



THE IRISH  
**HOSPICE**  
FOUNDATION



**RCSI**

# **Postgraduate Diploma/MSc Bereavement Studies**

## **Course Profile**



2014/2015

# Postgraduate Diploma/MSc Bereavement Studies

Course Profile 2014/2015

**The Irish Hospice Foundation  
Morrison Chambers  
32 Nassau Street  
Dublin 2**

**Tel: (01) 679 3188 Fax: (01) 673 0040  
e-mail: [maura.dunne@hospicefoundation.ie](mailto:maura.dunne@hospicefoundation.ie)  
website: [www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)**

## Postgraduate Diploma/MSc Bereavement Studies

### Background

Loss, grief and bereavement have a significant impact on our development as human beings and through the life cycle. The understanding of bereavement is a cross-sectoral issue, spanning health, social services, education and voluntary sectors. This programme (originally a Higher Diploma) had its first intake of students in 2004. It was designed to meet a number of needs, specifically gaps in formal knowledge relating to the support of bereaved individuals and a lack of bereavement infrastructure and training in Ireland. This education programme equips palliative care and health and social-care professionals from varied disciplines with the theoretical knowledge and practical skill to develop appropriate responses to bereavement at individual, community and regional levels.

### Course structure

The Irish Hospice Foundation and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland invite applications for this part-time programme. The programme is a two year MSc course (with the choice of exiting with a Postgraduate Diploma after one year).

Invitations are invited from representatives of a wide range of professional disciplines whose work or volunteering roles involve the provision or organisation of bereavement support services.



## Aims and Objectives of the Programme

The programme aims to promote the development of a bereavement support infrastructure in Ireland which is evidence-based, sensitive to Irish culture, to the range of grief reactions experienced by individuals and which acknowledges the fundamentally normal context of loss. The programme aims to promote competence, understanding and application of research findings to bereavement care in Ireland and to develop expert educators.

### Specific educational objectives:

- *Critically debate theoretical understanding and knowledge about grief and grief support structures relating to health, community and work organisations and in the voluntary sector.*
- *Critique and display counselling skills in the context of loss and bereavement.*
- *Evaluate different perspectives on loss and bereavement; including loss through the life cycle, family bereavement, cultural issues, gender issues, ethical issues*
- *Critique the organisation of bereavement support and formulate strategic and systematic developments in bereavement care.*
- *Design models for self-care and staff support in environments where people are consistently working with or meeting dying, death and bereavement.*
- *Critically interpret, apply and design bereavement research.*
- *Manage changes in work practices relative to an area of bereavement care.*
- *Design education resources and interventions for a range of settings relative to bereavement and loss needs*
- *Reflect on personal development and personal growth through the educational experience.*
- *Exhibit an integrated value-based and evidence-based approach to the support of bereaved children and adults.*

## Course details

This is a part-time course. Successful completion of six modules will result in the award of Postgraduate Diploma Bereavement Studies. Completion of a further three modules in year two will result in the award of MSc Bereavement Studies. Each module consists of 250 hours of learning including lecture time, self-directed learning, course preparation, examination time, and supervision. The two year programme equates to 90 credits and it is devised to support Level 9 learning outcomes (National Framework of Qualifications).

Modules - Year I and II

---

## Year I

### M1: Theories and models of grief, bereavement and mourning (Year I)

The main emphasis is on grief as a psychological and social phenomenon. Opportunity will be given to explore grief through the life cycle, paying particular attention to how theories of grief have evolved. Attention will also focus on how models have adapted and changed as empirical studies have challenged what were previously strongly-held beliefs about the grief process.

*Module Co-ordinator – Dr Helen Greally*

### M2: Bereavement counselling (Year I)

This module provides a framework for bereavement counselling and a general understanding of the pertinent issues. Course content will include; current research in the area, working with different populations and impact on self. Topics include personal experience of loss, models translating to practice working with complicated and uncomplicated bereavement, counselling bereaved children, legal and ethical issues, working with difference and the role of support and supervision.

*Module Co-ordinator - Dr Susan Delaney*

### M3: Research - methods and appraisal (Year I)

The main approaches to research and methodology will be introduced – quantitative and qualitative. Research methods will be studied in order to help participants to critically evaluate published research material. Participants will learn how to use technology to retrieve published literature. Research specific to bereavement will be explored and the contemporary sources identified.

