



**Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies (Disability) (BDD)
Ordinary Degree Programme**

**Standards required for acceptance into Year One of
the Applied Social Studies course**

Criteria in relation to place of employment

How might my work affect my studies?

The Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies (Disability) (BDD) Ordinary Degree is an applied degree programme. It is compulsory that students apply their coursework learning to their everyday work practice and refer to this process within their written assignments. In order to be accepted for a place on the course, applicants must therefore:

- Have been employed for a minimum of one year in an organisation that provides services to people with disabilities (applicants who work for Agencies and are 'on-call' will not be considered);
- Be working a minimum of 10 daytime hrs a week (the working week needs to be day or evening work but not night duty);
- If employed on the relief panel of organisations, support their application with a letter from their Human Resources Department outlining their estimated hours of work and future projection of hours;
- Be able to work regularly (weekly) with the same service users in order to complete assignments;
- Complete Section 5 of the application form which requires details of the applicants employment, their agency, details of how the agency will support them through their degree and the name and signature of a local support Manager).

Academic Standards

What is the required level?

Prospective applicants to the BDD Ordinary degree programme frequently inquire as to the academic level required for a place on the first year of the course. The majority of our students are returning to the education process after a long gap and are anxious to know if they are capable of studying at first year degree level. What if they begin the course and find that the level is too high?

This is a common fear among adult learners and, as a College, we work hard at providing a variety of supports for students during their years with us to facilitate them to ‘fill the gaps’ in knowledge on areas such as referencing, academic writing and preparing for exams. However, applicants are required to meet certain standards in order to be offered a place on the first year of the course.

This is because the BDD is accredited by the Higher Education and Awards Council (HETAC) at level 7 on the National Qualifications Framework <http://www.nqai.ie>. This is the level for ‘ordinary’ degree programmes and so it is expected that students will be capable of maintaining the associated level of competence in their written assignments and course work.

What do I need to be able to do?

In order to ascertain that students are at a place where they are ready to start a degree programme, the Open Training College requires applicants to:

1. Complete an application form, which includes details of their second and/or further and higher education awards.
2. If English is not their first language, supply evidence of proficiency in English.
3. Attend an ‘Applicants Day’ – a half-day interview and information session.

All applicants will be required to complete a piece of writing when they attend applicants’ day. From this, applicants will be assessed for their use of English from their:

- Proficiency in constructing sentences that result in a written account that relates to the question asked. (e.g. the writer is able to produce writing that flows from one sentence to another in an intelligible manner).
- Ability to express abstract thought. (e.g. the writer is able to use language relating to intellectual and theoretical ideas).
- Ability to develop a cohesive narrative. (e.g. the writer is able to express different points of view and develop a line of reasoning).
- Use of grammar, tenses, punctuation, vocabulary and spelling.

Please note that applicants who have specific learning requirements or any medical conditions that might impact on their learning (e.g. dyslexia related conditions), must indicate the same to the College on their written application form. This allows for their application process to be dealt with on an individual basis.

Associated Standards

Applicants will also be required to attend a brief interview with members of the College staff team in which they will be asked to respond to questions about any relevant prior learning and past academic experiences. Students will also be asked about areas of their lives that influence their ability to study at the required level. These include:

- Interpersonal/Communication Skills
- Motivation behind applying for the course
- Commitment to studying
- I.T. Skills
- Agency Support

I.T. Standard

It is important that students recognise that they need to be competent at using IT in order to succeed on the course. As with the majority of distance learning programmes in Higher Education today, many of the elements of the BDD (Ord) degree programme are delivered on-line. Students are expected to submit their assignments electronically and be comfortable using a pc for word processing and for accessing the internet and emailing. There is an IT workshop during first year to upskill students with IT skills but it assumes that students have a good working knowledge of information technology.

Assessing an applicants' overall standard

Each of the areas covered in the interview process will be rated on a scale of one to four:

Rating Scale for Applicants:

1. Does not reach the College standard
2. Marginal
3. Acceptable
4. Good
5. Excellent

Where applicants are rated at an overall average 1.or 2., they will be advised against attending the BDD (Ord) degree programme. This decision will be made on the basis that they need to build up additional academic expertise in order to reach the required standard for entry to a degree programme. Where possible, applicants will be advised on alternative programmes of study.