



**MSc**

Loss & Bereavement

**MSc**

Loss & Bereavement  
(Counselling)



**Educate,  
Nurture &  
Discover**

2020/2022

**At the Irish Hospice Foundation we work towards the best end-of-life and bereavement care for everyone. We think about not only those nearing the end of their own life journey, but those who they leave behind. Achieving best care depends on people being there to provide it, so we are delighted by your interest in our MSc Loss & Bereavement programme.**

# Welcome

Dealing with the loss of a loved one is never easy. Grief and bereavement are amongst the most challenging experiences we will ever have as human beings....

Whether it takes place over a long period of time or happens unexpectedly, the death of someone close is difficult to come to terms with.

Often it is only when it happens that we realise how unprepared we are. Most people will have the resource to cope within their own social circle, but others, for a range of reasons, will need someone to support and guide them. It takes a special kind of person to be that someone. Someone who cares, empathises and truly understands, but also someone with very specific skills and a desire to continually learn.

We know that the best response to bereavement involves one spanning health, social services, education and voluntary sectors. Our understanding of grief has changed over recent years and we are better placed to plan for, and provide appropriate bereavement education and care. Our course is designed against this backdrop.

Accredited by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), the MSc in Loss & Bereavement and MSc in Loss & Bereavement (Counselling) are two-year, part-time professional courses that provide the required skills.

Taught in the Irish Hospice Foundation, at our offices on Nassau Street in Dublin 2, this programme promotes the core skills

required for all professionals who encounter bereavement or loss in their role, with highly specialised grief training based on current evidence and best practice.

A central principle of this training is our priority on self-care – we believe you cannot care for others unless you have the skills to care for yourself first.

While this programme is of MSc level and accredited by the RCSI, it represents much more than an academic qualification. Taught in small classes tailored to your profession and work experience, it not only provides real learning you will be able to apply in your day-to-day, but you will be building lasting relationships with other professionals in your community. Joining this programme would see you join our community of graduates including nurses, social workers, educators, counselors and psychotherapists.

**Sharon Foley**  
CEO Irish Hospice Foundation.







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**I loved the course and got so much personally and professionally. I am immersed in bereavement work now and I feel the course really equipped me to establish a new service whilst also minding myself.**

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**These programmes aim to promote critical inquiry into the place of loss, death and bereavement in Irish society and in health and social care systems.**

## Background

Since 2004 the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland has supported bereavement education programmes convened at the Irish Hospice Foundation. During 2016/17 we revised the MSc Bereavement Studies and now offer two MSc streams – the **MSc Loss & Bereavement** and the **MSc Loss & Bereavement (Counselling)**.

These programmes aim to impact on health, social and community systems and ultimately to enhance quality of life. They are rooted in contemporary scientific research about loss and bereavement as well as being designed against a policy and professional regulation backdrop. There is an increasing impetus in Irish policy<sup>1</sup> and legislation<sup>2</sup> on developing competence in loss/bereavement and discussions about dying; these programmes address some of the educational needs associated with these competences.

## Course Structure

The Irish Hospice Foundation and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland invite applications for these part-time MSc programmes run over two years.

**For MSc Loss and Bereavement** applications are invited from representatives of a wide range of professional disciplines whose work or volunteering roles involve the provision or organisation of bereavement support in community, health or other areas.

**For MSc Loss and Bereavement (Counselling)** applications are invited from **qualified, accredited psychotherapists and counsellors** whose clinical work involves therapeutic support of bereaved people.

## Aims and Objectives of the Programme

These programmes aim to promote critical inquiry into the place of loss, death and bereavement in Irish society and in health and social care systems. Through this process we aim to equip practitioners and managers to promote and provide a range of appropriate supports in their communities, work places and professional practices.

