

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
Foundation Degree in Learning Support

This document applies to students who commence the programme in or after
September 2017

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	University of Worcester, Halesowen College, Herefordshire and Ludlow College
3.	Programme accredited by	NA
4.	Final award	FdA
5.	Programme title	Learning Support
6.	Pathways available and/or Linked Honours Degree progression route/s	<p>Three progression routes are available on completion of the FdA Learning Support course.</p> <p>BA Education Studies top-up degree.</p> <p>BA Integrated Working with Children and Families top-up degree. Conditional offers will also require an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check and a supportive reference. GCSE grade C in Maths and English is also desirable.</p> <p>BA Primary Initial Teacher Education (QTS) (Level 5) – the opportunity to apply for direct entry into Level 5 of the BA Primary Initial Teacher Education (QTS) programme.</p>
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Standard taught programme. University of Worcester, Halesowen College, Herefordshire and Ludlow College.
8.	Mode of attendance	Full-time and Part-time
9.	UCAS Code	X300 C E B University of Worcester (E), Halesowen College (B), Herefordshire and Ludlow College (C)
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	QAA Education Studies Subject Benchmarks (2015) QAA Characteristics Statement for Foundation Degrees (2015)
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	September 2016 – Updated following the April 2016 Periodic Review August 2017 - AQU amendments

12. Educational aims of the programme

This career-focused programme is suitable for students who are currently employed in the field of Learning Support or have access to a Learning Support environment and wish to further their understanding of education. The integrated, interdisciplinary nature of the Foundation degree course provides students with the opportunity to engage with practice and develop skills, which have a transferable applicability.

Students are encouraged to draw upon existing skills, knowledge and experience as well as recognise strengths and resolve personal professional development needs. Course modules are designed to provide the necessary expertise and knowledge to confidently tackle problems in a range of working environments and apply acquired skills and knowledge to use in the real world. Students engage in a range of learning and assessment styles and are encouraged to become effective and independent in researching and presenting work. Work-based assignments enable them to engage with their own practice and to share knowledge and expertise with others through activities such as group work and presentations. Students undertake a work-based study in their second year which allows them, with tutorial support, to focus on a particular area of interest within their professional practice.

The educational aims of the course are to:

1. provide students with all the necessary skills to support learners in a wide range of educative environments;
2. provide students with the opportunity to build on existing knowledge and experience and to further develop specific knowledge, skills and values relevant to the context of education;
3. enable students to understand the fundamental ways schools and other educative institutions function;
4. utilise employers' perceptions and ideas as appropriate to enrich the learning experience of students;
5. draw upon existing skills, knowledge and experience and assist students in the recognition of their strengths;
6. enable students to identify and acknowledge personal professional development needs and implement appropriate development strategies;
7. provide opportunities for students to develop key skills to prepare for further study and/or employment and lifelong learning;
8. promote critical reflection and reflexive practice;
9. develop students' interpersonal and communication skills and enable students to identify, use and communicate relevant information effectively;
10. give students the necessary skills and knowledge to confidently tackle problems in a range of working environments;
11. allow students to put their acquired skills and knowledge to use in the real world.

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

In keeping with the principles of good practice within Foundation Degrees the course is intended to offer flexibility of study and accessibility and, with the exception of Summer Schools (or their equivalent), will be delivered on one specified day throughout the academic year. Although delivered and assessed independently, the modules in the programme contribute to a coherent whole programme.

Many students entering Foundation Degrees may not have previously acquired formal study skills or may lack confidence in their ability. All students receive support to develop their learning and study skills as well as subject specific knowledge and skills. FDLS 1001 provides an introduction to study and learning strategies to equip students for higher education and will be delivered at the beginning of the course. The module outlines have been designed in accordance with the [University of Worcester Curriculum Design Policy](#). Progression at each level is evidenced through the assessment strategies in individual modules.

