



HIBERNIA
COLLEGE



MA/PG Dip (Arts) in

Inclusive and Special Education

A Joint Programme from Hibernia College and the
Institute of Child Education and Psychology (ICEP) Europe

Programme overview

The MA/PG Dip (Arts) in Inclusive and Special Education was developed jointly by Hibernia College and the Institute of Child Education and Psychology (ICEP) Europe. The programme is designed to give participants a thorough professional knowledge and understanding of special educational needs (SENs) and learning difficulties.

It is underpinned with the latest national and international research in relation to inclusive education. The modular structure and mainly online model of delivery make this programme particularly suitable for educators and other professionals seeking a more flexible postgraduate option due to personal circumstances, work or other commitments.



Dr Deirdre MacIntyre

Programme Director
Dean of Research and Academic Affairs
ICEP Europe

This programme is built on a commitment to inclusion, research and professional growth. You'll learn how to engage with critical issues in inclusive and special education, applying your learning to real-world contexts and contemporary challenges.

You'll gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to transform the lives of your students and ensure that diverse learners can thrive. Your contributions will positively impact and advance inclusive practice and the quality of education — to the benefit of all.

Why study with us

Hibernia College and ICEP Europe are nationally and internationally recognised and have extensive experience in providing flexible, accessible and innovative online programmes.

This programme brings together the **combined and overlapping experience** of ICEP Europe and Hibernia College to provide a very **contemporary and distinct** offering in this area of knowledge and expertise from pioneers in online learning.

Programme structure

This blended programme will be delivered mainly online, providing you with a flexible route to specialist training. It will be offered on a modular, part-time basis, offering maximum flexibility.

The postgraduate diploma comprises four taught modules and can be completed in one year. The master's comprises four taught modules and a research methods and thesis component — it can be completed in two years if modules are completed in succession.

This programme is perfect for:

- Early years, primary, post-primary, special education and further education teachers working with students with special and additional learning needs in diverse settings
- Principals, special needs assistants (SNAs) and other professionals involved in the education and support of learners with additional needs
- Social care workers working in a wide range of settings, including residential support services, educational and daycare programmes, and community and family support work
- Other allied professionals, working in diverse settings who wish to deepen and extend their existing knowledge of inclusive education

This part-time, online programme will empower you with the knowledge, skills, values and competencies to provide an inclusive and quality education for all.

Note that this programme is not a route to a Teaching Council number. If you wish to complete an initial teacher qualification, please refer to our Professional Master of Education programmes.





Future careers

This programme will enable you to acquire a deep understanding of core issues within the field of inclusive and special education. It will also enable you to develop your skill sets and acquire knowledge and expertise in conducting educational research relevant to inclusion and learners with diverse special or additional needs.

It will be of particular interest to special education teachers and those who may wish to take on coordinating or leadership roles in a range of educational settings or to work in the field of education policy and practice. Others may continue their studies to doctorate level.

This programme also offers various potential pathways in the education sector — from working as a special educational needs organiser (SENO) to providing training and support at various levels, including further education settings. It provides advanced knowledge and skills for those working with children, young people and adults with a wide range of learning differences, disabilities and complex needs. It paves the way for roles in management, specialist services for intellectual disability, autism, advocacy and educational services.

Graduates have also progressed to various careers outside the classroom, such as:

- Disability advocate
- Family liaison and support working with parents/guardians
- Inclusion officers in various organisations offering training in inclusion
- Working with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the disability/autism sector
- Educational consultancy
- Educational journalism
- Youth and social work



Karen Fahy

Graduate, MA in Inclusive
and Special Education



Professionally, I wanted to upskill and open up new opportunities in my teaching career. In fact, I was offered the post of Autism Coordinator in my school directly because of this course. It put me way ahead of others applying, and the knowledge I gained has been invaluable.





Dr Mary Kelly
President, Hibernia College

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The Master of Arts in Inclusive and Special Education is designed for educators seeking opportunities to move to the next level. With the flexibility of online learning, it is a highly supportive option for those who want to upskill while balancing personal and professional commitments. The advanced blend of theory and practice helps enhance your skills, opening doors to leadership roles in inclusive and special education.

Tuition and support

There are two intakes per year — January and September.

Modules are delivered online over a 12-week period, with live classes delivered every second week. You will have the opportunity to interact with peers in online class discussions.

Both institutions are committed to providing positive and supportive learning environments for all students. Tutors provide individual academic and pastoral support and guidance to all students.

Our Technical Support team is available to assist with any technical queries and can be contacted by phone or email. Your peers will also be a valuable source of support through discussion forums and online tutorials.

Modules

The programme is set up to be flexible, agile and individualised, allowing you to tailor modules to your professional specialisation, research areas and personal interests.

- **Inclusive Education and Special Education Needs** is a core module (15 ECTS) and must be completed in the first teaching term.
- You can then choose three of these elective modules:
 - **General Learning Disabilities: Understanding and Best Practice** (15 ECTS)
 - **Dyslexia and Literacy** (15 ECTS)
 - **Understanding Autism: Effective Management and Teaching Strategies** (15 ECTS)
 - **Understanding Behaviour as Communication** (15 ECTS)

Those progressing to master's level will also complete a **Research Methods** module and a 12,000-word thesis (30 ECTS).



Sharon Grady

Graduate, primary school teacher
and PhD candidate at University
College Cork (UCC)

Studying the dyslexia module was an enriching experience, one that significantly contributed to my professional growth in the primary school sector. The module struck an ideal balance between **theoretical concepts** and **practical applications**, providing a comprehensive understanding of dyslexia and its implications in educational settings.

