

Special Educational Needs

UCAS Code: Combined Honours only (please see website for details)

Duration: 3 years | Full-time | Hope park | 2026/2027

Placement year opportunities available



Course Overview

The Special Educational Needs course will help you advocate for disability rights and equality in your career. Over 16 million disabled people live in the UK. Graduates skilled in special educational needs and disability are in demand. They are needed in education, health, social work, and business. This degree values the contributions of disabled people and encourages you to focus on knowledge instead of just needs.

A supportive team of both disabled and non-disabled academics will help you gain skills, knowledge, and confidence to lead in this field. You will learn about the historical, social, and cultural factors that shape our views on special educational needs and disability. Activities will enhance your grasp of academic theories. They will also demonstrate how to use this knowledge in real-world situations. The course benefits from the tutors' strong professional backgrounds. It also includes insights from guest speakers and partner organisations. These include disabled-led groups, education and care providers, charities, and disability arts organisations.

Liverpool Hope's Special Educational Needs course is unique. It is led by the Centre for Culture and Disability Studies. This centre is an internationally recognised leader in disability studies research and the only UK research centre focused on disability and culture.

Entry Requirements

This course follows the standard University entry requirements. Please see the website for further information.

Fees and Additional Costs

The tuition fees for 2026/2027 are £9,535 for full-time undergraduate courses.

On top of tuition fees, you also need approximately £200 to purchase key textbooks and to cover the cost of any fieldtrips.

You will also need to consider the cost of your accommodation each year whilst you study at university. Visit our accommodation webpages for further details about our Halls of Residence: www.hope.ac.uk/halls/

Applicants will need access to a computer if course delivery is switched to online. The University has a laptop lending service if remote study is necessary.



**LIVERPOOL
HOPE
UNIVERSITY**

1844

CONTACT

T: +44 (0)151 291 3000

E: enquiry@hope.ac.uk

www.hope.ac.uk

Special Educational Needs Curriculum

Year One

The first year of your special educational needs course provides knowledge and understanding of the key ideas in Disability Studies that you will bring to your study of special educational needs. You will study the following modules:

Understanding Disability: Activism, Rights and Inclusion

This module develops your understanding of the relationship between disability and society and the different ways it has been understood over time. It includes an overview of early historical representations of disability but focuses most significantly on the emergence of categorisation and institutions in the nineteenth century as a basis for understanding contemporary ideas about special educational needs.

Re-thinking Special Education: Culture, Identity and Society

This module relates to the ways disability is represented in culture. It addresses important ideas about how social attitudes towards disability can be challenged or reinforced through, for example, media representations, and it explores the relationship between pity, charity, and disability.

Year Two

The second year of your course is underpinned by the social model of disability. You will develop an understanding of the significance of this in terms of theory and practice in relation to Special Educational Needs.

You will engage with recent research that offers alternative readings of impairment such as work on neurodiversity, dyslexia and lexism, as well as sensory, bodily and cognitive diversity. You will be encouraged to

develop independent research to support your choice for a focused study.

The relationship between embodied and professional knowledge forms an important core for this section of the course. The ethics of professional practice will be explored with reference to a range of educational contexts and professional roles and practice-based research. You will also have an opportunity to enhance your knowledge and awareness of issues relating to ethics of practice and to gain knowledge about future employment opportunities.

This final element of your studies engages with ethical and philosophical as well as practical dimensions of researching special educational needs and disability.

Year Three

Your final begins with a study of contemporary work in special educational needs and disability studies. This includes critical disability theory, ableism/disablism, neo-liberal ableism, knowledge and power, disability and surveillance, race and ableism, the Tripartite model, appreciation and affirmation, and crip theory.

You will explore a range of ideas that connect theory to inclusive practice. Key areas of study include cultural inclusion, inclusion and inclusive education, inclusive and exclusive policy, transformability, Universal Design, and Universal Design for Learning.

This final theme provides important insights into the relationship between special educational needs, disability, and ethics.

Dissertation Phase

You will select an aspect of research related to special educational needs and develop an independent dissertation project in your chosen area.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Teaching on this degree is structured into lectures, where all students are taught together, seminars of smaller groups, and tutorials. You will also use the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle and will have the opportunity for a one-to-one meeting with your tutor each week.

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Throughout your three years of study you will have a number of assessments, including a portfolio, essays, posters, an annotated bibliography, journal analysis and information pack. In your final year you complete a dissertation research project.

You will receive formative and summative feedback. This will include written feedback with opportunities for a one-to-one discussion of feedback with your tutors.



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