



**OTC**  
OPEN TRAINING COLLEGE

**2021-2022**

**B.A. in Contemporary Disability Studies**


**B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary Disability Studies**


**LEAD EXCELLENT PRACTICE IN SERVICES**



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**ACCREDITED PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FOR STAFF (DISABILITY SECTOR)**



**HECA**

Higher Education  
Colleges Association



# B.A. in Contemporary Disability Studies

Lead Excellent Practice in Services



## About The Course

This course is designed for people who work in disability services and want to enhance the supports they provide. The degree was created by people with extensive front line and management experience who understand the area and the issues that arise providing support for a person implementing HIQA standards or New Directions.

### This involves:

- Developing a detailed understanding of disability service provision and the critical role of the person centred approach to it
- Acquiring the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to implement a person centred approach to supporting service users
- Developing a range of communication skills, training techniques and professional practices to ensure optimal service provision
- The course is assessed through a combination of assignments, online activities, projects, written examinations and in-class assessment.

**“It’s an applied and practical degree programme so students get to earn a recognised QQI qualification at Level 7 and even Level 8. The presentation and quality of information presented at workshops is excellent and motivates students to question how they currently support service users and to strive to continuously improve the service they provide.”**

Roisin O’Neill, Person in Charge, St. Michael’s House.

### Audience

Anyone working within disability services; including day service workers; social care workers; social care leaders; people with an interest in the area, persons with a relevant Level 5 qualification.

### Award

B.A. (Ordinary) Degree (7M20216)

### Format

Blended

### Model

Part-Time/Open Learning

### Duration

3 Years

### Award Type

QQI/HET Level 7 (Major Award)

### Credits

180

### Start Date

November 2021

### Fees

€3,552 for Year 1 (Instalment plan available)

Students may be entitled to 20% tax relief on their fees.

Inclusive of PEL (Protection of Enrolled Learner) insurance cost.

# Why Choose The Course?

## For People Working In The Disability Sector

The course is aimed at people working in disability services. It was created by people with extensive first-line experience who fully understand the area and the problems that come with attempting to balance work, life and learning when you work in the sector.



## It Is Entirely Practical

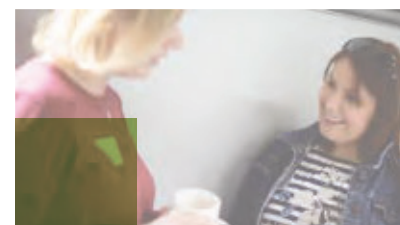
It is an applied programme dealing with real world challenges. The choice of course materials is determined by the needs of people employed in the sector. They are dealt with from the perspective of someone working in the disability arena and their relevance/quality is determined by the ways in which they can be applied to, and improve, everyday practice.

Similarly, our assignments tackle issues that you are likely to face in the workplace. While you are completing these you will have access to our expert tutors and a community of people who are almost certainly trying to deal with the same issues. As such, successfully completing the course will provide you with a unique opportunity to address real world challenges and improve the quality of service your organisation delivers.

## We Are A Student Centred College

The degree is designed to accommodate the pressures and responsibilities that you face. Its mixture of workshops, tutorials and online learning will allow you to balance your work, life and college commitments. Remember: our active learning community (made up of students, tutors and learning support staff) is always there to support you as you learn.

It is also designed to support Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities.



## We Are At The Heart Of The Sector

We work in partnership with over 220 organisations from the human services and non-profit sector. Together we ensure that the degree reflects:

- Current regulatory and public policy environment (including HIQA, New Directions and the new Assisted Decision Making legislation)
- Challenges driving the sector, and
- Contemporary best practices

## Enhance Your Career Prospects

On successful completion of this course you can go on to specialise in a variety of areas through further study including the College's Level 8 BA (Honours) in Contemporary Disability Studies. Graduates have specialised in areas such as social work, community work, addiction supports, mental health and quality management.

The Honours degree provides you with advanced social care practitioner skills.

Being a Social Care Worker means you can progress your career through promotion, for example, by becoming a Social Care Leader or a Person In Charge in disability services. The College provides a route to promotion via a suite of management programmes.

"My previous qualifications allowed me to gain Advanced Entry to the programme so I started in Year 2. That option saved me time and money in pursuit of my Social Care qualification. I would highly recommend this course and I am seriously thinking about the Level 8 option for next year."

**Linda Tierney, Care Manager, Catholic Institute for Deaf People**



## What Will I Learn?

### Relevant Skills Developed on this Course:

- Person Centred Planning
- Supporting Life Transitions
- Systematic Instruction
- Assisted Decision Making
- Advocacy
- Understanding of policy and legislation
- Risk Management
- Supporting service quality
- Positive Behaviour Supports
- Supporting sexuality and relationships
- Working with Families
- Community Networking
- Creating a sense of home
- Supporting wellbeing
- Supporting a Person in the Autistic Spectrum
- Supporting a Person in Mainstream Work



### In addition to acquiring these relevant skills, you will:

- Understand the services systems and regulations that affect people with disabilities
- Understand the professional and ethical commitments of supporting a person with a disability
- Understand the various roles of the professional in pan disability services
- Be able to explain the central importance of human rights and social justice in pan disability contexts
- Know how to use a range of research, enquiry and analysis methods to investigate issues relevant to inclusion
- Have the skills required to investigate, understand, and solve problems that arise in disability service settings
- Know how to record information relating to service users compliant with current legal, quality and ethical regulations
- Be able to work in inter-professional contexts and make substantive contributions to collective decision making
- Have the ability to reflect on personal practice and identify areas for professional development
- Know how to engage in self-directed practice and work with service users, groups, communities, families
- Know when to seek professional support/guidance when performing your role
- Be able to take responsibility for safeguarding and protecting service users

See [opentrainingcollege.com](https://opentrainingcollege.com) for more details.

