



Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from
The University of Sheffield

1	Programme Title	Combined Studies (Society and Culture) with Foundation Year
2	Programme Code	EDCU001
3	JACS Code	Y000
4	Level of Study	Undergraduate
5a	Final Qualification	Certificate of Higher Education
5b	Position in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications	UG Foundation level 0 to FHEQ Level 4
6a	Intermediate Qualification(s)	None
6b	Position in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications	Not applicable
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Extra-Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee
9	Department	Department for Lifelong Learning (DLL)
10	Other Department(s) involved in teaching the programme	The amended programme will offer modules from a range of departments across the University of Sheffield, including unrestricted modules and other modules by agreement with departments for which we already offer Foundation Years routes.
11	Mode(s) of Attendance	Part-time
12	Duration of the Programme	Normally two years part time at UG Foundation Level 0 plus two years part time at FHEQ Level 4
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
14	Date of production/revision	November 2014, May 2016, January 2019, March 2026

15. Background to the programme and subject area

The CertHE in Combined Studies with Foundation Year offers the same Foundation Year (Level 0) provision as that required by over thirty degree programmes across the institution. It offers students who are unsure of their chosen subject area, or who are not ready, or do not wish to embark upon, degree level study, the opportunity to progress onto a Level 1 CertHE which is anchored and supported within DLL whilst allowing students to study a range of other modules from across the institution alongside the core DLL modules.

Successful completion of the Level 0 element of the programme guarantees progression to Level 1 of the CertHE in Combined Studies within DLL, and may also, subject to appropriate threshold grades being attained, qualify students to progress onto one of the many full- and part-time degrees with a Foundation Year offered across the institution. Alternatively, on completion of the Foundation Year, students may apply for admission to Level 1 of a degree programme which does not currently have a Foundation Year at UoS or elsewhere.

The Foundation Year is based on over forty years' experience of successfully preparing adult learners for higher education. The programme is designed to provide the study skills as well as the subject specific knowledge necessary for successful progression within areas of the humanities, social sciences, health and natural sciences. Likewise, the Level 1 provision offered within and through DLL is based on many decades' experience of engaging adult learners and developing their confidence, independence, and love of learning.

The programme as a whole is designed to build students' confidence and to develop a wide range of essential study skills, including time management, essay writing, research, literacy and numeracy skills, developing all of the Sheffield Graduate Attributes. In the second year of study at Level 0 in particular, the programme aims to provide sufficient background information and subject specific knowledge to allow students to make an informed choice as to the most appropriate progression routes for them within higher education. An integral part of the programme is advice and guidance regarding progression routes within the University of Sheffield or other higher education institutions which may be available subject to other thresholds and prerequisites being met.

Further information is available at the Department for Lifelong Learning website: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/dll>

16. Programme aims

The programme aims to:

1. Provide students with subject based knowledge and skills to give them a range of opportunities for progression within Higher Education.
2. Develop students' familiarity with different methods of learning, teaching and assessment.
3. Build students' confidence in their academic ability and develop their understanding of personal strengths and areas for development.
4. Develop students' ability to adapt knowledge and skills in new situations.
5. Develop students' critical, analytical and evaluative skills.
6. Develop students' independent study and research skills.
7. Develop a range of transferable skills which enhance students' employability and preparedness to progress to higher levels of HE study.
8. Motivate and inspire students to consider further study opportunities and provide information and guidance relating to this.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

On completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate:

K1	Knowledge and understanding of academic English, mathematics and descriptive statistics, and relevant subject areas of a standard necessary for progression/entry to further HE study.
K2	Knowledge and understanding of the opportunities for, and demands of, future study, especially as these relate to mature students, and of the different forms of assessment used in HE.
K3	Knowledge of personal academic strengths and areas for development.
K4	Knowledge of basic research methods and approaches, and an understanding of their uses, strengths and limitations.
K5	Knowledge and understanding of academic conventions, ethics and integrity.

Skills and other attributes

On completion of the programme, students will have:

S1	Relevant skills in the acquisition, evaluation and use of subject-related information in a range of different circumstances and contexts.
S2	Essential skills in oral and written communication.
S3	Problem-solving, critical, and evaluative skills sufficient to develop, sustain and present a coherent line of argument.
S4	Ability to participate effectively in group work activities, both assessed and non-assessed.
S5	Ability to carry out small-scale independent study and research, including project planning and time management skills.
S6	Familiarity with basic techniques of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.
S7	Information literacy skills sufficient for effective further study in HE.
S8	Reflective learning skills which promote self-awareness and appropriate responses to feedback.
S9	The ability to make informed decisions about appropriate progression routes, either within DLL, or on to degree or other HE programmes at the University of Sheffield or elsewhere.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

The Foundation Year element introduces all the teaching and learning methods outlined below, as appropriate to the subjects selected. At Level 1, independent study and tutorials (individual and group) continue within DLL, while modules taken in other departments offer a range of subject-appropriate learning experiences and teaching methods.

