

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
MA Early Childhood (with PG Cert and PG Dip)

1	Awarding institution/body: University of Worcester
2	Teaching institution: University of Worcester
3	Programme accredited by: University of Worcester
4	Final award: MA , PG Dip, PG Cert
5	Programme title: MA Early Childhood
6	Pathways available: Not applicable
7	Mode and/or site of delivery: University of Worcester
8	Mode of attendance: Part time and full time
9	UCAS Code: Not applicable
10	Subject Benchmark statement: Not applicable
11	Date of Programme Specification preparation/revision: February 2008 Revised Dec 2010

12 Educational aims of the programme

The award is part of the Postgraduate Education Programme (PEP). The programme aims to develop rigorous professional practice in ways which will have impact on the workplace and on the achievement of all learners in that context. It has been designed to provide opportunities for course participants to pursue reflective and systematic enquiry which will enable them to extend their capacity for critical analysis, reflection and autonomous action, underpinned by a high level of professional knowledge, skills and understanding.

The overall aims of the programme are to:

- enhance competence to deal with complex issues and make informed academic and/or professional judgements
- develop self-direction and autonomy in professional early childhood development
- promote skills in critical reflection and self evaluation for professional and organisational quality and improvement
- engage in a research-based approach to professional and organisational development
- develop critical understanding of early childhood contexts, disciplines, values and concepts and apply new knowledge, skills and understanding in the field
- enhance collaborative working skills and effective communication with children, families and colleagues to enrich the working environment as a learning community.

13 Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

On completion of the course the student will be able to:

- i. extend their own professional development and support organisational change through improvements and actions implemented in the field of early childhood;
- ii. utilize reflexive, evaluative and analytical skills in the examination of early childhood professional actions, practices and situations;
- iii. articulate the interdependent and transformational relationship of theory and practice within the field of early childhood, showing originality in the application of knowledge and research;
- iv. engage in systematic enquiry and critical examination of research, policy and practice thus revealing comprehensive understanding and skills in the techniques of research and advanced scholarship in the field of early childhood;
- v. develop a rationale for continued professional development and the promotion of an early childhood learning community;
- vi. draw on improved skills in communicating, collaborating and working effectively with others;
- vii. develop as a critically reflective early childhood advocate.

Approaches to learning and teaching support the achievement of the learning outcomes of the Programme through the addressing in all modules of the cyclical process of experience, reflection, analysis, and the application of principles to one's own context. Further to this and in order to develop and sustain a critical form of educational practice within the Programme, each of the modules employs learning processes through which course participants are encouraged to analyse principles and procedures as active practitioner researchers.

Assessment in the Postgraduate Education Programme (PEP) is based on 100% coursework. This approach is in keeping with the models of the 'professional as learner' and the 'professional as researcher' which inform the Programme, the emphasis being upon the ability of such professionals to provide impetus for organizational evaluation, change and improvement in the workplace. To this end the coursework embraces a variety of approaches to assessment, including the critiquing of literature, the analysis of aspects of the curriculum/professional practice of the workplace, designing development plans, small-scale action research projects, reflective portfolios and case studies.

14 Assessment Strategy

Although the PEP structure is incremental, moving from a Postgraduate Certificate through a Postgraduate Diploma to a Master's degree, all of the assessment criteria are at 'M' level. In order to ensure consistency in the high standards associated with 'M' level work this generic set of criteria is based on the dimensions of the professional models which underpin the Programme. In addition the educational aims of the Programme are supported by this strategy inasmuch as it enables the students to act as autonomous learners, adopting a research-based approach to personal and organisational development in order to enhance professional practice within a clear framework of the participants' own professional values.

While all of the assessment criteria in the Programme are at 'M' level, progression in assessment is ensured by the way in which course participants move from an emphasis upon subject study within the Certificate phase, through a transitional phase involving the development of a research project and more reflective skills in research methodology, into the dissertation phase. This final phase sees participants as independent researchers

exercising autonomous professional judgment in a chosen field, with clear outcomes in terms of personal and/or organizational development.

