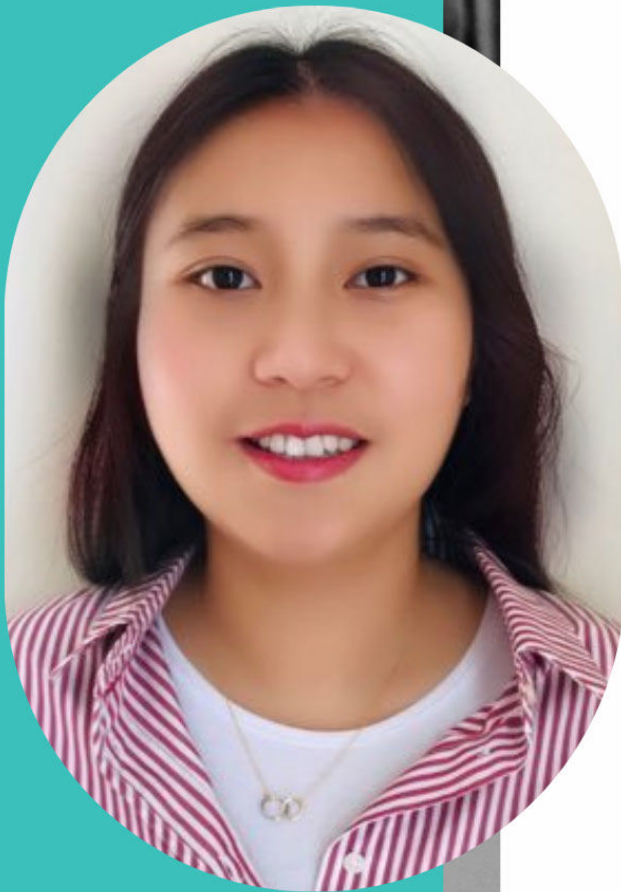
# Programme Overview

This online MA in Special and Additional Learning Needs has been developed jointly by The School of Childhood and Social Care, University of East London (UEL), and the Institute of Child Education and Psychology (ICEP) Europe. It is designed to deepen your knowledge and hone your expertise in inclusive and special education.

Underpinned by the latest research and offered in a flexible online format, the programme is taught by experienced practitioners and international experts in the field.

It will equip you with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to support and enhance the quality of education for diverse and potentially marginalised learners, including those with special and additional learning needs, in a variety of settings worldwide.





International in its reach, this programme draws students from Ireland, the UK, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, from countries as diverse as South Africa, China and India, and regions such as Hong Kong. A distinctive feature is its collaborative, co-constructive learning model, where participants contribute their insights and experiences to foster a rich exchange of ideas and shared learning.

As part of this vibrant learning community, you'll gain the skills to lead initiatives that promote inclusion and quality education for children and young people with diverse learning profiles and backgrounds.

**Dr. Ke Ren (Rita)**

**Joint Programme Lead**

# Why Study with Us

Both UEL and ICEP Europe have a long track record in providing quality programmes in the field of special educational needs in the UK, Ireland, and internationally. The collaboration between the two institutions comes from a shared interest in offering a first-class provision in higher education that is accessible to international educators.

Both UEL and ICEP Europe identified the need to support educators and those working with the increasing diversity of children with additional learning needs in education settings on an international level.

The international programme content is underpinned by the latest research in the field of special education; UEL and ICEP Europe are at the forefront of research into best practice in education. Both UEL and ICEP Europe are equally committed to promoting inclusion for people with diverse needs and learning differences through the provision of the highest quality continuing professional development.



UEL is proud to be the **University of the Year for Teaching Quality** in the Times and Sunday University Guide 2025.

# This Programme is Perfect For



Teachers, psychologists, and other allied professionals working in diverse educational settings and beyond, who wish to deepen and extend their existing knowledge of inclusive education and apply evidence-based approaches to respond effectively to the diverse needs of learners, influence practice, and promote inclusion in their professional context.



Educators and other professionals in Ireland, the UK and internationally, who are interested in special and additional learning needs.



Those who have achieved a Special Education Needs Co-ordination National Professional Qualification (SENCo NPQ).

Participants can avail of the specialist expertise of tutors who have worked professionally at a high level in the field of SEN and are experienced working with participants from a range of cultures and professional backgrounds.

“

I work in special education and found that the course immensely enhanced my practice. Studying with peers from around the world was incredibly valuable, allowing me to learn best practices from diverse global perspectives.

