| Middlesbrough College

| BA (Honours) Early Childhood Professional Studies

| Programme Specifications

April 2018

Programme Specification

(Notes on how to complete this template are provide in Annexe 2)

1. Overview/ factual information

Programme/award title(s)	B.A. (Honours) Early Years Professional Studies Top Up
Teaching Institution	Middlesbrough College
Awarding Institution	The Open University (OU)
Date of first OU validation	N.A.
Date of latest OU (re)validation	N.A.
Next revalidation	N.A.
Credit points for the award	120
UCAS Code	N.A.
Programme start date	September 2018
Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)	Early Childhood Studies (2014)
Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes	SEEC Credit Level Descriptors Framework for Higher Education Qualifications QAA Quality Code
Professional/statutory recognition	None
Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL, Mix of DL & Face-to-Face)	PT (FTE) Face-to Face
Duration of the programme for each mode of study	PT: 1 Year (40 weeks) FT: 1 Year (30 weeks)
Dual accreditation (if applicable)	N.A.
Date of production/revision of this specification	April 2018

> **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 student module guide(s) and the students handbook.**
>
> **The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.**

2.1 Educational aims and objectives

The overall aim of the programme is to:

- develop learners acquisition of knowledge and skills at degree level in the subject area of Early Childhood Professional Studies.

This can be achieved via the following objectives through which the programme will:

- develop students to become fully independent learners;

- develop detailed and critical knowledge and understanding required for working within the Early Childhood sector;

- enable the professional and practical skills required for working with children and families;

- promote awareness and analysis of inclusive practice;

- develop the ability to understand and apply the principles of research and evidence-based practice;

- enable an appropriate understanding of the theoretical, pedagogical and legislative framework of early years practice;

- develop students' ability to reflect on practice and become autonomous in managing their professional development;

- develop the personal and transferable skills critical to practitioners working with children and families.

2.2 Relationship to other programmes and awards

(Where the award is part of a hierarchy of awards/programmes, this section describes the articulation between them, opportunities for progression upon completion of the programme, and arrangements for bridging modules or induction)

Applicants will usually progress from a Foundation Degree in *Early Childhood Practice*. Applicants will also be eligible to apply if they have completed either a foundation degree, HND or diploma in a related subject. Relevant subjects delivered at Middlesbrough College include: *Social and Public Sector Studies*, *Working with Youth Childhood Community Studies* and *Health and Well-being*.

2.3 For Foundation Degrees, please list where the 60-credit work-related learning takes place

| N/A |

2.4 List of all exit awards
BA Early Childhood Professional Studies [60 Credits] BA (Honours) Early Childhood Professional Studies [120 Credits]

3. Programme structure and learning outcomes

Programme Structure - LEVEL 6					
Compulsory modules	**Credit points**	**Optional modules**	**Credit points**	**Is module compensatable?**	**Semester runs in**
Reflective Practice for Professional Development	20			Y	1
Historical Context of Children's Literature and its Impact in the 21st Century	20			Y	1
Leading and Managing in the Childhood Professions	20			Y	2
Assessing Children's Needs in the Multi-agency Environment	20			Y	2
Independent Research Project	40			N	Year Long W 1-30 FT W 1-40 PT

Intended learning outcomes at Level 6 are listed below:

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy / assessment methods**
A1: Critically review appropriate theories impacting upon early childhood.

A2: Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of how curriculum initiatives can enhance learning in early childhood. | **A1, A2**: These learning outcomes are addressed in three modules - *Reflective Practice for Professional Development*, *Historical Context of Children's Literature and its Impact in the 21st Century*, *Leading and Managing in the Childhood Professions* - through a combination of lectures, academic support tasks and seminar tasks. Formative and summative tasks assess learning and provide students with feedback which further supports the development of academic skills. A specific example includes using models of reflection to apply to situations or scenarios. |

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6

3A. Knowledge and understanding

A3: Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of child protection, safeguarding and SEN policies related to professional practice.	**A3, A4, A5, A6:** The modules *Assessing Children's needs in the Multi-agency Environment* and *Reflective Practice for Professional Development* underpin the importance of the core aspects of early childhood contained in these learning outcomes. Students are supported in their learning to link current appropriate legislation and practice in the context of identifying their professional needs. Students explore a range of scenarios and utilise reflective logs to capture, explore and reflect upon understanding their own - and others' - roles when working in partnerships.
A4: Demonstrate a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of children's physical, intellectual, emotional and social needs within Early Childhood.	
A5: Analyse and evaluate professional practice related to various sector areas in Early Childhood Professional Studies.	
A6: Critically appraise the benefits of working together in partnerships and multiagency practices with in the Early Childhood sector.	

