



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

**Circular 0019/2024**

**To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Secondary,  
Community and Comprehensive Schools**

**And**

**The Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards**

**Post-Graduate Diploma Programme of Teacher Professional  
Learning for Special Education Teachers, 2024/2025**



## Introduction

To assist all schools and educational services in meeting the needs of students with special educational needs, a post-graduate diploma programme of teacher professional learning will be offered to teachers in September 2024.

## Programme 2024/2025

In the school year 2024/2025, this post-graduate diploma programme of Teacher Professional Learning will be offered in the following centres

- Dublin City University, Institute of Education, DCU St. Patrick's Campus, Drumcondra, Dublin 9  
Places Available: 115
- Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick  
Places Available: 50
- University of Galway, School of Education, Galway  
Places Available: 30
- ATU St Angelas, Lough Gill, Sligo  
Places Available: 50
- University College Cork School of Education, , Cork  
Places Available: 25
- University College Dublin School of Education, , Belfield, Dublin 4  
Places Available: 25

## Funding

Funding for the programmes in the above Colleges/Universities is provided to each centre by the Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education

## Aim and Content

The aim of the programme is to provide substantial theoretical and practical teacher professional learning for teachers working with students with special educational needs and thereby to contribute to the school's overall capacity in this area. Qualifications will be awarded, by the Colleges/Universities involved, to participants who successfully complete the programme. **Participants will be assessed based on full attendance at the programme venue, successful completion of selected tasks and written assignments (and examinations where relevant), supervision of their work in schools/centres and final evaluation.** Further details will be made available to applicants by the individual College/University.



## Duration and Organisation

The programmes are of one academic year's duration. **Applicants should note that there will be a total of eight weeks' release from schools/centres** for attendance at the relevant programme venue and the remainder of the year will involve teaching in participants' own educational settings. There will be some variations between the participating Colleges/Universities in terms of organisation, assessment and title of awards. All of the programmes listed below provide qualifications recognised by the Department of Education in the area of special education for teachers in the following roles: Special Education Teacher (SET), Teacher in a Special School and Teacher in a Special Class in recognised Primary, Post-Primary schools or other recognised Educational Services.

**Information on how to apply to each of the Colleges/Universities is included below. Please note Postal applications will not be accepted.**

## Colleges/Universities

**DCU Institute of Education, DCU St Patrick's Campus, Drumcondra, Dublin 9, D09DYOO ([www.dcu.ie](http://www.dcu.ie))**

This programme provided by the School of Inclusive and Special Education leads to the award of a Graduate Diploma in Inclusive Education and Special Education. The course runs from September 2024 to May 2025 and involves a blended model of delivery incorporating block release from school/centre (for a total of eight weeks over the academic year), on-line learning, attendance at a maximum of ten online evening classes and supervised work in teachers' own schools/centres. In order to participate in the programme, teachers will need access to a computer and broadband internet access. Particular expertise has been developed within the programme that relates to the inclusion of students in primary, post-primary and special schools and other education centres. Further details are available at <https://www.dcu.ie/courses/postgraduate/institute-education/graduate-diploma-inclusive-and-special-education> and in Appendix 2. Applicants should apply using the online application form which is available, at [www.dcu.ie/gdise](http://www.dcu.ie/gdise). Please follow the online instructions and ensure that all required information is available before commencing the application process.

**Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick, V94VN26 ([www.mic.ul.ie](http://www.mic.ul.ie))**

This programme, which is provided by the Department of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education, leads to the award of a Postgraduate Diploma in Inclusive Special Education, accredited by the University of Limerick. The course runs from September 2024 to May 2025 and involves block release from school/centre for designated periods (for a total of eight weeks over the academic year), four Saturdays on campus, and supervised work in teachers' own schools/centres. The course incorporates blended delivery approaches and teachers will require access to broadband and a computer. Further details, and a link to the online application process are available at: <https://www.mic.ul.ie/faculty-of-education/programme/graduate-diplomam-ed-in-special-education> and applications must be emailed to [PGDISE@mic.ul.ie](mailto:PGDISE@mic.ul.ie). All applicants



should apply using the online application form and have all required information available prior to commencing the online application process. Contact details are available in Appendix 2.