Throughout the duration of the course students will be expected to show ethical considerations when working within the workplace and in particular when working with their learners. In this respect, issues of confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent are of particular significance since many of the learners in workplace settings might be described as 'vulnerable'. Any form of module that involves working with others, be they individuals or groups, will be subject to a strict ethical code as required by the University of Worcester. These are outlined briefly below:

- *Consent* – Permission must be sought from all participants prior to the commencement of any work based project;
- *Honesty* – Students must be honest and open in all matters relating to their work based projects;
- *Withdrawal* – Students must ensure that all participants know they have the right to withdraw from a project at any time;
- *Protection from harm* – All students must take appropriate action to protect all participants in projects from harm of any kind;
- *Confidentiality* – Confidentiality must be guaranteed. Information regarding participants' identity will not be shared with any third party. All evidence will be anonymous. All data will be securely stored by the student and disposed of appropriately at the end of the study.

FdA in Learning Support Intended Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:

On successful completion of the Foundation Degree Learning Support, students will be able to:

Learning Outcome	Module Code
1. demonstrate knowledge, understanding and application of the role of a Learning Support worker;	FDLS1012, FDLS1017, FDLS2016
2. recognise and reflect upon the many different contexts of learning support;	FDLS1016, FDLS2016
3. recognise and reflect upon differing perceptions of learning support in a variety of contexts;	FDLS1012, FDLS2016

Cognitive and intellectual skills:

On successful completion of the Foundation Degree Learning Support, students will be able to:

Learning Outcome	Module Code
1. demonstrate a philosophy of practice which includes major partners in health, education and social care;	FDLS1014, FDLS1017, FDLS2012
2. recognise and value individual differences and promote equal opportunity in practice;	FDLS1016, FDLS1018, FDLS2012

3. demonstrate critical awareness of learning support issues and the inter-relationship of theory and practice;	FDLS1014, FDLS2012
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Practical skills relevant to employment:

On successful completion of the Foundation Degree Learning Support, students will be able to:

Learning Outcome	Module Code
1. use reflective practice to develop knowledge and skills for supporting learners within work environments;	FDLS1016, FDLS2013, FDLS2015
2. recognise, understand and evaluate the professional roles and responsibilities of adults working with children and adult learners;	FDLS1013, FDLS1018, FDLS2015
3. demonstrate a working knowledge of the law and formal procedures relating to the learning support role;	FDLS1013, FDLS2015

Transferable/key skills:

On successful completion of the Foundation Degree Learning Support, students will be able to:

Learning Outcome	Module Code
1. respect difference and diversity and demonstrate and inclusive practice;	FDLS1015, FDLS1017, FDLS2017
2. recognise, understand and critically reflect upon relevant research and apply research techniques in practice;	FDLS1011, FDLS2011, FDLS2014

Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:

The key feature of the approach to learning and teaching within the modules is working towards student independence. Within the practically-based modules, this is achieved through work related assignments and a programme that gradually transfers responsibility for learning to the students. Care is taken to ensure that learning occurs in a context that enables students to relate what they are learning to what they already know and to guide them through subsequent general reading. The source material in these modules is not confined to lectures, but includes a range of appropriate strategies such as structured and general reading, video material, observation, experiential learning.

Moreover, the skills of analysis and evaluation are essentially developed, not just by passive absorption of ideas, but by interactive strategies to ensure that students engage with the

material, e.g. seminar discussions, team presentations, simulation exercises etc. Students will also develop other important qualities such as interpersonal and communication skills.

A comprehensive range of learning and teaching strategies are associated with this course including:

- Lectures
- Workshops
- Seminars
- Tutorials
- Group work
- Student presentations
- Practical activities
- Problem-based learning

The content and mode of delivery have been developed to enable the student to synthesise their academic and practical knowledge and apply it to work in the area of Learning Support in its widest sense. The module content will be continuously updated to reflect change and associated issues. Throughout the course, learning and teaching is supported through Virtual Learning Environments and the use of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL).

Work-based learning is an embedded element of the course. Modules are assessed through work related learning and it is a requirement that students are employed or volunteer in a learning support or similar role for the duration of the course. This enables students to relate their studies to their own setting and context.

The assessment strategies are designed to enable students to demonstrate their achievement of the course aims and outcomes and key skills development and are specifically focused on fulfilling the course aims which are consistent with the UW learning and teaching strategy employed across all undergraduate and post graduate programmes. Specifically they are intended to develop and assess knowledge and skills relevant to practitioners in learning support.