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<sup>1</sup> Connecting Lives, 2016; Palliative Care Competence Framework, 2014; National Standards for Bereavement Care following Pregnancy Loss and Perinatal Death, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Assisted Decision-making Act, 2015

## Programme Learning Outcomes

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- » Critically debate and contribute to theoretical understanding and knowledge about loss and grief across the lifecycle and grief support structures relating to health, community and work organisations and in the voluntary sector.
  - » Evaluate different contemporary perspectives on death, dying and loss in society – including social history, cultural issues, cause and circumstance of death in contemporary Ireland, death education, loss through the life cycle, family bereavement, cultural issues, gender issues, research and ethical issues.
  - » Critically appraise, apply and design bereavement research, audit and evaluation.
  - » Critique, select and utilise support and counselling skills in the context of loss and bereavement.
  - » Develop and utilise advanced bereavement counselling skills as part of professional counselling practice [ **MSc Loss & Bereavement (Counselling)** ] .
  - » Analyse the organisation of bereavement support and formulate strategic and systematic developments in bereavement care in different settings.
  - » Design models for self-care and staff support in environments where people are consistently working with or meeting dying, death and bereavement.
  - » Manage and evaluate changes in work practices relative to an area of bereavement care.
  - » Reflect on personal development and personal growth through the educational experience.
  - » Display an integrated value-based and evidence-based approach to the support of bereaved people.
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## Course Details

This is a part-time course, over two years. There are 7 modules in year one (5 at 10 credits, two at 5 credits) and a dissertation in year two. A 10 credit 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. Exiting option to be discussed.

Module & Module Title(s)		Programme	Credits
<b>Year 1</b>			
<b>1</b>	Loss, grief and bereavement models through the lifespan		10
<b>2</b>	Counselling in loss and bereavement		10
<b>3</b>	<b>3A</b> Applied bereavement practice; preparing the self to work with loss	MSc Loss & Bereavement (COUNSELLING) only	10
	<b>3B</b> Organisational staff support and self-care	MSc Loss & Bereavement only	10
<b>4</b>	Loss, death and bereavement in society		10
<b>5</b>	Research appraisal		5
<b>6</b>	<b>6A</b> Advanced counselling and practitioner self	MSc Loss & Bereavement (COUNSELLING) only	5
	<b>6B</b> Range of loss and non-finite loss	MSc Loss & Bereavement only	5
<b>7</b>	Policy and management in bereavement care		10
<b>Year 2</b>			
<b>8</b>	Dissertation		30

All modules are delivered in the classroom/blended learning format. All the modules described in the table are Core modules.



# Modules - Year I and II

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## Year I

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### MODULE 1

#### **Loss, grief and bereavement models through the life span**

Scientific research and conceptualisation of loss, bereavement and grief has developed over the past 30 years – moving from staged prescriptive understandings to more fluid and social constructionist models.

This module seeks to provide a thorough grounding in historical, theoretical and contemporary thinking around grief and loss. The module aims to explore how psychological theory has evolved to explain, predict and ameliorate the human response to loss and death.

### MODULE 2

#### **Counselling in loss and bereavement**

The core conditions of counselling are relevant to good bereavement care. Basic counselling skills can and should be used by all who seek to support the bereaved in professional and volunteering capacities. These core conditions need to be made explicit and linked to our knowledge about loss and bereavement.

This module will focus on the practical and theoretical aspects of bereavement counselling and how it pertains to different work roles and environments. Individual, family and group approaches will be considered. The module will also provide a structure to facilitate informed decisions about when and where to refer clients for professional help.

### MODULE 3A

#### **Applied bereavement practice; preparing the self to work with loss**

*MSc Loss & Bereavement (Counselling) only*

The module aims to distinguish and clarify the counselling role and personal responses in respect of bereavement support. It seeks to develop self-insight into loss, death and a worldview and how these are manifest in the counselling relationship.

To equip counsellors with advanced skills in self-reflection and self-preparation to enable them to stay present in loss and to manage death anxiety and activation when working with bereaved clients.

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## Module 3B

### **Organisational staff support & self-care**

*MSc Loss & Bereavement only*

Death is universal and comes to us all. Working constantly in the face of loss and grief has an impact on individual carers. While there are individual strategies, practices and insights which can be developed to ameliorate specific stressors, organisations also hold responsibility for developing healthy workplaces.

The aim of this module is to provide both a theoretical and experiential basis for the development of self-care and staff-care capacity.

