

INFORMATION NOTE

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND – M.A. IN PERSONAL LEADERSHIP AND PASTORAL CARE

1. INTRODUCTION

In September 2017 the National College of Ireland (NCI) will be delivering a M.A. course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care. This is the first time that NCI will be providing this course which is a part-time course being run over a two year period and which is aimed at people who aspire to work in jobs and roles which involve leadership and pastoral care or are already involved in these jobs and roles. It is likely that the course will be of particular interest to people and organisations already engaged work areas such as community work, youth work, homelessness, addiction, social care, work with prisoners, work with disabled people, work with refugees and asylum seekers, work with Travellers. The MA course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care aims to build upon the existing skills which people have in these work areas and to develop additional competencies around leadership and pastoral care in order to enhance their effectiveness and the contributions which they will make to the lives of people to whom they provide services and supports.

The MA course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care is awarded by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This award allows transfer to Level 9 research degrees and, in some cases, progression to Level 10 Doctoral courses on the NFQ. In order to be eligible for the MA course, applicants will need to have an honours degree (Level 8 on the NFQ) or professional education in work areas related to pastoral care – these work areas could include education, social work, nursing, theology, youth and community work, social care. Evidence of current or previous pastoral experience will also be taken into account when assessing applicants to the MA course on Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care. NCI operates a Registration of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) arrangement whereby relevant work/life experiences are considered in relation to applicants who do not meet the normal academic qualifications for the MA course.

The MA course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care has been organised in such a way that it will facilitate the participation of people who are unable to attend a full-time academic course on account of other work/life commitments. Much of the work on the course will take place at weekends and for block periods during the week. This should enable people who are working in areas aligned to pastoral care (with young people, with prisoners/offenders, with homeless people, with drug users, with disabled people, in disadvantaged communities etc.) to be able to combine their working life with participation on the MA course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care. This will be of benefit to the applicants (who will acquire new knowledge and skills, who will secure a MA qualification) and to the employing/sponsoring organisations (which will have employees who are more competent in leadership and the provision of pastoral care as a result of their participation on the MA course).

This Information Note on the course aims to provide applicants and organisations within the community and voluntary sector in Ireland with some insights into pastoral care (what is it? what makes it different to other related work areas?) as well as providing more basic information about the MA in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care (what skills and competencies will I gain through the course? how is the course organised and structured?).

2. PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care involves the provision of spiritual, emotional and/or practical supports to people who may wish to discuss and to talk about their issues and concerns to a person who is non-judgemental, empathetic, a good listener and not closely known to the person being supported and assisted (i.e. the pastoral care worker is not a relative or close friend). Pastoral care and the provision of chaplaincy services have been closely associated over the years and there is a strong Christian dimension to the ways in which chaplaincy and pastoral care have evolved over the years (with many Christian chaplains providing chaplaincy and pastoral care services in settings such as hospitals, hospices, schools, colleges/universities and prisons). However, it is also clear that the concept and practice of pastoral care has evolved in recent years and is now much more inclusive of people from different faith traditions and people without any religious affiliation. This is reflected in the ways in which pastoral care workers are increasingly being employed by institutions such as prisons and third level

colleges/universities rather than through historic arrangements which may have existed between various institutions and Christian churches.

However, whilst pastoral care has broadened beyond any unique or special relationship with any faith tradition or particular religious denomination it is also clear that pastoral care does involve a spiritual or faith dimension. There are people at different stages of their lives who are searching for answers and advice about issues around the meaning of life, the inner self, relationships with others, mortality, life after death, anxiety/stress. Whilst there are specialist workers who are qualified to deal with these matters (e.g. therapists, counsellors, clinicians) it is also evident that on many occasions people do not need or desire experts or therapeutic interventions – rather they would like people who will listen to them and who will empathise and understand their own circumstances and needs. On occasions people will also request particular supports and services which are relevant to their own faith tradition and these supports and services can also be provided by pastoral care workers (either directly by themselves in some cases or by accessing the appropriate personnel in other cases e.g. priests, imams, rabbis).

