Level 5 Certificate in Dyscalculia and Maths Learning Difficulties; Support and Intervention

Programme Information (pre-application)

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Contents

- Who are the BDA?. 3
- Current Definition of Developmental Dyscalculia 4
- What is the qualification? 4
- BDA Relationship with the University of Chester 4
- Who is the course for 5
- Entry Requirements 5
- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) 5
- Process of Application 6
- The Course 6
- Assessment of Candidates' Work 6
- Timeline and Duration of Course 7
- Course Fees 8
- Application and Booking Process 9
- Teaching Practice 10
- Applying for Accredited Teacher Dyscalculia (ATD) 10
  or Accredited Practitioner Dyscalculia (APD)
- Will I need to have a DBS Check (or equivalent)? 10
- Technical Equipment Required for the Course 11
- Pre-Course Reading List 12
- FAQs 12
- Contact Details 16

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We hope this pre-course information provides you with the information you need to join our training programme in teaching and supporting learners with dyscalculia.

Who are the BDA?

The British Dyslexia Association works to unlock the full potential of dyslexic people.

Dyslexia is common, but still too often missed and misunderstood. With the right support and understanding, dyslexic people can thrive. But too many people still face barriers in education, work and everyday life, and access to support is not equal.

We provide trusted information, advice, training and resources. We support dyslexic people and families, help professionals understand dyslexia, campaign for systems that work better, and build public understanding so every dyslexic person gets the support and understanding they need.

Through its activities, the BDA strives to achieve its key goals:

1. To build awareness of dyslexia (and dyscalculia) in all sectors of society.
2. Promote early identification of dyslexic and dyscalculic difficulties for all in society.
3. Availability of effective and appropriate teaching provision for all children and adults with dyslexia and dyscalculia.
4. Availability of appropriate assessments for all children and adults with dyslexia and dyscalculia.
5. Reasonable adjustments for individuals with dyslexia and dyscalculia within all sectors of society (including education, employment, training and the criminal justice services).
6. Information is available for individuals with dyslexia and dyscalculia across the age ranges and sectors, and for those who support them including effective strategies to help overcome dyslexia and dyscalculia related difficulties, and how to maximise the strengths of those with dyslexia and dyscalculia.

The training activities of the BDA are an important part of our work in all the above areas. We offer:

o Accredited open courses and evening webinars

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- Bespoke inset training in schools and bespoke training for employers
- Online accredited training

Current Definition of Developmental Dyscalculia (SASC,2025)

Features: A specific learning difficulty in mathematics is a set of processing difficulties that affects the acquisition of arithmetic and other areas of mathematics.

In **dyscalculia**, the most commonly observed cognitive impairment is a pronounced and persistent difficulty with numerical magnitude processing and understanding that presents in age related difficulties with naming, ordering and comparing physical quantities and numbers, estimating and place value.

Some individuals may not present with a specific cognitive impairment in numerical magnitude processing but have an equally debilitating specific learning difficulty (SpLD in mathematics) due to other processing difficulties. Difficulties in language, executive function (verbal and visuo-spatial working memory, inhibitory control) and visual-spatial processing may also contribute.

Impact: Mathematics is a very varied discipline. Difficulties with learning mathematics may present in specific areas (for example, basic calculation) or across the mathematics studied by the individual in relation to age, standard teaching and instruction, and level of other attainments. Across education systems and age groups, difficulties in arithmetic fluency and flexibility and mathematical problem solving are key markers of a SpLD in mathematics. Persistent difficulties in mathematics can have a significant impact on life, learning and work. This may also have a detrimental impact upon an individual's resilience to apply mathematical skills effectively.

Presentation: The presentation and developmental trajectory of a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) in mathematics depends on the interactions of multiple genetic and environmental influences. It will persist through life but may change in manifestation and severity at different stages.

