

University of Chester

Programme Specification

Early Years Practice BA (Hons) (Level 6 only)

2023 - 2024

1. Final Award

Bachelor of Arts (Level 6 only)

2. Programme Title

Early Years Practice

3. Internal Programme Title

Early Years Practice Top-Up (St Helens)

4. Intermediate / Exit Awards

4a. Award

4b. Title

5. Awarding Institution / Body

University of Chester

6. Programme Delivered By

St Helens College

7. Location of Delivery

St Helens College Town Centre Campus

8. Framework

Undergraduate Modular Programme

9. Mode of Study

Full-time

10. Forms of Study

Classroom / Laboratory,

11. Normal length of study

1 year

12. Maximum length of study

3 Years

13. Frequency of intake / starting month

Annual - September

14. UCAS Code

15. JACS and/or HECoS Code

X310

16. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check Required?

No

17. Faculty & Department

17a. Faculty

School of Education

17b. Department

Childhood, Education and Professional Development

18. Subject Benchmarking Group

Early Childhood Studies, March 2022.

19. Professional Recognition By (if applicable)

20. Name of Module Assessment Board (MAB)

Academic and Professional Programmes Undergraduate MAB.

21. Date of Approval

Thursday 10th May 2018

22. Educational Aims of the Programme

The programme aims reflect the common core of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required by those working with young children in early years settings, schools and other areas of children's services. In particular, the programme aims to equip learners with the subject knowledge, understanding, characteristics and skills described in the QAA Early Childhood Studies Benchmark Statements (2022) and also associated with the children's workforce. In particular, the aim is to:

- develop learners knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required by those working with young children in early years settings, schools and other areas of children's services;
- provide learners with the skills to communicate and engage effectively with young children, their carers and other professionals which will enable learners to engage in a multi-agency / professional approach to children's services;
- promote understanding of the needs of the individual and the setting to support their development as well as promoting their welfare;
- develop knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the preparation, planning, delivery and evaluation of provision that meets the needs of young children;
- provide opportunities to engage with and reflect upon their own personal and professional learning through further study and to enhance their professional practice;
- provide opportunities to explore theoretical concepts in a research context and to apply the principles of evidence informed and ethical practice;

- equip learners with transferable skills including ICT, teamwork; critical thinking and reflection, problem solving, communication and independence to enhance future practice in a diverse range of settings.

This will be achieved through a programme that is structured to encompass core areas of understanding such as perspectives on childhood and child development, the family and community, leadership and professional practice, developing research and pedagogy, as well as the personal attributes graduates need to be successful in the workplace.

23. Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

An Early Years Practice graduate will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key principles underpinning and factors that influence the early social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of young children;
- express their knowledge and understanding of multiprotection, interprofessional, multi-agency and inter-agency working;
- express and understand the main provisions of the national and local statutory and non-statutory frameworks and policy contexts within which children's services work and their implications for early years settings;
- demonstrate a depth of knowledge and reflective understanding of the literature related to relevant field of study;
- demonstrate how the family, community, social, economic, environmental, global, ethical, political and cultural factors influence the construction of early childhood;
- understand the diversity of children's rights and needs and analyse responses to these;
- understand and critically analyse legislation relating to young children, families and their communities.

ED6702; ED6704; ED6705; ED6706; ED6708.

Cognitive Skills

An Early Years Practice graduate will be able to:

- discuss critically a range of ideas and concepts relevant to how young children learn and develop;

- analyse and interpret the effects of society on young children, their families and communities;
- understand and critically evaluate different theories of child development and their influence on policy and practice;
- describe and critically analyse the nature and quality of a range of early years provision;
- review cultural and social diversity and inequality in society and evaluate how these are expressed and addressed;
- discuss critically a broad range of complex ideas and concepts relevant to the study of early childhood;
- analyse, interpret and evaluate a broad range of research;
- reflect upon different perspectives, and evaluate them in a critical manner to arrive at supported conclusions;
- access, retrieve, organise and use a range of sources of information, including primary sources and critically evaluate their relevance;
- make able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, reach sound judgements and communicate them effectively.