Pastoral care can be especially useful in circumstances where people are going through struggles, inner conflicts, grief, sadness, loss and separation. Pastoral care workers and other workers with different job titles who have significant pastoral care skills can play an important and decisive role in being available for people who are at difficult junctures in their lives (e.g. with life threatening illnesses, in prison, bereavement of close relative/friend, being homeless, being addicted to drugs/alcohol). It is considered that the MA in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care will equip participants with new and enhanced skills which will build upon the work they might already be doing with people going through various crises and struggles in their lives. The MA course will also assist participants to bring a spiritual/faith dimension to their relationships with clients and service users if this spiritual/faith dimension is considered useful or desirable. This would serve to complement the work which might already be taking place around matters such as addiction, mental health, offending behaviour, seeking accommodation, money/budgeting etc.

There are many different settings within which good and effective pastoral care work can take place. Whilst hospitals, hospices, schools, colleges/universities and prisons have traditionally been associated with chaplains and pastoral care workers, there are also

significant contributions which people with pastoral care skills can make to the work of NGOs and other organisations within the community and voluntary sector in Ireland. The role/work of those involved in pastoral care (whether they have the job title of pastoral care worker or another job title) is reflected in the following extracts from websites of organisations which are providing pastoral care:

Developing skills needed in pastoral care include abilities to develop relationships, listen and discern possible issues or concerns that may be important for a person and which may be sensitively explored with empathy.

- **Centre For Spiritual Care, Canberra**

An effective pastoral carer is an expert 'non-expert'. The conversations she or he initiates are between two or more free and equal persons where there is no necessary assumption of 'expertise' as there is with a counsellor or therapist.

- **Centre For Spiritual Care, Canberra**

Within a Pastoral Care Unit there is a team of visitors made up of people who may have titles such as chaplains, church visitors or pastoral carers. No matter what your beliefs or religious persuasion may be, the designated pastoral carer (whatever their title) who may be visiting you in hospital or other institution, will be respecting your values. If you want see someone from your faith tradition, the Pastoral Care Unit will seek to ensure that an appropriate carer or chaplain is asked to visit you.

- **Centre For Spiritual Care, Canberra**

Pastoral care: Offering emotional support or spiritual care by helping people connect with their own inner and community resources.

- **Centre For Spiritual Care, Canberra**

In difficult and demanding times such as a critical illness or other traumas in life, we may experience high stress, reducing our ability to cope. At these times the help of others may be very valuable. Family members and friends are often a very important support, but sometimes the presence of a person who is more emotionally detached from the situation can be very helpful. This could be a person with pastoral care skills.

- **Centre For Spiritual Care, Canberra**

Pastoral care aims to respond to the diverse spiritual and emotional concerns experienced through hospitalisation for patients and those who care for them.

- **Royal Melbourne Hospital**

Through pastoral conversation and counselling, the pastoral care workers seek to explore with people the ways in which they find, understand and express what is disturbing and what is meaningful for their life.

- **Royal Melbourne Hospital**

Pastoral Care aims to strengthen a person's inner resources and facilitate helpful responses to their particular experience of hospitalisation.

- **Royal Melbourne Hospital**

The Pastoral Carer may assist in the naming and remembering of significant moments of the person's experience through traditional and/or specifically created rituals that are appropriate to them and their faith/spiritual background/culture.

- **Royal Melbourne Hospital**

We provide 'spiritual companionship' to people of all faith traditions, and those with no religious affiliation.

- **Royal Melbourne Hospital**

The Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy Team seeks to engage with the 'ultimate concerns' of people as they journey through times of illness, uncertainty or death.

- **Royal Melbourne Hospital**

We support people as they draw on their own spiritual resources; the unseen things that give us meaning, purpose and a sense of belonging. For some people, the 'spiritual' is expressed through religion. For others, it is connected to the meaning they draw from their own culture, history and life experiences.

- **Royal Melbourne Hospital**

Pastoral care is sometimes called spiritual care. It is provided by trained pastoral care practitioners, and chaplains representing their particular faith communities, as well as volunteer visitors, who have their own faith while also accepting and respecting the beliefs (and non-beliefs) of others.

- **Royal Melbourne Hospital**

Our services include:

- *Confidential emotional and spiritual support during illness and hospitalisation*
- *Emotional and spiritual support for families and carers*
- *Religious and sacramental care including prayer, communion, anointing*
- *Coordinating visits by representatives from most religious traditions*
- *Reflective support for staff and volunteers of Melbourne Health*

- **Royal Melbourne Hospital**

We do not impose beliefs or expectations, but rather respect all beliefs and practices, drawing on individual resources of strength, courage and hope.