**University of Galway, Galway (<https://www.universityofgalway.ie>)**

This programme, provided by the School of Education, leads to the award of a Postgraduate Diploma in Special Education. The course runs from September 2024 until May 2025 and involves release from schools/centres for designated block periods (for a total of eight weeks over the academic year). In addition, teachers will be required to attend lectures and workshops on a maximum of four Saturdays. A blended delivery model is used involving attendance at the university and on-line learning. The programme also includes supervised work in the teachers' own schools/centres and supported ongoing study throughout the year. Further information and application form are available at: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/courses/taught-postgraduate-courses/education-special-educational-needs.html>, and applications must be emailed to [pdsen@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:pdsen@universityofgalway.ie). Contact details are available in Appendix 2.

**ATU St Angelas Sligo ([www.stangelas.ie](http://www.stangelas.ie))**

This programme is organised by the Centre for Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity (CSEPID) and leads to the award of a Post-Graduate Diploma in Special Education, accredited by the Atlantic Technological University. It runs from September 2024 until May 2025. The programme is based on a combined approach of block release from school/centre for a total of eight weeks during the academic year, on-line learning and attendance on a maximum of four Saturdays during the year. The programme also includes supervised work in the teachers' own schools/centres and supported ongoing study throughout the year using a variety of modes of delivery. The programme structure comprises five modules, one of which is a specialist study module that focuses specifically on the areas of Specific Learning Disabilities and Autism. Applicants should apply using the online application form, which is available using the following link: [Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Special Education - St Angela's \(stangelas.ie\)](http://www.stangelas.ie). Please ensure that all the required information is available before commencing the online application process. Queries can be directed to [csepid.stangelas@atu.ie](mailto:csepid.stangelas@atu.ie). Contact details are available at Appendix 2.

**University College Cork ([www.ucc.ie](http://www.ucc.ie))**

This programme is provided by the School of Education, UCC, and leads to the award of a Postgraduate Diploma in Special Education. The course runs from September 2024 to May 2025 and involves a total of eight weeks block release from school/centre, four Saturdays (face-to-face and/or online) and supervised work in the teacher's own school/centre. Only online applications accepted. Please see online application portal, accessible via the PDSEN programme section on the UCC website. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/taughtcourses/pgdip/specialed/>



**University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4 ([www.ucd.ie](http://www.ucd.ie))**

This programme, provided by the School of Education, leads to the award of the Graduate Diploma in Inclusive and Special Education. The course runs from September 2024 to May 2025 and incorporates block release from school/centre amounting to a total of eight weeks (four weeks each semester), two Saturdays of collaborative workshops and seminars, and ongoing supervised work in the participant's own school/Centre. The programme is taught using a blended learning approach, with a mixture of face-to-face and online learning. The programme structure includes five mandatory modules, which provide participants with a strong grounding in theoretical, research-informed teaching, and professional skills development enabling them to work inclusively with students with additional educational needs. Applicants must apply using the electronic application form which is available to download at [https:// www.ucd.ie/education/study/diplomaprogrammes/](https://www.ucd.ie/education/study/diplomaprogrammes/). The application form must be completed electronically and emailed to [educationenquiries@ucd.ie](mailto:educationenquiries@ucd.ie) on or before the application deadline. Course information is available at: <https://www.ucd.ie/education/study/diplomaprogramme/> Queries can be directed to [educationenquiries@ucd.ie](mailto:educationenquiries@ucd.ie)



## **Eligibility**

Please note that all teachers must be registered in accordance with Section 31 of the Teaching Council Acts, 2001-2015. Please refer to the Teaching Council website [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie) for further information. Candidates should note that evidence of having completed Garda vetting is required for participation in the course. This programme is open to all serving teachers who are employed in a position funded by the Department of Education and who provide Special Education Teaching in recognised Primary schools, Post-Primary schools, and other recognised Educational Settings. Teachers teaching in special schools and special classes are also eligible to apply.