ED6702; ED6704; ED6705; ED6706; ED6708.

Practical and Professional Skills

An Early Years Practice graduate will:

- develop and enhance transferrable skills;
- establish fair, respectful, trusting, supportive and constructive relationships with children;
- communicate sensitively and effectively with children from birth to the end of early years foundation stage;
- recognise and respect the influential and enduring contribution that families and parents/carers can make to children's development, well-being and learning;
- provide formal and informal opportunities through which information about children's well-being, development and learning can be shared between a setting and families and parents/carers
- contribute towards establishing a culture of collaborative and cooperative working between colleagues;
- have insight and confidence in leading and working collaboratively with others;

- be sensitive to contextual and interpersonal factors, taking into account of the complexity of factors that shape behaviour and social interaction and form the basis of problems and interpersonal conflict;
- be sensitive to the importance of enhancing cooperation to maximise the effectiveness of individual skills;
- have effective problem-solving skills and be able to devise and sustain arguments within their discipline;
- be able to use a range of multimedia skills to communicate;
- have effective professional and personal organisation skills including time management;
- be able to exercise personal responsibility and make decisions in complex situations.

ED6702; ED6704; ED6705; ED6706.

Communication Skills

An Early Years Practice graduate will be able to:

- present information to others in appropriate forms, including having a sense of audience;
- write for different purposes;
- communicate ideas and research findings both effectively and fluently by written, oral and visual means to converse, debate, negotiate, persuade, and challenge the ideas of others;
- offer an informed point of view, drawing upon a range of theoretical and ideological positions;
- collate, interrogate and use data effectively;
- critically reflect upon their own and other's skills and views;
- make critical judgements and evaluations;
- use information and communication technology (ICT) appropriately in a range of contexts.

ED6702; ED6704; ED6705; ED6706; ED6708.

24. Programme Structure and Features; Levels, Modules, Credits and Awards

24a. Programme Structure and Features (levels, modules, credits, awards)

The programme is designed as a single honours level 6 only programme with a modular structure that will be offered full time. The programme will run over one academic year, commencing in September of each year. On successful completion of level six (120 credits), students will be awarded the BA (Honours) Degree.

In general terms, the curriculum is structured so that at level six, modules are designed to explore complex and challenging concepts as well as providing opportunities for consolidation and breadth. Students will be encouraged to develop more questioning and self-reliant attitudes towards:

- subject material;
- independent thought and judgement;
- skills in research, critical evaluation and analysis;
- leadership, team working and networking skills;
- critical investigations of the relationship between theory and practice.

Students will undertake five core modules at level six which will enable them to evaluate and develop appropriate pedagogical approaches to work with children and their families. The modules encompass theories of leadership and management, and will help students develop their understanding of professions and professionalism, and the importance of multi-professional and multi-agency working, alongside key pedagogical issues for early years practice. The modules are:

- ED6702 The Early Childhood Professional (20 credits)
- ED6704 Contemporary Issues in the Early Years (20 credits)
- ED6705 Dissertation (40 credits)
- ED6706 Principles and Pedagogy in Early Childhood (20 credits)
- ED6708 International Perspectives in Early Childhood (20 credits)

24b. Module Structure

Mod-Code	Level	Title	Credit	Single
ED6702	6	The Early Childhood Professional	20	Comp
ED6704	6	Contemporary Issues in the Early Years	20	Comp
ED6705	6	Dissertation	40	Comp
ED6706	6	Principles and Pedagogy in Early Childhood	20	Comp

Mod-Code	Level	Title	Credit	Single
ED6708	6	International Perspectives in Early Childhood	20	Comp

24c. Credit Accumulation

Level 6 120 Credits would entitle the student to an Honours Bachelor's Degree.

24d. Details of any derogation from University Regulations (if applicable)

25. Professional Body Requirements (if applicable)

26. Admission Requirements

The programme is intended to make a valuable contribution to lifelong learning by providing access to higher education for learners from different starting points and with different career aspirations. This is in accordance with the University policy on widening participation and equal opportunity.

