

Programme Specification for FdA Early Years

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

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	<p>University of Worcester (Flexible and Distributed Programme) (Full time and Part-time) and Partner Institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birmingham Metropolitan College (Sutton Campus) (Full-time and Part-time) • Birmingham Metropolitan College (Matthew Boulton Campus) (Full-Time and Part-time) • Birmingham Metropolitan College (Stourbridge Campus) (Full-time and Part-time) • Halesowen College (Full-time and Part-time) • Herefordshire & Ludlow College (Full-time and Part-time) • Heart of Worcestershire College (Redditch) (Part-time) • Heart of Worcestershire College (Worcester) (Part-time)
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award or awards	Foundation Degree (FdA)
5.	Programme title	FdA Early Years (Sector Endorsed)
6.	Pathways available and/or Linked Honours Degree progression route/s	Progression route: BA (Hons) Integrated Working with Children and Families Top Up
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	<p>Standard taught programme delivered at partner institutions; annual Student Conference held at the University of Worcester.</p> <p>Flexible and Distributed delivered online and at the University of Worcester.</p>
8.	Mode of attendance and duration	Part-time (3 years), Full-time (2 years) and Flexible and Distributed – Part and Full time.
9.	UCAS Code	X312 (Full-time)
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	<p>Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement (2015) Early Childhood Studies Subject Benchmark Statement (2014) Sector requirements: National Occupational Standards, Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children’s Workforce (2010)</p>
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	<p>May 2015: Periodic Review and amendment to Partnership to include Matthew Boulton May 2016: removal of Bournville College August 2016: HoW, regulations and QAA changes October 2016: update to Admissions Requirements April 2017: Removal of Walsall college July 2017: Change of delivery for Herefordshire and Ludlow college from 50% to 100% August 2017: AQU amendments September 2017: Update to Section 13.</p>

12. Educational aims of the programme

The FdA in Early Years provides an opportunity for experienced practitioners working in early years settings and students progressing from level 3 qualifications to gain a professional and academic qualification which is recognised nationally and locally within the sector. The programme combines academic rigour with practice based experience to allow students to develop as reflective practitioners. It is a major route to a top-up honours degree and following this, Early Years Initial Teacher Status (for leaders of early years practice with children under 5 years of age). The aim of the programme is to play a significant role in the on-going development of the early years workforce, nationally, regionally and locally.

The FdA Early Years aims to provide a child-centred approach and a framework for academic and professional skills development. Thinking skills, including the ability to reflect and analyse, are facilitated through the student's developing knowledge, understanding and experience in practice. The programme, which sits within a culture of inter-agency working, requires students to maintain high standards of care and education. Students are expected to develop their personal and professional dispositions within a framework that supports inclusion and diversity. Students who gain the award of FdA Early Years will have demonstrated intellectual abilities and key transferable attributes, descriptors of which are informed by the QAA Characteristics Statement for Foundation Degrees.

As this degree sits within an arena which has seen many new directives over recent years, there is a need for the programme to remain flexible and responsive to change in its assessment and partnership structure.

The programme aims to:

1. Provide the appropriate knowledge and understanding required for the care and education of children within wider Early Years settings;
2. Develop students as independent reflective practitioners, with a sound understanding of the wider issues relating to young children and their development;
3. Develop students as effective advocates for the rights of young children;
4. Develop an understanding of the regulatory and legislative framework of Early Years, and the effect that it has on children and their families;
5. Enable students to develop appropriate pedagogical approaches to working inclusively with children and families, exploring theory in practice within their settings;
6. Develop students' personal and transferable skills, including communication, IT, team working and leadership, study skills, safeguarding and problem solving;
7. Provide a suitable basis for progression to further academic study or professional qualifications.

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

Knowledge and Understanding		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of early years care and education and the way in which those principles have developed.	FDEY1501 FDEY2501
2.	Acquire knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject, and ability to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in early years care and education and apply these in an integrated work context.	FDEY1503 FDEY2503

Cognitive and Intellectual skills

3	Employ independent learning and research skills to analyse, evaluate and challenge contemporary research, policy and literature in the sector.	FDEY1502 FDEY2504
4.	Develop academic skills, including the ability to engage in and reflect upon practice/ work-based enquiry and responding to diverse forms of course assessment.	FDEY1504 FDEY2504