# Course Content

## Year One:

### Modules

- Learning & Development in Higher Education
- Exploring Disability
- Communications 1:  
Communication & Interpersonal Skills
- Policy and Legislation in the disability sector 1
- Focus on the Individual (Person Centred Planning)
- Professional Practice 1:  
Practice & Ethics

## Year Two:

### Modules

- Psychology 1:  
Lifespan Development & Transitions
- Psychology 2:  
Learning Theories & Teaching Strategies
- Policy & Legislation 2
- Empowerment & Advocacy
- Communications 2:  
Key Management Skills
- Professional Practice 2:  
Quality & Risk in the Context of Regulation (e.g., HIQA)

## Year Three:

### Modules

- Social Research Methods
- Psychology 3:  
Wellbeing & Positive Behaviour Supports
- Exploration of Relationships, Self & Sexuality
- Working with Families
- Active Inclusion

You will also need to select one of the following modules as part of your study:

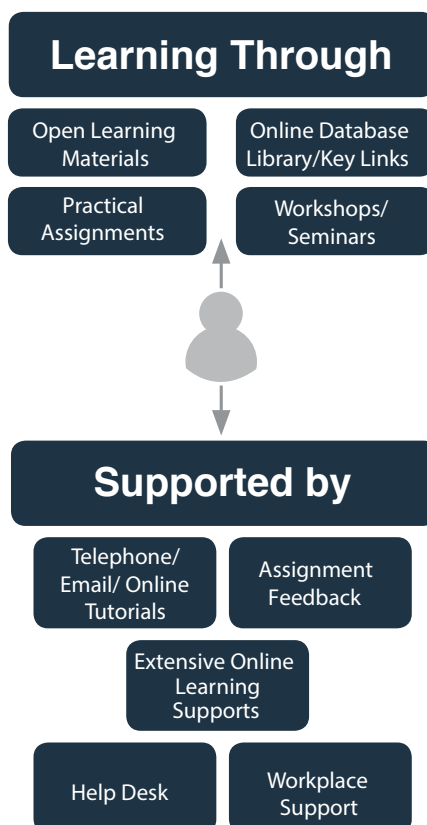
- Supporting a Person within the Autistic Spectrum
- Supporting a Person in Mainstream Work

# What Is It Like To Study At The College?

The College uses a 'blended' approach. Each module combines online learning, tutorials (telephone, online, virtual), face to face workshops and webinars. Learning materials are designed to accommodate the pressures that come with trying to balance work, life and learning. They make it possible to build study time around your work schedule. To support all online aspects of the course the College has a dedicated elearning team you can contact throughout your studies.

Regular online tutorials will expand your knowledge of the topic and answer any questions you have as you study. Each one-day seminar focuses on how the module topic impacts on the sector, will deepen your understanding of the subject matter and help you apply it in your working practice.

Underpinning all of this is our learning community. This is made up of tutors who have extensive first-line experience, learning support staff who understand the human challenges people can face when attending college and our students who are defined by their commitment to supporting each other. We believe this creates a learning experience that is unique to the Open Training College, one that meets the specific requirements of people working in our sector and improves the quality of service our users receive. **This is known as the OTC Supported Open Learning Model.**





## The Course Director View

*Meet Dr Noelín Fox -  
Course Director*

**Making the decision to embark on a degree, particularly when you are an adult learner, can be a difficult one. What concerns do people generally have?**

From talking to our students, there would appear to be three key concerns:

- What is the value of starting this course and how will it benefit them in their current role and provide a platform for future career development
- The level of academic and personal support they will receive when they go to college. Personal support is vital to the success of adult learners
- How will they manage to balance work, life and learning commitments because it can seem overwhelming

### **How do you help deal with this?**

From day one, our goal is to build confidence and encourage people to apply what they learn in their work, as they work. We place particular emphasis on helping people to develop the ability to analyse and learn from their own experiences and to work out ways to do things better, for themselves, by applying what they learn.

We are obviously there to support our students every step of their academic journey but I believe understanding and helping with the personal challenges of taking on a course are in many ways as important as the academic support. That is why we believe so passionately in our learning being student centred and put so much effort into building a learning community for our students. We support and learn from each other.

### **How do you think students benefit most?**

They become more aware of their critical importance to delivering a person centred service. They become more innovative in meeting the individual needs of people they support which leads to a better quality of life for the people they are working with.



