

ACADEMIC POLICY & QUALITY OFFICE

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

for the award of

Foundation Degree (FdA) Early Years

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

Date approved:	December 2020
Applies to students commencing study in:	September 2021

RECORD OF UPDATES

Date amended*	Nature of amendment**	Reason for amendment**
November 2020	Programme Revalidation	Programme Specification updated to reflect changes: new and updated modules.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Awarding body:	Oxford Brookes University
Teaching institution and location:	Abingdon & Witney College: Abingdon Campus Solihull College & University Centre, Blossomfield Campus Swindon College, North Star Campus Wiltshire College & University Centre, Trowbridge Campus
Language of study:	English
Final award/s:	FdA
Programme title:	Early Years
Interim exit awards and award titles available:	Cert HE
Brookes course code:	FDA-EYA - AB33, SH33, SW33, WT03
UCAS code:	AB33: X314 SH33: L520 SW33: X318 WT03: X315
JACS code:	X310 Academic Studies in Nursery Education
HECoS code:	100456
Mode of delivery: (Mode of Study given in brackets)	Face to face/on-campus (full-time) Face to face/on-campus (part-time)
Duration of study:	Full-time – 2 years Part-time – up to 6 years maximum
Subject benchmark statement/s which apply to the programme:	Early Childhood Studies Subject Benchmarks (2019) https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-early-childhood-studies.pdf QAA (2020) Characteristics Statement: Foundation Degree The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) (2015) https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf
Professional accreditation attached to the programme:	N/A
Apprenticeship Standard:	N/A
University Regulations:	The programme conforms to the University Regulations for the year of entry as published/archived at: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/

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 years practitioners. Study at Higher Educational levels 4 and 5 (and beyond) 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 Early Years Foundation degree at Oxford Brookes University brings together a number of academic disciplines. 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 settings with families, playgroups and in schools and nurseries, 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 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 FdA Early Years Programme seeks to prepare you to take a professional and leading role in early years provision. This may be in a formal leadership position or through mentoring, training and supporting roles in the workplace. As part of this preparation you will gain a clear understanding of how children grow and learn, and of the interaction between learning and development. You will recognise the important role of play in learning and development and apply this critically and reflectively to planning, leading and evaluating practice with young children. Observing practice and analysing your observations will enable you to create an appropriate learning environment for each child that takes account of their stage of development, their interests and their needs. You will understand the role of adults in promoting learning and development and creating a safe and inclusive environment.

Applying this understanding will help you to assess and improve your practice. Knowing about the policies and research that are having an effect on practice is part of being a professional practitioner. The programme will help you to gain that 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

- Apply an appropriate range of academic skills to explain the complex and interrelated effects of cultural, societal, political, historical, economic and technological contexts on young children's lives;
- Analyse the developmental needs of children and 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;
- Analyse patterns of children's growth and learning, and the interaction between learning, play and development;
- Develop critical and analytical thinking skills;
- Present information in an appropriate register, identifying key themes and presenting a coherent argument.

3.2 RESEARCH LITERACY

- Relate and apply theories of child development to observations of children in a variety of childcare environments and settings;
- Reflect on the way insights from research shape policy and practice;
- Appreciate the role and purposes of research 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

- Demonstrate effectiveness as a problem solver, team worker and sensitive mediator in early childhood contexts and settings;
- Demonstrate awareness of the multidisciplinary nature of early years work, and the importance of ethical practice working with and on behalf of young children and their families;
- Learn both independently and co-operatively through setting personal objectives, managing time and tasks and 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

- Select 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 University and College-based e-learning resources to support and enhance individual and collaborative work and to develop 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 employment as a professional in the Early Years sector;
- Demonstrate an understanding of equal opportunities in childcare and education, and the mechanisms and attitudes through which they can be promoted;