Skills and capabilities related to employability

5.	Successfully implement skills learnt on the course within the workplace to develop and implement an inclusive curriculum that promotes the education and wellbeing of children in order to help them achieve, safeguard their welfare and promote equality.	FDEY1503 FDEY2502
6.	Use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis in the field of early years care and education and in a work context.	FDEY1503 FDEY2503
7.	Undertake further training, develop existing skills, and acquire new competences that will enable students to assume responsibility within organisations.	FDEY2501 FDEY2504

Transferable/key skills

8.	Apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, and the application of those principles in a work context.	FDEY1500 FDEY2500
9.	Understand the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge in the field of early years care and education and in a work context.	FDEY1501 FDEY2501
10.	Communication information, arguments, and analysis, effectively in a variety of forms, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively in an early years, inter-agency work context.	FDEY1503 FDEY2503
11.	Develop qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment and progression to other qualifications requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.	FDEY2501 FDEY2504
12.	Utilise opportunities for lifelong learning.	FDEY2504
13	Use ICT skills effectively.	FDEY 1500 FDEY 2500

Learning, teaching and assessment

Teaching takes place through a combination of face-to-face and blended learning sessions with tutors. These include lectures, seminars, online learning activities, group discussions, problem-based learning and directed individual study. An important aspect of this course is learning from others, and so there is significant emphasis on working in groups with other students who have different backgrounds and experiences.

The programme assesses the ability to reflect and theorise practice thereby supporting professional development through academic study and practice based learning. Competence in practice is assessed against current criteria for effective practice and evidenced through a portfolio of evidence.

The course makes use of learning technologies, particularly Blackboard and e-portfolio (PebblePad).

Further information on how the assessment methods at each level are mapped to modules is included in the Student Handbook.

Centre for Children and Families generic assessment criteria (developed from the University of Worcester criteria) apply to all modules.

FDA Early Years Flexible and Distributed Learning (FDL)

This pathway recognises the importance of accessing a delivery mode which meets the needs of the learner in relation to the expectations of Higher Education. A significant amount of study time will be online, in the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) called Blackboard which is designed to facilitate collaborative and independent learning. In addition to face to face and practice based learning experience, this mode of study requires considerable commitment to on-going engagement with on-line learning opportunities. Practice based learning in OFSTED registered settings which are deemed good or outstanding is a requirement of the FdA Early Years programme.

ICT Competence Requirements

The FDL mode of study requires a basic level of ICT competence. An audit of ICT skills is completed at interview. Students will be asked to review skills as they progress through the course and engage with online tutorials and are introduced to other tools within the VLE.

There is time allocated within induction and the first face-to-face session at UW to ensure all students are supported regardless of their level of ICT skills to become familiar with the online learning environment.

Computer hardware and software also needs to be current to access information via the VLE and internet. Many of the conversion programmes needed for older computers are freely available via the web but some of the animations or video may not play if you do not have the required software and hardware.

14. Assessment strategy

The programme's assessment strategy has been considered within the context of UW's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, Assessment Policy, Curriculum Design Policy and Policy on the Management of Work-based and Placement Learning.

A range of assessment strategies contribute to the assessment of the overall course learning outcomes and module learning outcomes. Formative and summative assessment strategies are used to support personal and professional development, which underpins but also goes beyond the achievement of specific learning outcomes.

Formative activity is provided through responses to academic and practice based learning activities including reflective journal entries. Interactive face to face and online learning and teaching approaches including student evaluation of learning, provides further opportunity for timely formative activity.

The form of summative assessment (for each module) is determined by its appropriateness in allowing the student to demonstrate they have understood and can meet the learning outcomes with potential for achievement across the full range of grades. Assessment strategies are embedded within the learning and teaching experience. Some forms of assessment require forms of representation that facilitate the assessment of theory in practice and incorporate practice based study.

Assessments:

- Include formative and summative elements;
- Are aligned with subject, course, module outcomes and learning and teaching methods;
- Summatively assess all module learning outcomes;
- Include different assessment points and split assessments within modules where this approach is deemed to be beneficial to the students achievement of course and module learning outcomes;
- Provide opportunity for achievement of all grades;
- Provide opportunity for choice/negotiation where appropriate to the module content, learning outcomes and level of study;
- Include a range of assessment methods that enable students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes and the transferable skills inherent within them.

