

**ACADEMIC POLICY & QUALITY OFFICE**

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

for the award of

**BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies**

**Managed by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**delivered by School of Education**

**Partner Organisations: Abingdon & Witney College, Solihull College & University Centre, Swindon College, Wiltshire College & University Centre**

<b>Date approved:</b>	December 2020
<b>Applies to students commencing study in:</b>	September 2021

**RECORD OF UPDATES**

<b>Date amended*</b>	<b>Nature of amendment**</b>	<b>Reason for amendment**</b>
November 2020	Programme Revalidation	Programme Specification updated to reflect changes: new and updated modules.
20 February 2018	Additional ACP	Addition of Wiltshire College and University Centre

## SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Awarding body:</b>	Oxford Brookes University
<b>Teaching institution and location:</b>	Abingdon & Witney College: Abingdon Campus Solihull College & University Centre, Blossomfield Campus Swindon College, North Star Campus Wiltshire College & University Centre, Trowbridge Campus
<b>Language of study:</b>	English
<b>Final award/s:</b>	BA (Hons)
<b>Programme title:</b>	Early Childhood Studies
<b>Interim exit awards and award titles available:</b>	BA (Ordinary)
<b>Brookes course code:</b>	BAH-EL-C – AB40, SH27, SW27, WT20
<b>UCAS code:</b>	AB33: X314 SH33: L520 SW33: X318 WT03: 315X
<b>JACS code:</b>	X310 Academic Studies in Nursery Education
<b>HECoS code:</b>	100457
<b>Mode of delivery:</b> (Mode of Study given in brackets)	Face to face/on-campus (full-time) Face to face/on-campus (part-time)
<b>Duration of study:</b>	Full-time – 1 year Part-time – up to a maximum of 3 years
<b>Subject benchmark statement/s which apply to the programme:</b>	Early Childhood Studies Subject Benchmarks (2019) <a href="https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-early-childhood-studies.pdf">https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-early-childhood-studies.pdf</a>  The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) (2015) <a href="https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf">https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf</a>
<b>Professional accreditation attached to the programme:</b>	N/A
<b>Apprenticeship Standard:</b>	N/A
<b>University Regulations:</b>	The programme conforms to the University Regulations for the year of entry as published/archived at: <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/">http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/</a>

## **SECTION 2: WHY STUDY THIS PROGRAMME?**

### **2.1 Rationale for/distinctiveness of the programme**

Demands for high quality comprehensive services require highly skilled well-educated early childhood practitioners. Study at Higher Educational level 6 is also required for those who would be future researchers in early childhood care and education, those who would teach others and those who would become future advocates, monitors and inspectors of services.

The BA Early Childhood Studies top-up year is designed as a follow up from a Foundation Degree, such as Foundation Degree Early Years. The course is structured to provide an inter-agency focus, based on the outcomes of integrated methods and insights of the various disciplines that contribute to our understanding of childhood, and it will support practitioners who are working in a variety of early years contexts with families, group settings and schools, as well as childminders.

The degree is designed to be responsive to the employment needs of the sector and the region. As part of our commitment to maintaining the currency of the programme, members of the course team attend regional meetings of the Early Childhood Studies degree network and report back to the programme committee.

The dissertation as well as other modules at level 6 encourages students to develop established techniques further of analysis and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources using techniques previously explored in their previous studies. The distinctiveness of the programme arises from the close links between the Partner Colleges and Oxford Brookes University. The University, through its Associate College Partnership and other working relationships, seeks to support quality teaching and learning while paying due attention to key areas of success in Further Education Colleges such as student support and personalised learning.

### **2.2 Aim/s of the programme**

The BA Early Childhood Studies Programme seeks to prepare you to take a professional and leading role within the early years sector. The Early Childhood Studies degree focuses on the early years of a child's life from (pre) birth to approximately 8 years of age and draws on a number of academic disciplines to give you a broad and reflective understanding of early childhood.

A Research focus runs through the programme, developing your understanding that working with children is rooted in theory and research and therefore based on critical reading of texts from a range of sources, including research, government policy documents and media reports about children. You will engage in critical exploration of the particular complexities of research that arise when the research participants are children and/or infants, and from that into extending your knowledge of the processes involved and develop critical awareness of yourself as a researcher. A particular emphasis will be given to the ethical procedures that are necessary before conducting fieldwork. The dissertation is your chance to make your own area of interest an important issue in Early Years by exploring and researching it and presenting a longer study.

Professional knowledge is developed throughout the programme, which aims to combine theory with practice by providing you with opportunities to reflect on practice, alongside opportunities to explore and examine UK Early Years policy. Applying this understanding will help you to assess and improve your practice. Knowing about the policies and research that are influencing practice is part of being a professional practitioner. The programme aims to prepare you for a graduate role in the world of work, and for leadership in a number of contexts, through exploring subjects as diverse as outdoor learning and children's literature, with the aim of enriching your insights into childhood and learning. As a work-based programme, these modules have a significant hands-on element, which will help you to gain appropriate knowledge and to evaluate proposals and changes, seeing the local, the national and the international perspectives.

