

Entry Requirements

Participants will have a third level qualification or a recognised professional qualification in a field related to Family Support service delivery. In addition, as the programme is not geared towards individuals coming out of undergraduate programmes, a minimum of three year's work experience in the health and social services and related areas, will be required of candidates.

As there currently exists a set of practitioners working with children and families in community settings who despite a wealth of skill, have not attained a formal recognised undergraduate qualification, two places will be offered on the programme at Diploma level.

Course Attendance

The Higher Diploma/Masters is a two-year part-time programme and requires students to attend college two days every second week over four semesters, with the agreement of their employers. In addition, students will be required to complete practice projects and some distance learning.

Recruitment

Recruitment for the programme will be by application form and interview. Applicants are invited to apply through the Admissions Office NUI, Galway.

Programme Staff

The core staffing of the programme will comprise a part-time Director, who, in addition to overseeing the programme, will teach core modules. The main teaching staff will be drawn from the host department of Political Science and Sociology, while staff from other Departments including Law, and Health Promotion will also be involved. An important aspect of the programme will be the use of external expertise, to be drawn from practice and academic settings, for particular specialist inputs. A number of specific topics relating to practice interventions will be taught by guest lecturers within the relevant professional field. Each student will be assigned a tutor to offer him/her ongoing support with written work including essay assignments, research design and implementation.

Quality Assurance

Robert J. Chaskin is the external examiner to the course and programme advisor. He is an Associate Professor at the School of Social Service Administration and a Research Fellow at the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.



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National University of Ireland, Galway
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**Faculty of Arts
Department of Political Science
and Sociology**

Higher Diploma/Master of Arts Programme in Family Support Studies

The Higher Diploma/M.A. Programme in Family Support Studies offers a vocational postgraduate qualification and professional training in Family Support Policy and Practice.

This programme is supported by The Department of Health and Children.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

In recent times, there has been a shift towards a more pro-active stance in relation to social services for children and their families. Family Support represents an important framework within this overall trend and in essence, can be described as efforts which develop, compensate for, enable and strengthen family functioning. Family Support explicitly recognises the need to refocus interventions with children and families, so that professionals and agencies become preventative rather than reactive, and holistic rather than compartmentalised.

Offering a Higher Diploma/M.A. in Family Support Studies in collaboration with other key stakeholders offers an opportunity for NUI, Galway to initiate a programme that will advance the family support skills of professionals.

Higher Diploma/Masters in Family Support Studies

Year 1

Family Support Theory 1
Family Support Practice 1
Families and Children in Society and Policy 1
Family Support Practice Seminars

Child Protection and Family Support
Community Development and Families
Working with specific populations in Family Support, Disability, Ethnicity and Homelessness

(End Of Year One-Option To Exit With Higher Diploma)

Year 2

Family Support Theory 2
Family Support Practice 2
Families and Children in Society and Policy 2

Law and Family Support
Health Promotion and Families
Thesis Research Seminar

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The overriding purpose of this programme is to further the education, training and skill enhancement of professionals with a common interest in Family Support and includes the following key objectives:

- To educate participants in respect of core theoretical ideas underpinning Family Support Work;
- To develop key skills in Family Support work among participants;
- To provide participants with project management and evaluation skills;
- To develop participants' research and report writing skills;
- To enhance the quality of Family Support services delivered by relevant state, voluntary and community agencies;
- To strengthen the knowledge base of Family Support theory, policy and practice.

PROGRAMME TARGET GROUP

A Higher Diploma/M.A. qualification in Family Support will have a great appeal among many professionals working in state and voluntary services on behalf of children and families. In the main, the target group for this programme will come from the health and social services sector including Social Workers, Residential and Community Social Care Workers, Public Health Nurses, Youth Workers and Early Years Workers among others. Reflecting the inter-disciplinary nature of the area, the course will also target professionals from community work, education, justice, social welfare and other fields.