3B. Cognitive skills

Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
B1: Synthesise, appraise and evaluate data to justify conclusions when reflecting on professional practice.	**B1:** The module *Independent Research Project* allow students to propose solutions to issues based on the examination of data/evidence. The module *Reflective Practice for Professional Development* allows students to use sound evidence and data upon which to base their future development.
B2: Confidently identify and define pedagogical strategies and learning and teaching initiatives within early childhood.	
B3: Demonstrate intellectual flexibility in appraising children's learning experiences and child protection incidents.	**B2 - B5**: These learning outcomes are achieved primarily in the modules *Assessing Children's Needs in the Multi-agency Environment, Reflective Practice for Professional Development* and *Independent Research*

3B. Cognitive skills	
B4: Analyse and appraise how children's holistic development can be enhanced. **B5:** Synthesise, appraise and evaluate how learning, resources and self-evaluation can be integrated with practice.	*Project*. These skills developed in these modules link student's self-awareness skills to core aspects of Early Childhood Professional Studies. This activity is facilitated through the use of reflective logs in which students synthesise, appraise and evaluate the ways in which learning, resources and self-evaluation can be integrated with practice.

3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
C1: Operate ethically within the research process using appropriate ethical and legal frameworks. **C2:** Adopt pedagogical skills to enhance learning and inform professional practice. **C3:** Act with increasing autonomy to ethically respond to the needs of children and families. **C4:** Operate ethically and enable the multidisciplinary team to contribute to best practice by acknowledging diversity. **C5:** Act with increasing autonomy to identify professional and practical skills that can be improved and professional development needs.	**C1 - C5:** These learning outcomes underpin all programme modules. Formative and summative tasks asses learning and provide students with feedback which further supports the development of academic skills. A specific example is the use of scenario-based case studies and video links to reflect on children's needs and partnership working. A further example is in the module *Leading and Managing in the Childhood Professions* during which formal lectures address leadership and management theory, leading to summative assessment involving undertaking a change management log and action plan.

3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
D1: Reflect and critique own knowledge and understanding of learning in respect of early childhood. **D2**: Communicate clearly, fluently and effectively in a range of styles appropriate to the context. **D3:** Demonstrate both employment potential and ability to manage future professional development. **D4:** Engage effectively in academic discussion and present arguments in a professional manner.	**D1 - D4**: Key Transferable and academic skills development are embedded throughout the programme. Students are supported through tutorials and seminars as well as provided with developmental feedback on summative work. A range of assessment opportunities allow students the opportunity to address many varied academic and professional skills, including both written and spoken assignments. This activity includes, for example om the module *Leading and Managing in the Childhood Professions*, students undertaking professional discussions with a range of stakeholders. The college provides students with a range of support opportunities delivered via the VLE in addition to support a programme and module levels.

[Please insert here title of exit awards(s) at Level 6]

BA Early Childhood Professional Studies [60 Credits]

BA (Honours) Early Childhood Professional Studies [120 Credits]

- **Where applicable, this section provides details on distinctive featurs such as:**

- **where in the structure above a professional/placement year fits in and how it may affect progression**

- **any restrictions regarding the availability of elective modules where in the programme structure students must make a choice of pathway/route**

4.1 Full and Part Time Delivery

The BA (Hons) Early Childhood Professional Studies provides students with a wide-ranging learning experience that links to core topics, underpinning knowledge and areas of best practice in the sector. Part-time students can opt to study the course over a 2-year period utilising an extended academic year. In response to local market demand, the College offers part-time modes of delivery for some of its programmes that enable students to complete their studies in a 40-week period. The key features of the part-time mode are:

- Each stage of the programmes starts in September and concludes at the end of July.
- This allows an additional 10 weeks of delivery per academic year when compared to the full-time mode.
- The additional 10-week window is to allow an extended period of time for part-time students to complete the project or work-based element of the programme.
- All part-time students receive formal scheduled teaching sessions (FST) each week that cover all of the taught elements of the programme of study.
- Academic Support (AS) sessions for part-time students are supported via the VLE for a proportion of their learning. The approach to managing this is as follows:

  - each programme of study is allocated hours for FST and AS;
  - AS hours for part-time students are delivered via the VLE;
  - students are allocated tasks and activities designed to build on the content delivered in FST sessions;
  - part-time students are expected to complete these tasks away from the College;
  - a window for completion of the tasks is set to allow students time to refer to tutors/peers as required with a specified response time allocated;
  - staff are allocated a time in the week (usually an evening) when they will be available to respond to posted requests for help as well as engage in on-line discussions.

Support for Part-Time Students
To ensure that all part-time students can engage with the delivery model, the following support will be made available:

- Initial support and guidance during induction to ensure that part-time students are able to log-on to the VLE and understand the relevant aspects required to support their engagement in remote AS sessions.

- Information - both on the VLE and in the part-time Student Handbook - to guide students through the process of log-on and use of the various sections.
- Lap-top loans for students that encounter technical difficulties or do not have access to a computer at home.
- Technical help to support students when not at the College.

Help for Staff supporting Part-Time Students
Staff are supported in working with part-time students as follows:

- Staff are allocated time during teaching weeks to manage AS sessions.
- Staff development is provided to ensure staff make best use of the VLE for the delivery of AS sessions.
- Mentor support from the Associate Director HE (Learning and Teaching) is ongoing.

4.2 Employability
The programme enhances the employability potential of the students in a variety of different settings and features innovative assessment strategies that produce confident, critical and adaptable graduates. This programme offers students a wide range of learning opportunities which provide the opportunity to diversify skills to meet the needs of the current climate. A key feature is the opportunity at Level 6 to engage in modules which develop the students in both specialist areas such as learning needs, multiagency working and literature but to develop the transferable skills to enable employability in multiple related job sector based around Early Childhood Professional Studies such as education, childcare, care, health and social care. The programme also prepares students specialist Level 7 programmes, for example MA Education or teaching pathways.

5. Support for students and their learning

5.1 Induction
The following activities are provided in Induction Week:

- Students are given the opportunity to attend a taster session for Level 6 modules to give them a feel for the course and to provide an insight into dissertation modules.

- Alumni speak to new students about their experience of the programme and specifically address what student's skills development and focus for their project linked to career goals.

- Current students are invited to meet and greet new students.

- A representative from the Student Union helps to elect Student Representatives.

5.2 Attendance Support

Attendance is monitored closely to ensure that all students are getting the best from the programme. Should a student need to miss a session for any reason, they are required to email the lecturer beforehand. Where a lecturer notes that a student is absent with no prior warning, the student is emailed at the end of the session, asking if the student is well and reminding the student that they are required to let lecturers know if they cannot attend.

Where student misses three consecutive sessions, the Year Tutor also contacts the student with an invitation to attend a formal meeting. Where attendance problems persist, the Year Tutor works with the college Student Support Staff who, where necessary, direct students to the relevant confidential support (personal, financial, etc.). Where students are facing difficulties, it is vital to ensure they get the right support and where necessary, decide to withdraw or suspend as the timing of any withdrawal/suspension can affect their Student Loan.

5.3 Tutorial Support

Student tutorial opportunities are embedded in all modules. The independent project module provides students with frequent tutorials and a high level of contact with the dissertation supervisor (approximately 30 minutes fortnightly). Formative and summative feedback tutorials sessions are also designed into each module and feedback tutorial sessions are listed in Module Handbooks. Tutorial support is also provided by the Year tutor on a regular basis.