## The Student View

*Meet John Lawlor –  
Graduate, Gheel Autism Service Ltd*

### **Why did you choose the OTC?**

It's delivered by tutors who have direct experience of working in the sector themselves so you know that the teaching comes from a realistic point of view and an understanding of the challenges faced by students.

### **What's it like to study with the OTC?**

I am able to avail of telephone tutorials and online tutorials when needed in order to stay on track with my assignments. It's a clever programme in that it allows me to work and study at the same time without losing any valuable time with my family. It allows me balance all three which is so important for my own well being.

The workshops are a real melting pot of ideas and it's great to meet all the other students from different organisations so you can get a better perspective on things from them.

I am in my final year and have learned so much that I would have no hesitation in recommending the Social Care programme to anyone wishing to enhance their career prospects and wanting to make a positive impact on the sector.

## Transfer & Progression

Applicants wishing to transfer from another course must have completed a Level 6/7 cognate qualification to 60 credits (NFQ) or more in Social Care or Social Studies to be considered for Advanced Entry. Students who successfully complete this course can progress to the BA (Honours) in Contemporary Disability Studies at Level 8 (NFQ), subject to meeting entry requirements.

# B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary Disability Studies

## Why Choose the Course?

This one year, part-time course will help you to become an advanced social care practitioner and drive the development and delivery of quality, rights driven services to people with disability. This programme provides professionals, such as Social Care Workers, with the knowledge and skills to make substantive, positive changes to organisations in the pan disability sector.

It is also designed to facilitate continuing professional development and provide access to postgraduate study.

## How Will The Course Enhance My Career Prospects?

Holding the Level 8 qualification can significantly enhance your promotion prospects. Past graduates have been promoted to a variety of roles including Social Care Leaders, Persons In Charge, Service Managers and Area Directors.

Successful completion of this course is also essential for postgraduate study. Past graduates have gone on to a variety of postgraduate courses in areas including training and education, social work, advanced social care, mental health, community studies and addiction studies.

### Course Modules:

- Contemporary Issues in Social Care: Mental Health, Elder Care, Children
- Supporting Individualised Living and Alternative Services
- Disability in the Context of Social Equality & Inclusion
- Comparative Social Policy
- Applied Research Methods

### Audience

Qualified professionals working in disability services

### Award

Honours B.A. Degree (8M20215)

### Format

Blended

### Model

Part-Time/Open Learning

### Duration

1 Year (2-year option)

### Award Type

QQI/HET Level 8 (Major Award)

### Credits

60

### Start Date

September 2021

### Fees

€3,904

(Instalment plan available)

Students may be entitled to 20% tax relief on their fees. Inclusive of Protection of Enrolled Learner (PEL) insurance cost.



**Meet**  
**Dr Tracy Warner**  
**Course Tutor**

### How do you think taking the course changes people?

You see students become more powerful advocates for people with disabilities as their knowledge of legislation and human rights developments becomes more detailed and nuanced.

On a personal level, it also provides them with the skills and confidence to improve their work practices and progress in their career.



**Meet**  
**Naoya Hyodo**  
**Camphill, Graduate**

### Why did you choose to study with the OTC? What impact has your decision had?

I wanted to improve myself both professionally and personally. I was truly impressed by the support from the College. I never expected such flexible and person centred support from a conventional academic degree course.

The OTC supports practice by building a theoretical foundation for practitioners. Theory enlightens/illuminates practice, and vice versa.



**OTC**  
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## Accredited Training for the Human Services and Nonprofit Sector

### Entry Requirements

Applicants must be 23 years of age at the time of application **or** have successfully completed their Leaving Certificate/QQI/FETAC Level 5 Certificate. All applicants must be linked with a service for people with disabilities for approximately 10 hours a week.

Submit your application on our Online Application Centre page ([opentrainingcollege.com](http://opentrainingcollege.com)).

**International Applicants** must provide appropriate documentary evidence of proficiency in English (i.e. IELTS 6.0).

**All applicants for the Honours BA degree must** hold a cognate qualification, preferably in social care or social studies at Level 7 (180 credits) on NFQ or equivalent.

**Please note:** The requirement for the social care registration is a Level 7 approved Social Care degree. These Level 7 and 8 qualifications listed in this brochure are not being put forward for CORU approval.

### Working Together with the OTC

The Open Training College has spent 25 years working as training experts and consultants for the human services and nonprofit sector.

Our collaborative approach can be organised into three categories:

- Customised Training - onsite local delivery
- HIQA Training and Collaboration
- eLearning - providing a bespoke eLearning platform for your staff

**If you are planning training for your staff or require further information, please contact Conor Murray, our Corporate Services Manager.**

### About the OTC

The Open Training College, established in 1992, is a formally recognised, award winning institution providing programmes leading to QQI awards to the human services and nonprofit sector.

We believe that the learning community created by the collaboration between ourselves, our students and the more than 220 organisations we partner with, has created a unique environment in which people from the human services and nonprofit sector can learn in ways that can make a real difference to the citizens that use our human services.



### Contact

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The College has protection of enrolled learner (PEL) arrangements in place for all relevant QQI validated courses in accordance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

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