”

– Kat McAteer, Canada  
Learning Specialist, Fraser Academy

## Connect . Learn . Collaborate

This fully online, modular programme enables you to connect, learn, and collaborate from anywhere in the world, allowing flexibility to balance your studies with personal and professional commitments.

# Programme Structure

This specialist SEN qualification is delivered in a distance learning format and is fully online. If modules are completed in succession for the Masters, students can complete the course in two years.

You will be able to tailor your learning experience with modules that align with your professional interests in inclusive and special education. This flexibility allows you to build a strong foundation in theory and practice, developing the skills needed to create meaningful change in your setting and meet the needs of diverse learners.

“

**Completing the course empowered me to create real grassroots impact. I got the courage and confidence to branch out on my own and I have founded a social impact organisation called Vision Board Projects.**

”

- Tripti Someshwar, India

Educational Consultant & Founder, Vision Board Projects



# Course Modules

Module Title	CATS Points	Status
<b>Inclusive Education:</b> Collaboration and best practice	30	Core
<b>Autism Spectrum Disorders:</b> Contemporary perspectives and best practice	30	Optional
<b>Dyslexia and Literacy:</b> Issues, perspectives and best practice	30	Optional
<b>Leading Inclusive Practice in SEN</b>	30	Optional
<b>Applied Behavioural Analysis;</b> Critical exploration and practice	30	Optional
<b>Understanding Behaviour:</b> Theories, perspectives and best practice	30	Optional
<b>Research Methods and Dissertation</b>	60	(MA Only)

Note:

- 30 CATS points are the equivalent of 15 ECTS credits.
- Modules will be available during each term subject to minimum participant numbers.

“

I was a little apprehensive about studying online, but all aspects of the course are so accessible. All module tutors were supportive and any IT problems were resolved immediately.

The choice of modules was varied and engaging. I have gained a much deeper understanding and knowledge of special and additional learning needs, which will help me when working in a special school.

One of the best decisions ever! I absolutely loved studying for an MA from overseas.

”

- Karen Dunn, UK

# Brief Module Descriptors

## **Inclusive Education: Collaboration and Best Practice**

This module introduces key ideas, policies, and practices in inclusive education. It explores how to support students with additional needs through early identification, assessment, and collaborative planning. There is a strong focus on whole-school approaches and adapting teaching to meet diverse learning needs.

## **Autism Spectrum Disorders: Contemporary Perspectives and Best Practice**

This module explores autism through a neurodiversity lens, combining research, classroom strategies, and the voices of autistic individuals. It covers early identification, assessment, and inclusive approaches to support autistic learners in both mainstream and specialist settings.

## **Dyslexia and Literacy: Issues, Perspectives and Best Practice**

Develop a strong theoretical and practical foundation for supporting students with dyslexia and literacy difficulties. This module explores key definitions, research, and inclusive strategies at both individual and whole-school levels, helping educators and professionals reflect on and enhance their practice.

## **Understanding Behaviour: Theories, Perspectives and Best Practice**

This module helps participants understand student behaviour and how to respond effectively. It explores positive behaviour support, communication skills, social and emotional learning, and whole-school approaches that promote a safe and supportive learning environment.

## **Leading Inclusive Practice in SEN**

Prepare to lead inclusive education by engaging with global policy, ethical leadership, and systemic change. This module focuses on stakeholder collaboration, inter-agency partnerships, and reflective leadership to drive sustainable and inclusive reform.

## **Applied Behaviour Analysis: Critical Exploration and Practice**

Critically examine the role of ABA in inclusive education, considering both its benefits and challenges. With a focus on ethical practice and neurodiversity, this module explores how behavioural strategies can support learners while aligning with neuro-affirmative approaches.

## **Research Methods and Dissertation**

In this module, you will carry out a small research project related to your own practice. You will choose a topic, review the literature, design your study, and write up your findings - with guidance from tutors and peers throughout the process.

“

**The course was really easy to undertake while teaching full-time. The staff were always helpful and on hand to assist which was really reassuring as a student. This course has really benefited my practice in the classroom.**

**My confidence has increased in my ability to teach children with SEN. I would recommend it as an invaluable course for anyone who works with learners with special educational needs.**

”

- Michael Conway, Ireland  
Mainstream Classroom Teacher

# Assessment

Due to the practical nature of the programme the assessment is through written assignments, and there is a single assignment of 5,000 words to be completed for each module.

For the award of MA a dissertation of 14,000 words is undertaken on completion of all the taught modules.

The dissertation provides an opportunity to undertake a research project relevant to educational development in the context of the participant's role and/or practice.

# Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

If you have existing Master's-level credits (Level 7, UK) in a relevant area—such as the SENCo NPQ award—you may be eligible to transfer credits into this programme. This could allow you to complete your master's degree in less than two years.

# Exit Award and Requirements

This programme offers exit awards, allowing students to complete and exit with a qualification at different stages based on the number of credits achieved at Level 7 (UK)



## Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)

Exit award: 60 credits



## Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)

Exit award: 120 credits



## Master's (MA)

Final award: 180 credits, including a 60-credit advanced independent research module

Note:

- Students enrolled in the MA programme may choose to exit early with a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma upon meeting the respective credit requirements.
- Inclusive Education: Collaboration and best practice is a core module and must be completed for both the Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma exit awards.

# Tuition and Support



There are 3 teaching terms per year, **January, May,** and **September.**



A single module is taught over a period of 10 weeks, with a further 3-4 weeks to complete the assignment.



Students also participate in a series of interactive tasks in which you and your fellow students discuss the issues raised considering your own teaching context and educational background.

**“ I have observed significant positive changes within the classroom and throughout the school regarding the knowledge, attitudes, and approaches of the teaching staff when working with students who are differently abled. The insights I have gained have not only deepened my understanding but also boosted my confidence in effectively supporting and engaging with these students. ”**

**– Benita Heyburgh, South Africa  
Native English Teacher in Hong Kong**

Students will be well supported in terms of accessing and using the online learning environment, using the learning materials, writing assignments and administration by both UEL and ICEP Europe.

As a student, you can use the UEL online library facility, allowing access to a wide range of e-books and electronic journals. Academic, technical and pastoral support is available to all learners through the online learning platform, via email and telephone contact.







## Future Careers

Graduates may use the knowledge and skills developed during the programme to expand their career opportunities – to become more specialised lead teachers in their schools, to take on educational leadership or management roles or to work in the field of education policy and practice. Others may continue their studies to doctorate level.

We have also had alumni go on to work in consultancy, inclusion work, education journalism, management, youth/social work and employment with non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

This course will help you develop a range of transferable skills that are desirable in a wide variety of careers. These skills include the knowledge of theories, legislation, policy and practice, computer literacy, planning and time management and written communication. You will also demonstrate your ability to think critically and to design and carry out small-scale research. The skills and knowledge that you will develop on this course will allow those working in teaching to gain expertise in the increasingly sought-after area of special needs.

# Entry Requirements

-  The programme is open to all suitably qualified teachers, SENCos, psychologists, and others who are interested in special and additional learning needs.
-  Applicants should have an undergraduate honours degree with a minimum 2:2 classification or equivalent.
-  International qualifications will be checked for appropriate matriculation to UK Higher Education postgraduate programmes.
-  In the case of applicants whose first language is not English, then IELTS Academic 7.0 (or equivalent) is required.



## How do I Apply for the Programme?

You can complete the online application form [here](#) for either the September or January intake.

# Funding Options

Many students receive sponsorship or partial funding from their schools or employers to complete this course. School management, Headteachers and Special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) often encourage staff to pursue this valuable professional development. Therefore, it may be helpful to discuss sponsorship options with your employer.

You may be entitled to tax relief on the tuition fee depending on your jurisdiction. We advise you to check with your revenue/tax authorities. For example, you may qualify for tax relief for tuition fees if you are a resident or citizen of Malta or Ireland. Qualified teachers registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland may be eligible for the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme.

This course is not eligible for the UK Student Finance postgraduate loan scheme, as it is a collaborative programme between the UK and an Irish institution.

# Fees

Fees are paid on a module-by-module basis. The fees for the 2026/27 academic year are £1,460 per module and £2,920 for the Research Methodologies and Dissertation module, which runs over two semesters.

There are no international fees, the same fees apply to both UK, EU and international students. Tuition fees are subject to annual change. Fees for future years will be published in due course.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

ICEP Europe will be processing applications for this programme, and for more information on admissions and fees you can find our contact details below.

For application and admission queries, please contact:

**Antoinette Hurley**

Senior Administrative Officer  
Email: a.hurley@icepe.eu

**Chloe O'Rourke**

Administrative & Student Support Officer  
Email: c.orourke@icepe.eu

For career and academic queries, please contact

**Dr Ke Ren (Rita)**

Joint Course Lead  
Email: r.keren@icepe.eu

**Dr Deirdre MacIntyre**

Academic Advisor  
Dean of Research and Academic Affairs  
Email: d.macintyre@icepe.eu

**BEGIN APPLICATION**