- 1. Lectures and seminars.** Most modules rely largely upon a mixed lecture/seminar format in order to impart essential subject knowledge, build confidence and encourage individual student participation. The latter is achieved through regular question and answer sessions and the use of small-group work to stimulate discussion on particular issues. The balance between tutor- and student-led discussions varies from subject area to subject area. (K1,3,5; S1-3,8).
- 2. Problem solving classes.** These are an integral part of the Maths and Statistics, Foundations of Biology and Foundations of Chemistry modules, allowing students to develop their problem-solving skills with individual support from tutors where necessary. The work carried out in these classes allows students to apply and practice their theoretical knowledge, as well as their examination technique, in a supportive environment. (K1,3; S1,3,6).
- 3. Field studies.** Short field study trips to specific landscapes, places or buildings (e.g. museums) are employed in appropriate modules in order to introduce particular concepts, ideas and techniques best understood in context. These also provide an opportunity to practice basic recording methods in some instances. (K1,4,5; S1,4,6).
- 4. Independent study.** This is the most important part of the learning process for most Foundation Programme students. The extent to which independent study is formally guided by the tutor through the setting of specific weekly "private study tasks" will vary from subject area to subject area. In many natural science-based subjects, for example, formal or informal question papers and tasks may be set on a regular basis. In other subjects, the emphasis will be more upon the location, reading and analysis of suitable primary or secondary sources, often in preparation for particular formally assessed essay questions or projects. The main opportunities for undertaking independent study are provided at Level 1 by the Extended Project module, which specifically develops independent study and research skills, and at Level 1 through the Independent Study Project module. Within this and the Academic Literacy and Communication Skills module at L0, and the Professional and Academic Skills module at L1, students are also encouraged to monitor and reflect on their learning and performance in a number of different contexts (K3,4; S1,2,3,5,7,8).
- 5. Skills and subject-based tutorials.** These are provided as part of the core Extended Essay/Project and Academic Literacy and Communication Skills modules at Level 0, and the Independent Study Project and Academic and Professional Skills modules at Level 1. All students are also assigned a personal tutor for the duration of their studies on the CertHE with Foundation Year with whom they are encouraged to discuss their progress and future study choices. (K1-5; S1-5,8,9).
- 6. Group work.** Throughout the Foundation Programme students are encouraged to work together and support one another both within and outside the classroom – sharing knowledge and experience in a creative way in order to develop support networks during their time on the Foundation Year which they can continue to draw upon in their future degree level studies. (K3,4; S2,4,5,7,8).
- 7. On-line activities.** All Foundation Programme modules make use of MOLE courses to develop familiarity with the use and potential of virtual learning environments to enhance and structure learning, and as a tool for effective communication. (K1,4,5; S1,5,6,7).
- 8. Revision workshops.** All those modules which include substantial summative assessment by formal written examination will include specific workshops tailored to prepare students for this particular form of assessment. This is an area of assessment which mature students often find particularly challenging but is also a key assessment tool used at level one and above on most degree pathways (K41,3,4; S3,8).
- 9. Laboratory sessions.** The Foundations of Biology, Chemistry and Geography modules include laboratory classes in which students will practice basic laboratory procedures, skills and techniques, whilst exploring their understanding of subject knowledge through experiment and observation. (K4,5; S1,3,4,6).

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

The Cert HE in Combined Studies with Foundation Year is designed to provide experience of all key forms of assessment method which students are likely to encounter in their future studies. Early exposure to these different assessment methods, including formative assessments, as well as the opportunities provided through feedback and tutorial discussion to reflect on these experiences, helps build students' confidence in their ability to succeed, and to identify strategies for future success. The Foundation Year element introduces all the methods of assessment outlined below, as appropriate to the subjects selected. At Level 1, the extended essay and presentation elements are consolidated within DLL and augmented by a range of different subject-appropriate assessments in other departments.

The assessment methods employed are as follows:

1. *Essays*. A common method of assessment across most Humanities and Social Science based modules. In preparing for and writing their essays, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of K1,4,5; S1,2,3,7.
2. *Oral and/or poster presentations*. Individual and/or group presentations, supported by Powerpoint, posters or other appropriate visual aids, are assessed as part of the core Academic Literacy and 'Introduction to' modules. They provide an important opportunity for students to demonstrate to their peers their achievement of learning outcomes 3,4,5; S1,2,3,4,5,7,8.
3. *Reflexivity exercises*: these exercises can take various forms (e.g. learning journal, feedback action planning, critical reflection on individual extended essay/project) and are an important element of the Academic Literacy and Extended Essay/Project modules. They provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of K2,3; S8,9.
4. *Unseen examinations*: End of module examinations are an integral part of the Foundation Year. In preparing for and sitting examinations, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of K1,5; S1,2,3.
5. *Extended essay/independent project*. The core extended essay/project modules give all students the opportunity to develop their independent research and communications skills, whilst further exploring subject matter in their chosen subject area in more depth. The successful completion of this module enables students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes 1,4,5; S1,2,3,5,6,7,8.