## Module 4

### **Loss, death and bereavement in society**

Our encounters with death and our experiences of grief and mourning are not static. Contemporary Western death is institutionalised, primarily happening in hospital and institutional care. Causes of death shift in line with medical and social developments. Cultural, gender-based, technological, ethical and political/social justice narratives all impact on how death and bereavement are interpreted and managed and individual psychological models are not sufficient to expand our understanding of loss. New developments such as public health models of dying and bereavement will be used to examine how death may be managed in our communities and how compassion may be maximised. A life-cycle approach will underpin the module.

The module aims to go beyond the individual perspective on loss, bereavement and death and to examine broader influences on our behaviour and attitudes.

## Module 5

### **Research appraisal**

The research-practice gap is a feature of much social and health research, and similarly is evident in the field of loss and bereavement. A sound understanding of the limits of research methods and conclusions and a strong competence in critical appraisal is appropriate to the development of bereavement care.

This module aims to develop an understanding of research approaches and to develop critical appraisal skills relating to statements about grief and bereavement. Research specific to bereavement will be explored and the contemporary sources identified. The mechanisms, dynamics and current discourses around evidence-based decision-making and evidence-based policy making will be explored.

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**Module 6A****Advanced counselling & practitioner self**

*MSc Loss & Bereavement (Counselling) only*

A small proportion of the bereaved population experience complicated grief and these symptoms can be targeted with a range of defined therapeutic approaches, tested in the research literature.

The module aims to equip counsellors with advanced counselling techniques and understanding of treating complicated grief. Further development of the counselling self will also be supported.

**Module 6B****Range of Loss and non-finite loss**

*MSc Loss & Bereavement only*

Loss is an intrinsic feature of change. This module examines common life losses and how they are theorised and supported.

This module seeks to identify the ways in which loss presents in a range of situations, not always concerned with death. Specifically mental illness, dementia, fertility and addiction will be examined with consideration also of loss of place and role.

**Module 7****Policy and management in bereavement care**

Bereavement impacts on all citizens of our society and an integrated approach to bereavement care requires strategic direction. Bereavement care should be integrated into national policy and priority in health and non-health areas. The need to maximise natural support, to identify those at risk of poor outcomes and to resource appropriate specialist service underpins a common framework.

This module identifies the broad context of bereavement care at community and national level. It also identifies and critiques the main modes of bereavement care, assessment, audit and governance of voluntary organisations. Specific content is provided for maternity settings. The module aims to uncover the features of excellent bereavement care at national, local and workplace level.

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**Year II**

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**MODULE 8****Project/Dissertation**

The module aims to integrate learning into action, in order to promote the development of bereavement care in an area.

This module provides the directive content to prepare the final dissertation of the MSc. An action research project will be devised, designed and executed.

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## Assessment

A range of assessment methods will be employed.

These include written coursework, reaction papers and a dissertation/work based project in year two.

## Accreditation

This is an RCSI programme run in association with the Irish Hospice Foundation. It is accredited by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and the National University of Ireland as a Level 9 qualification.

## Admission Requirements

### **MSc Loss and Bereavement**

Applicants must possess a Level 8 degree in a relevant area or equivalent demonstrated through a defined Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. RPL requires demonstration of significant professional experience in social/health care in a loss/ bereavement related area or as a bereavement support volunteer; completion of CPD and other training relevant to loss and bereavement; evidence of personal insight into loss history.

### **MSc Loss and Bereavement (Counselling)**

Applicants must possess counselling/psychotherapy accreditation through a national body and a Level 8 degree in a relevant area (or equivalent as demonstrated through RPL).

RPL involves demonstration of formal training in counselling/ psychotherapy; significant professional experience in loss/ bereavement related work; evidence of personal insight into loss and bereavement.

All candidates must fulfil the NUI entry requirements or be eligible for matriculation.

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' equivalency** is to be verified by using the NARIC service from QQI at the following link <http://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/Search?searchtype=recognitions>

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I have gained more knowledge and confidence in my chosen subject, I'm less biased in my thinking and more open to change. I don't feel I have to fix everything anymore and am happier overall with my approach.

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All modules must be successfully completed before a candidate can progress to the subsequent year of the programme.

