



OTC
OPEN TRAINING COLLEGE

2025-26

CERTIFICATE IN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY PRACTICE

Deliver best practice in community-based disability support



ACCREDITED PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FOR STAFF (DISABILITY SECTOR)



HECA

Higher Education
Colleges Association



CERTIFICATE IN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY PRACTICE

Studying with the Open Training College



About the Course

This one year programme will ensure you have the needed qualification to be employed as a frontline support worker. It provides participants with the tools to take a person centred approach to supporting individuals with an intellectual disability to have a good life of their choosing.

“I have worked in the intellectual disability sector since 2001; this course has taught me to have a complete new outlook on advocating for people with disabilities using the correct language and supporting them to be more involved in their local community.”

Claire Deane, Daughters of Charity

Audience

Unqualified healthcare, social care assistants and support workers working in disability services

Award

Certificate in Intellectual Disability Practice (5M1761)

Delivery

Online via Zoom or MyOTC

Model

Online

Duration

1 Year

Award Type

QQI/ FET Level 5 (Major Award)

Credits

120

Start Date

Contact the College

Fees

€1,800

Fees installment payment plans are available. Inclusive of Protection of Enrolled Learner (PEL) insurance cost.

Why Choose The Course?

For People Working In The Disability Sector

The course is intended for practitioners working in disability services. It was created by individuals with extensive frontline experience who fully understand the sector and the challenges of balancing work, life, and learning while working in this field.

Having a relevant QQI Level 5 qualification is a basic requirement to access work as a Care Assistant, Key Worker, Personal Assistant or Community Support Worker in a large number of organisations. If you are working already in a service that is HIQA regulated, a level 5 qualification is increasingly becoming a requirement.



“As someone who hadn’t studied for a number of years, taking part in a Level 5 course with the OTC was an ideal reintroduction to the learning path. It gave me an ideal base in which to progress to my current Social Care degree course with the OTC.”

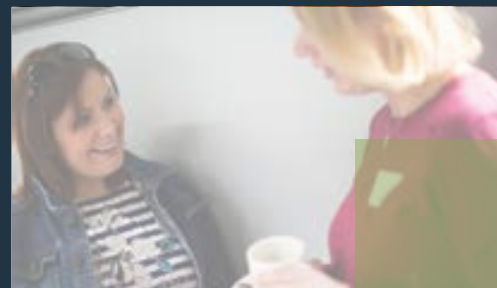
Robbie Loughlin, St. Michael's House



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 Certificate 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

The Certificate in Intellectual Disability Practice provides a perfect pathway to the higher qualifications necessary for career advancement. We see it, for instance, as the ideal first step for those aiming to become registered as a Social Care Worker, which can be achieved upon completing our B.A. in Social Care. Completing the Certificate will enable you to both learn and manage the demands of undertaking a college programme.



What Will I Learn?

The course content is based on:

- Our expertise in the disability and broader social care area
- International best practice
- Current legislation and policy
- Ongoing feedback from course participants
- Input from graduates, professional bodies, regulatory bodies and people with disabilities

This is reflected in the choice of learning objectives, course materials and the award winning approach that has been developed to deliver the course.



After completing the course you will:

- Develop a strong value base that embodies a human rights, person centred approach
- Have in-depth understanding of the sector
- Practice the skills and techniques to empower people to make informed choices
- Facilitate a person to build upon their presence in their community by using community networking tools and techniques
- Develop the knowledge and skills to support a person to learn a skill important to them and their life goals
- Possess the knowledge and skills to enable person with an intellectual disability develop socially valued roles and relationships
- Be prepared and capable of making meaningful contributions as a team member to achieve service goals
- Understand how you can make a difference to people's lives by improving service quality

See opentrainingcollege.com for more details

Course Content

The course is made up of eight modules. A module is a unit of learning covering a particular topic or subject, such as empowerment or community inclusion.

A Major Level 5 Award has six 'core' modules that must be completed to attain the award and two 'elective' modules that customise the course in line with sector needs such as a positive behaviour support approach.

What Is It Like To Study At The College?

The course reading material will be available online via the College e-learning platform, MyOTC. This material is interactive, enabling you to complete knowledge quizzes, watch videos and listen to podcasts from the programme team, and participate in online discussions or posting boards. Learning materials are specifically designed to be accessible, allowing you to organise your study time around your commitments.



Tutorial support is available by telephone, email, and online through virtual groups and individual sessions. If workshops are provided, they will be delivered online via Zoom or in person. We understand that completing an online course can be daunting. Before acceptance, it is essential to understand what is expected. We will provide this technical information to help you prepare. During the course, you will have access to the College's e-learning team, who will help with any technical issues.

The health and well-being of our students and staff are a top priority for the College. While college life is an exciting experience full of new opportunities, it can also be challenging and sometimes overwhelming. Managing life, study, and work balance can be difficult for anyone; we want you to know you are not alone and that support is available through our Health and Wellbeing service. The College believes in fostering a learning community of practice. This means working together with students on their learning journey and being committed to supporting you. Therefore, it is essential that students commit to making use of the wide range of support on offer to have a positive and constructive learning experience.