- **Royal Melbourne Hospital**

Pastoral care is a fulfilment of John 13: 34-5 – ‘A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another’

- **Pastoral Care United Kingdom**

Pastoral Care is a holistic profession that delivers a service to staff and students who are experiencing difficulty in their personal and/or professional lives. Some may have tried counselling and found it unsatisfactory, or need something different. Some clients prefer not to attend counselling for a variety of reasons, but still need someone to listen or simply to connect them with other appropriate services. The Pastoral Care office fulfils these needs and is available on campus to all students and staff on an on-call basis.

Pastoral Care workers are professionals trained and accredited in Clinical Pastoral Education. Like Counsellors, Pastoral Care workers provide a safe, confidential environment for their clients and ideally work with other professionals to achieve the best outcome for their clients. Pastoral Care workers allow clients to express themselves and their needs in a trusted space. Pastoral Care focuses on empowering individuals to resolve their difficulties through a process of encouragement, support, active listening and the formation of an ongoing, strategic relationship. Clients are supported in building resilience and self-sufficiency.

- **University of Canberra**

Contemporary professional Pastoral Care workers need to be able to operate in a dogma free zone, although many are qualified Chaplains associated with particular religious groups. Pastoral Care workers operate from the basis of common humanity and inclusiveness. They aim to assist individuals find meaning in life and hope for their future, without determining a particular path or outcome, and are patient in allowing individuals to choose how and when they share the nature of their issues.

The Pastoral Care model is based on enabling clients to resolve their concerns, not rescuing the client or providing solutions. Workers actively assist clients in coming to terms with their own values, and support clients to work within an inclusive framework. Pastoral Care workers are not limited to consulting in the office environment, but engage proactively with the campus community.

- **University of Canberra**

Pastoral care is an ancient model of emotional and spiritual support that can be found in all cultures and traditions. It has been described in our modern context as individual and corporate patience in which trained pastoral carers support people in their pain, loss and anxiety, and their triumphs, joys and victories.

Pastoral care as a care model and profession is emerging in the public arena in its own right, in our day, and its value and helpfulness is now recognised as applicable to people generally in their everyday life.

Just as its theory and philosophy is not dependent on any one set of beliefs or traditions, so pastoral carers are trained to relate gently and skilfully with the inner world of individuals from all walks of life, and the elements that go to make up that persons sense of self, their inner resources, resilience and capacity to cope.

They are not counsellors or therapists. They are personal relators operating under a positive motivation that has no strings attached.

- **University of Canberra**

What does a pastoral care worker do?

- *Pastoral care workers are available to all on campus at an individual and interfaith level, as well as spiritual*

- *Pastoral care workers work inclusively with all people, whether or not they have a stated religious affiliation.*
- *Pastoral care workers are aware of boundaries, and the limits of the role*
- *They advocate according to need*
- *Pastoral care workers work within the boundaries of the privacy legislation and respect confidentiality*
- *They liaise with other disciplines relevant to the needs of the person*
- *They work closely with other pastoral care workers and chaplains*
- *Pastoral care workers have a role in crisis intervention (not taking the role of Health and Counselling but being available for those who do not want the more formal medical approach)*
- *They facilitate a person finding their own way of worship and prayer, e.g. through meditation or blessing, pastoral counselling (not finding a solution but encouraging them to find their own path, which may include going to Health and Counselling for clinical consultation)*
- *They facilitate ceremonies upon request.*
- *They educate the community in which they work so people can recognise those with issues, and know where to send them for help*
- *They offer a pastoral presence to those referred by others*
- *They have a duty of care for example toward those who may be suicidal*
- *They keep confidential statistics of the people who have seen them, and the issues they have dealt with - this helps identify weaknesses or issues in an organisation, so they can be addressed*
- *They listen with respect and are non-judgemental*
- *They allow the person to direct the conversation and do not push their own agenda*
- *They provide an opportunity for each person to reconcile, forgive and heal etc., from their own resources and experiences, without imposing their own values, beliefs or faith on the person*
- *They nourish the persons own inner resources of faith, courage, trust and love*
- *They affirm and acknowledge that it is OK to feel certain ways*
- *They assist a person to listen to their inner voice, and respond empathetically and with understanding and compassion*
- *Pastoral care workers honour the stories of peoples lives, and their experiences.*

What is spiritual care?