Assessment of practice

Evidence from experience in practice is essential to all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment:

- Evidence from experience in practice will stimulate individual and peer learning in modules and will be used by students as a source of data in assessments.
- Completion of hours and competence in practice is assessed through a Practice Portfolio within FDEY1500 (Level 4) and FDEY 2500 (Level 5) (0 credit modules) which are a requirement for the FdA Early Years award.

Assessing competence in practice

The assessment of competence in practice has been developed across all of the UW Centre for Children and Families undergraduate courses involving the assessment of professional practice. This provides a standardised approach across the Centre for Children and Families, which is helpful to progressing students, settings, colleagues in partner institutions and the CCF Team.

The criteria for assessment have been aligned with current indicators of effective practice in early years settings with the purpose of supporting the progressive development of your professional practice; currently these are the current Early Years Teacher standards which relate to practice competence.

15. Programme structures and requirements

Award Map

The programme learning outcomes shown in section 13 describe the knowledge, understanding and skills that students will have demonstrated on achievement of their intended qualification award. Students who do not complete their full programme of study may qualify for an alternative award and the approved exit awards for this programme are listed in section 20 of this programme specification. For a Foundation Degree, exit awards are available at level 4 (Certificate of Higher Education).

Course Title: FdA Early Years

LEVEL 4				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)	Prerequisites (Code of Module required)
FDEY 1500	Competence in Practice (Level 4)	0	M	NA
FDEY 1501	Understanding Children's Development and Learning	30	M	NA
FDEY 1502	Supporting learning and development in practice (Practice Based Learning Module)	30	M	FDEY 1501
FDEY 1503	Protecting and safeguarding: working together for the child. Note: this module (30 credits) must be passed to enable progression. This is because it underpins the professional requirements to safeguard children.	30	M	NA
FDEY 1504	Working together to develop positive learning environments (Practice based learning module)	30	M	FDEY 1503

Note that where prerequisites are stated, students must have passed named modules in order to be able to take that requiring the prerequisite. This is also important with regard to scheduling of modules, as such passes must be ratified by an examination board prior to enrolment on a module requiring prerequisites.

Requirements at level 4

Students must take the 4 mandatory modules, plus the non-credit bearing module listed above. 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)
FDEY 2500	Competence in Practice (Level 5)	0	M	FDEY 1500
FDEY 2501	Investigating key features of quality enhancement in early childhood education and care	30	M	FDEY 1503
FDEY 2502	Evaluating and developing the curriculum for young children	30	M	FDEY 1503
FDEY 2503	Reflecting, responding and learning: practice and self (Practice/ work-based learning)	30	M	FDEY 1503
FDEY 2504	Practice/ work-based enquiry: improving quality in early years settings	30	M	FDEY 1503

Requirements at level 5

Students must take the 4 mandatory modules, plus the non-credit bearing module listed above. Students must successfully complete 120 credits in total at level 5.

Part Time Students

Part time students undertake FDEY1501, 1502 and 1503 in their first year of study. During the second year they take FDEY1504, 2501 AND 2502 and in the final year take FDEY2503 and 2504.

Practice based learning

Practice based learning forms a significant proportion of the Foundation Degree, with practice based learning incorporated into taught modules. Learning in practice is supported through a mixture of practice based learning activities, face-to-face delivery, e- learning, directed tasks, a reflective diary and a reflective journal.

Practice based Learning will usually take place in an OFSTED registered setting deemed good or outstanding. Consideration will be given to paid employees in settings which do not meet these requirements; extended experience in different settings will be a requirement in these cases. If the OFSTED grade changes from good or outstanding after students have registered on the programme, they must notify the Course Leader so that extended experience in a different setting can be negotiated.

All students are required to be in employment or working voluntarily in an early years setting for the duration of their studies.

Students are required to be in employment or working voluntarily in an early years setting for a minimum of 600 hours.

- Students studying full-time are expected to be in practice for a minimum of two days (10 hours) per week for 40 days per year in the same setting (serial placement) and 20 days in two blocks of 10 days (block placement) in different settings. This equates to a minimum of 300 hours per level of study / academic year.
- Students studying part-time are expected to be in practice for a minimum of one day (5 hours) per week for 20 days per year in the same setting (serial placement) and 10 days in two blocks of 5 days (block placement) in different settings. This equates to a minimum of 300 hours at each level of study.
- Students who are employed within an early years setting are likely to exceed this requirement in their own setting. However, during the course of their studies, they will need to negotiate a period of professional practice experience in a different setting. The Practice Based Learning Tutor will provide guidance as required.
- Completion of hours and competence in practice is assessed through a Practice Portfolio within FDEY1500 (Level 4) and FDEY 2500 (Level 5) (0 credit modules) which are a requirement for the FdA in Early Years award.