The key features of the Postgraduate Education Programme assessment strategy are that it:

- i. enables course participants to direct their own learning efficiently and effectively towards a given purpose;
- ii. is aware that course participants have unique goals and interests and recognises that these have implications for the teaching and learning process;
- iii. acknowledges that learning occurs in a particular social, cultural and political context and that this affects what is learned and the ways in which it is learned;
- iv. has a commitment to facilitate course participant learning through an individual course participant-centred approach as well as a group-centred approach with a strong commitment to group learning, group processes, and dissemination;
- v. includes specific learning outcomes as well as a generic set of criteria for all modules;
will be systematically monitored and reviewed in relation to its principles and procedures and its effectiveness as a formative and summative function.

15 Programme structures and requirements – see award map appended

16 QAA Academic Infrastructure

As propounded by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), both the module specific and the generic learning outcomes of the PEP draw on the principles of 'originality in the application of knowledge' and an understanding of 'how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research.' This is assured via the centrality of the practitioner researcher to the Programme. Concomitant with this the 'Sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments' demanded by FHEQ is supported by the Programme's emphasis upon experiential learning and transpersonal reflection.

Further to the above and in accordance with the FHEQ (QAA 2001), at post graduate level students will have begun to acquire:

- i. A systematic understanding of knowledge and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights. (Learning outcomes vi, vii and viii)
- ii. A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship. (Learning outcomes i, ii, iii and v)
- iii. Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge. (Learning outcomes i, ii, iv and v)
- iv. A conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate critically current research and to critically evaluate methodologies (Learning outcomes ii, iv and v)

17 Support for students

Because of the wide range of approaches to the delivery of the programme induction tends to be within specific modules although an induction specific to PEP is offered to all students as well as the induction for all postgraduate students organised centrally by the university. In addition Information Learning Services (Library, Media, Print and ICT) provides induction sessions both independent of, and in conjunction with, specific modules delivered by the programme.

All students receive individual tutor guidance when engaging in independent study work and

during the researching and writing up of the dissertation or its equivalent. Tutorial support is also provided as part of the delivery of all taught modules in the programme.

Electronic versions of the PEP student handbook, the dissertation handbook and the University of Worcester student guide are all updated annually.

At the beginning of all modules students receive a module study guide identifying specific learning outcomes, assessment items and other relevant information pertaining to the module.

WebCT provides students with electronic means of accessing course information and communicating with peers and teaching staff.

Study skills support is available on request to all students at UW, including those engaged in postgraduate studies.

Socrates Erasmus funding and Comenius projects provide opportunities for study in Europe. These opportunities are only available to practising teachers.

18 Admissions policy, criteria and procedure

The MA Early Childhood is open to graduates or the equivalent who carry a professional responsibility for teaching and learning to include qualified teachers. The University will seek evidence of personal professional experiences that provide an indication of ability to meet the demands of the Programme.

Normally applicants should be in-post. However, applications will be considered from those who are planning to resume their career. Such applicants will be supported in the undertaking of all necessary workplace based/focused tasks and assignments.

In keeping with University policy on widening participation and diversity the Programme encourages and welcomes the contribution of older learners and people from the widest range of social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

The admission of course members to the Programme will be governed by the normal entry requirements for an award at M level. Course members should normally:-

- a) be the holder of a bachelor's degree or equivalent;
- b) hold an appropriate professional qualification (e.g. QTS/QTLS) or have experience which demonstrate they possess appropriate knowledge and skills.

The normal arrangements for APL apply. Advanced standing is available for those in possession of qualifications granted in the last five years.

Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance 01905 855111

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

- The annual monitoring report reviews the quality of the Programme in which the awards sit and provides action points emerging from the analysis of data provided by students, staff and external examiners.