A SpLD in mathematics frequently co-occurs with one or more of the following: attention

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deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, developmental language disorder (DLD) and developmental coordination disorder (DCD). Maths anxiety commonly co-occurs with a SpLD in mathematics but is not an indicator in itself.
(SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC), 2025, *Guidance on the Assessment of Mathematics Difficulties and Dyscalculia*.)

What is the qualification?

The BDA Level 5 Certificate in Dyscalculia and Maths Learning Difficulties; Support and Intervention is the first step towards becoming a specialist teacher or tutor for learners with maths related difficulties.

Successful candidates can apply for membership of a professional body following completion of a Specialist Teacher course, including from the BDA for the **Approved Teacher Dyscalculia (ATD) or Approved Practitioner Dyscalculia (APD)** accreditation, provided that they have worked in an educational setting for 1900 hours which may include the 20 hours of teaching from the course.

Successful candidates may also apply to extend their training to level 7 which will allow them to assess and diagnose dyscalculia. It is important to note that at level 5 you will not be able to make a diagnosis of dyscalculia.

Who is the course for?

The BDA Level 5 Certificate in Dyscalculia and Maths Learning Difficulties; Support and Intervention provides training for individuals who have a professional interest in dyscalculia and maths learning difficulties in order for them to become informed practitioners and teachers. The course is delivered primarily in the form of eLearning with some virtual sessions.

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It is of particular benefit to:

- Teachers, teaching assistants and tutors supporting maths in primary, secondary and tertiary settings;
- Tutors and support staff in Further Education and other adult learning settings;
- It is also accessible to those who have a desire to improve their skills and knowledge in the area of dyscalculia and maths learning difficulties and display the ability to study at Level 5 (equivalent to undergraduate level).

Entry Requirements

The BDA is committed to widening participation and, as such, has an open policy to its courses.

However, candidates will be expected to have a high level of proficiency in written and spoken English and at least two years' relevant maths teaching or support experience in an educational setting.

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

Applicants who do not fulfil all the requirements above may be considered for 'special entry' if they can demonstrate other relevant academic and/or professional experience. Such applicants are advised to apply in the normal way and include documentation that fully records their experience in their application statement together with certificates and evidence of previous course outcomes.

Process of Application

Candidates will need to complete and submit an online application form.
This provides us with information about your background and experience and will help us determine whether you are eligible for the course. Once approved and you will be accepted onto the programme, and offered a start date on the next available cohort.

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The Course

The course has been approved by the award body OCN at Level 5 and has three units each worth 20 credits.

Unit 1: Theories and Approaches to Dyscalculia and Maths Learning Difficulties
Unit 2: Intervention and Support for Dyscalculia and Maths Learning Difficulties
Unit 3: Identifying Needs and Numeracy Teaching to Support Dyscalculia and Maths Learning Difficulties.

The content for each unit will be primarily delivered by webinars and videos on our eLearning platform. There may also be short lectures on zoom or teams which candidates would be expected to attend if possible. Candidates are also expected to do substantial reading around the topics from the reading list.

The content of the Units above is delivered and assessed in Tasks.

- Tasks 1 - 3 are academic tasks
- Tasks 4-7 are related to the teaching practice

Assessment of Candidates' Work

- Candidates will complete 8 written tasks totalling 10,000 words including academic essays based on information from the modules and their own reading.

- Candidates will complete an informal assessment and plan a programme of support for two learners and undertake a total of 20 hours of teaching. Lesson plans will be continuously assessed as well as 2 hours of teaching.

- All work will be uploaded to the e-learning site.

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- Work will be assessed by the candidate's tutor and moderated by other members of the team of tutors. Completed portfolios will be verified by the course leader.

Timeline and Duration of the Course.

The course can be completed in 12 months, although you will have 16 months to do so. There are 3 cohorts per year starting in:

- September
- January
- May.

Hours for the course are estimated as follows:

20 -30 hours of content on the eLearning platform including some videos

80 - 120 hours of self-study, background reading, researching & writing the academic assignments

30 x 2 hours of informal assessment

60 x 2 hours of teaching practice

15 x 2 evaluation of teaching practice

20 hours voluntary attendance at the informal sessions

Term One:

Candidates will undertake the eLearning modules, virtual sessions and begin writing the academic tasks.