Assessments:

- Assignments will include both formative and summative elements
- Single modules will have maximum 4,000 word (or equivalent) assessment
- All assessments are aligned with subject, course, module outcomes and learning and teaching methods
- All module learning outcomes are assessed
- All assessments provide an opportunity for achievement of all grades
- A range of assessment methods that enable students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes and the transferable skills inherent within them will be used.

These will include:

- Written assignments
- Individual and group presentations
- Case studies
- Reflective portfolio entries
- Problem based learning
- Learning journals / reflective journals
- Seminars
- Independent Studies
- Workplace investigations
- Self-evaluation / needs analysis
- Evaluations of processes and resources
- Poster/leaflet presentations /Production of workplace resources
- Literature critiques

The assessments encourage and promote reflection and learning that enables and encourages the students to think critically and analytically. The assessments relate specifically to module

learning outcomes and encompass both formative and summative elements in line with The [University's Assessment Policy](#).

14. Assessment strategy

The approach to assessment is to use a wide range of assessment techniques and approaches (see section 13). Many modules provide two different types of assessment which provides a variety of assessment types and opportunities for students. Formative assessment (whether formally through a formative assignment, or informally via a timetabled face to face, e based or phone tutorial) is available in all modules though students are expected to be progressively more self-directed as the course progresses from Level 4 to Level 5. The FdA Learning Support is a pass/fail qualification and no degree classification is awarded.

The assessment structure has been developed to support student learning by providing assessment procedures that reflect the nature of the learning experience of each module, and by ensuring that the students are able to demonstrate ability in a wide range of qualities and skills appropriate to the course. The assessments have also been developed to provide students with a range of opportunities to relate to, apply to and reflect upon their work setting. This structure is under continuous review via course quality enhancement procedures including student feedback, comments from the external examiner and other review processes. Each assessment item is specifically linked to the Intended Learning Outcomes for the module contained with the module outline and is graded according to the relevant assessment criteria for each level of study. Assessment guidance is provide in the Course Handbook, module outlines, through taught session and tutorial support.

Appropriate support in teaching, learning and assessment for students with disabilities is provided in conjunction with the [University Disability and Dyslexia Service](#).

15. Programme structures and requirements

Overview of Course Programme

The course is modular in design and each module will be studied and assessed as a discrete entity. The modules are designed to create a coherent whole in which individual modules relate to and complement each other and, as the student progresses through the course, the modules will build upon and further develop knowledge and skills learned in earlier modules.

Key Skills development and acquisition are embedded within individual modules. Furthermore, graduate study skills are explicitly facilitated through a level four and a level five module, as well as embedded within all modules.

The programme consists of 15 modules, with one worth 30 credits and the rest worth 15 credits.

Students must complete all modules at each level of the course.

The Award Map for the FdA Learning Support is appended to this specification.

The majority of the modules are assessed through work related learning and it is a requirement of the course that all students will be in a relevant work environment, either as a paid member of staff or on a voluntary basis to enable them to relate their studies to their own school or setting.

The course is designed to be studied, full or part-time, over a minimum of two years and up to a maximum of 4 years. The full time programme will be delivered over three eleven week terms with eight level four modules delivered during the first year and eight level five modules during the second year. Part time programmes will also be delivered over three eleven week terms but will consist of a maximum of six modules per year.

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

The Foundation Degree in Learning Support is consistent with the [QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement](#) (2015), ensuring that there is balance between practical and intellectual skills underpinned by opportunities to apply learning within the workplace. The course is designed to reflect the qualification benchmark statements which specify the distinctive features of foundation degrees within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ 2008). This framework is reflected in the outline of skills and subject knowledge that students acquire on the course. Course learning and assessment strategies are designed to build upon vocational skills and competencies and promote the development of academic knowledge and skills.

Assessment criteria for the programme build upon the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications as appropriate to level. This award is located at level 5 of the FHEQ. The independent study and school based work are all informed by the codes of practice (work placements) and the UW ethical guidance.