Information on teaching teams can be found within individual college programme handbooks.



## **SECTION 3: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES**

On successful completion of the programme, graduates will demonstrate the following Brookes Attributes:

### **3.1 ACADEMIC LITERACY**

- Critically analyse the complex and interrelated effects of cultural, societal, political, historical, economic and technological contexts on young children's lives;
- Critically analyse the developmental needs of children and of the role of agencies, adults and the family in supporting the development, protection and education of young children;
- Evaluate how theoretical perspectives can inform practice in childcare and early learning, and the interaction between learning, play and development;
- Demonstrate knowledge of policy and practice governing Early Years settings;
- Demonstrate critical and analytical thinking skills;
- Present information in an appropriate register, identifying key themes and presenting a coherent argument.

### **3.2 RESEARCH LITERACY**

- Critique theories of child development to observations of children in a variety of childcare environments and contexts;
- Critically reflect on the role and purposes of research in shaping policy and practice in early childhood studies;
- Understand and offer informed critiques of the role of adults, agencies and families in the support, protection and education of young children, using insights from research to understand the shaping of policy and practice;
- Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of a chosen specialist area in Early Childhood Studies;
- Apply a wide range of academic skills (research, analysis, synthesis of information) to an investigation of practice.

### **3.3 CRITICAL SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL LITERACY**

- Critically reflect on own effectiveness as a problem solver, team worker and sensitive mediator in early childhood contexts and settings;
- Critically analyse the multidisciplinary nature of early years work, and the importance of ethical practice working with and on behalf of young children and their families;
- Reflect upon the importance of careful liaison across early childhood settings, and the need to engage collaboratively in this process;
- Learn both independently and co-operatively through setting personal objectives, managing time and tasks and critically evaluating one's own performance.
- Demonstrate personal accountability and responsibility in application of their day to day work, while also recognising his/her own limitations.

### **3.4 DIGITAL AND INFORMATION LITERACY**

- Critically engage with a range of relevant primary and secondary sources, including theoretical and research-based evidence, to extend your knowledge and understanding of young children and their families;
- Engage with a range of e-learning resources to support and enhance individual and collaborative work and to develop critical reflection and practice in early childhood.
- Use correct referencing and the use of bibliographical skills.
- Access and use information on the course and the modules on a VLE which you are encouraged to access to participate in online discussions.

### **3.5 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**

- Demonstrate the knowledge and skills relevant to graduate level employment as an ‘educare’ professional;
- Critically reflect on equal opportunities in childcare and education and the mechanisms and attitudes through which they can be promoted;
- Reflect on diversity of practice locally, nationally and internationally
- Engage in reflective practice in all professional contexts identifying key features of effective practice in supporting children’s development;
- Be a reflexive advocate for young children and their families.

## SECTION 4: CURRICULUM CONTENT & STRUCTURE

### 4.1 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS:

Code	Module Title	Credits	Level	Status	Coursework: Exam ratio
ECS5009	Preparing for the Dissertation	15	6	Compulsory	100:0
ECS5001	Literature for Young Children	15	6	Compulsory	100:0
ECS6008	Professional Roles in the Early Years	15	6	Compulsory	100:0
ECS6003	Reflective Practice	15	6	Compulsory	100:0
ECS5002	Outdoor Learning	15	6	Compulsory	100:0
ECS60**	Representations of Childhood	15	6	Compulsory	100:0
ECS6010	Dissertation	30	6	Compulsory	100:0

### 4.2 PROGRESSION AND AWARD REQUIREMENTS

Progression and Award requirements align with general University regulations.

### 4.3 PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

All programme learning outcomes have been aligned to the Early Childhood Studies Degree Network Graduate Practitioner Competencies (appended in [Subject Benchmarks](#)). Students may be eligible for assessment of Graduate Practitioner Competencies at the end of the programme, and all modules may contribute towards the evidence needed for this to be awarded at Level 6.

## SECTION 5: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

The teaching team takes seriously the University's aim to "enable a student experience of the highest possible standard," and part of this entails supporting all students as they develop key Graduate Attributes at Level 6, as outlined in Section 3 above. The BA Early Childhood Studies is delivered across four colleges, and benefits from experienced course teams in each college, who meet regularly to share good practice as a larger team.

Our emphasis for the delivery of this programme is on lectures and seminars, which take an interactive approach to learning and teaching. Single modules (15 CATS) have a notional 150 hours of learning time (pro rata for larger modules) of which 20 - 25% is contact time and the remainder is made up of independent study, directed reading and coursework (group or individual). We encourage you to take responsibility for your own learning and to develop appropriate professional skills. The aim of the programme is to develop students into autonomous learners who take responsibility for their learning and assessment and who will make positive contributions in their chosen professions. To that end we work with you so you can:

- Work independently
- Know how to find information without guidance
- Know how to set goals and devise strategies for achieving them
- Monitor your own progress to these goals and adapt your strategies accordingly

We do this by:

- Setting assessment tasks that focus upon what we really want students to learn and which require meaningful activity and complexity of thought in relation to practice
- Developing students as researchers throughout their programme of study
- Balancing summative and formative assessment to guide development of knowledge and skills

Staff make themselves available through regular consultation hours, and actively welcome questions about content the course content or Early Years practice outside set class time.