## English Language Requirement

Prospective students applying for the MSc Loss & Bereavement/ MSc Loss & Bereavement (Counselling) for whom English is not their native language may need to arrange a test to confirm proficiency in English with the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). For more detailed information on requirements, exceptions and test centres:  
<http://www.rcsi.ie/Englishreq>

## Exit Awards

Candidates who are unable to progress in their studies but who have completed and passed a minimum of 30 ECTS, can exit the programme and are eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate Loss & Bereavement/ Postgraduate Certificate Loss & Bereavement (Counselling).

Candidates who are unable to progress in their studies but who have completed and passed a minimum of 60 ECTS, can exit the programme and are eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma Loss & Bereavement/ Postgraduate Diploma Loss & Bereavement (Counselling). It is not possible to use the same ECTS for more than one award.

## Time Commitment

The programmes run from **September 2020 to June 2022**.

Classes for **Year One** are held in three-day blocks once a month (**Thursday, Friday and Saturday**) from 9.15 am to 5:30 pm.

Dates are as follows for Year 1:

Year	Month	Date
2020	September	10th, 11th and 12th
	October	8th, 9th and 10th
	November	12th, 13th and 14th
	December	10th, 11th, and 12th
2021	January	14th, 15th and 16th
	February	11th, 12th (2 days only)
	March	11th, 12th (2 days only)
	April	15th, 16th and 17th
	May	13th, 14th (2 days only)



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This has been the most rewarding academic experience of my life. The subject is profound beyond words and the staff teach it with care and compassion.

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Classes for **Year Two** are normally held in two day blocks once a month (**Mondays and Tuesdays**). **The exception to this is at the beginning of Year 2 in September where attendance will be for three days. These dates will be made available in November 2020.**

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 programmes 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/pgbereavementstudies](http://www.rcsi.ie/pgbereavementstudies) from March 1st.

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 20, 2020**

## 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)*

A non-refundable deposit of €1,000 is required on acceptance of a course place.

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

Year 1 Fees: **€5,000.00**

Year 2 Fees: **€5,000.00**

An invoice for the balance of fees will be issued at beginning of August 2020 and payment will be required by Friday 4th September 2020. Fees are eligible for tax relief.

## Cancellation

Cancellations up to three weeks prior to the course commencing will be given a full refund, minus a cancellation fee of €500.00 - **thereafter no refunds will be made.**

## 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:

Jennifer Leech  
Education Administrator  
The Irish Hospice Foundation, Morrison Chambers,  
32 Nassau Street, Dublin 2.  
Tel: (01) 6793188  
e-mail: [jennifer.leech@hospicefoundation.ie](mailto:jennifer.leech@hospicefoundation.ie)

### Course content enquires

Orla Keegan  
Course Director  
The Irish Hospice Foundation, Morrison Chambers,  
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Tel: (01) 6793188  
e-mail: [orla.keegan@hospicefoundation.ie](mailto:orla.keegan@hospicefoundation.ie)

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**On line applications  
will be accepted up until  
Wednesday, 20 May 2020.**

**Access the online  
application form through  
the following link:  
[https://www.rcsi.com/  
dublin/postgraduate](https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/postgraduate)**

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**The Irish  
Hospice  
Foundation**

CHY 6830

Registered Charity Number 20013554

The Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) is a national charity dedicated to all matters relating to dying, death and bereavement in Ireland. The IHF promotes the hospice philosophy and supports the development of hospice care and relies on public donations to support its initiatives.

Our vision is that no one should face death or bereavement without the care and support they need. This includes support for families and loved ones, extending into bereavement.

The Bereavement Education & Resource Centre of the IHF was established in 2003. It provides education and training as well as a public and professional information service on loss and bereavement.

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## **Current education and training programmes**

- > MSc Loss & Bereavement / MSc Loss & Bereavement (Counselling)
  - > Professional Certificate in Children and Loss
  - > Annual series of Workshops on Loss and Bereavement
  - > E-Learning
  - > Staff Development
- 

Information on all our training is available on **[hospicefoundation.ie/bereaved.ie](http://hospicefoundation.ie/bereaved.ie)**

**The Irish Hospice Foundation**  
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