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Subject Benchmark Statements

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2014)

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

University Vision

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/vision>

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016-21)

https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.661828!/file/FinalStrategy.pdf

20. Programme structure and regulations

The Cert HE in Combined Studies with Foundation Year is delivered part-time at Level 0 over two years, and part-time at Level 1 over a further two years. In the two years at each level, students must take a total of 120 credits, normally by taking 60 credits in each year.

In the first year (L0) of study students must complete two 20-credit core modules (Academic Literacy and Communication Skills, and Maths and Statistics). In addition, they must complete a third 20-credit introductory module in Humanities, Social Sciences, Health, or Natural Sciences, chosen according to interest or their intended subject for future study.

In year 2 (L0) students must complete one core module, the Extended Project, and a further 40 credits of subject specific modules from a range including English, History, Geography, Psychology, Sociology, Biology and Chemistry.

In year 3 (L1) students complete one core 20-credit module in Academic and Professional Skills Development, within DLL, along with 40 credits by agreement with other departments, or from unrestricted modules or MLTC provision, selected in conjunction with a DLL academic adviser (usually the student's personal tutor, or a programme director) to comprise a coherent programme of study.

In year 4 (L1) students complete one core 20-credit module, Independent Study Project, within DLL, along with a further 40 credits by agreement with other departments, or from unrestricted modules or MLTC provision, selected in conjunction with a DLL academic adviser to comprise a coherent programme of study.

The full regulations for the programme are included in the Google folder.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at www.shef.ac.uk/calendar

21. Student development over the course of study

Level 0 of the CertHE in Combined Studies is carefully designed to ease transition back into study for people who have often not studied in a formal academic environment for a long period of time. In this respect, the key subject matter and assessments students encounter in the first year are intended to introduce and refresh key study skills and practices, to build confidence, but also to open up their thinking to the wider field of learning and knowledge which is the life blood of University study. We also place a strong emphasis upon group and peer-assisted learning at this stage, through the inclusion of different group tasks and assessments which are designed to ensure students can share and develop skills and support networks together which will serve them well throughout their University career.

In the second year, the nature of the challenges we present intensify, with an increasing emphasis placed upon those forms of assessment which mature students often find most rewarding (more in-depth project work) or most difficult (end of year exams). Before the end of each year's study, all students are offered clear advice and guidance around progression options from Foundation Level to Level 1, including appropriate careers advice, and support with preparing UCAS applications where appropriate.

At Level 1, students can build on this to follow their own academic interests, anchored around two core DLL modules. Academic and Professional Skills builds on the Level 0 Academic Literacy and Communication Skills module to broaden students' skills base, whilst the Independent Study Project moves on from the Level 0 Extended Project to develop students' abilities and confidence in independent research and project planning. Complementary to these two modules delivered within DLL, students will be guided to select appropriate modules, according to their interests, from other departments, to form a coherent programme of study.

Students will be offered clear advice and guidance around potential progression options at the end of both L0 and L1.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

The entry requirements and admissions processes for this programme follow the model developed for degrees with Foundation Year delivered through DLL. These non-traditional entry pathways are specifically designed to help mature applicants make a successful transition to undergraduate study. Some applicants will have few or no formal educational qualifications above GCSE level, and most will typically not have studied full-time for A-Level (or equivalent) qualifications within the last three years.

All applicants are usually asked to attend an interview. This may happen remotely if an applicant is residing some distance from Sheffield and they hold appropriate level GCSE or equivalent qualifications (C in English, D in Mathematics) which have been gained within the last 5 years. On the interview day all applicants' Maths and English abilities are assessed via tests. These form part of the selection processes, alongside an academic interview which assesses applicants' understanding of and commitment to their chosen subject, their potential to succeed (assessed by reference to prior work, life and educational experience) and their current preparedness for study. The interview is integral to the selection process, as it is the key tool in assessing a candidate's aptitude for study and understanding of the demands that will be placed upon them.

Applicants must be proficient in written and spoken English, normally demonstrated by grade C or above in GCSE English Language or performance in interview assessment. Non-native English speakers may demonstrate proficiency through the attainment of IELTS 6.0 with 5.5 in each component. Applicants must also demonstrate a sufficient level of numeracy skills, normally demonstrated by grade D or above in GCSE Mathematics (or equivalent) and performance in interview assessment.

For direct entry to Level 1 of the programme (if offered), applicants must demonstrate in addition to the above in their applications and at interview:

1. a clear potential to succeed on the programme evidenced by a combination of work, life, and prior educational experiences which together demonstrate communication and analytical skills which can be successfully transferred to an academic context.
2. a clear understanding of and commitment to their chosen subject area(s).
3. a considered self-awareness of the challenges of studying at HE certificate level both in DLL and in relevant cognate departments.

23. Additional information

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at www.shef.ac.uk/ssid