

Autism Studies



“I thoroughly enjoyed the course and am finding the knowledge I gained invaluable in my work with young people with autism and their families. It was also extremely inspiring to work and study alongside other professionals in the field.”

Annette Box, Resource Base Co-ordinator

Autism Studies at the School of Education

The Autism Centre for Education and Research (ACER) is a world-leading centre focusing on autism and education, based in the Department of Disability, Inclusion and Special Education Needs (DISN) within the University of Birmingham's School of Education.

ACER: The Autism Centre for Education and Research

ACER has two main purposes:

- to initiate and respond to research proposals on education, care and support for individuals on the autism spectrum across the lifespan.
- to provide programmes of study and training. These are designed to meet the needs of those who work with and support people on the autism spectrum, including educators, clinicians, care providers, other practitioners and parents.

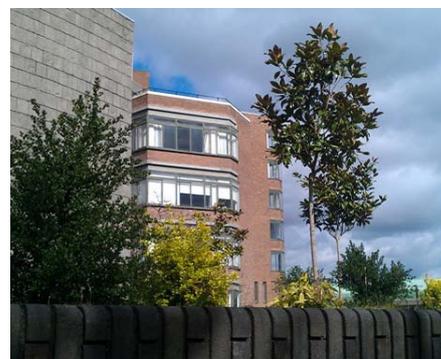
The ACER team has a range of experience working with children and adults across education, health and social care, within the state, voluntary and independent sectors. Our research and training activities involve collaboration with people on the autism spectrum, practitioners and carers, and partnership with key policymakers and institutions in the UK and internationally. A core principle of our approach is the importance of the user voice and this is reflected in every aspect of our teaching and research.

The ACER team includes:

- Dr Karen Guldberg
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- Dr Lila Kossovaki
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For further information on the ACER team and our current activities please check our webpages: www.birmingham.ac.uk/acer

The autism programmes available from the School of Education enable students to build on their current understanding of individuals on the autism spectrum. Through our courses students increase their knowledge and skills in relation to understanding autism, and consider the principles that underpin interventions. Students are encouraged and supported to evaluate their own practice, and apply their learning in their work or home setting. Our courses attract an international cohort of students.



Qualifications can be gained at different levels of study depending on a student's entry qualifications and experience. These include University Certificate, Advanced Certificate, Bachelor of Philosophy, Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master of Education. Vocational qualifications and experience are taken into account, and our courses offer a progression route so that students can for example begin at entry level (University Certificate) and potentially progress on to gain a degree (BPhil) after three years of part-time study.

Our autism programmes form part of the postgraduate courses provided by the Disability Inclusion and Special Needs Department (DISN) in the School of Education. If you are interested in any of the other programmes within DISN, please visit: www.birmingham.ac.uk/din

ACER also supports a large and vibrant community of doctoral research students, studying both part- and full-time. Please visit: www.birmingham.ac.uk/acer-courses

Programme/Course	Level of Award/Qualification	Mode of Study	Programme Tutor(s)
Autism Spectrum (Webautism)	University Certificate (UCert)	Web-based distance education	Andrea MacLeod Dr Kerstin Wittemeyer
Autism (Adults)	Advanced Certificate (AdCert) Bachelor of Philosophy (BPhil) Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) Master in Education (MEd)	Distance Education	Andrea MacLeod
Autism (Children)	Advanced Certificate (AdCert) Bachelor of Philosophy (BPhil) Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) Master in Education (MEd)	Distance education (part-time)	Dr Karen Guldberg Dr Despina Papoudi
		Campus-taught (full- and part-time)	Dr Kerstin Wittemeyer Dr Despina Papoudi

Autism (Adults)

Adcert, BPhil, PGCert, PGDip, MEd
Distance Learning



Is this programme for you?

This programme is designed for practitioners working with adults across the autism spectrum within vocational, educational, social care or therapeutic services. It is studied part-time and draws upon each student's own experience. It is appropriate for those working in schools, further/ higher education, care, support or therapeutic services.

What does the programme offer?

The aims of the programme are to give students knowledge of the autism spectrum based on current theory, research and practice. Students are able to interpret their knowledge for the support and education of adults with autism. Course content encompasses the range of ability and settings. The programme also aims to develop skills in identifying and meeting the needs of adults with autism, and to improve the student's awareness of different approaches. It encourages students to think for themselves and use their professional skills to select and research topics of relevance to their own situation. In this way, the student's learning directly influences their practice, benefitting their professional setting and the individuals they support. The importance of the user voice is reflected in all teaching material.

What is the content of the course?

There are three compulsory modules in order to get an Autism (Adults) qualification and, for qualifications where a dissertation is involved, this also must be in the area of Autism (Adults).