17. Support for students

Induction

Induction will occur both on a general course basis (course induction) with the Course Leader and Assistant Course Leader, and within individual modules (module induction)

Course Induction will cover the following elements:

- libraries, including membership and a tour of facilities;
- internet induction;
- identification of special needs support requirements;
- student handbooks, UW regulations and expectations;
- assignment schedules, common skills and assessment procedures;
- individual timetables;
- an introduction to the Students' Union and 'fresher' activities;
- the Course Committee structure and student representatives;
- careers and counselling support;
- work related learning

Tutorial Support

All of the tutors on the FdA in Learning Support will provide group and individual student support. Meetings for the identification and resolution of general issues may be held on a small group basis, while students are encouraged to discuss matters of individual difficulty with their module tutor in the first instance.

Personal Academic Tutor

All students on the FDLS programme are allocated a Personal Academic Tutor in accordance with University Policy. University policy explains that the main focus of the Personal academic tutor role is to support students in relation to their course and studies as follows:

- Support all students in becoming a member of the University and making the transition to studying in higher education
- Help students to understand the requirements of their course in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills development and assessment requirements
- Support students to take responsibility for their own learning through helping them to reflect on their progress, identify their learning needs and develop appropriate strategies to achieve them
- Help students to make the most of the learning resources and other forms of learning support available to them

- Support students in academic, professional and career related planning and development, and the appropriate recording of this
- Advise and guide students on issues or difficulties arising whilst they are at the University and, where appropriate, direct them to the broader range of services provided by the University
- Support students for whom there may be particular challenges when entering higher education (e.g. students with disabilities, students leaving care, black and ethnic minority students)
- Provide a reference for students as they progress into employment or further study.

Support for Students and Their Learning

- Students on this programme will experience a wide variety of learning and teaching activities designed to facilitate development of both subject specific knowledge and skills and transferable knowledge and key skills.
- A range of assessment strategies enables students to develop academic and practice knowledge and skills and facilitate the application of this knowledge to practice.
- Students will receive comprehensive course handbook which will include module details and assessment methods.
- Students will be supported by the individual module tutors who will provide specific educational guidance.
- During their first year of study all students will receive one workplace visit.
- Students will be offered support and guidance in the event of a work placement breakdown. The UW course team do not take responsibility for providing and alternative work placement, but appropriate guidance will be offered on the basis of individual student need and may include, for example, identification of appropriate voluntary or paid employment opportunities, signposting to relevant UW Support Services etc.
- Students are provided with a progression talk at each Level of study by the Course Leader and/or Link Tutor within partner providers. Progression guidance provides students with information on routes into employment, careers and top-up provision.
- Use of Blackboard or Moodle for students to access a virtual learning environment and maintain contact with tutors and peers.
- Library Services, [Student Support Services](#) including, [Disability and Dyslexia Service](#), Careers Guidance, Counselling, Programme Advisors are available to all students, including those studying at partner institutions.

18. Admissions

Admissions policy

The admissions policy for the FdA in Learning Support is to encourage access to higher education through a policy of equal opportunity regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or age.

Entry requirements

The course seeks to recruit students who working within learning support settings. Students must be in an appropriate placement for the duration of the course and the course and entry requirements for FDLS include a minimum of two years current or recent experience of working with learners in an appropriate setting. All students must be in a suitable placement and working for a minimum of ten hours per week (either paid or voluntary) at the start of the course.

The normal minimum entry requirement for Foundation Degree courses is the possession of 4 GCSEs (Grade C/4 or above) and 1 A Level (or equivalent Level 3 qualification).

The current UCAS Tariff requirements for entry to this course are published in the prospectus and on the UW website <https://www.worc.ac.uk/journey/a-z-of-courses.html>.

See [Admissions Policy](#) for other acceptable qualifications.

For mature students (i.e. 21 or over), without formal qualifications, a non-standard entry route is available. Candidates are encouraged to apply if they feel they can benefit from the programme; such applicants will be considered on the basis of relevant work experience and attainment of skills, which demonstrate an ability to study at this level. Students with non-standard qualifications may be asked to complete a written piece of work on a relevant subject and/or learning needs assessment.

Students transferring from other Foundation Degree programmes are welcomed in accordance with UW Admissions Policy on the accreditation of prior experiential learning (RPL).

