



# Partners in Learning

A BTEC blended online course for professionals working in educational settings with children and young people who are blind or partially sighted.

## ■ Overview

Vision is most children's main channel for communication and understanding. Learning with little or no sight therefore presents significant challenges to established ways of teaching. As a teacher, teaching assistant, support worker or early years practitioner, you fulfil a crucial role in understanding and meeting the needs of a blind or partially sighted learner in your setting.

Our **Partners in Learning** is a modular course developed between RNIB and the Open University, using a blended learning approach of face-to-face training with on-line study and discussion activities. The course is designed to increase your understanding of visual impairment and its impact on learning. It encourages you to identify key factors in effective teaching, learning and support and to reflect on how to promote these in the educational context in which you work.

The course is designed to be studied mainly online with two training days. However, a face-to-face version involving six training days and no online component is also available on a contract basis only.

## ■ Course philosophy

**Partners in Learning** seeks to challenge you to consider your current practice, share and develop this with others in the field, and apply your new understanding to your working situation. You are asked to actively use your learning in a variety of practical ways and to implement your developing knowledge of best practice with colleagues and learners in your own setting.

Specific intended learning outcomes which you should achieve include:

- understanding visual impairment and its implications for the educational and social development of young people
- applying a range of skills which can be used regularly in teaching and learning situations
- demonstrating a commitment to effective team work and to encouraging positive attitudes among staff and pupils
- developing a positive working relationship with learners which promotes their independence and engages them in planning and decision making.



## ■ Benefits

Benefits of the blended learning course are:

- flexible online access
- learners have frequent online discussions with fellow students
- regular online contact with experienced tutor
- fewer training days involving less travel.



## ■ Accreditation

**Partners in Learning** leads to a customised BTEC Level 3 Advanced Certificate entitled “Working with learners with visual impairment in educational settings”. The course is mapped against relevant elements of the underpinning knowledge and understanding in the National Occupational Standards for supporting teaching and learning in schools (STL). It does not meet the requirements of the mandatory qualification for teachers of children with visual impairment.

## ■ Learning pathways

The course is modular in structure and allows you to register for one of the following pathways:

### ■ Visual impairment: principal disability

This pathway is suitable for those working with children and young people whose visual impairment is their main or only disability, usually in a mainstream school or setting.

### ■ Visual impairment: complex needs

This pathway is suitable for those working with children and young people with significant additional needs as well as visual impairment, usually in a special school or setting.

### ■ Visual impairment: early years

This pathway is suitable for all practitioners working with young children from birth to five years, with or without additional needs, in the home or early years settings.

## ■ Course structure

There are two training days for the course, one at the start and the other half way through. Training days are held at a regional location within reach of all students. Special arrangements can be made for students whose circumstances mean they are unable to attend both training days.

The blended course runs over three terms and is divided into six units as follows:

- provision, roles and responsibilities
- vision and visual impairment

- effective practice
- curriculum access
- communication skills in a learning environment
- independence and social inclusion.

Each unit includes the following elements:

- online self study activities assessed by an online multiple choice test
- online group discussion activities which enable you to engage and share your learning with other students
- short written assignments encouraging you to apply your learning from the unit to your own situation.

For groups of 10 or more students we are also able to offer a contract version of the course which involves six training days and no online component. Please contact us to discuss.

## ■ Entry requirements

You should be able to provide evidence of the following:

- education to GCSE standard, NVQ Level 2 or equivalent experience or qualifications
- working on a regular basis with one or more children or young people with visual impairment for the duration of the course
- regular access to broadband internet and email facilities
- employer support for the period of your training.

## ■ Course fees

The 2011-12 fee is £650 per participant. Please contact us to discuss costs of contract courses.

## ■ Terms and conditions

- All courses are subject to viable numbers.
- Please pay on receipt of invoice.
- RNIB reserves the right to impose a charge for places cancelled two months or less before the commencement date, and in situations where students withdraw after commencement of the course.

## ■ Contact us

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PR12112P