Evidence from experience in practice is essential to all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment:

- Evidence from experience in practice will stimulate individual and peer learning in modules and will be used by students as a source of data in assessments.

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

This award is located at level 5 of the FHEQ.

The [QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement](#) (2015), Early Childhood Studies Subject Benchmark Statement (2014), UK Quality Code for Higher Education (B3 Section 2 indicator 2) Work-based and placement learning, and Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ 2008) have been used to develop this programme and will be the framework within which it is, subsequently, implemented and monitored.

The Characteristics Statement defining the distinctive features of Foundation Degrees within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ 2008) ensures that expectations placed on student performance are recorded in language appropriate to the levels on module outlines and that assessment of students' knowledge, understanding and skills is appropriate at individual centres and across the partnerships (e.g. through supporting moderation and standardisation). Feedback from external examiners facilitates on-going evaluation of the expectations placed on students and the extent of their attainment.

17. Support for students

Students are supported by a Personal Academic Tutor, Module Tutors, Course Leaders, a Professional Partner in the setting and a Practice Based Learning Tutor. A peer learning support system is integral to the course design and organisation. A student handbook and module outlines also provide relevant information and guidance.

Individual support

A named Personal Academic Tutor will be available so that a learning relationship can be quickly established. Tutors are accessible by telephone, e-mail or in person by appointment.

Online and distance learning

Online learning and tutor support will be available through e-mail and the use of the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment.

Curriculum design

The programme has been designed to support student's achievement through an emphasis on reflective practice which supports personal and professional development, theorisation of practice and its impact on quality improvement within early years settings. Competence in practice is developed and assessed throughout the course.

As students progress through the programme and gain confidence, the module content will require more independence. The learning outcomes of the programme reflect a student-centred approach enabling students from diverse but relevant educational backgrounds to build on previous learning and experience.

Student Conferences

Once a year, the Foundation Degree in Early Years community is able to meet at the University of Worcester and be part of a dynamic and growing national and international community. The conference is designed to support the modules currently being undertaken at all levels. It provides opportunities for collaborative research to be shared and allows attendees to be informed by other practitioners. Eminent speakers identified as leaders in the field of early years, reinforce our ethos of collaborative communities of practice. The conference also provides a forum for learning about progression and career opportunities.

Study skills

Study skills are identified and embedded within all modules.

Practice Based Learning

Practice based learning forms a significant proportion of the Foundation Degree. It is incorporated into taught modules and dedicated practice based learning modules. It is supported through a mixture of face-to-face delivery, e- learning, directed tasks, a reflective diary and a reflective

journal. Deadlines will be set for the completion of tasks. Students have responsibility for organising their own time to meet deadlines.

Support in the workplace

Practice based learning requires as much support as traditional learning.

The structure consists of appropriate support from the setting through a designated Professional Partner. The Professional Partner will be a colleague within the student's setting. This person is someone with whom they can chat informally and from whom they can gain day-to-day advice and feedback.

Further support will be available from the Practice Based Learning Tutor, the Course Leader and other tutors, where appropriate.

Peer Group Support.

Learning groups will be established with a central membership of peers and will meet for informal but regular discussions based on personal and professional development. Learning groups will also be utilised within module group work where appropriate.

Other methods of peer group support include e-mail communication and online conferencing, described above.

Student Services and the Disability and Dyslexia Service can be accessed through the following links:

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/index.htm>

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/disability-and-dyslexia.htm>

18. Admissions

Admissions policy

The course seeks to recruit students from a range of educational and experiential backgrounds, including those with significant experience of working in early years settings and those who are progressing from vocational or academic courses at college or school.

A lack of formal qualifications is not necessarily a barrier to joining the course if you have relevant experience and commitment to learning. The course is committed to widening participation. University and partner college equal opportunity policies apply in relation to course admissions processes and selection criteria.

We welcome applicants who hold alternative qualifications/experience different to those shown in this section who can demonstrate the ability to benefit from the course and show their potential to complete the course successfully.

