**Programme Title:**
Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Title:</th>
<th>Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awarding Body:</td>
<td>Staffordshire University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Institutions:</td>
<td>Stoke College, Stafford College, Ashton College, Burton and South Derbyshire College, South Staffordshire College, Newcastle College, CWT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Award:</td>
<td>Foundation Degree of Arts in Early Childhood Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of Study:</td>
<td>Part Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCAS Codes:</td>
<td>X310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QAA Benchmarks:</td>
<td>Early Childhood Studies Subject Foundation Degree Qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACS Code:</td>
<td>L520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Production:</td>
<td>August 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Revision:</td>
<td>September 2015, Next revision August 2016</td>
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</table>

If you require this document in a larger text or a different medium please contact us.
EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

- Increase your competence as a learner and aid you to develop transferable skills such as communication, self-awareness, reflection, evaluating your effect on others and their environments.

- Provide flexible and high quality, teaching and learning experiences which will encourage you to relate theory to practice and prepare you for a range of vocational roles in early years care and education, in accordance with your prior experience.

- Ensure that you can demonstrate that you have adopted appropriate, value and belief systems for the early years’ sector, including anti-discriminatory practice, safeguarding children, equal opportunities and inclusion.

- Develop your ability to construct and sustain a reasoned argument, informed by research about a wide range of issues, engaging critically with evidence based reflective practice.

- Develop your knowledge and an in-depth understanding of current practice, legislation and initiatives in the early years’ sector and gain understanding of how approaches in other societies may differ.

- Provide you with a firm basis for progression to further study (e.g. a BA Honours degree) or to attain an early years’ sector specific professional status.

- Promote your capacity and commitment to act as an advocate for young children and the disposition to work for change.

- Support your study of early childhood studies which aims to cross the boundaries between disciplines and professions to promote multi-professional understanding, respect and collaboration.

- Extend your knowledge and understanding of the continuum of holistic growth and development of young children and support your commitment to promoting the holistic development of the child.

**What is distinctive about this programme?**

The content, delivery style and organisation of this programme have been developed as a result of our experience of delivering a Foundation Degree for practitioners in the early years’ sector since 2003. In consultation with students and local employers, we have combined features of traditional academic study with more innovative teaching, learning and assessment strategies to design a programme that both experienced and aspiring practitioners will find stimulating and relevant to the growing demands of their roles in developing the high quality early childhood provision expected in 21st century society.

We have well-established and effective collaborative partnerships with all the organisations delivering the award, providing you with a choice of places to study close to home or work, across a wide geographical area.
For those without qualifications to work with young children, the programme offers a full-time pathway with a significant amount of placement experience to enhance learning and develop the inter-personal and practical skills required for employment. Alternatively, our partners offer a variety of days and times of part-time attendance for practitioners wishing to fit their studies around full-time employment. Staffordshire University offers a two year part time fast track option for those in full time employment who wish to complete this qualification at a faster pace. Therefore there is an option for flexibility to suit individual needs.

The University and our partners are active members of the Sector Endorsed Foundation Degrees in Early Years (SEFDEY), a national body which seeks to establish a network of institutions with high standard programmes and to promote the development of graduate practitioners to work within the sector. Programmes offered by SEFDEY members have been developed with reference to the Foundation Degree quality benchmark, the Early Childhood Studies subject benchmark and the Common Core Skills and Knowledge for the Children’s Workforce standards.

The Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies at Staffordshire University is distinctive in its design to meet the needs of the local people and the local business community, and has been developed in co-operation with the local employers. Our partnership with colleges allows us access to shared skills and resources which enables students a wider range of materials and expertise upon which to draw.

The Staffordshire Graduate

The Staffordshire Graduate represents a set of qualities that the University passionately believes is necessary for success in the 21st century. The Staffordshire Graduate is a reflective and critical learner with a global perspective, prepared to contribute in the world of work.