Term Two:

Candidates will complete the first 4 academic tasks and identify the first Learner

Term Three:

Candidates will prepare to teach learner 1.

Terms Four/Five:

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Candidates will teach learner A and start preparing to teach learner B.

Terms Six/Seven:

Candidates will teach learner B and complete any outstanding assignments

Term Eight:

Candidates will complete teaching Learner B and evaluations.

Extensions:

Extensions may be granted upon application by the course leader but please note that these will incur additional cost. The course must be completed within 2 years of its starting date. In exceptional circumstances, with evidence of need provided, you can apply for a suspension or deferral of your course.

Course Fees

To find current course costs please visit the BDA website: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Options for Payment:

We currently offer three options when choosing to pay:

- in one instalment upfront.
- in two instalments - part 1 (50%) due upfront and the part 2 (50%) within 3 months of the course starting.
- in 6 instalments over a 6 month period via direct debit, 25% due upfront, and the remaining 5 instalments in the 5 months after the course starts.

Please note:

- Extension fees will apply for candidates who go over the 16 months course deadline.
- All prices are subject to change.

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Application and Booking Process

Stage 1:
Complete the Application Process so that you are eligible to book onto the course. You can do this by visiting our website and filling in this form or visiting our website. Please note that it may take up to 15 working days for your application to be approved.

Stage 2:
Once your application has been received and approved, you will receive confirmation via email and you can proceed to booking onto your course. Please note that it may take up to 15 working days for your application to be approved.

Stage 3:
Please ensure you have an account on the BDA website. If you are a member, have attended an event or have made a purchase in our shop you will already have an account.

If not, please go to 'Log in/Register' at bdadyslexia.org.uk and set up an account. Please keep a record of these details, as these will allow you to log into your account and access the course information and modules.

Please allow **1 working day** before moving to the next stage and booking onto a course.

Stage 4:
When the above stages are completed, you can book onto your course using this link or by visiting the website.

Teaching Practice

This is a competency assessed programme; supervised teaching is an essential part of the programme.

Candidates working towards ATD or APD are required to deliver 20 hours of evaluated

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teaching practice with two learners from the school/college setting (primary or secondary) up to 18 years or post 16 FE/ HE/adult age group. **All learners must be in a mainstream setting (no complex needs) and speak good English**. Your main learner should have significant difficulties with the acquisition of numeracy. Your second learner may have difficulties with numeracy and may also have difficulties with other areas of the Maths curriculum. Neither learner needs to have a formal diagnosis. Teaching practice must take place in a school, college or HE site, and candidates must have contact with class teachers or tutors so that targeted support can be integrated with class support or requirements of an FE/HE qualification.

Candidates are expected to produce a portfolio of evidence on our eLearning platform, which will contain documentation and evidence of the teaching practice. This will also include two 1-hour videoed sessions of you working with each learner.

Applying for Accredited Teacher Dyscalculia (ATD) or Accredited Practitioner Dyscalculia (APD)

To apply for ATD or APD at the end of the course you must have two years professional, educational experience working with pupils, this can be two years full time or a combination of part time appointments. The total number of hours must add up to 1900 hours of appropriate teaching or support in Maths. The 20 hours from this course can count towards the total. You can apply for ATD/APD for pre- 16 or ATD/APD for FE/HE. It is possible to apply for both, but you would need to complete an additional 20 hours teaching practice in the second age group, please contact us to discuss this further and note there would be an additional charge.

Will I need to have a DBS Check (or equivalent)?

As a Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Disclosure is a requirement for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults in England, the learner you choose to work with for any practical teaching should be someone within your school or workplace, where

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you will already have a DBS Enhanced Disclosure.

If you choose to work with someone from outside that environment, then you should apply for a separate DBS check in the setting in which you will be working.