The programme is designed specifically to support teachers in their preparation for teaching and meeting the learning needs of students with special educational needs. Potential applicants must therefore have a designated teaching role in relation to students with special educational needs. In nominating a teacher to participate, the school principal must give a commitment that the teacher will be deployed/timetabled to teach in a special education role for the duration of the programme and for a reasonable period into the future, in accordance with the needs of the students in the school.

Please refer to the circulars listed in Appendix 1 for information on the qualifications necessary for Special Education Teaching posts at Primary and Post-Primary levels and qualifications necessary to teach in Special Schools.

Please note that Teachers must have a minimum of 11 Special Education Teaching (SET) hours on their weekly timetables, which have been allocated to the school by the Department of Education. This can be in the form of individual small group or in-class support for the students with identified special educational needs.



### **Primary**

Teachers will be required to forward a copy of their Registration Certificate<sup>1</sup> from the Teaching Council, when submitting their application form. If the “Route” field is blank, teachers will be required to provide evidence that they have qualifications suitable to teach in either the mainstream primary sector or to teach students with special educational needs.

Applicants from Primary Schools should have successfully completed a recognised induction process in accordance with the requirements as set out by the Teaching Council in their publication Post-qualification Professional Practice Procedures and Criteria <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/assets/uploads/2023/09/The-Teaching-Council-Practice-Procedures-and-Criteria-2023-2024.pdf> and hold a position in a sanctioned post in an area of special education or be taking up such posts in September 2024. For the purpose of the course, teachers will need to deliver a range of programmes related to meeting the learning needs of students with special educational needs.<sup>2</sup> Teachers’ timetables must also include periods during which they are working with small groups of students with identified special educational needs. Collaborative in-class support practices can be combined with small group support.

### **Post Primary**

Teachers will be required to forward a copy of their Registration Certificate (see footnote 1 below) from the Teaching Council, when submitting their application form. If the “Route” field is blank, teachers will be required to provide evidence that they have qualifications suitable to teach in either the mainstream post-primary sector or to teach students with special educational needs in the post-primary sector. Applicants from Post-Primary Schools should have successfully completed a recognised induction process in accordance with the requirements as set out by the Teaching Council in their publication Post-qualification Professional Practice Procedures and Criteria <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/assets/uploads/2023/09/The-Teaching-Council-Practice-Procedures-and-Criteria-2023-2024.pdf>.

Applications are invited from recognised second-level schools/centres that have been allocated special education teaching supports or officially sanctioned special classes. The person nominated must be a teacher eligible to hold a permanent post in recognised second level schools. **In order to be eligible for the**

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<sup>1</sup> Certificates of Registration are available to download by logging into the My Registration Section on the Teaching Council website [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie)

<sup>2</sup> Please see the following links for definitions of Special Education as described in DES Circulars [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - [Special Education Teaching Allocation 2022/23 \(primary\) \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie) and primary [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - [Special Education Teaching Allocation 2022/23 \(post primary\) \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)



**programme, teachers must be timetabled for a minimum of 11 special education teaching hours per week, which may include co-teaching / in-class support for students with special educational needs.**

This should be direct teaching time that does not include consultation/planning time. Teachers who are unable to provide a timetable demonstrating **a minimum of 11 hours of dedicated SET time** upon commencement of the course may be asked to withdraw from the programme at the discretion of the provider. Teachers will need to deliver a range of programmes related to meeting the learning needs of students with special educational needs. Teachers' timetables must also include periods during which they are working with small groups of students with identified special educational needs. Co-teaching in class support can be combined with small group support. At least four class periods per week should be allocated to teaching individuals or groups of not more than six students. The SET hours should include periods where the teacher is working with consistent groups each week i.e. regular SET hours with groups of 3-6 learners. SET hours should involve support across more than one domain of learning e.g. literacy, communication and language, numeracy, social and emotional learning, etc. In addition to the 11 SET hours outlined above time should also be made available for collaboration with parents/guardians and colleagues.