This programme enables students who are new to the sector to gain and evidence practical skills and competences in preparation for employment and will enhance the knowledge and skills of experienced practitioners to prepare them for the responsibilities of senior roles associated with leading practice and influencing change in early years’ provision. Students start to develop reflective thinking skills at the beginning of the programme and critical reflection on practice and learning is emphasised throughout. The Foundation Degree Early Childhood Studies Award will provide you with early years’ practitioner status equivalent to level 3 which will enable you to gain employment working with children. The content has been designed to initially encourage students to consolidate understanding of the impact of national legislation and policy on practices and issues they will experience first-hand, before challenging them to consider global perspectives on early childhood issues and the influence these may have on their own practices as they progress through the programme.
## PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

### What will this programme teach me to do?

On completion of the programme you should be able to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common learning outcome headings</th>
<th>CERTIFICATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Understanding</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key concepts, philosophies, political, economic and social of early childhood studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Develop lines of argument and make sound judgements to challenge and evaluate appropriate early childhood studies literature through research, showing a willingness to accommodate new ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enquiry</td>
<td>Present, evaluate and interpret complex data (qualitative and quantitative) appropriate to the diverse range of early childhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Evaluate and interpret the diversity, complexity and changing nature of babies and young children's care and education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Communicate relevant ideas and findings reliably through written and oral means both individually and within groups, using structured and coherent arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Undertake further training and develop new skills that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within relevant vocational organisations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Demonstrate qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment, management or further training including the use of ICT resources for producing written material and research.</td>
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PROGRAMME STRUCTURE, MODULES AND CREDITS

Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part-time Optional Module</th>
<th>Core Modules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. Professional and Academic Development</td>
<td>2. The Developing Child: A Holistic View</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 credits</td>
<td>30 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b. Working with Young Children</td>
<td>6. Leading Change in Early Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 credits</td>
<td>30 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Planning Cycle</td>
<td>7. Safeguarding and Promoting Children’s Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 credits</td>
<td>30 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 credits</td>
<td>30 credits</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(240 credits will be gained over the course of the 2 years delivered over 3 years part time).

Part-time structure over three years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Teaching Block 1</th>
<th>Teaching Block 2</th>
<th>Teaching Block 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1b. Professional and Academic Development</td>
<td>2. The Developing Child: A Holistic View</td>
<td>3. The Planning Cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 credits Level 4</td>
<td>30 credits Level 4</td>
<td>30 credits Level 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(90 credits completed in Year 1)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR 2</th>
<th>Teaching Block 1</th>
<th>Teaching Block 2</th>
<th>Teaching Block 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 credits Level 4</td>
<td>30 credits Level 5</td>
<td>30 credits Level 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(90 credits completed in Year 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>Teaching Block 1</th>
<th>Teaching Block 2</th>
<th>Teaching Block 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 credits Level 5</td>
<td>30 credits Level 5</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(60 credits completed in Year 3)

### Possible Progression Routes from Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching FE:</th>
<th>BA/BA (hons) Social work/Education/Nursing</th>
<th>BA/BA (hons) Top-up Early Childhood Studies/Education</th>
<th>Teaching: Registered Teacher Programme.</th>
<th>Employment: Family/children centres, care support, educational admin and management, playwork, learning support etc.</th>
<th>Early Years Teacher Status</th>
<th>Early Years Teacher Status (Pre-requisite ordinary degree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector. Cert Ed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employment outside the vocational area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies (On successful completion of level 5)

(Note: Entry to teacher training (including Early Years Teacher Status) will require each applicant to have GCSE English/Maths/Science at level C or above, prior to application. Entry requirements for other vocational degrees (nursing, social work) will vary according to the HE provider and candidates are strongly advised to contact the providers prior to application.)
HOW WILL I BE TAUGHT AND ASSESSED?