- External examiner reports feed into the annual monitoring report and serve as indicators for areas where staff development will be of benefit to the Programme.
- Each module provides opportunities for student evaluation.
- The PEP committee for staff and students considers feedback from all participants. It also serves as a forum for identifying important issues which are likely to impact upon the Programme.
- Appraisals of staff and peer assessment of teaching provide important means of updating and monitoring developments in teaching and learning.
- PEP staff are all involved in either research or scholarly activity which impacts upon teaching and learning issues in the Programme and ensures that teaching and learning issues at Master's level are addressed in an appropriately challenging and innovative manner.
- A PG Cert for new staff, Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, accredited by the HEA and SEDA, provides a forum for individual and collaborative reflection on approaches to teaching and learning.

20 Regulation of assessment

Requirements to pass modules

- **Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.**
- **The minimum pass mark is 50% 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.**
- **Some modules have attendance requirements (delete if this does not apply).**
- **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 50% 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.**
- **Students who fail to submit an item of assessment lose their right to reassessment in that module, and will be required to retake the module, which will incur payment of the module fee.**
- **For full details of submission regulations see PRF.**

Retrieval of failure

- **Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade, unless the failure was due to non-attendance or non-submission.**

- **Reassessment takes place during the following semester or during the summer reassessment period at the end of the academic year.**
- **If following reassessment the module has been passed, the module grade will be capped at 50%.**
- **If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they will have one further and final reassessment opportunity.**
- **A student who fails 40 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.**

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
PG Cert	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at level 7
PG Dip	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at level 7
Masters (MA/MSc/MBA/MTL)	Passed a minimum of 180 credits at level 7 including a minimum of 40 credits from the Dissertation

The awards of PG Cert, PG Dip or Masters may be made with Merit or Distinction.

21 Indicators of quality and standards

Over the last three years the two external examiners representing this award have confirmed that the marking of student work was comparable to standards elsewhere at this level and that the standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at Master's level. One of the external examiners stressed that, 'the aims and outcomes (of PEP) are relevant to the requirements of TDA Postgraduate Professional Development and the needs of teachers.' Both of the external examiners agreed that the standard achieved by students is appropriate to the level of the award to which the programme leads and that they are commensurate with those achieved by peers on comparable courses.

In November 2005, the institution was audited by the Quality Assurance Agency. The audit confirmed confidence in the University's management of the quality of its academic programmes and the standards of its awards. The QAA particularly commended the University's supportive ethos and range of departmental and central services provided to students and staff in support of its mission to deliver an excellent inclusive higher education.

22 Career Opportunities and Links with Employers

The educational aims of the Programme centre on the enhancement of professional practice and provide students, where appropriate, opportunities for career moves within and beyond their organizations.

The head of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) chairs a steering group consisting of teachers, LA representatives and others involved in CPD six times a year. This provides important links with the professional community and ensures that the PEP is involved in the promotion and development of significant initiatives.

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 the module study guide and course handbook. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher

Education.

Key sources of information about the Course can be found in:

- Definitive Course Validation Document (Parts A and B)
- PEP student handbook (reviewed annually)
- Dissertation Handbook
- Web address: www.worc.ac.uk (follow links to CPD)

AWARD MAP FOR POSTGRADUATE AWARDS

MA Early Childhood

PG Certificate in Early Childhood

PG Certificate Leading Early Years Practice

PG Diploma in Early Childhood

Year: 2008	Last Updated: June 2008	
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Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Level 7)	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)	Prerequisites (Module Code required)
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Specialist Modules for Early Childhood:				
MEDD4010	Comparative Policy and Practice in Early Childhood	20	O	
MEDD4011	Theory and Principles in Practice in Early Childhood	20	O	
MEDD4012	Inclusive Early Childhood Provision	20	O	
MEDD4030	Early Childhood Policy into Practice	20	O	
MEDD4155	Understanding Mentoring in Early Childhood	20	O	
MEDD4156	Mentoring Skills and Quality Enhancement in Early Childhood	20	O	
MEDD4157*	Pedagogy, Practice and Policy in the Early Years	20	O	
MEDD4158*	Communication and Collaboration in Leading Early Years Practice	20	O	
MEDD4159*	Effective Early Years Practice and Pedagogy	20	O	