- Engage in reflective practice in all professional contexts, identifying key features of effective practice in supporting children’s development;
- Appreciate diversity of practice locally, nationally and internationally;
- Be a reflective 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
EAYS4006	Studying Policy & Practice	15	4	Compulsory	100:0
EAYS4008	Introduction to Child Development	30	4	Compulsory	100:0
EAYS4007	Reflective Early Years Pedagogy	15	4	Compulsory	100:0
EAYS4009	Inclusion & Wellbeing	15	4	Compulsory	100:0
EAYS4012	Children's Digital Learning	15	4	Compulsory	100:0
EAYS4010	Working with families and caregivers	15	4	Compulsory	100:0
EAYS4011	Global Perspectives	15	4	Compulsory	100:0
EAYS5007	Developing Pedagogies for Artwork With Young Children	15	5	Compulsory	100:0
EAYS5008	Children's Voice	15	5	Compulsory	100:0
EAYS5005	Researching with Young Children	30	5	Compulsory	100:0
EAYS5003	Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Studies	30	5	Compulsory	100:0
EAYS5009	Early Years Environments	15	5	Compulsory	100:0
EAYS5004	Leading Early Years Practice	15	5	Compulsory	100:0

4.2 PROGRESSION AND AWARD REQUIREMENTS

It is expected that students will complete the level 4 modules prior to commencing the level 5 modules.

Progression:

Level 4 assignments will support students’ developing academic skills and will induct them into the discourse and practice of university education. Assessment tasks in this phase will normally take the form of interlinked tasks, including the creation of practice-based resources with accompanying self-assessments or critical reflection. Group work is also an important element as this is a crucial skill for employability.

In Level 5, the focus shifts to the communication of complex ideas to peers, or through the creation of portfolios, resources and environments. There is also an increase in the prevalence of discussion of research evidence and critical argument in longer pieces of written work.

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](#)). Whilst Graduate Practitioner Competencies cannot be awarded with the FdA, 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 5, as outlined in Section 3 above. The FdA Early Years 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. There are no exams on this programme.

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, learn 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

Prior qualifications necessary for entry to the programme including English Language requirements.

Applicants must:

- be capable of producing work at a standard equivalent to Level 4
- produce for assessment at the interview a 500-word piece of work reflecting on their role as an early years practitioner
- have a reference from their employer.
- have relevant work experience, paid or in a voluntary capacity.
- normally hold as a minimum one of the following:
 - An A level or vocational A level
 - Vocational level 3 (such as CACHE Diploma or other qualification)
 - An advanced Modern Apprenticeship
- have access to a relevant work setting for a minimum of 10 hours per week

Admission with credit:

Applicants with prior certificated or experiential learning may be admitted with credit for up to a maximum of 120 credits at level 4.

Application for the award of credit must be made in writing following discussion with the Programme Manager and the University Liaison Manager. Documentary evidence will be required in support of the application. If sufficient learning is considered to be evidenced to meet the learning outcomes of a Module (or Modules), an application for credit will be made to the Examinations Committee. A student admitted with credit will, on admission, receive a written statement of the modifications of these Programme Regulations as they apply to him or her. The average mark of a student receiving credit will be calculated on the total number of remaining Modules for each year of study.

Dispensation:

Exceptionally, applicants who can show that they have qualifications, or experience, or both, that demonstrate that they have knowledge and capabilities equivalent to those possessed by holders of the qualifications listed above may be admitted with dispensation from the requirement to possess those qualifications.

Selected applicants will be interviewed by the local course leaders. Applicants are selected in the basis of their suitability for the course, and their ability to benefit from and contribute to it.

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 Foundation 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 Foundation Degree is a work-based qualification designed to support your reflective practice in the workplace as well as fostering academic and research skills. Previous students have benefitted from an improved professional status; some have trained to be teachers or Early Years Professionals; many have sought to complete their undergraduate career through finishing an honours programme, and some have continued into postgraduate study and a range of careers in education, health and psychology related fields.

The team values its links with employers especially at a local level. Nursery managers and local authority officers have contributed to the design of this programme and many continue to be involved through discussion with the course team.

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 at the College, you may wish to undertake a 'top up' year to top your degree up to a full honours degree.

Once the course is completed, some students gain promotion within their current employment or with new employers in roles including Learning and Teaching Assistant and Cover Supervisor.