Teaching and Learning

The teaching, learning and assessment strategy has been carefully developed for this award. Students who come to this Certificate in HE bring with them a wealth of practical experience and detailed knowledge of specific contexts to share with others, their learning may therefore need to be supported in a different way. The programme will be studied over one year and one semester, the following year delivered one day a week in the late afternoon/evening to accommodate students who will be in employment and may have difficulty accessing University/College resources during the day time.

Each module consists of a total of 300 hours of study time. The study time is subdivided into contact time and self-directed time (see module descriptors). Each module is designated at FHEQ Level 4 equating to the stage of study reached and representing progression in the demand and nature of the expected learning outcomes. At FHEQ Level 4, candidates will demonstrate a sound knowledge of basic concepts and be able to present, evaluate and interpret data, to develop lines of arguments to make sound judgements.

All modules are compulsory. Candidates studying for Certificate in Higher Education in Early Childhood Studies must successfully complete all modules, thus achieving 120 credits.

The VLE ‘Blackboard’ will be used as a support resource for candidates by providing flexible learning, with access to materials on-line to enable candidates to manage their time more effectively and to improve staff/student communication through bulletin boards. Blackboard will enable candidates have access to course materials, lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations and reading lists, to enable them to manage their time more effectively. Blackboard offers opportunities for candidates to engage in group work and independent learning by the use of such things as synchronous/asynchronous discussion boards, video links, blogs and wikis. Students will also have access to their chosen college’s VLE system for internal discussion and resource.

The strategies for teaching and learning are designed to provide practical contexts for the analysis of contemporary issues and problems of a practical nature. The following strategies will be adopted to ensure that students have a supportive learning and teaching environment.

Work Related Learning – Students will be required to complete work related tasks in all modules. This will provide them with the opportunity to link theoretical perspectives to their practice. It will also enable them to reflect on values, practices, assumptions and policies. Work-based activities, supported by a work place mentor, help students to establish connections between practice and issues raised by the programme.

Lectures and Presentation - Students will be given formal lectures which will provide theoretical underpinning on key educational concepts.

Seminars – Students will be given the opportunity to contribute to seminars which discuss in depth issues covered in the lectures and presentations. This encourages discussion, reflection and the exchange of ideas. Students will be engaged in providing and receiving critical feedback from peers and tutors on presentations.
Personal and Academic Tutorials – Students will be given the opportunity to discuss personal and educational concerns in small groups and individually. Academic and personal tutorials may be either face to face or electronic. This will support the development of understanding and promote retention and successful attainment.

Personal tutorials will be run in accordance with individual college’s policy on Personal Tutoring. The Personal Tutor will provide pastoral support and advice. All students will be encouraged to approach the module tutor for guidance and advice on specific areas of academic direction. Personal tutors will assist students to maintain and develop their Personal Development Profiles as they go through the programme.

All students will be allocated a personal tutor when they first arrive at the college of their choice, and this is their first point of contact for help and advice. The personal tutor will build up a relationship with their tutees to provide pastoral support, academic guidance and where necessary make referrals to student support services. Once per ten week block all students will be invited to book individual or group tutorials with their personal tutor. The personal tutor meetings will enable the student to reflect in a critical and analytical manner upon their professional practice and intellectual knowledge, thereby subjecting it to informed scrutiny and enhanced understanding.

Students will be issued with a student handbook at the start of the course and a module handbook prior to the commencement of each module. A short induction period will take place in the first week of the course when they will be made aware that their personal tutor will be their first port of call if they need any help or advice, the tutorial meetings will help to build up a relationship between tutor and tutee. Students will be encouraged to use e-mail to ensure speedy communication with personal tutors if needed. The tutor will ensure that all students have a college based e-mail address to contact, to ensure that students have continuity of support throughout the course.

The induction period will include an orientation session, security, health and safety, introduction to library facilities, awareness of student support services, communication and an understanding of both tutor and student responsibilities. The induction period will also outline the progress, assessment and delivery pattern of the course.

Guided reading and independent study – students will be provided with booklists and reading tasks in order to enable them to engage with relevant and appropriate debates.

