



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

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

Programme Details

1. Programme title	Education: Early Childhood
2. Programme code	EDCT011
3. QAA FHEQ level	7
4. Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences
5. Department	School of Education
6. Other departments providing credit bearing modules for the programme	Not applicable
7. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
8. Date of production/revision	May 2013, March 2017, November 2021, March 2026

Awards	Type of award	Duration
9. Final award	MA	1 year
10. Intermediate awards	PGDip	
	PGCert	

Programme Codes

11. JACS code(s) <i>Select between one and three codes from the HESA website.</i>	X300		
12. HECoS code(s) <i>Select between one and three codes from the HECoS vocabulary.</i>			

Programme Delivery

13. Mode of study	Full-time
14. Mode of delivery	Face-to-face

15. Background to the programme and subject area

The programme covers a broad range of issues, debates and practices relating to learning, pedagogy and curriculum in early childhood education (birth to eight years). Students have opportunities to critically reflect on how research, practice and policy intersect in shaping key issues related to early childhood education within international contexts.

During their study, students are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the School. The School of Education is internationally renowned for the excellence of its teaching and the high quality of its research.

Upon completion of their programme of study, candidates will have gained knowledge and skills relevant to careers in a variety of educational contexts related to early childhood education, e.g., teaching, educational policy and educational development roles. The programmes are appropriate both for those at the start of their careers and those at mid-career who wish to enhance their professional knowledge and competencies.

16. Programme aims

MA Education: Early Childhood aims to:

A1	develop students' critical understanding of research, theory, policy and practice within diverse international contexts for early childhood education.
A2	promote critical reflection and analysis of policy, pedagogy and curriculum for children from birth to eight years in global and national contexts.
A3	develop students' critical understanding of early learning and development from birth to eight years.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

		Links to Aim(s)
K1	Critical evaluation of theoretical perspectives of learning, teaching and pedagogy in early childhood education.	A1
K2	Critical analysis of policy and research in early childhood education.	A2
K3	Critical awareness of global and local issues in pedagogy, curriculum and assessment in the context of early childhood education.	A1-A2
K4	Critical awareness of the broad global contexts in which early childhood education is situated, linking education, family, and community perspectives.	A1-A2

K5	Critical understanding of professional and workforce issues in early childhood education.	A2
K6	Knowledge and understanding of research methodologies, methods and data analysis for educational enquiry, including ethical considerations.	A3
K7	Advanced knowledge and critical understanding of their chosen area of study through synthesising academic literature and their own research in the dissertation module.	A1-A3
Skills and other attributes		
On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:		
S1	Competent application of appropriate technologies to retrieve/evaluate/analyse information and carry out literature searches.	
S2	The skills required to review and critically appraise literature, synthesise research and practice and develop a coherent and sustained argument.	
S3	The skills required to critically analyse and reflect upon complex subject matter, issues or questions relating to early childhood education.	
S4	Effective written and oral communication skills to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, reflection and analysis to a range of audiences.	
S5	Advanced skills in carrying out a substantial independent study in a specific area of early childhood education, which involves research design, choosing appropriate methods, data analysis and writing a dissertation report.	

18. Learning and teaching methods

The programme's teaching is research-led. Research-led teaching is fostered through scholarly activity of staff, appropriate use of research in the relevant fields and the development of students' own research skills. Students are encouraged to develop as active and independent learners, and teaching and learning activities have been developed which are appropriate to these aims.

The following teaching and learning methods are used:

Lectures: to develop students' knowledge and understanding of key ideas, issues and debates relating to early childhood education; to provide opportunities for information-sharing, dialogue and critical reflection

Seminars (tutor- and student-led): to develop and apply subject knowledge and understanding, study skills and verbal communication through discussion and reflective activities relating to early childhood education.

Tutorials: to respond to students' enquiries; provide formative feedback on coursework; promote reflection and analysis through discussion and questioning.

Student presentations: Used to develop a range of key transferable skills. To develop other students' engagement with key information and subject-specific knowledge and understanding.

Independent study: The programme's online learning environment (Blackboard) comprises a bespoke range of learning materials which have been developed to facilitate and guide independent study. These materials include online reading materials, multimedia resources, links to the School of Education's study skills site. TUoS online library resources are a key learning resource, with key links embedded into the module Blackboard sites.

19. Assessment and feedback methods

All learning outcomes are assessed by a written assignment with the exception of Module 1 (EDU6356) which has both a written and oral presentation element. The independent study is assessed via a dissertation.

20. Programme structure and student development

Programme structure

There are four taught modules for the course, two of which are studied October to December, and two from January to March. From May onwards students work on their independent study, which is submitted in September. The four modules each involve ten two-hour sessions. The students can exit with a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma if they do not wish to complete the Masters' Programme. Students who pass all four taught modules progress to the masters' dissertation module.

Each module is assessed by a written assignment with the exception of Module 1 (EDU6356) which has both a written and oral presentation element. The independent study is assessed via a dissertation.

In addition to the taught modules a range of support which is non-assessed is offered, for example in academic study skills, avoiding unfair means and dissertation preparation. This takes place throughout the year, alongside all of the modules. The aim of the support is to ensure that all students are suitably supported throughout their period of study. The objective is to ensure that students achieve the skills necessary to write competently and reflectively and at Masters' level. It is intended that students will develop their research skills within an enquiry-based learning framework.

Student development

The Sheffield Masters graduate attributes are embedded throughout the programme. Specialist knowledge and skills relevant to the broad field of education and the more specific field of early childhood education are developed and assessed through modules 1-4 and the dissertation. The overarching framework of the full time Masters' is informed by a programme level approach in which each module is planned in relation to its contribution and connection to the whole programme. This enables students to develop breadth of skills and depth of knowledge as they progress through the programme.

The students' subject specific knowledge and understanding is developed in relation to the focus of each module and is supported through the overarching framework of the full time Masters' in Education. Students are supported in the development of skills, knowledge and understanding through reading and group work. The progression built into the programme with regard to the development of critical awareness, ability to synthesise research and write critically is reflected during the taught modules and is reinforced through the non-assessed postgraduate support available. The development of key skills runs throughout the programme and students are taught critical reading and writing skills, including literature reviews and are supported in the development of appropriate academic conventions. Critical selection, evaluation and engagement with academic literature is emphasised from the onset and developed through the programme. This culminates in the dissertation when students will work independently, supported by individual dissertation supervisors.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available online at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/>.

21. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to programmes is available from the University's On-Line Prospectus at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/courses/>.

Applicants for the MA in Early Childhood Education should have a good undergraduate degree in a related field. For students whose first language is not English, the School of Education requires an IELTS score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each component, or equivalent.

22. 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

School of Education Learning and Teaching Strategies

23. Additional information

None

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 <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid>.