This learning environment is known as the **OTC Supported Open Learning Model**

Learning Through

Open Learning Materials

Online Database Library/Key Links

Practical Assignments

Workshops/Seminars

The OTC Supported Open Learning Model



Supported by

Telephone/Email
Online Tutorials

Assignment
Feedback

Extensive Online Learning Supports

Help Desk

Workplace
Support

Core Modules

Intellectual Disability Studies

This module serves as an introductory to the course, and intellectual disability. It explores:

- How intellectual disability has traditionally been defined and understood
- How societies have responded to people with intellectual disability
- The history and evolution of support services
- Contemporary thinking and key policy, legislation and practice that informs service provision and the role of the frontline worker

Empowering the Individual

This module provides you with the tools to implement a person centred approach in your job. A person centred approach allows you to:

- Empower individuals and families, where relevant, to make positive life decisions
- Promote empowerment in service delivery

Community Inclusion

Promoting community inclusion and providing the right supports to assist service users develop meaningful links to the community are fundamental tasks in frontline work. This module provides you with the skills to:

- Support a person achieve active involvement in their community; and,
- Support a person to develop roles and relationships that are based on their interests, skills and capacities

Facilitating Learning

This is a practical module that gives you the tools to teach in a way that helps a person learn what matters to them so they can reach their life goals.

Personal Effectiveness

This module provides an opportunity to:

- Assess and reflect on your current capacities and capabilities
- Develop the skills required of a frontline worker, including:
 - Problem solving techniques
 - Professional communication skills
 - Abilities to work effectively with others

Work Practice

This module focuses on your role as a member of a team and how the organisational, regulatory, legal and economic environment you work in impacts on your ability to support service users. It explores how increased professionalism and working within defined policies and procedures make for a more effective workplace.

Electives

Person Centred Focus to Disability

This module explores in detail the philosophy behind the person centred approach to disability and examines how to apply in your day-to-day practice.

It complements and provides the context to empowerment so will be delivered alongside the module, Empowering the Individual.

Behaviours that Challenge

This module provides you with the tools required to support a person exhibiting behaviours that challenge in a very person centred and effective way.

Facilitating Communication through Lámh and Total Communication

(Counts 2 Electives)

This bespoke training is for those who use Lámh extensively in their work and are involved in supporting Lámh users and their families. It provides comprehensive guidance in facilitating Lámh using a total communication approach. www.lamh.org

Lámh



The Course Director View

Meet Claire Hopkins - Course Director

How do students benefit from doing this course?

The course is designed to guide staff in meeting the challenges and opportunities they face in the Intellectual Disability sector. Staff need to be informed of changing policy, legislation, regulation and best practice. This course informs and instructs students on how to enhance their practice in this changing workplace

What is the biggest fear that students have?

I find that participants can lack confidence in their abilities as a practitioner and as a learner. This course will recognise and support the student's strengths.

It will enhance abilities while addressing the areas of practice that need to be better. I am always delighted when I hear students say 'I never saw it in that way before', or 'that is a good idea! I can try that out and see if it works!'.

How does the College support the student?

It can be nerve racking to face the commitment of completing a full award. We understand this and have developed tried and tested supports that will address any concerns and anxieties. We always look forward to working with new students because our model of training delivery revolves around a supportive and respectful environment. Common reactions to the workshop and the course materials have been:

- "Thought provoking"
- "Enjoyable"
- "Made me look at my work in a completely different way"



The Student View

Meet Margaret McDonald - Care Assistant, Daughters of Charity

What made you sign up to the course?

I have been working in disability services for 36 years and have seen some of our residents grow up from childhood to adulthood. It has been such a rewarding time for me. Even with such experience, I agree that we are living in changing times and I agree with the HIQA regulations and I believe strongly that a proper qualification is very important no matter what your age or experience. You are never too old to learn!

Has the OTC supported you through the course?

I had great support from my tutor. She put everything in very simple and easily understood terms. She had me so prepared that even if she wrote my assignment for me, it would be no better than mine.

What was your main concern before starting the course?

I had not studied since doing my Leaving Cert. many, many years ago. I was fearful of the workload and time management issues but I earned to prioritise and balance the required study with my work and family life. I committed to making the most of my opportunity to do the course.

What has been the main benefit from doing the course?

It's given me the skills to take a step back and look at things differently and to analyse my my work practices more constructively. I think I am now more enthusiastic about the work we do and about accommodating new ideas from team members. At the end of the day, it's all about providing a better service for our service users.

Accredited Training for the Human Services and Nonprofit Sector

Entry Requirements

You can apply for this course if you:

- Work at least part time in a disability service
- Volunteer for at least 2-4 hours per week in a disability community based service

If you do not fall into these categories but are interested in the course, please contact us.

How Do I Apply?

You can apply for this course online. To visit our Application Centre please **scan the QR code** where you can:

- Find complete list of all the information you will need to provide when making an application
- Learn about what happens after you've made your application
- Submit and monitor your application

Application Due Date: 15th September 2025



Working Together with the OTC

The Open Training College has spent 30 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.

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

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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.



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