Practical workshops will develop application and reflection where issues, documents and materials will be analysed and discussed.

Case-study activities will be used to support the above approaches as a means of establishing connections between the workplace and issues raised by the programme.

Each method will be chosen to achieve the acquisition of relevant knowledge and understanding in order to develop an informed appreciation of practice. It must also be recognised that much learning will take place in the work place setting. The theoretical perspectives explored will enable students to reflect upon and share their experience, and relate this to current thinking. Students will be encouraged to develop their observational skills and to question their own practice and that of others, to investigate how this is influential in the development of the ‘whole child’.

The teaching and learning experience will offer a range of opportunities to develop the skills of the reflective practitioner, a theme which is integral throughout all modules within the programme.
The teaching of each module will also provide opportunities for students to:

- work with others
- develop interpersonal skills
- demonstrate the capacity to plan, share goals, and work as a member of a team
- communicate and present oral and written arguments

Each module will vary slightly in the learning and teaching styles adopted. However, in general all modules will include traditional learning materials, such as hand-outs, powerpoint presentations, and specialist visiting speakers. Throughout the programme students will be encouraged to reflect critically; to listen carefully to the views of others; to question values and opinions; to investigate evidence and draw upon their own informed conclusions. They will be encouraged to develop as independent learners and to extend their skills of collaborating and negotiation. The teaching approach will often be activity based and participatory with students expected to take a full and responsible part. Prior reading will be specified and is necessary for some sessions.

In addition to the above, at appropriate points in the year, students will be briefed on assignments, which include clearly defined assessment criteria.

**Work based Activities**

Students will be expected to undertake work-based activities in preparation for their teaching and learning sessions within the college. These may include information gathering exercises such as locating relevant policies of resource audits from their setting for review and discussion. Observations of children or work processes in the work setting may be used to inform discussion such as analysing children’s needs, involvement in the planning process or the preparation of work focused learning materials. Identified work based guides will provide support for learners undertaking such activities.

Upon registration on the course all candidates will be required to nominate a work based guide (Critical Friend) who has agreed to support the candidate throughout the programme. Each guide will be issued with a handbook explaining the programme structure, their role and how they can support and facilitate the student’s work based learning.

It is expected that the elected guide will:

- Relate well to the student.
- Have a willingness to share their practice.
- Have good negotiating skills
- Be able to provide constructive feedback in a supportive manner
- Be supportive of the development of the early years practitioners’ role.
Assessment

You will be provided with assessment descriptors for the programme. These describe the characteristics of the performance necessary to achieve each grade at this level.

The assessment tasks set over the duration of the programme have been designed to develop and build upon a wide range of personal and professional skills, whilst strongly reinforcing links between theory and practical application. The assessment strategy has been constructed to reflect the changing role of the early childhood studies practitioner at all ages from 0 -7 (+ 11mths) years, especially in the light of the Children’s Workforce Strategy and the requirements of the Early Years Professional National Standards, Common Core of Skills for the Children’s Workforce and Early Years Foundation Stage Framework/National Curriculum, thereby embracing the need for evaluation and reflection throughout.

It is understandable that some methods of assessment will suit different students in different ways, therefore a range of assessment methods will be used on the programme to assess the learning outcomes of the modules, including one pre-seen examination to provide information about knowledge and understanding of the course that may not be available through other forms of assessment, such as the ability to recall and apply theory.

. The assessment methods include:

- Assignments
- Case Studies/Practical Planning
- Poster Presentation
- Group presentations- DVD/film making
- Independent Research
- Portfolio
- Reflective Log

Students are encouraged to analyse complex situations concerning human learning and development in particular contexts. This also includes an examination of their learning and value systems. Students will be assessed upon their ability to accommodate new ideas within childcare settings across the whole age range of 0 -7 (+ 11mths) years. Throughout their study students will be encouraged to apply theoretical frameworks to their own and others practice. Transferable and generic skills (including problem solving and communication) are assessed. These require students to demonstrate a range of skills including the ability to;

- communicate and present oral and written arguments; use information and communication technology, including word processing, data bases, internet communication, information retrieval and on-line searches.

