

University of Ottawa Certificate Program in Special Music Education First of its Kind in Canada



The University of Ottawa in collaboration with Lotus Centre for Special Music Education has established a new program in special music education that will launch in fall 2018. This is the first program in Canada developed to train music teachers to work with students with special needs.

Dr. Erin Parkes is the founder and executive director of Lotus Centre for Special Music Education, an Ottawa-based charity. "All music teachers are going to encounter students with special needs in their classrooms or studios. Our mission at Lotus Centre is to provide access to adapted music education programs for students of all abilities. Teacher training is a vital part of that mission."

Dr. Parkes brings a background in research on training teachers to work with students with autism. "Research is clear that adequate training is a huge factor in success for the student. And yet, most music teachers in Canada receive little or no training in how to adapt their approach for this population. We have developed this program to include both classroom and practicum components, as this has been shown to be most effective in preparing teachers and providing both the knowledge and experience needed for success."

Recognition of the importance of teacher education in providing a positive learning experience is growing, and yet very few higher education institutions have taken the initiative to offer this training. Says Dr. Gilles Comeau, professor of music at the University of Ottawa, "The School of Music at the University of Ottawa is so pleased to be able to offer this much-needed training for music educators, the first certificate program in special music education in Canada. Lotus Centre is a leader in the movement towards access to adapted music education for people of all abilities, and we are excited to be partnering with this trailblazing organization."

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