It is a requirement of the course that all students undertaking the course will be in a relevant work environment, either as a paid member of staff or on a voluntary basis for a minimum of ten hours per week.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Students transferring from other Foundation Degree programmes are welcomed in accordance with UW Admissions Policy on the accreditation of prior experiential learning (RPL). Details of acceptable level 3 qualifications, policy in relation to mature students or applicants with few or no formal qualifications can be found in the prospectus or on the University webpages. Information on eligibility for recognition of prior learning for the purposes of entry or advanced standing is also available from the University webpages or from the Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111).

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm>

Admissions procedures

Full-time

Full-time applicants apply through UCAS (X300).

All applications follow the University of Worcester full-time admissions regulations and procedure.

- All applicants complete the UCAS application form
- Each application will be considered by UW Registry Admissions and the appropriate Course Leader
- Evidence of qualifications will be checked
- References and personal statements will inform the selection of candidates
- All students, irrespective of their pathway into the degree, are invited to attend an interview prior to acceptance onto the course. The interview will normally take place in the term preceding entry. The interview is an informal opportunity to discuss the applicants experience working within a learning support or similar role and to discuss their suitability for the programme.

Part-time

Part-time applicants apply directly to University of Worcester (UW) or to partner colleges.

All applications follow the University of Worcester part-time admissions regulations and procedure.

- Initial enquiries and pre-course application forms are sent to the programme leader in the partner institution.
- Evidence of qualifications will be checked
- References and personal statements will inform the selection of candidates
- Prospective students are invited to attend an interview at the partner institution.
- If, following the interview, the FDLS proves to be an appropriate route the candidate is invited to apply internally to the University of Worcester using the application form for part time courses

Admissions/selection criteria

On application and meeting of the appropriate admission requirements and regulations, applicants are offered a place on the programme. All applicants who have a minimum of two years experience in employment or a volunteer position in a learning support or similar role are invited to interview. Students who do not meet this criterion at the time of application, but will do so by September in the year of entry are also invited to attend an interview. Following successful interview, students are offered a place. Students who are unsuccessful are provided with information about alternative provision at UW (i.e. students interested in becoming a secondary school teacher).

Please see Section 22 of the Programme Specification for information regarding the admissions arrangements for progression to the linked Honours Degree(s)/Top-Up Degree(s).

19. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

The course, both at UW and the partner Institutions will be subject to the UW Quality Assurance Processes.

Quality mechanisms will chiefly be:

- Annual Monitoring and Review at Course and Scheme Level
- Periodic Review and revalidation including external scrutiny
- Appointment of Course Leader
- Appointment of Link Tutor to each partner college
- Annual Link Tutor Report
- Internal moderation and cross partner verification of assessment
- External verification of assessment and External Examiner's Report
- Pre-Examination Board Moderation Group
- Peer supported review of teaching
- Academic staff annual appraisal
- Staff Development Away Days
- Staff scholarly activity

In addition to the programme-specific mechanisms above, the University and individual Institutes have other groups and committees that contribute to evaluation and improvement of quality e.g.:

- Institute of Education (IoE) Quality Committee
- Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee
- IoE and UW Ethics Committees
- Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee
- FdA Learning Support Course Management Committee (within UW and partners)
- Externally Provided Programmes Sub Committee (for collaborative provision).

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience:

- Student self evaluation
- Course Committee with Student Representation each semester
- Written student module evaluation and feedback
- StARS (Student academic representatives);
- University of Worcester Student Survey
- National Student Survey

Quality Assurance

There is a high degree of fluidity in terms of shared communication, feedback and action within meetings and management structure; this creates a coherent whole in which reflection, evaluation and review of the FDLS across the Partner Institutions is ongoing throughout the academic year. UW policies and strategies are implemented, monitored and reviewed within the FDLS.

20. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#).

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 5 days of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 5 days but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations please see [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#).

Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module; the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.

Requirements for Progression

- Students at Level 4 may be permitted to progress to Level 5 when they have passed at least 90 credits at Level 4.
- A student who fails 90 credits or more due to non-submission will be required to withdraw from the University.
- Students who pass less than 90 credits but have submitted all items of assessment will be required to retake modules.