Teaching and Learning Strategies will encourage students to:

- Engage in new areas of knowledge
- Broaden and deepen their existing knowledge, understanding and skills
- Engage in critical analysis of texts, theories and practices and to test students' analysis against received understandings and practices
- Question concepts, theories, policies and practice encountered
- Interrogate the assumptions underpinning theory and research in order to come to an understanding of the significance and limitations of theory and research
- Engage in critical reflection of their own and others' value systems, development and practices

The Assessment Strategy, in conformity with the University Assessment Policy, has two purposes:

- To help students learn by providing them with information on how they can improve and to record students' learning for the purpose of awarding them marks which count towards their degree and is based on the latest research on assessment of, for and as learning.
- Focuses on a continuous assessment model using essays, portfolios, group / individual presentations, summaries or reviews of articles and research or reports of research. A major feature of this programme is the Dissertation, so the ability to design, conduct and evaluate a study in an extended written form is important. There are no exams on this programme.

In Level 6, the emphasis is on the development of professional identity so assessments are designed to develop professional skills such as reflection, collaborative working and writing for professional audiences.

We believe that since assessment is so important, students should understand what it is all about. As a student, you will have the opportunity to discuss assessment criteria, be involved in the formulation of criteria used for assessing presentations and peers' contributions to group work, engage in marking exercises, develop knowledge about plagiarism, how to provide and use formative feedback to improve learning. Each college provides comprehensive, standardised information through their VLE in regards to information about assessments. They also will make it clear how and by when you need to submit your assignments and how you will receive feedback on your assignments.

The programme regulations determining progression and degree classification are set in the relevant sections of the programme handbook. Where there are no specific regulations or procedures, the programme conforms to [university regulations](#).

## **SECTION 6: ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME**

### **6.1 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

Students will usually have achieved a Merit profile in the Foundation Degree in Early Years or an equivalent relevant Early Years related level 5 qualification of 240 credits subject to individual credit rating by Oxford Brookes University.

Students who have not studied Oxford Brookes University's Foundation Degree in Early Years will need to produce a transcript of the modules and learning outcomes they have studied on their level 5 course to allow credit rating by Oxford Brookes University and evidence coverage of sufficient comparable content to allow entrance to this BA. year.

Gaining a place on the course may also be subject to a successful interview and a strong UCAS application with an appropriate reference. These interviews may form part of an applicant day that is a shared endeavour between the College and the university. During the applicant day, applicants could be asked to:

- Attend a presentation that covers the top-up programme in more detail and outlines the rigours

of studying at level 6.

- Attend an interview where they may present and discuss their research proposal for the dissertation (this will enable the programme team to assess each student's commitment to and preparation for the programme).

The Programme Leader will consider each application on a case-by-case basis.

If English is not your first language, then you will need to show that your English language skills are at a high enough level to succeed in your studies. IELTS level 6.0 overall with 6.0 in Reading and Writing and 5.5 in Listening and Speaking.

Although GCSEs in Maths and English are not required for the Top-Up Degree, they will be required should applicants wish to progress onto future programmes, including teacher training.

## **6.2 DBS AND OTHER PRE-COURSE CHECKS REQUIRED**

A current Disclosure and Barring Service certificate is a requirement for the whole of the duration of the Programme.

It is important to note that participation in or completion of this programme may be affected by subsequent disclosure/discovery. Depending upon the outcome of the vetting process, the college reserves the following rights: to not register a student, to remove an existing registered student, or to delay the student's progression. In all circumstances, it is the student's responsibility to proactively disclose any convictions/cases pending.

## **SECTION 7: PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT**

The course is an excellent foundation to work in nursery and primary schools and other Early Years settings including those in the private and voluntary sector. You might also work with families and children in an advisory role for organisations in the public, private or charitable sectors. Wider opportunities include work in commercial organisations that are oriented to children and families. For example, children's publishing or broadcasting children's leisure activities.

Students may elect to be assessed in practice, in addition to the submission of a final portfolio at Level 6 for the opportunity to be awarded Early Childhood Graduate Practitioner Competencies, setting the new standard for professional Early Childhood Studies graduates employed within the Early Childhood Education and Care sector.

The Colleges provide impartial support and guidance regarding career options, and you can make an appointment with an advisor at some point during the course if you wish. More detailed information can be accessed in college programme handbooks. The university also has a Careers service at the university's Headington Campus on Gipsy Lane and you can equally make if you wish an appointment with them at some point during the course.

On completion of the course, you may wish to undertake a teacher training programme, social work programme or continue your studies to Masters Level and beyond, and to become involved in research or academia. If this is something that interests you, you should explore this possibility with your tutors.