



UCD School of Education

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Scoil and Oideachais UCD

Áras Roebuck
An Coláiste Oilischoile, Baile Átha Cliath,
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National Training Programme for Special Needs Assistants: Certificate in Inclusive School Support

October 2020

Dear Principal,

I am writing as Head of UCD School of Education to inform you of a new national online training programme for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). UCD School of Education has been selected by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) to design and deliver this online training programme. UCD School of Education is collaborating with UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems in designing and delivering this programme. The DES is funding this programme and are offering to fund participation on the programme to SNAs currently working in schools.

The programme will consist of five modules, delivered online over a 10-month period. Participation in the programme will involve engagement with an online lecture over two hours, delivered each week outside of school hours. In addition, participants will be required to engage with learning materials and complete related tasks online. They will have access to a comprehensive range of learning resources. Recordings of the lectures and the related learning materials will be available online. Progress through the programme will be monitored on an ongoing basis and there will be an assignment to be completed at the end of each module. On successful completion of the programme, participants will receive a Certificate from UCD School of Education. In addition to the expert lecturers delivering the programme, students will be supported by an Educational Technologist, by tutors and by administrative personnel. An induction session will be held at the beginning of the programme in order to familiarise participants with the technological requirements and other aspects of the programme.

The first cohort of students will consist of 500 participants and the target start date for the first cycle of the programme is January 2021. The timetable for this first cycle is as follows:

Module Number	Module Name	Timeline
Module 1	Inclusive Education of Pupils with Additional Educational Needs	January-February 2021
Module 2	Communication and Language Difficulties	March-April 2021
Module 3	Supporting Students with Autism	May-June 2021
Module 4	Primary Care Needs, including Medical and Complex Needs	September-October 2021
Module 5	Professional Development of Special Needs Assistants	November-December 2021



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All SNAs currently working within the Irish education system, in primary, post-primary and special schools, are eligible to apply for entry into the programme. We, at UCD School of Education and UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, feel that this is a very important initiative to provide formalised training to SNAs. We would greatly appreciate if you would inform the SNAs in your school of this initiative and encourage them to apply. The closing date for applications for the first intake is 15th November 2020 and applicants can apply online by following this link: <https://www.ucd.ie/education/>. If you or any SNAs in your school require further information, please contact sna@ucd.ie. I am attaching a short booklet providing more detailed information on the programme. A further more detailed Course Handbook will be made available to participants on entry to the programme. We would be delighted to welcome SNAs from your school on to the programme.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'William Kinsella'.

Associate Professor William Kinsella
Head of UCD School of Education