*Module Co-ordinator – Ms Orla Keegan*

**M4: Perspectives on grief (Year I)**

The objective of this module is to apply different lenses to examining grief – for example; sociological and cultural approaches, age and development, family and spirituality. This module explores some factors that may influence the experience of loss and the language we use to describe bereavement. It identifies dimensions across with individuals will differ, and it moves beyond a purely individual framework to explore grief. A disenfranchised grief perspective will be used to integrate topics.

*Convenor - Breffni McGuinness, Guest Speakers*

*Module Co-ordinator – Ms Orla Keegan*

**M5: Systems of bereavement support (Year I)**

This module sets out to identify the principles and practices underlying a range of community and health-service bereavement support systems. Bereavement support structures will be described and an attempt made to uncover dimensions of quality in practice. The module includes a discussion and forum on standards in bereavement care and recent developments in bereavement care assessment systems.

*Module Co-ordinator – Ms Orla Keegan*

**M6: Self care and caring for carers (Year I)**

The aim of this module is to provide both theoretical and experiential bases for the development of self and staff care programmes. The module will examine individual and organisational influences on health of carers – in work or volunteering roles. An introduction to the concepts of stress, burnout and compassion fatigue will be explored alongside the emotional dynamics of working with people who are facing and dealing with significant losses. An experiential introduction to mindfulness based stress reduction will be run over five weeks as part of this module. Important organisational processes such as team work and conflict management are also included as study topics.

*Convenors - Ms Paula Bermingham, Dr Susan Delaney, Mr Breffni McGuinness, Dr Ray O Donnchadha*

*Module Co-ordinator – Ms Orla Keegan*

## Year II

### **M7: Advanced research methods (Year II)**

This module aims to equip students with skills to plan a research proposal focusing on an aspect of bereavement or loss. The methodological, practical and ethical considerations are reviewed. The advanced module builds on research and critical appraisal skills developed through the research module Year One.

*Convenors - Dr Mimi Tatlow, Dr Amanda Roberts and external speakers*

*Module Co-ordinator - Ms Orla Keegan*

### **M8: Education and teaching in grief and bereavement (Year II)**

This module aims to prepare course participants to understand the principles of death and bereavement education. The means of assessing education need and the principles of education design and group facilitation will be examined, studied and critiqued.

*Convenors - Mr Fergal Finnegan, NUI Maynooth, IHF Staff (Breffni McGuinness, Orla Keegan) and guest speakers*

*Module Co-ordinator - Ms Orla Keegan*

### **M9: Structuring bereavement support (Year II)**

This module takes a change management approach to identifying gaps in current bereavement care in the participant's setting. Project management techniques will be explored and appropriate strategies to address gaps and evaluate impact will be developed.

*Convenors - IHF Staff (Breffni McGuinness, Dr Susan Delaney, Orla Keegan) and external Dr Pauline Joyce, Dr Luke Feeney and guest speakers*

*Module Co-ordinator - Ms Orla Keegan*

## Assessment

A range of assessment methods will be applied as outlined in the following table. These include written coursework in the form of critical review, case study, literature review, care plan and examination. One assignment will involve a group presentation.

Modules	Year	Type of Module	Assessment	Marks
Theories and models of grief, bereavement and mourning	I	Core	Critical review of book	100
Bereavement counselling	I	Core	Case study	100
Research methods and appraisal	I	Core	Literature review	100
Perspectives on grief	I	Core	Written examination	100
Systems of bereavement support	I	Core	Group presentation and exam question	100
Self-care and caring for carers	I	Core	Care plan(s)	100
Advanced research	II	Core	Research proposal	100
Educating about bereavement and loss	II	Core	Learning Intervention	100
Structuring bereavement support	II	Core	Work project	100

## Minimum Pass Mark

A pass in a module may be awarded to candidates who obtain 50% overall.

The pass mark may be obtained by combining the total marks obtained for the various assessments specified for an individual module. Where a module consists of more than one element of assessment candidates must obtain a minimum of 45% in each element.

## Pass by Compensation

- Compensation may be applied in the case of a candidate who has failed one module in the following circumstances:
- The marks obtained in the examination in the module being considered for compensation must not be lower than 45%.
- The pass standard must be reached in all the remaining examination subjects.
- Aggregate gross marks above the pass standard obtained in modules must be at least double the deficiency in the examined module being considered for compensation.
- Compensation can only be applied where all examinations are presented at the same sitting i.e. a candidate may not pass a repeat examination

## Accreditation

The course is convened by the Irish Hospice Foundation and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. It is accredited by the National University of Ireland and by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland as a Level 9 postgraduate qualification.