5.4 Encouraging Completion

One of the significant advantages offered by the programme is the amount of time students spend with tutors. This advantage is due to the relatively small number of students and a mode of delivery that includes a significant amount of facilitation. There are, therefore, plenty of opportunities to encourage students to meet assignment deadlines. With respect to assessment, the mantra of 'little and often' is repeated from Induction Week onwards from staff in both formative and written, summative feedback. Another oft-repeated comment is that students must let lecturers know as soon as possible if a deadline may be missed so that, where appropriate, a deadline *Extension* form can be completed (where such an extension is warranted.)

5.5 Summer Reassessment Period

Tutorials are provided for students offered reassessment and the facilities remain available.

5.6 Pastoral Support

The amount of *ad hoc* pastoral support noted above is greatly valued by the students. More challenging are students who don't attend as is the effect of non-attendance upon their performance. In recent years, the number of students declaring Asperger's or dyslexia has increased slightly. The Programme Team have all attended Staff Development sessions relating to both conditions - attendance at many of these sessions is mandatory. For students with dyslexia, staff utilise advice that encourages the student independent skills to manage their learning such as signposting to IT software that enables the students to access notes suited to their preferences and to

use background colours or overlays on work. Additional devices such as voice software is also encouraged if their use is declared, and confidentiality is maintained. Students declaring either condition receive a formal assessment after which the Programme Team are advised on the steps they must take.

5.7 Academic Support
The delivery of many modules is based upon individual sessions that consist of two parts – a lecture (which is built around formal teaching) followed by academic support tasks which allow the student to further develop knowledge of subjects outlined in the first part of the session. This delivery strategy ensures that theory is always applied, and that knowledge and understanding are regularly checked and that formative feedback is continuous rather than focussed at specific points in academic year.

In addition to in-session help, students can also make appointments (via email) to get support from:

- Members of the Programme Team - Module leaders, lecturers and instructor/demonstrators.

- The Programme Leader & Year Tutors

The personal tutoring system is in place to support students' full engagement with their programme of study and to help students gain as much as possible from their time at the College. Though the emphasis is on academic support, tutorials are also an opportunity to raise pastoral issues which may be having an impact on a student's academic performance. Tutors can offer support and advice and, if required, direct students to further support services available within the College. In the final year students are encouraged to arrange tutorials as and when required.

5.8 Programme Documentation and Online Learning Support
Students are provided with Programme and Module Handbooks that contain comprehensive information on how their degrees and modules are structured and delivered. These documents are available to students throughout each academic year (and for the duration of their registration) via a web-based Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). This VLE includes lecture notes and a range of video materials are included based on formal taught content. Students use Canvas (VLE) to submit assignments.

5.9 Support for Part Time Students
Part-time students will receive blended learning support via the College VLE which will enable them to keep pace with the standard module delivery pattern experienced by the full-time students. In addition, the academic year for part-time students will be extended by 10 weeks to provide additional time to complete the *Independent Research Project*.

6. Criteria for admission

Most applicants will progress from the College's FD Youth, Childhood and Community

Studies programme. Applicants will also be eligible to apply if they have completed either a foundation degree, HND or diploma in a related subject. All applicants need to demonstrate, through interview, that they have a strong vocational interest in developing their career in the youth and community sector.

At the point of enrolment at Middlesbrough College, students are required to declare whether they have ever received, or have pending, a criminal conviction, caution, reprimand, final warning or prosecution. Middlesbrough College has a legal and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults. Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily prevent a student from studying this programme as this will depend upon the background of the offence. Procedures are in place to support any student making a declaration of a criminal offence and provide appropriate guidance.

Non-standard entrants are interviewed to assess their ability to complete the course. This activity entails a review of any professional experience and training gained in the work place to ensure that this adequately prepares them to cope with the academic level of study.

Finally, all applicants must also have English and Maths at GCSE Grade C or equivalent and have completed a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check.

---

7. Language of study

English.

---

8. Information about non-OU standard assessment regulations (including PSRB requirements)

N.A.

---

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

9.1 College HE Teaching and Learning

The College has recognised the importance of having a distinct approach to HE learning and teaching for over ten years. The first HE specific Learning and Teaching process was introduced in 2009. Subsequent reviews and updates in 2011, 2014, have enhanced the process to reflect the aims of the UK Professional Standards Framework and prepared the College to meet the expectations of the Teaching Excellence Framework.