- *Spirit means breath of life*
- *Sometimes pastoral care workers are called spiritual companions and travel beside a person on their journey*
- *They listen with their heart to a persons struggle, joys, pain, and journey with a person who is seeking life and nurturing their inner self*
- *They:*
 1. *Are non-judgmental*
 2. *Explore the yearning within to understand the mystery of life*
 3. *Assist people to heal the spiritual aspects that may be broken or wounded*
 4. *Allow people to sit in silence, allowing the inner world to manifest itself in tears, laughter, anger, and a myriad of emotions that may arise*
 5. *Enable a person to take control of their own issues and solve their own problems through the inner world*
 6. *Listen like a child hearing for the first time, with an open loving heart and mind*

- **University of Canberra**

Pastoral care is gaining a unique place within our secular society alongside other caring modalities such as social work, community work and general counselling, specifically to help meet the religious, spiritual, emotional and pastoral needs of the general community.

- **David Oliphant, A Philosophy of Pastoral Care**

3. WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE M.A. IN PERSONAL LEADERSHIP AND PASTORAL CARE

3.1. AIMS OF COURSE

The MA in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care is designed to facilitate the development of professional and vocational skills appropriate to personal leadership and pastoral care in both faith-based and secular communities. It will enhance the skills and competencies of people to work more effectively with those who are going through difficult, stressful and challenging periods in their lives and with those who are experiencing particularly high levels of marginalisation and social exclusion.

The course will equip participants with enhanced leadership and pastoral care skills and competencies and will enable participants to play stronger and more effective roles within

their employing organisations or, if not employed, to significantly improve their chances of securing employment in jobs which have a pastoral care dimension (e.g. youth work, community work, work with offenders and those affected by addiction). The programme is designed to assist students to demonstrate and understand relevant aspects of the disciplines of sociology, adult education, spirituality, practical theology and to help them reflect critically on their pastoral and personal leadership skills and experience.

3.2. COURSE CONTENT

The MA course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care comprises 10 modules and will be run over a two year period (from September 2017 to May 2018 and from September 2018 to May 2018). The 10 modules in the course are as follows:

- **Pastoral Care in Context**
- **Faith and Society**
- **Personal Leadership in Human Services**
- **Spiritual Accompaniment and Psychology of Religious Development**
- **Practical Theology and the Pastoral Care of families**
- **Practical Theology/Spirituality and Care of the Bereaved**
- **Pastoral Supervision and Ethics**
- **Theology and Leadership in Dialogue**
- **Research Methods (Social Sciences)**
- **Research Methods (Theology and Pastoral Care)**

The course will be run by experienced and qualified lecturers with an understanding and awareness of the work contexts from which participants are coming and the work opportunities which may become more available to participants with skills and competencies in personal leadership and pastoral care. The course will involve a combination of studying and attending lectures in NCI, of field placements and of research assignments (within which students will be provided with opportunities to focus attention on aspects of pastoral care which are of particular interest to them – perhaps on account of the work in which they are involved). For the 2017-2018 academic year the work taking place within the classrooms and lecture rooms within NCI (i.e. the taught modules) will involve 6 weekend sessions (on Fridays and Saturdays) and 2 one week blocks. These are scheduled to take place on the following dates:

	Semester 1 (18th September 2017 – 16th December 2017)	Semester 2 (22nd January 2018 – 28th April 2018)
Induction	23rd September	27th January
Weekend Sessions	6th – 7th October 17th – 18th November 1st – 2nd December	10th – 11th February 9th – 10th March 13th – 14th April
One Week Blocks	16th – 20th October	19th – 23rd February

Students will be expected to attend NCI on these dates. In addition to these dates there will also be a need to engage in some online interactive work in relation to certain aspects of the course. Special attention will be placed on the research element of the course (especially in year 2) so as to allow learners to investigate and deepen insights specific to the field of pastoral care and to combine that learning with the personal learning associated with reflective practice. The completion of a research based dissertation is a central part of the course and each student will be supported by an academic supervisor for the entire period of their dissertation.

3.3. COST OF COURSE

The cost of the course over its two year duration is €8,000. This comprises of payment of €4,750 in Year One and €3,250 in Year Two.

