



Circular: 0014/2023

To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and The Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards

Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Teachers working with Students with Special Educational Needs (Autism)

Introduction

The programme will aim to develop teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills in working with students with autism and, thereby, contribute to the school's overall capacity in this area.

1. The Programme 2023/2024

St Angela's College, Sligo is offering a Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma in Arts in Special Educational Needs (Autism) Professional Development Programme in collaboration with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) for teachers of students with autism. In accordance with programmes being offered by the college, this programme is accredited by Atlantic Technological University (ATU) and will lead to an award of a Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma in Arts in Special Educational Needs (Autism).

Up to 25 places will be available on the programme for the year 2023/2024.

2. Aim and Content

The aim of the programme will be to develop teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills in working with autistic students and, thereby, to contribute to the school's overall capacity in this area.

Qualifications will be awarded by ATU to participants who successfully complete the programme. **Participants will be assessed on the basis of full attendance at the programme, successful completion of selected tasks and written assignments, in addition to their work in schools.**



Consideration will be given to applications for recognition for prior learning (RPL) under the College's RPL policies and procedures. Relevant NCSE courses in the learning and teaching of autistic students will be considered in this context.

Further details are available to applicants from St. Angela's College, Sligo on their website at www.stangelas.ie and the National Council for Special Education on their website at www.ncse.ie.

3. Duration and Organisation

This Post-Graduate Certificate is a professional development programme which must be completed in **one** academic year.

The Post-Graduate Diploma is a professional development programme which must be completed within a time-frame of **two** years.

On completion of the Post-Graduate Certificate in year one, candidates who wish to complete the Post-Graduate Diploma must do so in the following academic year.

The programme comprises four modules, as follows:

- **Post-graduate Certificate in Special Educational Needs - Autism**
 - **Module one (Core Module)** - Understanding Autism: Theoretical Perspectives and Implications for Practice

And

Module two - Engaging Autistic Students: Assessment and Planning for Teaching and Learning

Or

- **Module three** - Autistic Students: Teaching Approaches
- **Post-graduate Diploma in Arts in Special Educational Needs – Autism**
 - **Module one** - Understanding Autism: Theoretical Perspectives and Implications for Practice
 - **Module two** - Engaging Autistic Students: Assessment and Planning for Teaching and Learning



- **Module three** - Autistic Students: Teaching Approaches
- **Module four** - Supporting Autistic Students with reference to Emotional Regulation and Promotion of Positive Behaviour

Completion of Modules 1 (Core) and 2 or 3, together with successful completion of the necessary course work and a practicum will attract a Post-Graduate Certificate in Special Educational Needs (Autism).

Completion of the additional two modules together with the necessary course work will attract a Post-Graduate Diploma in Arts in Special Educational Needs (Autism).

Participants will not necessarily be required to complete individual modules sequentially.

The programme will require a minimum of eighteen days (Certificate) to thirty-seven days (Diploma) release from school over the two-year period.

Subject to public health advice, attendance on at least 5 Saturdays at a central venue will be a requirement for successful applicants.

Class visits from NCSE and St. Angela's personnel for the purposes of support provision and practicum assessment respectively are an essential component of the programme.

4. Eligibility

Please note that all teachers must be registered in accordance with Section 31 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001. Please refer to the Teaching Council website www.teachingcouncil.ie for further information.

This programme is for registered teachers who hold a post currently funded by the Department of Education who are currently working with autistic students or will be working with autistic students for the duration of the Programme in recognised primary schools including special schools and recognised post-primary Schools. **The programme is designed specifically to assist teachers in meeting the learning and teaching needs of students with autism.** Potential applicants must therefore have a teaching role in relation to autistic students.

Candidates should note that evidence of having completed Garda vetting is required for participation in the course.



(a) Primary:

Teachers will be required to forward a copy of their Registration Certificate or Confirmation of Registration letter¹ from the Teaching Council, when submitting their application form (see footnote below). If the “Education Sector(s)” 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 in the primary sector.

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 and hold a position in a sanctioned post in an area of special education or be taking up such posts in September 2023.

(b) Post-Primary

Teachers will be required to forward a copy of their Registration Certificate or Confirmation of Registration letter from the Teaching Council, when submitting their application form (see footnote below). If the “Education Sector(s)” 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 and hold a position in a sanctioned post in an area of special education or be taking up such posts in September 2023.

(c) Special Schools

Teachers will be required to forward a copy of their Registration Certificate or Confirmation of Registration letter from the Teaching Council, when submitting their application form (see footnote below). If the “Education Sector(s)” 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 Procedures and

¹ Confirmation of Registration letter is available to download from the Registered Teacher Login Facility on the Teaching Council website www.teachingcouncil.ie



Criteria and hold a position in a sanctioned post in an area of special education or be taking up such posts in September 2023.

Teachers who are participating in this programme must continue to have a teaching role in relation to students with autism for the duration of the programme. It is also advised that school management should make every effort to ensure that autistic students continue to benefit from teachers' knowledge and expertise in this area, through assigning teachers who have successfully completed this programme to autism-specific settings. Collaborative practices, such as team-teaching, can also form a part of these arrangements.

5. Applications and Selection

Eligible teachers, nominated by their school authorities who wish to be considered for admission to the Programme, should apply using the Online Application Form which is available using the following link, at [Postgraduate Dip in Arts/Cert in Special Educational Needs - Autism - St Angela's \(stangelas.ie\)](https://stangelas.ie) Please read instructions for completing the online application carefully and ensure that all the required information/documentation is available before commencing the online application process.

Online applications must be received no later than **12th May 2023**.

Normally, applications will be accepted from not more than one teacher per school who meets the requirements outlined in this Circular. Applicants for this programme will not be required to attend for interview.