Compulsory modules:

Autism (Adults): Understanding and working with the continuum of need:

This module develops understanding of the diversity on the autism spectrum and illustrates the ways in which current research and theory can inform an autism-friendly approach.

Autism (Adults): Intervention, support and education:

This module explores a range of approaches that facilitate autonomy and inclusion for adults with autism, covering different sectors and needs to reflect the adult lifespan and autism spectrum.

A special studies (project) module:

An independent investigation on a topic relating to the support or education of adults with autism, allowing students to develop their investigative skills and reflect on their own practice.

Qualifications and Progression

These modules are studied in the first year and lead to the award of Advanced Certificate or Postgraduate Certificate. For students wishing to gain a Postgraduate Diploma, three more modules from one other field of study are explored in the second year. For students wishing to gain a Bachelor of Philosophy or Masters, further modules in other fields are studied and a dissertation submitted.

How do you study?

These programmes are offered by distance education. Each student has a personal tutor in a regional or online tutor group. Study is supported through study packs, tutorial groups, telephone, email and online contact, which encourages students to develop through shared experience. Internet access is required for the programme. There are two University- based study weekends.

What are the entry requirements?

Academic and/or professional qualifications and prior experience are taken into account and in some cases can form an integral part of the entry requirements.

The level at which you study will normally depend on your previous academic qualifications and professional experience. For applicants who do not hold a recognised degree or equivalent, there are opportunities for progression through undergraduate and postgraduate level study in most programmes on offer. Please consult the admissions tutor for further advice and information.

Admissions Tutor: Autism (Adults)

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Programme Administrator:

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How do you apply?

For more information on this programme and to **apply online** go to:

www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/distance/edu/autism-adults.aspx

If you are unsure of what to include in your application, please send as much information as possible to demonstrate your qualifications and relevant experience.

All programmes of study start in September each year.



Autism (Children)

Adcert, BPhil, PGCert, PGDip, MEd

Full-time or part-time on campus, or part-time by distance education



Is this programme for you?

This programme is designed for practitioners working with children and young people across the autism spectrum. It is appropriate for those working in early years provision, schools, colleges, residential care, vocational, social care or therapeutic services, and draws upon each student's own experience.

What does the programme offer?

There are three compulsory modules in the first year of part-time study. In the second year of part-time study, students chose optional modules in areas of specific interest. In addition, students pursuing a BPhil or Masters degree will write a dissertation on a topic within the field of autism that is of interest and value to them. Full-time students will complete all modules and (if applicable) their dissertation in one academic year.

What is the content of the course?

There are three compulsory modules in the first year of part-time study. In the second year of part-time study, students chose optional modules in areas of specific interest. In addition, students pursuing a BPhil or Masters degree will write a dissertation on a topic within the field of autism that is of interest and value to them. Full-time students will complete all modules and (if applicable) their dissertation in one academic year.

Compulsory modules:

Special educational needs of children

This module enhances the student's understanding of the nature of autism, and considers the educational needs and issues that may arise from early years to further education. The rationale and practice in different types of educational provision are examined.

Curriculum and approaches for children with autism

This module examines the rationale and evidence base for different educational interventions developed for and used with children and young people on the autism spectrum. It enables the student to consider practice in their own settings, and aims to develop skills in evaluating interventions in terms of process and outcomes.

A special studies (project) module

For this module, students choose a topic of interest and value to their own situation and practice. They are encouraged to carry out a small-scale study with children, staff, or parents and carers to ascertain the value of the practice or policy concerned. Where a student does not currently have access to children, staff, or parents, it is possible to conduct a literature review on a particular topic in the area of autism.

Qualifications and Progression

These three modules are studied in the first year and lead to the award of Advanced Certificate or Postgraduate Certificate. For students wishing to gain a Postgraduate Diploma, three more modules from autism or another field of study are explored in the second year. For students wishing to gain a BPhil or Masters degree, further modules in autism and/or other fields are studied and a dissertation submitted, which must be in the area of autism.

How do you study?

Distance Education:

The programme is offered part-time on a Distance Education basis, so that students from anywhere in the UK and internationally can access the programme. Each student has a regional or online tutor group and attends face to face or online tutorials twice a term. All students are invited to attend two study weekends per year at the University of Birmingham in their first and second year of study (in September and April).

Study is supported through written materials, tutorial groups, email and online resources. Internet access is required for the programme.

Campus Education:

Students from the UK can study full-time or part-time if they are able to travel to the University of Birmingham campus to attend lectures.

Full-time study on campus is available for international students from outside the UK.

The campus-based programme includes classes and tutorials, normally scheduled for early evening to accommodate working professionals, as well as independent study.

What are the entry requirements?