You should allow **at least 6 weeks** to process any DBS application, and this must be in place before any face-to-face work with a learner. For further information please visit: www.gov.uk - Disclosure and Barring Service

Other countries may have their own procedures for approving the suitability of individuals to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. The BDA is only authorised to validate the suitability of the academic and education qualifications and teaching experience to participate in the course and therefore it is the responsibility of the of the school/college/workplace where the candidate is working to ensure that they are suitable to work with learners.

However, we reserve the right to request this information from you or to terminate a programme where we feel it is not in the interests of the learner to continue. The BDA will not assume responsibility nor will accept liability incurred as a result of any participant or learner being engaged in this programme.

Technical Equipment Required for the Course

Computer and Internet access: You will need a computer (PC, Mac, laptop or other similar device) connected to the Internet and email in order to access the teaching materials and participate in this programme.

Video Recording Equipment:
You will need access to a digital video camera to record two of the teaching sessions. We recommend using a camera which records in MP4 or AVI formats. High quality webcams, smartphones and tablets properly positioned on a tripod will accomplish the task.

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Online Repository:

For our tutors to review your recorded videos and work, you will be provided with access (when required) to the BDA's learning platform and asked to upload assignments and evidence of teaching to your individual e-portfolio.

Pre-Course Reading List

Once your application has been approved, you may like to start the reading. This is the list of course reading.

Course Books

Emerson J and Jennings R (2025) The Maths & Dyscalculia Assessment. London: JP Publishing.

Gilmore, C., Göbel, S.M. and Inglis, M. (2018). An introduction to mathematical cognition. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

Noel, M-P. & Karagiannakis, G. (2022) Effective Teaching Strategies for Dyscalculia and Learning Difficulties in Mathematics. UK. Routledge

Other recommended texts:

Bay-Williams, J.M. and Kling, G. (2019). Math fact fluency : 60+ Games and assessment tools to support learning and retention. USA: ASCD.

Boaler, J. (2024). Math-ish. New York: HarperCollins.

Chinn, S.J. (2017). The trouble with maths: a practical guide to helping learners with numeracy difficulties. London; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Emerson, J. & Babtie, P. (2015) Understanding Dyscalculia and Numeracy Difficulties. London: Jessica Kingsley

Hornigold, J. (2015) Dyscalculia Pocket Book. Winchester: Teacher's Pocket Books

Hornigold, J. (2017) Understanding Learning Difficulties in Maths: Dyscalculia, Dyslexia or Dyspraxia? London: McGraw-Hill

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Kelly, K (2020) Identifying, Assessing and Supporting Learners with Dyscalculia. London: Corwin

Rogers, C. and Thomas, M. (2022). Educational Neuroscience. The Basics London: Taylor & Francis.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How many hours studying will I need to undertake?

The programme is accredited with a total of **600 guided learning hours**.

How long do I have to complete the qualification and what happens if I need more time?
You will have 16 months to complete the course. You may apply for an extension, but this will incur costs. Extension costs are worked out as the total current course fee divided by 4 for each 4-month session.

Do I need QTS or be a qualified teacher to enrol on the Level 5 programme?

No, you don't. The BDA is committed to widening participation, and so the Level 5 programme has been designed so that those who do not have a teaching qualification can also participate, so long as they have relevant prior experience.

If you already hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and you have completed the Level 5 qualification, you can apply for ATD (Approved Teacher Dyscalculia). If you do not have QTS you could apply for APD (Approved Practitioner Dyscalculia). Both routes require evidence that you have completed 1900 hours, equivalent of two years' experience working within an educational setting. This does not necessarily need to be learners who have maths difficulties but the age of those you have experience working with does matter and needs to be compliant with the application – either pre 16 or post 16. Your experience does not have to be full time and could be a combination of part-time roles. The hours of teaching you do
as part of this course will count towards this. In Scotland teachers should be registered with

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the General Teaching Council for Scotland and other countries will have equivalent accreditations.