All applications must be accompanied by a non-returnable administration fee of €25. Payment must be made via our online payments system at www.stangelaspayments.com See instructions below: Under Course Info section of the payment page please do the following:

- Enter "00000" in Student Number Field
- Under Payment Type choose "Other"
- Under Choose Course which the payment relates to select "Postgrad Education – Application Fees" from the dropdown menu
- Type in €25 into the amount which you wish to pay box.

Any queries relating to the application can be sent to Emer Feeney, SEN Administrator at cseid@stangelas.ie

6. COVID-19

Applicants should be aware that Colleges and Universities may need to continue to operate under Covid-19 restrictions for the 2023/24 academic year which may necessitate amendments to the delivery of certain elements of the programme as required, in order to abide with the prevailing Government health advice at the time.



7. Funding

All elements within each module are funded by the Special Education Section of the Department of Education and Skills through the NCSE.

Applicants will be responsible for the payment of a fee of €300 per module and will be invoiced by St. Angela's College as per the College's current policy.

8. Travel and Subsistence

Travel and subsistence will be provided for any of the face-to-face elements of the programme in accordance with Special Education Section rates.

9. Extra Personal Vacation

No extra personal vacation will be allowed in respect of attendance at the Programme.

10. 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 NCSE/college specifying the absence details must be retained by the school.

11. Salary Arrangements

All teachers on release from their school 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 and Skills.

12. Master's Programme

Those who successfully complete the Post-Graduate Diploma in Arts in Special Educational Needs (Autism), and who satisfy the relevant requirements, are eligible to progress to an MA in Special Educational Needs (Autism) at St. Angela's College. Further information on the MA in Special Educational Needs (Autism) Programme in St. Angela's College is available on the St. Angela's website, [St Angela's College - St Angela's \(stangelas.ie\)](http://stangelas.ie)

Brendan Doody
Principal Officer

Special Education Section

07 March 2023



Appendix A

Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma in Arts in Special Educational Needs (Autism) 2023 - 2024

Applicants should be aware that Colleges and Universities may need to continue to operate under Covid-19 restrictions for the 2023/24 academic year which may necessitate amendments to the delivery of certain elements of the programme as required, in order to abide with the prevailing Government health advice at the time.

<p>Module One Understanding Autism: Theoretical Perspectives and Implications for Practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory Day • NCSE 4 Day Introductory Course including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction to Autism ○ Autism Teaching and Learning ○ Structured Teaching ○ Role of the SNA (collaborative partnerships) ○ Promotion of positive behaviour ○ Assessment ○ APPS and Autism ○ Sensory Processing ○ Play, Communication and Social Skills • Planning for Autistic Students (Primary or Post-primary) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism: A Sensory Perspective • Understanding Autism (on-line) • Autism & Co-occurring Additional Needs • Placement (<i>subject to Government Health advice</i>) • Class Visit (NCSE Advisory Team: Autism)
<p>Assessment</p>	<p>Essay</p>
<p>Module Two Engaging Autistic Students: Assessment and Planning for Teaching and Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SCERTS Model (Social Communication Emotional Regulation and Transactional Supports) (2 day) OR ABBLS & AFLS (1 day) and VBMAPP (1 day) • PEP3 OR T-TAP • Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools (2 day) • Attention Autism (2 day) • Visual Structured Teaching Methodologies or Fundamentals of Structured TEACCHing (online) (2 day) (<i>for Certificate students only</i>) • Language and Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Language and Communication for Autistic Students in the Mainstream Classroom: 2 Day Seminar (Primary & Post primary) OR ○ Early Communication for Autistic Students (Pre or Early Verbal): 2 Day Seminar • Class Visit (NCSE Advisory Team: Autism)



Assessment	Case Study
<p>Module Three Autistic Students: Teaching Approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual Structured Teaching Methodologies (2-day) or Fundamentals of Structured TEACCHing (online) • An Introduction to Emotional Regulation and Positive Behaviour (online) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Narratives • TEACCH (5 Day) (<i>subject to Government Health advice</i>) <p>The following options are offered in this module and participants must choose two from the following list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lámh • DIRFloor-Time (<i>subject to Government Health advice</i>) • Supporting Autistic Students as they Transition through Education (Primary or Post primary) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puberty, Relationships, Sexuality & Autism • Intensive Interaction • Inclusive Music, Drama and Art for Autistic Learners <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Participants must choose the 2-day seminar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism, Mental Health and Managing Anxiety <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Participants must choose the 2-day seminar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PECS
Assessment	Practicum
<p>Module Four Supporting Autistic Students with reference to Emotional Regulation and Promotion of Positive Behaviour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Social Differences (Primary and Post Primary) • Pathways to Prevention (3 days) • Emotional Regulation and Promotion of Positive Behaviour (5 days) • Class Visit (NCSE Advisory Team: Behaviour)
Assessment	Literature Review
<p>Practicum</p>	<p>Completion of the practicum is an essential element for both the Postgraduate Certificate and the Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Special Educational Needs (Autism) (See section 3 of Circular)</p>



Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma in Arts in Special Educational Needs (Autism) 2023-2024

Post-Graduate Programme

Post-Graduate Certificate

Module one (Core Module)	Understanding Autism: Theoretical Perspectives and Implications for Practice
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And

Module two	Engaging Autistic Students: Assessment and Planning for Teaching and Learning
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Or

Module three	Autistic Students: Teaching Approaches
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Post-Graduate Diploma

Module one	Understanding Autism: Theoretical Perspectives and Implications for Practice
Module two	Engaging Autistic Students: Assessment and Planning for Teaching and Learning
Module three	Autistic Students: Teaching Approaches
Module four	Supporting Autistic Students with reference to Emotional Regulation and Promotion of Positive Behaviour