Although recent preparatory study at an appropriate level (e.g. Access to HE Diploma) is recommended, students may be considered on the basis of prior evidenced professional/work experience and/or other assessment procedures, and the assessment of personal suitability. University Admissions office staff will be able to offer information, advice and guidance on this process.

Students with relevant previous study at HND or degree level or extensive experience may be considered eligible for Recognition of Prior Learning. Entry may be possible to Year Two of the course, depending upon the qualifications or experience gained.

Entry requirements

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.

Alongside the above a testimony / reference (e.g. from either an employer, teacher or placement where a potential student has volunteered) is also required that supports the student's commitment and suitability for the course.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements

Current police clearance is also required to work with young children (DBS). Relevant forms will be sent by admissions on receipt of a firm acceptance of an offer of a place on the course.

Recognition of Prior Learning

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).

Applicants for the part-time programme route who do not hold the above qualifications will be considered on the basis of prior professional experience and the criteria indicated above.

Further information or guidance is available from Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111) or from <http://www.worc.ac.uk/courses/howtoapply/476.html>

Admissions procedures

Selection criteria for all modes of study and delivery

The applicants must have:

- commitment to working with and for children;
- commitment to personal development as evidenced in different ways such as work experience, previous study, and/or training courses, portfolio of professional achievements, performance assessments, personal interests etc.;
- suitability for working with young children;
- suitability for working as part of a team within an early years setting;
- literacy skills in relation to how these will enable them to fulfil the requirements of the course.

Offers of places are usually made on the basis of the application and an interview with representatives from the course team.

The application should address the selection criteria above:

- Full-time applicants apply through UCAS (Code X312)
- Part-time applicants apply directly to University of Worcester (UW) (Part-time application form available on UW website).
- Part-time applicants to Heart of Worcestershire College apply directly to the college

The interview provides an opportunity for:

- applicants to fully understand the nature and requirements of the course and to be able to make an informed decision if offered a place on the programme;
- applicants to demonstrate their suitability for the course;
- the course team to gain further information in relation to the selection criteria (below) and to make an informed decision or identify further action or evidence as required;
- the course team to identify additional learning needs and relevant support required, which might include organising a placement or providing guidance on student support services.

Access to practice based learning in an OFSTED registered setting deemed good or outstanding is a course requirement. For some applicants this may require further discussion with the Course Leader at interview.

Flexible and Distributed Programme

To support your successful engagement and achievement on the programme an audit of IT skills will be conducted at the interview to identify your strengths and weaknesses and how these can be supported. Details of this audit will be sent to you on confirmation of your interview at the University of Worcester.

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 is monitored at a local level by student evaluation of modules and student representation at course committees. Each partner institution writes its own Annual Evaluation Report; these are then collated to develop an overall programme Annual Evaluation Report. To support the programme UW's Partnership Management Team lead on the on-going communication and delivery of the programme. They plan regular cross-moderation and standardisation events for the whole course team to ensure quality and standards are consistent across partner institutions. Further to this Link Tutors have a role in working with individual partner institutions. This process is further strengthened by external examiners who verify work and marks across the institutions and feedback on quality issues. Tutors at partner institutions are registered lecturers of UW, which supports and offers opportunities for staff development and scholarly activity. Conference days at UW provide further opportunity for CPD, collaborative working and peer assessment. A Partnership Management Committee oversees Quality Assurance and Enhancement. Regular partnership team meetings are essential to the planning, delivery and development of the programme within a collaborative approach.

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 the 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 (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative 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
Cert HE	In order to be eligible for the exit award of Certificate in Higher Education in the named subject/area of study, a student must have passed at least 120 credits in total including the mandatory modules for level 4 of the award as specified on the award map.
Foundation Degree FdA/FdSc	120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5 as specified on the award map.

These awards are not classified.

21. Indicators of quality and standards

External examiner reports not only confirm that standards are appropriate for study at Level 4/5 and are in line with standards experienced elsewhere, they have identified that the programme is 'innovative and cutting edge'. The partnership team's commitment to on-going evaluation and improvement has also been identified.

Course Review May 2015: Good Practice and Innovation

The Panel noted the following features of good practice and innovation:

1. The community of practice and inclusivity, which promotes engagement and a sense of ownership across the courses/partners by including everyone in curriculum design and research opportunities provided by the University;
2. The transformational impact of the course on students as indicated by the many positive student comments;
3. The network of support for students – for example the proactive and responsive nature of the link tutors to maintain the student experience;
4. An ongoing profile of research activities, including the constructive inclusion of students as partners in research, and the productive relationship of such research with the development and delivery of the course;
5. The Student Conferences which help to bring students from all the partners together.