Admission of students shall be based on the University of Chester's expectation that the student will be able to achieve the standard required for the academic award. Within the admissions process the University seeks to give advanced standing/credit for prior learning appropriate to specified learning outcomes. The level 6 Early Years Practice modules are available as a full-time option to students who have completed a Foundation Degree in Early Years, Early Years Practice, Early Childhood Studies or a similar qualification deemed equivalent by the programme team. Those students who do not hold this formal qualification, or who have only obtained vocational qualifications, will be directed towards an appropriate FdA award.

All students progressing from a FdA in Early Years Practice will hold [a full and relevant Level 3 qualification as stated by the Department for Education](#). All qualification will be checked against this on Entry to the FdA.

Admission onto the course will be via application.

27. Subject Benchmark Statements

The programme takes account of the current QAA Benchmarking Statements (2022) for Early Childhood degrees. This set of Benchmarking Statements is divided into three categories:

- 'threshold standards' which are the minimal standards necessary for a student to graduate with a single honours degree in Early Childhood Studies;
- 'typical standards' which are those which a typical ECS student would be expected to attain;
- 'excellent standards' are those which the highest attaining Early Childhood Studies student would be expected to achieve.

The standards are designed to identify the knowledge or skills a graduate at that standard (threshold, typical or excellent) would be expected to be able to demonstrate. The areas of knowledge and skills are linked to the programme modules, but typical standards will be more securely demonstrated than threshold while excellent standards reflect a higher level of proficiency and understanding.

The programme aims to develop graduates who will demonstrate the characteristics described in the QAA Early Childhood Studies Benchmark Statements which cover Subject Knowledge, Subject-specific Skills and Generic Skills. These include aspects such as knowledge and understanding; awareness of key issues; reasoning, reflection and analysis; evaluation, observation, planning and implementation; critical thinking; application; communication and presentation; ICT; teamwork and problem solving; improving own learning; pose and operationalise research questions.

A distinguishing feature of the Early Years Practice degree is the emphasis placed on the application of theory to practical understanding of child development and early childhood multi-professional and inter- and intra-professional work. The Early Childhood Studies (2022) benchmarking standards offer a set of defining principles but state that the aim of the degree should be to produce 'an understanding of the ecology of early childhood from conception, and of children in ecological context. Ecological context should be understood as encompassing both time and geographical space and encompassing the contexts of family and community, and children's and family services'. It is the study of 'the development the child in context and the implications for practice'. This necessarily draws on many disciplines, including those of psychology, sociology, philosophy, social policy, education, health, history, cultural studies and the law along with economic and political perspectives; in doing so the degree has established a distinctive area of study and research. 'This enables students to understand and analyse the processes that shape childhood and children's lives in a way that fosters critical evaluation' and enables them to develop 'insights and understandings relating to how children and childhood are

understood from a range of academic and professional perspectives and to understand the philosophies, beliefs and attitudes that inform them'.

28. Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods

This programme aligns with central University directives. From this, the School of Education have developed a local level response in the form of the School of Education Flexible Learning Improvement and Development Plan.

This commits to pedagogical principles which include:

- Promoting professional engagement and reflective practice;
- Encouraging independent and autonomous learning;
- Supporting continuing professional development;
- Valuing students' professional experience and prior learning;
- Supporting diversity and personalised learning;
- Encouraging dynamic and participative learning;
- Promoting collaborative learning;
- Encouraging and supporting online learning;
- Supporting reflective and practitioner enquiry.

Terminology relating to learning and teaching:

In-person describes any type of teaching session where a member of staff and students are physically present in the same place. This replaces the previous term 'face-to-face teaching'.

Live online describes a session where a member of staff and students are together at the same time on Teams.

Dual Delivery: is the simultaneous delivery of a class in-person and live online.