- interpret and present relevant numerical information.

- work with others, as a result of the development of interpersonal skills, to demonstrate the capacity to plan, to share goals, and work as a member of a team.
• improve their own learning and performance, including the development of study and research skills, information retrieval, and a capacity to plan and manage learning,

A variety of methods are used to ensure that assessment is an accurate reflection of the student’s ability at the two levels.

• Formative learning and feedback is used throughout the programme, this includes observation of the student’s performance in class discussions and their ability to contribute to considerations of case-studies in class time. Student’s engagement with work related learning through the completion of work related tasks is formatively assessed. Students may be asked to make presentations about their work related learning to their peers or develop practical resources. They may be asked to produce reviews of and recommendations for policy and practice.

• Summative assessment takes a variety of forms which include written assignments that link theoretical knowledge and understanding to practical application in the workplace. All assessed work is marked according to the grade point system adopted by the University (Grade Percentage up to 100%). The changing levels of the course are reflected in the demands of the assessment in accordance with QAA framework for Higher Education. Assessments at level one require sound knowledge of concepts with the ability to evaluate and interpret data to create arguments and make sound judgements of basic concepts.

• Candidates must attempt ALL assessments.

Assignments must:

• be appropriate to the undergraduate level of the award.

• be clearly related to the learning outcomes of the module.

• provide realistic scope for the candidate to relate to the aims and outcomes of the module.

• clearly state the expectations of the assignment and the methodologies to be used.

• use valid and reliable techniques of assessment where appropriate.

• be broadly focused to cover all age ranges 0 - 7 (+ 11mths) years

• allow the candidate to demonstrate his/her reflective and analytical skills.

• demonstrate weighting appropriate to the level of the award emphasising the importance of analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

• allow candidates to integrate theory with practice and draw upon their own work-based experience.
• give opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate his/her own professional development.

• encourage consideration of equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

• maintain ethical standards of confidentiality.

• be appropriate and sensitive to the needs of the child, family and institution.

• use group work with caution and ensure that each candidate’s work is unique and can be assessed independently.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Entry Requirements (including IELTS score)**

**What qualifications would I need to join this programme?**

All part-time applicants are individually assessed on their qualifications, skills and experience. However you would normally

- Be in employment (either paid or voluntary) within an early years setting for at least two days a week.

- Have a pass in an appropriate Level 3 vocational qualification (eg. CACHE DCE, NNEB, DNN, Level 3 Diploma, BTEC National Diploma Early Childhood Studies, NVQ Level 3 Early Childhood Studies/Playwork, etc)

- Have at least one year’s post qualifying study experience in an early years or play work setting.

- Have a Critical Friend (usually from your setting and usually a senior member of staff) to support your study in the workplace

- English GCSE at grade C or above.

- Maths and Science GCSE at Grade C or above are desirable

Entry will be subject to a successful interview and applicants demonstrating an enhanced DBS check (formally CRB check) which confirms that there are no reasons why a candidate should not work with children.

Candidates who do not meet the standard entry requirements will be considered on a case by case basis
Disability Statement
Staffordshire University operates a policy of inclusive teaching and learning to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to fulfil their educational potential. Details about how to apply to have your needs assessed can be found at:
http://www.staffs.ac.uk/courses_and_study/disabled_students/index.jsp

AWARD SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Programme Management

The Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies will be managed at Staffordshire University by a Programme Leader and a University Programme Advisor.

Management meetings will be held termly to oversee the delivery and quality of the programme together with other award issues. On completion of each module moderation of assessment will take place. Two Award Committee meetings will take place. These meetings will include student representatives and employers and will review delivery and quality of the award and inform the Annual Monitoring process. All Partner College Award Leaders/Representatives are expected to attend these meetings.