Optional Modules for Early Childhood:				
MEDD4003	Evaluation of the Impact of Professional Development	20	O	
MEDD4004	Professional Enquiry into an Educational Setting	20	O	
MEDD4007	Negotiated Learning - Education (Single)	20	O	
MEDD4008	Negotiated Learning - Education (Double)	40	O	
MEDD4009	Negotiated Learning - Education (Triple)	60	O	
MEDD4013	Reflecting on Current Issues in	20	O	

	Education			
MEDD4014	Reflecting on Professional Practice	20	O	
MEDD4017	Changing Childhoods, Changing Policies	20	O	
MEDD4026	Leading Creativity and Innovation	20	O	
MEDD4102	Creativity: Fostering Ability and Talent.	20	O	
These are the recommended optional modules but any other PEP modules may also be chosen if the specified modules are unavailable or inappropriate.				

Mandatory Modules for MA:				
MEDD4001	Approaches to Educational Research: Research Methods for professional enquiry in education	20	M	
MEDD4000 or MEDD4000A	Dissertation	80 or 60	M	MEDD4001

MEDD4007, 4008 and 4009 are excluded combinations

PG Certificate in Early Childhood - Requirements

Students undertaking the Postgraduate Certificate must successfully complete modules from the specialist modules for Early Childhood, amounting to 60 credits in total. MEDD4007 (Negotiated Learning - Education) may be regarded as a specialist Early Childhood module providing the assessment of the module is focused on Early Childhood issues.

20	20	20
EC SPECIALIST MODULE	EC SPECIALIST MODULE	EC SPECIALIST MODULE

***PGCert Leading Early Years Practice**

Students undertaking this Postgraduate Certificate must successfully complete MEDD 4157, 4158 and 4159 as mandatory for this award, amounting to 60 credits in total. MEDD4030 and MEDD4157 are excluded combinations.

PG Diploma in Early Childhood - Requirements

Students undertaking the Postgraduate Diploma must successfully complete modules from the specialist modules listed, amounting to 120 credits in total. At least 80 credits should be selected from the specialist modules listed above. Up to 40 credits can be drawn from other modules in the PEP. MEDD4007 (Negotiated Learning - Education) may be regarded as a specialist Early Childhood module providing the assessment of the module is focused on Early Childhood issues. It is recommended that the assessment undertaken for optional modules should also focus on aspects of Early Childhood practice.

20	20	20	20	20	20
EC SPECIALIST MODULE	EC SPECIALIST MODULE	EC SPECIALIST MODULE	EC SPECIALIST MODULE	<i>EC OPTIONAL MODULE</i>	<i>EC OPTIONAL MODULE</i>

MA in Early Childhood - Requirements

Students undertaking the full MA Early Childhood award must successfully complete MEDD4001 and either MEDD4000 or 4000A, together with an appropriate selection of modules from those listed, amounting to 80 or 100 credits (depending on which of 4000 or 4000A is taken). At least 60 credits may be selected from the specialist modules and the dissertation theme must be in the domain of Early Childhood. MEDD4007 (Negotiated Learning - Education) may be regarded as a specialist Early Childhood module providing the assessment of the module is focused on Early Childhood issues. A total of 180 credits must be successfully completed. A typical route would be as follows:

20	20	20	20	20	80
MEDD4001 MANDATORY MODULE	EC SPECIALIST MODULE	EC SPECIALIST MODULE	EC SPECIALIST MODULE	<i>EC OPTIONAL MODULE</i>	MEDD4000 DISSERTATION

Linked awards

Students completing MEDD4155, MEDD4156 and MEDD4007 (with EC assessment focus) will be eligible for the award of PG Cert Mentoring in Early Childhood.