Essential online (learning) activities describe students' engagement with activities designed by teaching staff and hosted in Moodle module spaces. These activities are required study for the module. These may be described as **scheduled essential online (learning) activities** when a study slot is attached in the timetable.

Approaches to learning and teaching:

Independent Learning: Independent Learning is a philosophy of education which students are encouraged to adopt. It includes the opportunity to work with a supervising tutor who offers support as students work towards completing assessment tasks but is fundamentally a more over-arching concept about an autonomous approach to work.

University-based Modules: These modules are held at the University in technology rich environments. A range of methodologies are employed which take account of best practice to maximise active learning, with scaffolding also being used as appropriate to support student learning and success. These methodologies include lectures, seminars, group work, directed tasks, independent research, individual and group tutorials.

Placement-based Modules: These modules are placement-based. They represent authentic contexts within which students can develop personally and professionally within specific vocational routes.

Essential online learning activities (sometimes scheduled): The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE-Moodle) is an essential feature of the Programme. Each module has a dedicated module site where key information about the module and a range of materials and interactive elements to support learning and assessment, is available.

Tutorial Support: students can contact their module tutor or module supervisor by email or via Teams whenever they wish. Tutors will endeavour to respond to student queries within 3 days but often sooner. Tutorial support can be face-to face or online via Teams, Skype and Facetime. This is an important feature of the Programme as it enables students who may not live near to the University to access tutorial support remotely.

Flexible Delivery: Teaching may be delivered as in-person, live online or as dual delivery. Seminars may be designed flexibly so that they can be conducted either in-person or live online

Assessment:

The programme strives to maintain a diverse assessment palette and rigorous, consistent assessment practices which aim to enable students to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways. Where appropriate, authentic assessments are built into modules and across programmes and, if applicable, will integrate theory and practice.

All assessed work is graded according to a percentage scale 0-100 using the University's grading criteria linked to the appropriate QAA requirements. All marking procedures comply with the central Quality and Standards Manuals. Feedback to students is available electronically using the Turnitin and Feedback Studio systems. Feedback on the work is intended to identify strengths and points for development.

Students may receive formative feedback on plans or on a specified amount of work identified by the module lead. See more specific detail on drafts here, within the [School of Education Appendices](#).

Assessment criteria are communicated to students through programme and module handbooks, with specific assignment guidance explaining the important features of individual assignments provided by the module tutor.

Innovation in Learning, Teaching and Assessment:

The degree has been structured to allow for flexibility in terms of pedagogy and assessment methodology and will be able to accommodate the incorporation of future innovation as appropriate. All learning and teaching practices are underpinned by principles that support diversity, shared values and inclusive practices, and the differentiated needs of Students as learners.

Those who work with Students will employ a range of methodologies and take account of best practice as identified from research evidence. The critical analysis of theory, research and practice is at the heart of all learning and teaching throughout the Programme. The Programme emphasises independent and self-managed learning. Students are required to progressively take greater responsibility for their learning rather than continually being guided in detail.

Throughout the Programme, strong links are made between theory and practice. Students consider and interpret theory in relation to their own experience and observations. By reflecting on their own learning with the mediation of an 'expert other', Students come to understand that learning is an active process where knowledge is constructed, learning is social, and learning communities are equal and inclusive. They learn that views may be presented strongly while being open to the views of others. Learning and teaching strategies are deployed to encourage student participation and active learning; promote collaborative learning as well as the autonomy and self-motivated engagement of learners; reflect the dynamic, interactive nature of teaching; enable learners to take advantage of resources including new and emergent technologies; and support reflective practice and research-based enquiry.

The School of Education is committed to principles of assessment that:

- Promote learning;
- Support manageable assessment tasks within an agreed timeframe;

- Enable Students to reflect on and take personal responsibility for their own learning;
- Support formative assessments that provide feedback and constructive guidance;
- Support summative assessments that indicate clearly how criteria have been met and that are consistent and comparable;
- Enable Students to demonstrate their achievements against the Level at which they are studying and national agendas;
- Inform planning and programme development.