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
CertHE	120 credits at Level 4 or higher
Foundation Degree FdA/FdSc	120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5

These awards are not classified.

Institute-level Assessment Boards review and confirm results for modules, and the Board of Examiners considers students' mark profiles to make decisions about progression, awards and degree classifications as appropriate.

21. Indicators of quality and standards

The Foundation Degree in Learning Support was reviewed in April 2015. The Review Panel concluded that:

- Confidence can be placed in the soundness of the management of the academic standards of the FdA Learning Support.
- Confidence can be placed in the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.
- The awards reviewed are aligned with the FHEQ and take account of relevant QAA subject benchmark statements and professional body requirements.

The Review Panel identified a number of areas of good practice:

- The Personal Academic Tutor System and the successful way it works on the programmes.
- Staff going above and beyond – indicative of the level of support across all provision.
- The 'You say, we did' scheme responding to StARs queries and comments.
- The support for students with dyslexia.
- The leadership structure.
- The development of learner independence on the programme.
- The thorough grounding provided for work in schools or further study and the way everyone spoke positively about the course (both students and employers), demonstrated by the employer stating that with a graduate from the course, 'You know you have a good quality person'.
- The strong partnership.
- The link tutor relationship.
- The use of phased leads.

National Student Survey and University of Worcester Student Survey 2014/15:

- The NSS and UWSS response rate for the course was 92%
- 92% (NSS) and 83% (UWSS) were overall satisfied with the course
- 95% (NSS) and 96% (UWSS) were satisfied with the quality of teaching on the course
- NSS data showed students rated all areas of the course positively, with 2014/15 data showing an improvement on 2013/14 in all areas.

Employment and graduate destinations:

Using data collected by the Careers and Employability team, relating to students 6 months after leaving the course, data for the FDLS is clustered together with broader FdA awards (particularly other IoE provision on the FdA Integrated Children's Service and the FdA Teaching and Learning). This provision is all located within the Somerset and South West Region. FdA

data for destinations 6 months after the course suggests 100% of students are engaged in further study or work.

Progression:

Progression on to top-up study from the FDLS is consistently high with a significant number of students choosing to continue their studies on UW provision. For 2014/15 82.35% of UW students, 77% of HLC students and 56% of HC students progressed on to study at UW.

Staff achievements of note:

Staff regularly publish the results of their research in national and international educational research journals, as well as produce books and book chapters. Staff regularly publish and present on their research into a variety of educational fields at national and international conferences, and staff teaching on the programmes have won University awards for inspirational teaching. Higher Education Academy award descriptor for the following Associate Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow have been awarded to members of staff. Many are also involved in various educational projects nationally and internationally.

Summary statements from the external examiner:

External examiner comments have consistently stated that course standards are the equivalent of standards in other UK higher education institutions.

“I think this is a well designed and implemented course and provides important opportunities for practitioners working in the field to study and work at the same time effectively and in a mutually beneficial way”

“A diverse range of assessments across the programme are used to enable different communication skills to be supported and developed. Modules are routinely reviewed collaboratively as part of a reflective process by the partnership which is good practice and supports currency and consistency within the team as a whole”

“the course offers a range of types of assessment at levels 4 and 5 and is designed to systematically build academic and professional competencies equally. Outcomes are transparent and specifically referred to in assessment feedback and module handbooks. Marking is fair and feedback suitably challenging and developmental to students in the main.”

(External Examiner report 2014/15)

Summary statement of feedback from students:

“Little did I know when I signed up to study for a Foundation Degree in Learning Support that I was beginning an incredible journey which would take me from Teaching Assistant to Head Teacher in under 10 years. As a mature student, studying at university for the first time, I was grateful for the care and support I received from my tutors at the University of Worcester, which gave me the confidence to continue studying for a B.Ed with Qualified Teacher Status. Later, and still with the University of Worcester, I completed Post Graduate courses in teaching Modern Foreign Languages and achieved the National SENCO award. Some days, I still can't believe my luck. Thanks UoW!

