

Moving on with the Mary Hare courses

Sarah Davis and **Joy Rosenberg** provide an overview of the offer from the University of Hertfordshire training provider

Mary Hare courses are now wrapping up their 25th year celebrations! The Master of Art/Master of Sciences MA/MSc Deaf Education Studies programme partnered with the University of Hertfordshire has now trained nearly 1,000 Teachers of the Deaf, educational audiologists, and early years specialists. In addition, we are marking more than 15 years of working with the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service to deliver a BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) Level 3 accreditation course that is aimed at teaching assistants working with d/Deaf children and young people. It is the only external accredited course of its type.

However, as we celebrate by looking back, we also look excitedly to the future and the many opportunities it brings. We must give profound thanks to Helen Nelson, (former head of the Courses Department and the Course Leader for the Teacher of the Deaf course) as she moves on to new adventures. At Mary Hare, we move forward towards a new Mandatory Qualification for Teachers of the Deaf and to supporting many more training Teachers of the Deaf, Educational Audiologist, and BTEC students to develop their skills in working with deaf children and young people.

Teachers of the Deaf

A real strength of the Teacher of the Deaf course is in producing students who have deeply embedded

audiological skills and a thorough understanding of language development, assessment, and facilitation. This is embedded by face-to-face interactive hands-on and collaborative learning, which remains at the core of the qualification offered at Mary Hare/University of Hertfordshire. Additionally, many members of the course team work in both an academic role and as practitioners in the field, which supports the application of 'real world' context to the student's learning. Face-to-face learning sessions are delivered through regular two-day study weekends (Friday and Saturday), along with enhanced online lectures and learning material. These support students to develop their knowledge, skills, and confidence and become true 'agents of agents' for change, which will enable current and future generations of deaf children and young people to achieve their full potential.

Mary Hare's new CEO/Principal, Robin Askew, reflects on his own training:

"Fourteen years on from undertaking the Teacher of the Deaf course, it has not only helped me secure the future of deaf pupils and young people but also my own aspirations within a position to support future generations of deaf pupils. I recall inspirational course leaders and guest speakers who supported my understanding of deaf education and in particular the challenge of language acquisition. There is no doubt the post graduate ToD





[Teacher of the Deaf] training is rigorous and demanding, but I remain grateful to the input from the lecturers and the opportunities to build professional networks within my cohort.”

Educational audiology and early years

This year we graduate our first cohort of students who undertook an early years focus on the educational audiology course, which was extremely well received. We also have stand-alone module takers, and returnees completing their Postgraduate (PG) Diploma, as well as clinicians who are training for educational audiology. Feedback has been: “Highly rated! Really valuable assignments in terms of learning to use and apply the knowledge”. The bridging role of an educational audiology qualification between clinic, school, and families is developed by honing knowledge and critical reflection on scientific principles regarding habilitation of deaf children and young people.

Educational audiology graduates are employed mainly in educational services and also auditory implant centres. Educational audiologists can register professionally with the Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists.

Mary Hare’s Educational Audiologist, Lynn Gamble, writes “The breadth of the programme (both the ToD and Ed Aud [educational audiology] courses) has enabled me to move between roles, take on new cases, and transfer skills. Study weekends were full of newly acquired knowledge and practical skills; the work-based experiences from placements

were invaluable, and the professional networks developed through the course were supportive and inspirational.”

BTEC teaching assistants

The BTEC Level 3 course for teaching assistants working with children and young people who are d/Deaf continues to be delivered online using a blended learning model. As such, this course now facilitates access to unique learning opportunities for teaching assistants from across the UK. With support from their local mentor, students can complete the course via online taught sessions.

Each of the five modules is delivered across two study afternoons and gives learners an opportunity to develop their skills that enables them to better support learning and holistic development, to gain knowledge of supportive technology, and to learn about barriers to listening in the classroom.

For more information on any of these courses, contact courses@maryhare.org.uk or see Professional Courses Mary Hare School. We are very much looking forward to welcoming new and returning students across the various courses to the coming academic year, shaping sensory support as we secure the future for d/Deaf children and young people.

		<p><i>Sarah Davis is the BTEC Teaching Assistant Course Leader and is a lecturer and module leader for the postgraduate courses.</i></p> <p><i>Joy Rosenberg is the Postgraduate Programme Leader: MA/MSc Deaf Education Studies (Educational Audiology and Teacher of the Deaf courses).</i></p>
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