A wide range of formal and informal formative assessment strategies are employed by the Programme Team. These range from small group, semi-structured discussions where Students can demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a key topic and on-going verbal feedback from both tutors and peers within taught sessions and via electronic means, to assignments which have been deliberately structured to provide formative feedback between submissions which are related. It is also anticipated that cohort feedback will be offered from previous year groups for significant assignments, so that Students are aware of common pitfalls and areas for development. Module Leaders identify the most appropriate assessment methodology to best assess the learning outcomes for each module. The assessment tasks are selected by the team from a wide range of methods. Robust moderation and monitoring procedures will ensure equity and security of assessment across the groups.

Learner Support:

Every student will be assigned to a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) who contributes to the programme and has oversight of the individual's progress. Regular meetings with the PAT will focus on effective strategies for the enhancement of the academic profile. This academic, professional and pastoral support is provided for the duration of the programme. Students who are assessed as requiring additional support for specific needs or disabilities will negotiate Inclusion Plans (IP) and, if appropriate, support the development of a Reasonable Adjustment Placement Plan (RAPP) to address these.

29.Careers and Employability

The Government acknowledges the importance of a highly qualified early years workforce and to attracting graduates to work with young children. This is viewed as key to continuing to raise the quality of provision in settings across England and improving

outcomes for many more children and young people (Nutbrown Review,2012; 2017 Early Years Workforce Strategy). Students will have gained [a full and relevant qualification at Level3 as stated by the Department for Education](#), allowing them to be included in the staff:child ratio.

Following successful completion of this programme, students may progress to a range of careers and/or further study and professional training. The skills and knowledge students gain through undertaking this programme will be applicable to future work opportunities. Embedding theory into practice, which supports the gaining of new knowledge and skills to underpin existing experience, is a key factor for learners and employers.

Some students will go on to work in areas which require non-specialist degree qualifications and may consider employment or further study aligned to health, social service or other children's services related disciplines. Others might seek postgraduate study which would enable them to teach, by undertaking a further programme of study/professional training leading to QTS, EYTS or to other professional work with children and young people. In order to do this students must have the appropriate grades at GCSE for Maths, English and Science (at the time of application) to progress. Graduates in this discipline may be employed as learning mentors, specialist learning support in early years environments, Higher Level Teaching Assistants, trainers, teaching assistants, child minders, play workers or other roles working with children in this age range. Others go onto manage/own their own settings.

30.Equality

The University of Chester is committed to the active promotion of equality of opportunity both as an employer and an educational institution. For this purpose it has an equal opportunities policy and appropriate codes of practice. The objective of the policy is to be a University which is open to all sections of the community, where people from all groups in society are represented at all levels. Thus, the University is committed to the promotion of diversity, equality and inclusion in all its forms; through different ideas and perspectives, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In particular, we are committed to widening access to higher education. This is reflected in the admissions criteria which acknowledges the different pathways

potential students take to reach higher education. Within an ethically aware and professional environment, we acknowledge our responsibilities to promote freedom of enquiry and scholarly expression.

The programme adheres to the University's policy on equality and diversity, namely:

- the University can only fulfil its responsibilities to students and staff and its broader responsibility to society if it builds on a foundation of respect for the dignity of each individual;
- discrimination is unacceptable within the University community in that it represents a waste of human resources and it unjustly denies individuals the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It can also be unlawful;
- the active support of the University community is sought through the commitment and involvement of all groups of staff and students in the implementation of this policy.

The University is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this equal opportunities policy is fully effective. Positive action may be needed where there are historical imbalances. To this end, the programme will ensure that:

- all students, staff (including those in partnership schools) are treated with respect;
- no student or professional colleague will be knowingly discriminated against.

All participants in and contributors to the programme will be encouraged to become involved in the development, management, delivery and evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme.

Opportunities for study to the highest level of award of which they are capable is offered without any form of discrimination on non-academic grounds. Students with disabilities will be advised on the facilities and capability of the University to respond to their needs.

31. Additional Information