

[FAQs: Online Professional Certificate/Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education](#)

When does the programme commence?

This programme commences in September 2021.

How to apply?

You can apply for this course now using DCU's online application system PAC www.pac.ie

Before you can apply for our course you will first need to register on the PAC website. Once you have done this you can search for our course under 'DCU' and then 'Taught Programme Listings'. Our course code is DC841.

What qualifications do I need to apply for the course?

- (a) Applicants may be qualified teachers in the Irish Education System and/or
- (b) Graduates (with experience or a demonstrable interest in working in an educational, training or educational-related professional context).
- (c) Those holding equivalent qualifications with significant experience of working in an educational, training or educational-related professional context.

Do I have to be in full time employment to qualify for a place?

No, you do not have to be currently employed as a teacher to qualify for a place. But you should hold qualifications with regard to (a), (b) or (c) as outlined above.

How long does it take?

The programme is delivered online and the duration is flexible to suit the needs of individual participants. The Certificate consists of four taught modules and must be completed within 3 years. The Diploma involves the completion of a Dissertation (8000 words) in response to a formulated research question related to practice in special/inclusive education. The Diploma must be completed within four years from first registration.

Is the course delivered entirely online or will I have to travel to DCU campus?

There is one induction day for both the Certificate and Diploma which takes place on the DCU campus in mid September. This is a very useful day for all those enrolling on the first module and allows the opportunity to meet fellow students and be introduced to the e-learning environment. Once you have applied, you will receive an email from DCU with information on the dates of the induction days. Induction days are mandatory to attend unless exceptional circumstances apply.

How much are the fees?

Each module costs €750. Fees are paid on a module by module basis, you do not need to pay full course fees up front. Tax refunds can be claimed against all fees paid. In addition, support for course fee

payment can be applied for through the Teacher Refund Scheme administered through the Marino Institute of Education. There is a €50 application fee for students who are applying for the first time.

What will I be awarded upon completing the course?

Upon successful completion of four modules you can exit the course with a Certificate in Special and Inclusive Education or you can do a further dissertation module and exit with a Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education. These awards are accredited and classified by Dublin City University.

How is the programme organised?

Modules are offered three times a year, in September, January and April and students usually complete three modules per year. Each module is taught online over a period of 8 weeks with a further two weeks for completing a written assignment. The foundation module, *Inclusion for Pupils with Special Educational Needs*, which is mandatory for all students, focuses mainly on inclusive practice. Upon successful completion of this module participants will choose from a range of modules listed below:

- S1: Understanding Autism: Effective Management and Teaching Strategies
- S2: Dyslexia
- S3: Mild General Learning Disabilities
- S4: Understanding Behaviour as Communication

What is the time commitment?

This online programme expects students to actively engage with classmates and course content through responding to learning activities by reflecting on your own experiences and practice. There are four online live classes (one for each unit of learning) for each module. In addition, you are expected to communicate and collaborate with your colleagues in support of the development of a community of learners.

Will there be assignments to complete and what form do they take?

Each module will have an assignment of 3000 words (+/-10%). The format of the assignment will vary according to the modular content, for example, a written assignment, a piece of classroom-based action research or a reflective journal. During the course of each module, students are required to complete a number of interactive learning activities. The marking system is based on a combination of online participation and completed assignments.

What IT skills do I need to participate in this programme?

In order to participate in the programme, you will need access to a computer, with headset and microphone, and Internet access. Broadband access is strongly recommended. Familiarity with the Internet and email is an expected requirement.

How many online classroom sessions per module are there?

Each module is delivered over an eight-week period with four online live lectures (every second Wednesday) – usually scheduled for 6.30-7.30pm GMT.

How many students are in each group?

Each module group is assigned a tutor and the number of students in each online class is generally around 20-25, in order to provide an individualised level of support and personalised tuition.

If I have a problem who will help me?

Each class is assigned a tutor who will offer continuous support and advice throughout the duration of the module. There is also an IT Coordinator who provides support with the online environment.

Will I have access to library facilities?

As a registered student of DCU you will have access to all library facilities and services.

How will this online programme help me in working with pupils with special educational needs?

Through a combination of background reading, online learning and interactive activities, including live classroom sessions, this programme strives to give practical support to teachers in meeting the diverse learning needs of pupils with special educational needs.

What are the aims of this programme?

The programme aims:

- To offer professional development to individual teachers in the areas of special and inclusive education.
- To develop teacher's knowledge, skills and competencies in relation to special and inclusive education.
- To create a community of learners, who will communicate and collaborate with each other in support of the teaching and learning of pupils with special and additional learning needs.
- To enrich the special educational knowledge, skills and competencies of other Graduates (non- teachers) or those holding equivalent qualifications with significant experience of working in an educational, training or educational-related professional context.

How can I use the Credits?

Graduates of the Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education are eligible to apply for the Masters in Special Educational Needs (MSEN). The selection criteria are based on diploma results and on the application form. Successful candidates will complete a further two modules, outlined below before joining the second-year cohort of the MSEN:

1. Diagnostic assessment and the Individual Education Planning Process which involves the assessment of a child/young person.
2. Teaching planning and practice which involves one formative and one assessed visit of teaching and planning in your own school.

What have current students said about their experience?

Our students value the freedom and accessibility of online learning and the opportunity to extend their knowledge and skills despite professional and family commitments. They are very pleased with the structure, flexibility in learning methodologies, and ease of access regardless of location as is evidenced from some of their comments below:

'I am really enjoying the course and the chance to learn more skills. The course materials are easy to follow, well sourced and relevant to up to date literature. The other students on the course talk about the experiences from their school and I learn from that that too. I feel much more confident about my job since I've started learning. I am developing new skills and knowledge that I can bring into my own work'

'The quality of the programme is excellent with the resources available, the I.T. support and the Tutors who at all times encouraged us and made students feel that their contributions were worthwhile.'

'Brilliant - you can learn around your work. I had a Whole School Evaluation during this module but was still able to work around it.'

'The only way to learn while working, less stressful and a much more enjoyable experience.'

For further information please contact:

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DCU School of Inclusive & Special Education

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You can also contact ICEP Europe to speak to a course advisor:

Call +353 1 6510 618 or email Dr Deirdre MacIntyre d.macintyre@icepe.eu