4. WHAT SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES WILL STUDENTS DERIVE FROM THE COURSE?

As a result of their participation on the MA course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care it is anticipated that students/learners will develop and enhance their skills and competencies in the following areas:

- They will be better equipped to deal with difficult and stressful situations in an empathetic, understanding, non-judgemental and spiritual way
- They will develop the key professional skills, knowledge, attributes and approaches required to successfully engage in pastoral care
- They will be able to apply current thinking concerning pastoral work, faith formation, spiritual accompaniment, inter-religious dialogue and interculturalism in different pastoral care settings
- They will be better positioned to exhibit and demonstrate the personal, professional skills and sensibilities necessary to work as a chaplain/pastoral care worker and/or as a

member of a pastoral team (e.g. within schools, colleges/universities, hospitals, hospices, prisons, community/voluntary sector organisations)

- They will be able to undertake research projects which are of relevance to the work contexts of course participants and, if applicable, to the organisations employing these people
- They will develop pastoral counselling and spiritual accompaniment skills which are appropriate to their work as a pastoral care worker or as a worker with a different job title (e.g. youth worker, outreach worker) whose work involves significant aspects of pastoral care and understanding of individuals
- They will be better placed to work collaboratively with others in order to enhance the pastoral, spiritual and moral dimensions of the work situations/contexts in which they are involved.

5. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The MA in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care will enable and facilitate the academic, pastoral, spiritual and professional development of those already working in, or wishing to work in, a number of different work areas and contexts. These work areas/contexts include organisations who either employ people with the job titles of pastoral care worker or chaplain or employ people who are involved in providing pastoral care but who do not have the title of pastoral care worker or chaplain (e.g. they may be a youth worker or community worker, they may be part of a pastoral care team within a hospital or a school). The work areas and work contexts within which pastoral care is most prevalent and which are likely to provide the most significant employment and career progression opportunities for students involved in the MA course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care include the following:

- **Pastoral care in second level schools**
- **Pastoral care in third level colleges and universities**
- **Work in prisons and young offenders centres**
- **Work in young peoples probation projects**
- **Pastoral care in hospitals**
- **Pastoral care in hospices**
- **Work in parish communities**

- **Work with young people and with young adult groups**
- **Pastoral work in a variety of settings within the community and voluntary sector (with particular focuses on groups such as drug users, homeless people, disabled people, people with mental health issues, refugees and asylum seekers, Travellers)**

The course will serve to meet the continuous professional development needs of those who wish to extend their skills and knowledge into new areas of guidance, care and support (especially in relation to vulnerable, marginalised and/or isolated adults and young people). The MA course will enable participants to learn new skills and knowledge, to focus on a research topic/issue which may be of particular interest to them and their employing/sponsoring organisation, to build upon prior learning and experience and to secure a Level 9 MA qualification within QQI's National Framework of Qualifications.

6. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR MA COURSE IN PERSONAL LEADERSHIP AND PASTORAL CARE

In order to be eligible for the MA course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care, applicants should hold an honours degree (Level 8) or professional qualification in subjects which are aligned to, or relevant to, personal leadership and pastoral care. These subjects include teaching/education, social work, social care, youth and community work, nursing, counselling, theology/religion. However, it is important to note that, unlike some other pastoral care and chaplaincy courses, a degree or qualification in theology/religion is not a necessary pre-requisite or requirement for entry onto the NCI MA course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care.

Prior evidence of pastoral experience (e.g. in a youth work or community work setting) will also be taken into account when assessing applicants for entry onto the MA course. In this context, applicants who do not meet the normal academic requirements for the course (i.e. Level 8 honours degree) may still be accepted onto the course as a result of relevant life/employment experiences which have involved aspects of personal leadership and pastoral care. Within NCI, this arrangement for acknowledging the value of previous relevant work/life experiences is called Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL).

All applicants to the MA course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care will be interviewed by the programme team. There is also a requirement for candidates to be Garda vetted upon being accepted onto the course.

7. NEXT STAGES

Candidates interested in joining the MA course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care should apply to NCI through the normal application process (see nci.ie). Candidates who wish to find out more about the course can contact any member of the programme team – Dr. Leo Casey at Leo.Casey@ncirl.ie; Stephanie Roe at Stephanie.Roe@ncirl.ie; or Dr. Michael Goldrick at Michael.Goldrick@ncirl.ie.

An information event on the MA course in Personal Leadership and Pastoral Care will take place on Thursday 29th June 2017 in NCI.

PROGRAMME TEAM
M.A. COURSE IN PERSONAL LEADERSHIP AND PASTORAL CARE
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND
JUNE 2017