Do I need to have current teaching experience before enrolling onto the course?

No, your experience does not have to be current, but you will only be accepted on the course with relevant experience. However, you will not be able to apply for ATD/APD until you have completed the required number of hours working with learners within an educational setting (see above).

I have already completed a Level 2 Dyscalculia qualification with the BDA, can I count this toward a Level 5 and how much will I pay?

We can offer you a 5% discount if you have completed the above course with the BDA within 3 years of completion of the Level 2.

What other documents will I need to refer to?

You will need to refer to the relevant legislation or curriculum for your country (e.g. Candidates in England should refer to the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 and the National Curriculum).

How can I access books and journals for my research?

You are provided with a reading list which highlights core texts which you will either have to purchase or access. We recommend you join a library (A University library would be best if you have access to one). There are a number of journal articles uploaded onto the course site, the course development team add to this on an ongoing basis, and you can find additional articles through an online search. Many academic journal articles are now accessible online for free.

When can I enrol onto the Level 5?

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You can enrol onto this programme at any time during the year and once accepted you can start reading and wait to be allocated to a start date and the online modules. There are 3 start dates in the year, September, January and April.

When will I be allocated a tutor?

You will be allocated a tutor as soon as the course begins.

Are there any additional costs once I have paid for the course?

There are some additional costs. There are some essential reading texts for the course, which you may have to purchase if you are unable to borrow them through a library. If you are not attached to an educational setting you may need to purchase some basic teaching resources and may need to pay for your own photocopying. We estimate total additional costs to be no more than £200. If you are attached to an educational institution the costs will likely be lower.

Is the BDA Level 5 Certificate in Dyscalculia and Maths Learning Difficulties: Support and Intervention a course which will qualify me as a SpLD tutor?

Yes, once you have completed and passed the Level 5 programme you will be able to apply for Approved Teacher Dyscalculia (ATD) or Approved Practitioner Dyscalculia (APD) and Professional Membership of the BDA.

What age groups would this course enable me to work with as a SpLD tutor?

This would depend on the age group with whom you undertake your assessed teaching practice for the Level 5 certificate; if you work with school age learners up to 18 then this is the age range you would be qualified to work with, or FE/HE/adult learners from 16 years then it would be this age range.

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You could do both, but this may entail you having to undertake additional assessed teaching practice which will incur an additional cost.

Once you have completed the BDA Level 5 Certificate in Dyscalculia and Maths Learning Difficulties; Support and Intervention, do I need to become a member of the BDA or another affiliated body so that you can practice as a SpLD tutor?

No. Upon completion of the qualification you may tutor without ATD or APD. But we would strongly recommend that you do apply to the BDA for ATD/APD status.
If tutoring students at HE level, you now need to have membership of a professional body in order for the student to be able to claim funding to pay for their support.

Will the BDA Level 5 Certificate in Dyscalculia and Maths Difficulties; Support and Intervention enable me to be a qualified assessor as well?

No. To become a qualified assessor you would need to complete an AMBDA accredited course at Level 7 in the assessment of maths learning difficulties. Please visit the BDA website for Level 7 course details.

If I already have a Level 7 qualification for assessment in dyslexia, will I be able to assess for dyscalculia having completed this course?

No, you will still need to do a qualification in assessment for dyscalculia at level 7 as well as additional teaching. The level 5 can, therefore, be viewed as the first stage of the process towards becoming a qualified specialist and assessor if that is the route you wish to take.

Do I need to complete and pass all of the modules to become fully qualified?

Yes. All of the required modules need to be completed in order to complete the Level 5 programme.
In addition, you will need to complete all the academic tasks, and prove evidence of 20 hours teaching practice together with informal assessment and evaluations.

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Contact Details

For additional information or any queries please contact:

Email:L5cert@bdadyslexia.org.uk

BDA Training team: 0333 405 4565

Postal address:

British Dyslexia Association BDA Training, Office 205, Access Business Centre, Willoughby Road, Bracknell, RG12 8FB

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