## Admission Requirements

Candidates must fulfil the NUI entry requirements or be eligible for matriculation. The candidate is required to hold an honours primary degree or equivalent in any subject (each candidate's application will be considered on an individual basis) **OR** a professional qualification in relevant fields with significant work experience and responsibilities.

Entry to MSc year 2 requires successful completion of six core modules from year 1.

An academic transcript will be requested. An academic transcript lists your complete academic history: programmes attended, a breakdown of marks/grades achieved, the degree awarded, your overall grade and conferring date.

**International degrees** are to be verified by using the service at the following link:  
<http://www.naric.org.uk/index.asp?page=2>.



## Time Commitment

The programme runs from **September 2014**. Classes for Year One are held every **Wednesday from 1.30pm to 6.00pm**. There are seven Saturday sessions in Year One. No classes are scheduled in July or August. Participants are expected to attend all sessions and to devote time to the self-directed learning and assignments associated with the programme.

While contact hours or lectures make up 30 hours per module, this course is designed relative to the QQI and ECT systems. A guideline of 250 student hours **per module** to include contact time, course work preparation, self-directed learning and reading is suggested although individual students may vary in the time commitment required.

## Staffing

The programme will be directed by the professional staff of the Irish Hospice Foundation with core modules and inputs from the academic, hospice, and community sectors in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

## Application and selection procedure

Applicants **MUST APPLY ON LINE**. Applications can be accessed and completed on the RCSI website through the following link: [www.rcsi.ie/bereavement](http://www.rcsi.ie/bereavement) from March. Applications will be processed through the Irish Hospice Foundation and final selection may be based on interview.

In completing your application form please provide full details of your experience and potential to apply learning in your work or volunteering role. This application form will be used for selection purposes.

**Closing date for application is Wednesday, May 9th 2014**

## Participants

Participants on the course will reflect a range of disciplines from clinical and non-clinical backgrounds – e.g. nurses, social workers, teachers and community, voluntary and statutory personnel.

**Fees** for EU students (non EU students, please contact for rates)

Year 1 Fees:	Year 2 Fees:
€4,050	€4,050
+€200 Booking fee	+€200 Booking fee

*This includes an IHF supplement of €50 for display, photocopying & printing of downloaded electronic material.*

Annual fees may be paid in two instalments. A non-refundable booking fee of **€200** must accompany your acceptance of the place on each year of the programme. The first instalment of fees must be paid prior to Registration. Cheques should be made payable to The Irish Hospice Foundation. Fees are eligible for tax relief.

### Location

All classes, tutorials and seminars will be held at the training rooms of the Irish Hospice Foundation, 4th Floor, Morrison Chambers, 32 Nassau Street, Dublin 2.

The Irish Hospice Foundation also houses the Thérèse Brady library, a specialist Library for a niche collection of bereavement books, journals and resources.

### For general enquiries contact:

**Maura Dunne**

Education Administrator  
Irish Hospice Foundation, Morrison Chambers,  
32 Nassau Street, Dublin 2.

**Tel:** (01) 6793188

**Fax:** (01) 6730040

**e-mail:** maura.dunne@hospicefoundation.ie

### Course content enquires

Enquiries on course content to

**Orla Keegan**

Course Director,  
Morrison Chambers, Irish Hospice Foundation,  
32 Nassau Street, Dublin 2.

**Tel:** 01 6793188

**e-mail:** orla.keegan@hospicefoundation.ie

**Online applications will be accepted until  
Wednesday, May 9th 2014. Access the online  
application form through the following link:  
[www.rcsi.ie/bereavement](http://www.rcsi.ie/bereavement)**



THE IRISH  
**HOSPICE**  
FOUNDATION

## The Irish Hospice Foundation

The Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) is a national charity dedicated to all matters relating to dying, death and bereavement in Ireland.

Our vision is that no one should face death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

The Irish Hospice Foundation runs a number of education and training programmes, primarily concerned with bereavement and loss.

**Irish Hospice Foundation**

Morrison Chambers

32 Nassau St, Dublin 2

**Tel:** (01) 679 3188

**Fax:** (01) 673 0040

**www.hospicefoundation.ie**

**E-mail:** [maura.dunne@hospicefoundation.ie](mailto:maura.dunne@hospicefoundation.ie)

[www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)

[www.bereaved.ie](http://www.bereaved.ie)