(FdA Learning Support Graduate)

22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

Students who successfully complete the course will exit with a FdA in Learning Support which is a recognised qualification in its own right. The Foundation Degree will support employment in a range of educational settings and with a range of learners, for example:

- Early Years Settings
- Mainstream Schools
- Special Schools
- Educational support services, such as the Learning Support and Behaviour Support Services.

Progression to Linked Honours Degree(s)/Top-Up Degree(s)

The FdA in Learning Support could support a range of pathways within a variety of educational settings. For example:

- Learning Support Worker in a number of different settings, e.g. schools, Early Years Settings, School Support Services such as the Access and Inclusion Service and the Educational Welfare Service.
- For those already in post the FdA offers a pathway to career enhancement.
- The FdA offers access to progression into an honours degree in the field of education, accessing the second year or third year of the degree programme; for example, BA Education Studies or BA Integrated Working with Children and Families.

(UW validated) Level 5-7	UW Programme for Progression	UW Level 7 Programme for progression
Foundation Degree in Learning Support	<p>Three progression routes are available on completion of the FdA Learning Support course.</p> <p>BA Education Studies top-up degree</p> <p>BA Integrated Working with Children and Families top-up degree. Conditional offers will also require an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check and a supportive reference. GCSE grade C in Maths and English is also desirable.</p> <p>BA Primary Initial Teacher Education (QTS) (Level 5) – the opportunity to apply for direct entry into Level 5 of the BA Primary Initial Teacher Education (QTS) programme.</p>	<p>Masters in Education: Pathways in Early Childhood / Education / Special and Inclusive Education / Leadership and Management / Mentoring and Coaching / Religions and Values in Education</p> <p>PGCE Education</p>

Student employability

The programme aims to develop students working in learning support or similar roles who are equipped to work in a range of early years, mainstream, special and educational support services. For the duration of the course, students are required to be employed or volunteer in a learning support or similar role for a minimum of two days per week. During the course, students receive a work-place visit from a member of the course team. The purpose of the visit is to meet

with a senior member of staff to outline the course and discuss the impact of the FDLS and the demands placed upon the student. The visit also provides an opportunity to discuss course related issues, provide clarification of any aspects of the FDLS as required and answer any questions that may arise.

The programme team work with the University Careers and Employability Service and promote opportunities to students, particularly in relation to vacancies, career pathways and applications for further study or employment. Members of the course team also promote UW events across the partnership that may be valuable and beneficial to student's wider knowledge of the sector.

Links with Employers

The course has close links with employers across the region, including schools, colleges, education services, social welfare, voluntary organisation and support services. Employee representatives are invited to attend Course Management Committees. A range of employers engage with the course, providing enhanced learning opportunities through guest lectures and educational visits within the settings. Students are also advised to discuss the course with their employers and identify a critical friend within their setting who is able to provide additional support during their studies.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications.

Award Map for the FdA Learning Support

Course Title: FdA Learning Support

LEVEL 4				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)	Prerequisites (Code of Module required)
FDLS 1011	Preparing for Study	15	M	None
FDLS 1012	The Creative Curriculum (1) Supporting Literacy and Numeracy	15	M	None
FDLS 1013	The Creative Curriculum (2) Creativity and Learning	15	M	None
FDLS 1014	Child Development	15	M	None
FDLS 1015	Understanding Learning Support	15	M	None
FDLS 1016	Managing Challenging Behaviour	15	M	None
FDLS 1017	Partnerships in Education	15	M	None
FDLS 1018	Wider Aspects of Disability	15	M	None

Requirements at level 4

Students must take the eight mandatory modules. Students must successfully complete 120 credits in total at level 4.

LEVEL 5				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)	Prerequisites (Code of Module required)
FDLS 2011	Introduction to Research Methods	15	M	None
FDLS 2012	Inclusion in Theory and Practice	15	M	None
FDLS 2013	Supporting Additional Needs	15	M	None
FDLS 2014	School Based Study	30	M	None
FDLS 2015	Talking and Listening with others	15	M	None
FDLS 2016	An Introduction to Social Care Strategies: Meeting the National Agenda	15	M	None
FDLS 2017	Evaluation and Change	15	M	None

Requirements at level 5

Students must take the seven mandatory modules. Students must successfully complete 120 credits in total at level 5.