### **Special Schools**

Teachers will be required to forward a copy of their Registration Certificate (see footnote 1 on page 6) from the Teaching Council, when submitting their application form. If the "Route" field is blank teachers will be required to provide evidence that they have qualifications suitable to teach either in the mainstream primary or post-primary sectors or to teach students with special educational needs in the primary or post-primary sector or to teach in special school settings.

Applicants from Special Schools should have successfully completed a recognised induction process in accordance with the requirements as set out by the Teaching Council in their publication Post-qualification Professional Practice <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/assets/uploads/2023/09/The-Teaching-Council-Practice-Procedures-and-Criteria-2023-2024.pdf> and hold a sanctioned post in a Special School or be taking up such posts in September 2024.

### **Other Educational Settings**

Teachers will be required to forward a copy of their Registration Certificate (see footnote 1 on page 6) from the Teaching Council, when submitting their application form. If the "Route" field is blank teachers will be required to provide evidence that they have qualifications suitable to teach either in the mainstream primary or post-primary sectors or to teach students with special educational needs in the primary or post-primary sectors. Applicants must have successfully completed a recognised induction process in accordance with the requirements as set out by the Teaching Council in their publication Post-qualification Professional Practice Procedures and Criteria <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/assets/uploads/2023/09/The-Teaching-Council-Practice-Procedures-and-Criteria-2023-2024.pdf> and be recognised as being eligible for permanent



appointment in a primary, post-primary or special school.

Applications are invited from qualified teachers employed by ETBs as literacy and/or numeracy tutors in Youth reach, Community Projects or in the Prison Service and who are assigned to teaching in a special education role for a minimum of 11 hours per week. This should be direct teaching time that does not include consultation/planning time. Teachers who are unable to provide a timetable demonstrating 11 hours of dedicated SET teaching time upon commencement of the course may be asked to withdraw from the programme at the discretion of the provider. At least four class periods per week should be allocated to teaching individuals or groups of not more than six students with identified special educational needs. Additional time should also be made available for collaboration with parents/guardians and colleagues. The teaching hours should include periods where the teacher is working with consistent groups each week i.e. regular SET hours with groups of 3-6 learners. Teaching hours should involve support across more than one domain of learning e.g. literacy, communication and language, social and emotional learning, etc.

### **Applications and Selection**

Applications must be submitted to your chosen College or University by **5pm on 15 April 2024**.

Priority will be given to teachers who meet the criteria and who have not already completed a similar post-graduate programme for teachers of students with special educational needs recognised by the Department of Education.

Generally, only one application per School/Centre will be considered. Candidates should note that some institutions require applicants to attend for interview.

It is intended that, on those programmes which accept primary and post-primary teachers, an equal number of places will be allocated to each group but the ratio may be modified in response to demand and local requirements. The selection of participants from the eligible applicants will be a matter for the College/University authorities.

### **Programme Fees**

No fee or registration charges will apply for applicants eligible under the terms of this Circular.

### **Extra Personal Vacation**

No extra personal vacation (EPV) days will be allowed in respect of completion of the Programme.

**Substitution**

Substitution, which must be approved by the managerial authority of the school/ETB, will be allowed. The substitution must be deemed necessary to cover the approved periods of absence of the teacher from teaching duty for attendance at the course. Documentation from the College/University specifying the absence details must be retained by the school. It should be noted that paid substitution cover will not be provided by the Department of Education where a teacher takes personal leave during the block release element of the programme.

**Salary Arrangements**

All teachers on block release under the terms of this Programme will continue to receive their salary in the usual way. Please note that successful completion of this programme will not result in any entitlement to additional remuneration from the Department of Education.

**Travel and Subsistence**

Please note that there will be no reimbursement of any travel or subsistence expenses incurred by participants in the Programme which is the subject of this Circular.

