

# COURSE SYLLABUS

## COURSE: INCLUSIVE PATHWAYS: WORKING WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

### COURSE INFORMATION

<b>Program</b>	Empowering Community Engagement: Soft Skills Micro-Courses for Students, Professors and Administrative and Service Personnel (PAS)
<b>University</b>	Universidad Pontificia Comillas
<b>Department</b>	Education, Research Methods and Assessment
<b>Course name</b>	Inclusive pathways: Working with intellectual disabilities
<b>Course code</b>	ECE2.7
<b>Credits/hours</b>	10 hours
<b>Language of instruction</b>	Spanish
<b>Course dates</b>	Academic year 2026/27
<b>Course schedule</b>	TBD
<b>Mode of instruction</b>	On campus/ In-person
<b>Target audience</b>	Students, faculty, staff
<b>Course coordinator</b>	Birgit Strotmann
<b>Course instructor</b>	María Mercedes Zurdo Garay-Gordovil
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## SHORT DESCRIPTION

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Universidad Pontificia Comillas, rooted in its Ignatian identity, grounds its pedagogy in the Ledesma–Kolvenbach paradigm and the innovation strategies of the Jesuit university network (UNIJES). Through active methodologies such as challenge-based learning (CBL) and service-learning, the university connects Jesuit values with contemporary educational practice and promotes engagement with real social challenges. Attention to diversity is understood as a preferential option for vulnerable individuals and groups, in line with the principles of iustitia and humanitas. In this framework, inclusion becomes a praxis that affirms human dignity, values diversity, and fosters empathy, critical awareness, and social responsibility—integrating academic excellence with social justice and care for the most vulnerable.

Building on this foundation, the university offers a hands-on, in-person course focused on practical strategies for inclusion in contexts of intellectual disabilities. Open to students, faculty, and staff, the course combines real-life cases, collaborative workshops, and interdisciplinary teamwork. Participants analyse contexts affecting young people with intellectual disabilities, identify educational needs, and design inclusive resources with tangible impact. Along the way, they strengthen key soft skills—empathy, social awareness, collaboration, and problem-solving—while engaging with community partners. By the end of the course, participants gain a deeper understanding of intellectual disabilities in educational settings and practical tools for inclusive practice grounded in real-world experience.

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## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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- Understanding/explaining intellectual disabilities as a key dimension of diversity in educational contexts.
  - Analysing real situations of vulnerability for young people with intellectual disabilities and identifying associated educational needs.
  - Applying collaborative skills in interdisciplinary teams to address complex social-educational challenges.
  - Designing and developing educational strategies and/or resources adapted to diverse populations with intellectual disabilities.
  - Evaluating didactic strategies and/or resources from a pedagogical perspective.
  - Demonstrating increased social awareness, empathy and commitment to inclusion.
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- Connecting academic and professional knowledge with community-based needs and projects.
- Self-reflecting on personal commitment and community engagement.

#### Objectives:

- Understand intellectual disabilities as a dimension of diversity and its educational implications.
- Analyse educational needs linked to concrete contexts of intellectual disabilities.
- Identify possible didactic strategies and/or resources to respond to those needs.
- Develop inclusive attitudes in the framework of a community-engagement oriented mindset.
- Construct collaborative and interprofessional work between students, professors and administrative and service staff.
- Design and elaborate educational strategies and/or resources that respond to concrete needs for the projects that are proposed, considering the pedagogical analysis of them.
- The development of attitudes and the construction of a collaborative and interprofessional work have much to do with soft skills, which are explained as follows:

Soft skills to be developed:

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	EXPECTED EVIDENCE
<b>EMPATHY AND SOCIAL AWARENESS</b>	Understanding and valuing the live experiences of students and professionals that volunteer and work with young people with intellectual disabilities.	Group reflection and discussion.
<b>COLLABORATIVE TEAMWORK</b>	Implementing strategies and working effectively in mixed and interdisciplinary groups.	Collaborative workshops and group challenges.
<b>PROBLEM SOLVING</b>	Selecting priority needs and designing appropriate educational strategies/resources.	Challenge-based design activities.
<b>REFLECTION AND ETHICAL COMMITMENT</b>	Reflection on social responsibility and engagement within the personal/professional role.	Self-evaluation rubric.
<b>THROUGHT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>		



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## COURSE CONTENTS

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1. Conceptual Framework
  2. Social vulnerability in the context of intellectual disabilities and diversity
  3. Educational and employment implications
  4. Foundations for pedagogical analysis and inclusive resource design
  5. Testimonies and Real-Life Experiences
  6. Insights from students and professionals involved in community projects
  7. Needs Assessment in Inclusive Educational Contexts
  8. Identifying barriers and opportunities for openness to diversity
  9. Challenge-Based Learning for Inclusion
  10. Applying CBL methodologies in inclusive educational settings
  11. Design and Development of Inclusive Strategies
  12. Creation and refinement of educational strategies and resources
  13. Community Engagement and Social Impact
  14. Evaluating the societal impact of inclusive educational interventions
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## TEACHING METHODOLOGY

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This is a face-to-face course based on a challenge-based learning (CBL) and community-engaged methodology. Learning is organized around a real-world challenge derived from identified educational needs in contexts of intellectual disabilities, developed in collaboration with community partners involved in specific social projects. All outputs are designed to respond directly to needs identified by these entities, ensuring a strong and meaningful connection between academic learning and community engagement.

The methodological approach integrates:

MODULE	TOPIC	ACTIVITIES	DURATION
1	Introduction to Social Vulnerability	Presentation of the conceptual framework Testimonies and real-life experiences Workshop: identification and selection of needs	3 hours
2	Design Phase	Workshop on principles for the pedagogical analysis of educational strategies and resources Collaborative design of strategies and/or resources	2 hours

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3	Development Phase	Development and prototyping of strategies and/or resources	2 hours
4	Refinement Phase	Review, refinement, and finalization of products	2 hours
5	Presentation and Evaluation	Presentation and handover of developed resources Self-evaluation using a rubric	1 hour

### ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

The assessment design is grounded in a predominantly formative approach, where assessment is understood primarily as a learning tool rather than merely a grading mechanism. Accordingly, evaluation is process-oriented and supports continuous development. Ongoing feedback will be provided throughout the workshops to foster reflection and improvement. Participants are also expected to engage in self-assessment as part of their learning process. Successful completion of the course requires active participation and completion of all proposed activities.

Assessment type	Assessment criteria	Overall weight
Ongoing assessment	Progress, reflection, active participation	100%

### STUDENT WORKLOAD (in hours)

Contact hours	Outside classroom	Overall
10	0	10

### READING LIST / RELEVANT REFERENCES

Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.). (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. Longman.

Bou Ysás, S., Carretero González, C., Castro González, P., Echániz Barrondo, A., & Hassi, L. (2022). *Aprendizaje basado en retos. UNIJES – Universidades Jesuitas / Universidad Pontificia Comillas*. <https://hdl.handle.net/11531/75920>



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- Galdames-Calderón, M., Stavnskær Pedersen, A., & Rodríguez-Gómez, D. (2024). Systematic review: Revisiting challenge-based learning teaching practices in higher education. *Education Sciences*, 14(9), 1008. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14091008> MDPI+2OUCl+2
- Karimova, N. U. Q. (2020). Soft skills development in higher education. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(5), 1916–1925. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.080528> ResearchGate
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