Assessment

Each module is assessed through a single 5,000-word portfolio/assignment. There are no examinations in this programme. The thesis component of the master's programme is 12,000 words.

Awards

- Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Inclusive and Special Education — four modules (60 ECTS)
- Master of Arts in Inclusive and Special Education — four modules + Research Methods module and thesis (90 ECTS)

Entry requirements

Applicants must hold a minimum of a Pass, or equivalent, in an honours bachelor's degree at National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Level 8 in a relevant area.

An applicant whose first language/primary mode of expression is not English will need to provide evidence of English competence.

Application process

The application process is carried out entirely online. You will be required to complete a personal statement and upload your official undergraduate transcripts to your application. Note that you must upload all documents in PDF format (under 4 MB).

You can register interest for our next intake on our [website](#).

Recognition of prior learning

We operate a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy for entry into the programme. Applicants with previous learning in a relevant area may be able to have it formally recognised as part of this programme. Those wishing to be considered under this policy should email rpl@hiberniacollege.net.

Fees and funding

Application fee

€65 (paid as part of the online application process)

Tuition fees

PG Dip (Arts) in Inclusive and Special Education: €5,400

- 4 × taught modules (€1,350 per module)

MA in Inclusive and Special Education: €9,400

- 4 × taught modules (€1,350 per module)
- Research Methods and thesis module (€4,000)

Fees must be paid in full before modules begin each term.

QQI

QQI certification fee: €200

Funding supports

Tax relief may be available. Teachers may be eligible for the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme.

Education loans are available through

[INTO Credit Union](#) and [TUI Credit Union](#).

Brief module descriptions

Core module

Inclusive Education and Special Education Needs

This core module provides a critical and reflective introduction to the principles, philosophy and practice of inclusive education, focusing on supporting learners with diverse learning profiles. It offers a framework for understanding the evolving concept of inclusion, exploring historical and policy contexts as well as current issues and challenges. Practical strategies and pupil voice guide reflection on how to create learning environments where all learners feel valued and supported.

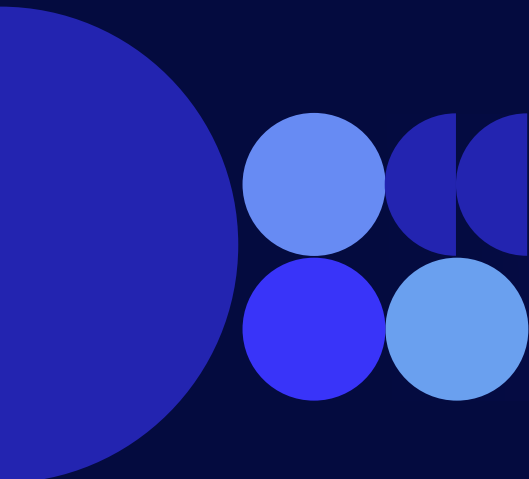


Vera Shanahan

Graduate and Primary Education Officer,
Educate Together

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The **flexibility** afforded is a huge benefit of the programme. Content is presented in both synchronous and asynchronous formats, which is appealing as you can engage with it mostly at your **own pace** and it does mean that your life doesn't have to be put on pause.



Elective modules

General Learning Disabilities: Understanding and Best Practice

In this module, you will take a developmental and strength-based approach to understanding general learning disabilities (GLDs), recognising learners' diverse needs and profiles across a range of ability levels. You will explore the historical context of exclusion and labelling, recent policy developments and the implications of GLDs for teaching and learning. It emphasises evidence-based strategies tailored to different levels of need, alongside collaborative planning, inclusive classroom practices and the role of leadership in supporting whole-school inclusion.

Dyslexia and Literacy

In this module, you will build knowledge and skills to support learners with dyslexia. You will explore key theories, neurological foundations and current research, with a focus on early identification and intervention. You will also examine whole-school and collaborative approaches, along with evidence-based strategies to support literacy development, subject-specific learning and inclusive educational practice.





Understanding Autism: Effective Management and Teaching Strategies

In this module, you will explore autism through a contemporary, developmental and neuroaffirmative lens. You will engage critically with current research, policy and lived experience while examining the history and evolving understanding of autism, including early identification, diagnosis and a range of evidence-informed teaching and support strategies. This module highlights the importance of recognising the strengths and support needs of individuals with autism. It promotes inclusive, respectful practices that value neurodiversity and the voices of people with lived experience.

Understanding Behaviour as Communication

This module will deepen your understanding of behaviour as a form of communication and explore how social-emotional difficulties can impact learning and behaviour. You will engage with psychological theories and examine risk, resilience and the origins of these difficulties while critically evaluating school policies and practices. Throughout the module, you will reflect on your values and approaches to promoting positive behaviour, resilience and social-emotional literacy in inclusive learning environments.

Master's programme

The aim of the Research Methods module and thesis is to introduce you to the theoretical, philosophical, sociological and practical aspects of research in the area of SENs and inclusive education. You will undertake a small-scale research project relevant to inclusion and SENs, usually in the context of your role and/or practice, with online supervision. You will consider ethical issues related to research within the field of inclusion and develop an in-depth understanding of the link between research and practice.



Research is a powerful tool for driving meaningful change in education and beyond. Engaging with research strengthens your ability to reflect on practice, ask critical questions and apply evidence-based insights to complex challenges. It empowers you to create more inclusive and informed solutions — whether in the classroom, supporting families or leading initiatives in your professional field.



Dr Ke Ren (Rita)

Research and Thesis Module Lead,
MA in Inclusive and Special Education
Academic Programme Lead in Special
Education ICEP Europe





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hiberniacollege.com/events (Webinars)

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