**Master's Programme**

Those who successfully complete the Post-Graduate Diploma Programme of Teacher Professional Learning for Special Education Teachers, and who meet entry requirements, are eligible to apply to a Master's Programme provided through the higher education institutions (HEIs) listed in section 1 of this Circular. Further information is available on individual HEIs' websites, details of which are available at Appendix 2.

**Jill Fannin**

**Principal Officer**

**14 March 2024**



## **APPENDIX 1**

The following Circulars are available for download on the website of the Department of Education.  
[www.gov.ie/education](http://www.gov.ie/education)

- 0013/2017 Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools  
Special Education Teaching Allocation
- 0014/2017 Circular to the Management Authorities of all Post Primary Schools: Secondary, Community  
and Comprehensive Schools and the Chief Executive Officers of the Education and Training  
Boards Special Education Teaching Allocation
- 0031/2011 Teacher Recruitment Registration and Qualifications – Post Primary
- 0044/2019 Teacher Recruitment Registration and Qualifications – Primary
- 0025/2013 Requirement for Teachers in Recognised Schools to Register with the Teaching Council
- 0052/2013 Procedures on the Commencement of Section 30 in Recognised Schools

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/56c43-supporting-pupils-and-students-with-special-educational-needs-guidelines-for-schools/>

Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream  
Schools:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/56c43-supporting-pupils-and-students-with-special-educational-needs-guidelines-for-schools/>

Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools – Supporting Children and Young People

[gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - [Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools – Supporting Children and Young People \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)



## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Addresses of Colleges/Universities offering the Post-Graduate Diploma Programme of Teacher Professional learning for Special Education Teachers**

#### **1. DCU Institute of Education**

Address DCU Institute of Education  
School of Inclusive and Special Education,  
DCU St Patrick's Campus,  
Drumcondra,  
Dublin 9,  
DO9DYOO

Phone Phone (01) 7009062

Website [https://www.dcu.ie/inclusive\\_and\\_special\\_education/index.shtml](https://www.dcu.ie/inclusive_and_special_education/index.shtml)

Email [ioe.ise@dcu.ie](mailto:ioe.ise@dcu.ie)

#### **2. Mary Immaculate College**

Address Mary Immaculate College,  
Department of Educational Psychology,  
Inclusive and Special Education,  
South Circular Road,  
Limerick  
V94VN26

Phone (061) 204550

Fax (061) 313632

Website <https://www.mic.ul.ie/faculty-of-education/programme/graduate-diplomam-ed-in-special-educational-needs>

Email [PGDISE@mic.ul.ie](mailto:PGDISE@mic.ul.ie)

#### **3. University of Galway**

Address University of Galway,  
School of Education,  
PDSSEN,  
University Road  
Galway

Phone (091) 492195 Fax (091) 750538

Website <http://www.nuigalway.ie/courses/taught-postgraduate-courses/education-special-educational-needs.html>

Email [pdsen@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:pdsen@universityofgalway.ie)



#### **4. ATU St Angelas**

Address ATU St Angelas  
Centre for Special Educational Needs  
Inclusion and Diversity  
Lough Gill,  
Sligo.

Phone (071) 9195552

Email [cseid@stangelas.ie](mailto:cseid@stangelas.ie)

Website <https://www.stangelas.ie/programmes/postgraduate-programmes-standalone-modules/postgraduate-diploma-special-education>

#### **5. University College Cork**

Address University College,  
Special Education Department,  
School of Education,  
Leeholme,  
Cork,  
Cork.

Phone (021) 4902465

Fax (021) 4270291

Website [www.ucc.ie](http://www.ucc.ie)

Email [Dan.OSullivan@ucc.ie](mailto:Dan.OSullivan@ucc.ie)

#### **6. University College Dublin**

Address University College Dublin  
School of Education  
Belfield,  
Dublin 4

Website [www.ucd.ie/education/study/diplomaprogrammes](http://www.ucd.ie/education/study/diplomaprogrammes)

Email [educationenquiries@ucd.ie](mailto:educationenquiries@ucd.ie)