There are a range of teaching staff from a variety of professional backgrounds teaching on the course throughout the partnership and these are supported by academic librarians and work based partners. The partnership holds a UW Team Teaching Award (2017) and HEA senior

fellowship and fellowship awards. The partnership have recently published research on student views of the personal and professional effect of the FdA Early Years in *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. ISSN 0309-877X Online: 1469-9486.

87% of students express satisfaction in the course and 95% are in employment or further study at the end of the course and 85% in a managerial or professional role six months after completing the course (NSS and Unistats 2016).

22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Student employability

The FdA in Early Years prepares students for employment in early years settings but also provides opportunities for progression on to further study and qualifications. It provides opportunities for practice-based experience and learning and the development of relevant transferable skills and attributes which provide a strong foundation for a range of professional roles in the sector and beyond. The Student Conferences provide opportunities for students to receive advice on careers and progression and to benefit from participation within the wider community of practitioners and employers.

Graduate destinations

The FdA in Early Years will support students in pursuing careers in areas such as:

- Leadership and management within early years settings e.g. as an Early Years Teacher or nursery manager
- Social welfare / Social work
- Family support work
- Children's charities: e.g. Barnardos
- Playwork
- Early years education: teaching or teaching assistant
- Day care provision Early Years Services

N.B. Further study may be necessary for some these. Further advice is available during the course and from UW Careers Advisors.

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

The Foundation Degree remains a sought after qualification for those wishing to progress in the area of Early Years education and care. An increasing number of students are progressing on to UW's BA (Hons) in Integrated Working with Children and Families Top-up or Early Years Initial Teacher Status which have also received praiseworthy reports from external examiners.

The identified progression route to an honours award is the BA (Hons) Top Up in Integrated Working with Children and Families. Other possibilities include: BA (Hons) Social Welfare, BA (Hons) Education Studies, Early Years Teacher and direct entry to year two of BA Hons Primary Education (QTS).

Entry requirements for BA (Hons) Integrated Working with Children and Families are:

Foundation degree, Early Years Sector Endorsed FdA, DipHE, HND or equivalent qualification in Early Childhood Studies or related subject.

GCSE grade C in Maths and English as course entry requirements are desirable but students are reminded that their employment sector may require these qualifications.

An Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check.

Supportive academic reference.

Non-standard entry routes will also be considered. We encourage applications from candidates who can provide evidence of their ability to work at Level 6 and substantial experience of working with children and families through integrated service provision. If your qualification is not listed, please contact Registry Admissions for advice.

Due to the requirements for further progression e.g. Early Years Teacher Status / Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) it is strongly recommended that students gain GCSEs in English, Mathematics and Science or equivalent whilst studying for their Foundation Degree. Advice on equivalency tests will be provided during the course.

Support for transition to the linked Honours Degree/Top-Up route is provided through:

- The FdA in Early Years curriculum design – aligned to the expectations of the progression route e.g. study skills, practitioner research and related skills and knowledge;
- The FdA in Early Years learning, teaching and assessment strategy which has been designed to support transition to honours level study e.g. independent and critical engagement'
- The FdA in Early Years Partnership Team which provides a standardised and coherent approach to information and support for students (Refer to Section 17). In addition to progression being embedded within the provision students will be offered advice on choice of progression routes (and where relevant to the identified UW route), advice on subsequent module choices and Independent Study preparation;
- UW's Centre for Children and Families standardisation across different levels supports the transition of students from different partner colleges to the UW BA (Hons) Top Up in Integrated Working with Children and Families.

Other progression routes include:

Early Years Teacher: applicants to the Undergraduate Practitioner Pathway require GCSE's in English Language and Mathematics and Science (in addition to a Level 5 qualification).

Student employability

The course prepares students for employment through work based learning opportunities, careers education, workshops, support for preparing applications, for interviews. Students also have the opportunity to participate in the Worcester Award which develops employability skills.

Links with employers

The FdA EY opens up opportunities for career progression for students who are already in employment, working voluntarily in the sector or progressing from Level 3 study. Employers are involved in the design of the course, its on-going delivery and review. A Partnership Forum which includes representatives from Early Years LA Services across the region supports collaborative working with UW and FE providers.

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.