Academic and/or professional qualifications and prior experience are taken into account, and in some cases can form an integral part of the entry requirements.

The level at which you study will normally depend on your previous academic qualifications and professional experience. For applicants who do not hold a recognised degree or equivalent, there are opportunities for progression to undergraduate and postgraduate level study in most programmes on offer. Please consult the admissions tutor for further advice and information.

Admissions Tutors: Autism (Children)

Distance Education:

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Campus Education:

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Programme Administrators:

Distance Education:

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Campus Education:

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How do you apply?

For more information on the Autism (Children) programmes and to **apply online** go to:

www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/taught/edu/autism-children.aspx

If you are unsure of what to include in your application, please send as much information as possible to demonstrate your qualifications and relevant experience.

Early application is advised as places are allocated on a first come first served basis. All programmes of study start in September each year.

Autism Spectrum (Webautism programme)

UCert

Web-based distance education



Is this programme for you?

This programme of study will be of particular interest to those who are working with children and adults on the autism spectrum and have no prior Higher Education qualification. Learning support assistants, support staff and parents will find the programme particularly helpful.

What does the programme offer?

The programme is designed to provide students with a broad understanding of the autism spectrum, an insight into current practice, and an introduction to the latest research and. It will prepare both practitioners and parents to draw upon recognised strategies for meeting the needs of individuals with autism in a variety of settings such as in the home, classroom, or supported living environments.

What is the content of the course?

Three compulsory modules need to be completed to gain the University Certificate.

Compulsory modules:

Webautism: Understanding and responding to the autism spectrum

This module explores what it means to be a person on the autism spectrum. Students are encouraged to examine their own practice in relation to current literature and understanding, and to look at ways in which they can meet the specific needs of a person with whom they work.

Webautism: Working with individuals on the autism spectrum

This module introduces students to key approaches in the support and education of people with autism across the lifespan and spectrum of autism. The module will consider how approaches should take account of individual needs and preferences and remove barriers to participation.

Webautism: Models for practice when working with people on the autism spectrum

In this module students will be encouraged to look at the wider world in which people with autism live. The module will cover best practice in the support and life-long education of people with autism. This will include understanding the concept of the inclusive society and what this might mean for individuals with autism.

Qualifications and Progression

The University Certificate (Autism Spectrum) is a web-based distance education programme completed over a year of study, with a total of 60 credits at level C.

There is a potential progression route on to the Advanced Certificate course of either Autism (Children) or Autism (Adults), so that students can potentially gain a degree qualification (BPhil) after three years of part-time study.

How do you study?

The programme is offered through a mixture of online and face-to-face learning. Each student has a personal tutor in an online tutor group. Learning is supported through web-based study materials, tutorial groups, email and online discussions in the dedicated virtual learning environment exclusive to students on this programme. Internet access is essential for the course.

What are the entry requirements?

- We normally expect two years current experience of working with or caring for someone on the autism spectrum.
- Access to an online multimedia computer is essential.
- No advanced computer expertise is required beyond being able to surf the internet, upload and download documents and send and receive emails with attachments.

Admissions Tutor: (Webautism)

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Programme Administrator:

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How do you apply?

For more information on this programme and to apply online go to:

www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/edu/autism-spectrum.aspx

If you are unsure of what to include in your application, please send as much information as possible to demonstrate your relevant personal or professional experience.

All programmes of study start in September each year.



www.birmingham.ac.uk

This leaflet was written several months in advance of the start of the academic year. It is intended to provide prospective students with a general picture of the programmes and courses offered by the School. Please note that not all programmes or all courses are offered every year. Also, because our research is constantly exploring new areas and directions of study some courses may be dropped and new ones offered in their place.



Trudi Rainsberry, BPhil in Special Education: Autism (Children)

I chose this course because of having two children on the autistic spectrum and working with children with ASD (as SEN assistant). I also felt it was a valuable qualification where I could use my experience whilst learning the subject at a higher level. My studies were immediately applicable to my career, and this made the course easier as it could be used and applied to essay and research projects.

Kate Leavy, MEd in Special Education: Autism (Adults)

It has been a fantastic experience for me. I have not only gained valuable knowledge, but I actually ended up changing jobs from meeting another student who was also on the course. He is now my manager and I am working in a job I love! So the qualification has benefited me in so many ways!

David Serpell-Stevens, UCert in Special Education: Autism (Webautism)

It's a great format and an excellent course which caters for students from a wide range of backgrounds and standpoints. I have enjoyed the challenge and hope to continue my studies in a couple of years by applying for the Advanced Certificate.

David Edwards, Tutor on the UCert (Webautism) programme

The real value of the course is that it encourages thought as well as learning.

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