

Special Educational Needs & Disability Studies BA (Hons)

UCAS Code: X11C | Duration: 3 years | Full-time | Hope Park | 2026/2027

Placement year opportunities available



Course Overview

This course in Special Educational Needs & Disability Studies will help you advocate for disability rights. In the UK, over 16 million people are disabled. Graduates with skills in this area are needed in education, health, social work, local government, and business. We encourage you to focus on knowledge rather than just needs.

You will work with a supportive team of both disabled and non-disabled academics. They will help you build the skills, knowledge, and confidence to lead in this field. You'll look at the historical, social, and cultural factors that shape how we view special educational needs and disability. Activities will help you understand academic theories better. You'll see how these theories apply in real jobs. Alongside tutors with extensive experience, guest speakers and partner organizations will contribute to your learning. These include disabled-led groups, education providers, charities, and disability arts organizations.

Liverpool Hope's course is unique because of its link to the Centre for Culture and Disability Studies. This centre leads in disability studies research. It is the only UK centre that focuses on disability and culture.

In your second year, you can undertake a placement. This experience will help you see how disability studies relate to your future profession.

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 £9,790 for full-time undergraduate courses.

As well as tuition fees, you will need approximately £200 to purchase any necessary texts during your three years of study. There will also be travel costs when you go on placement, this usually costs around £100.

You will also need to consider the cost of your accommodation 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.



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Special Educational Needs & Disability Studies

BA (Hons) Curriculum

Year One

The first year of your special educational needs & disability studies course provides you with knowledge and understanding of the key ideas in special educational needs & disability studies. You will study the following modules:

Understanding Disability: Activism, Rights and Inclusion

This module enables you to develop an understanding of the relationship between disability and society, and the different ways it has been understood over time. You will explore disability in early years, youth, adulthood, later life, and old age. This deepens your understanding of the relationship between disability and education throughout the life course.

Re-thinking Special Education: Culture, Identity and Society

A key focus of your first year relates to how disability is represented in culture. This includes examining how social attitudes towards disability can be challenged or reinforced, for example through media representations, and opens up important discussions about the relationship between pity, charity, and disability. You will develop an understanding of the relationship between disability and social practices that shape the everyday experiences of disabled people and the ways in which we think about SEN and disability.

In addition, you will study two Faculty of Education and Social Sciences common core modules: Being Human and Education and Society.

Year Two

Social Theory of Disability

The second year is underpinned by the social model of disability. You will develop an understanding of its significance in both theory and practice in relation to special educational needs & disability studies.

Exploring Diversity, Disability and Education

You will engage with research offering alternative readings of impairment, including work on neurodiversity, dyslexia and lexism, as well as sensory, bodily, and cognitive diversity.

Exploring Professional Values and Attitudes

The relationship between embodied and professional knowledge forms a core part of this section of the course. The ethics of professional practice are explored

with reference to a range of educational contexts, professional roles, and practice-based research.

Researching Disability

This final element of second-year study engages with the ethical, philosophical, and practical dimensions of researching disability.

If you study this course as a single honours, you will also explore different approaches to understanding education, society, and professional practice through completing a placement.

Year Three

Theories of Disability

In the final year you will study contemporary work in special educational needs & 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.

Inclusive Practice

You will explore a range of ideas that connect theory with inclusive practice.

Disability and Ethics

This theme provides important insights into the relationship between disability and ethics. Topics include disability ethics and technology, the ethics of intervention such as medical intervention, and the ethics of choice.

If you study this course as a single honours, you will also have the opportunity to choose from a range of specialist modules in social sciences and education.

Dissertation Phase

You will identify an aspect of study related to special educational needs & disability studies and develop a piece of independent research into your chosen area. The following courses are indicative of topics available in your final year:

- Neither Seen nor Heard: Listening to the Stories of Marginalised Young People
- Policy Analysis: Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Disability
- Researching the Cultural History of Learning Disability
- Disablement & Time
- Metanarratives of Disability and Assumed Authority
- Disability Rights, Chronic Illness and Chronic Pain

- Researching the Representation of Disability in Popular Culture
- Exploring Chronic Illness, Neurodiversity and Mental Health Distress
- Disability and Disney
- Neurodiversity
- Disability Studies, Arts and Education
- Disability and the Built Environment.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Teaching on this degree is structured into lectures, where all students are taught together, seminars of smaller groups of around 15-20 students, tutorials which typically have no more than 10 students, and workshops. You will also have the opportunity to have a one-to-one meeting with your tutor each week.

In your first year of study, there are approximately 12 teaching hours each week, which reduces to approximately 10 teaching hours each week in your second and third years. On top of teaching hours, you will be expected to spend 12-14 hours studying independently each week, as well as studying in groups to prepare for any group assessments that you may have. This degree also has a compulsory placement.

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

During your degree, there are a variety of different assessments to ensure you are given a range of opportunities to demonstrate your knowledge, skills and understanding of the academic and professional components of the degree. These include essays, portfolios, poster and other presentations, and case studies.

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.