Many of the innovations established in the evolution of this process have been subsumed into the current Cross-College Learning and Teaching model for all levels, including a non-graded observation process. The underlying principle throughout, has been around placing the student at the centre of the process to ensure that their learning and attainment of Learning Outcomes drives the process. Underpinning this has been a focus on ensuring that lecturing staff are fully engaged in the process to match outcomes to professional discussion and peer review.

As the College moves into 2018, the approach is being further refined to form part of the Departmental Review process which is being applied across the College. The distinct nature of HE provision however, is still reflected in the approach. A mark of the success of the approaches taken to date are reflected in the award of the GOLD standard in the recent Year 2 Teaching and Excellence Framework.

Teaching across the HE provision is innovative and further encourages teaching staff to work in partnership with students to ensure all learning needs are addressed. Teaching is delivered using a range of lectures, tutorials, seminars and academic support tasks which provide opportunities for students to further embed their learning independently. Academic support tasks develop independence and confidence in learners, but with the reassurance that staff support is available. This also provides ongoing opportunities for formative feedback throughout the year.

The HE model of delivery also provides an opportunity for staff to engage in research activity and professional development, and other tasks which align with the role of Higher Education Lecturer.

9.2 Observation of Teaching and Learning (OTL)
The OTL process for HE provision has been contextualised to reflect the differences between HE and FE. The OTL process for FE courses is based upon the expectations of the Common Inspection Framework, whereas the HE model, is aligned to the expectations of the UKPSF and the TEF. Central to the process is the student as an independent learner, developing their academic skills as they progress through their academic career.

The model distinguishes between different levels of study and differing abilities of the students. At Level 4, teaching staff take a lead role in the student learning process, but as students progress, the balance gradually evolves to involve students as leaders/co-leaders of learning. To facilitate this model, student learning and reflection may not take place at the same time as content delivery, making it difficult for an observer to see the product of the model. To work around this, the OTL process for HE lessons is based on mapping the observation of the session to the scheme of work and planned assessment tasks.

The outcome of the OTL forms the basis of a professional discussion with a Teaching and Learning mentor as well as with members of the HE teaching team, to ensure that good practice is shared across the College. Any trends identified from OTL reports or staff feedback are used to inform relevant CPD activity. The current policy and procedure is nearing the end of a recent review and redevelopment ready for a September 2019 launch.

9.3 Feedback from Students
Another input to the process of evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning is feedback from students. Feedback emerges through several routes. The most significant is through the Module Evaluation Questionnaires. In addition to five-point Likert scale questions, students are asked to state 'what worked and what could be improved' regarding any aspect of the module. The results and comments from the Module Evaluation Questionnaires feed into Module Reports. Student feedback is also collected from induction surveys, the Student Reps, the NSS and in tutorials, which are regularly included in the structuring of modules, but also available at any point by request of a student.

9.4 Staff Workforce Development
Improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning is also a focus of the internal and external Workforce Development (WFD) sessions. Academic staff attend a range of internal and external staff development events aimed at improving teaching and learning.

9.5 Staff New to HE
All staff new to teaching HE at the College are required to hold a relevant degree and a PgCE as part of the terms of their employment. A higher degree is desirable for all staff and for those teaching Level 6, holding a relevant level 7 qualification or the commitment to study for one is essential. Staff new to teaching HE at the College receive initial tailored CPD to help them to make the transition.

9.6 Staff New to Delivering at Level 6
New staff employed for the delivery of Level 6 awards are required to hold a relevant level 7 qualification. Those staff already teaching at the College making the transition to level 6 delivery are provided with funding and support to complete a level 7 qualification at the earliest opportunity.

Programme teams new to Level 6 awards, are provided with advice and guidance from the Higher Education Office (HEO) during the programme development phase to ensure that the teams have an understanding of the difference in expectations at level 6. As well as general information, which is also available via the VLE, teams are required to submit draft submissions for feedback. A process of meetings and regular reviews of the design and content of the new awards ensures that awards are aligned to the FHEQ and expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. In programme teams where there is no prior expertise amongst the team of delivering at level 6, mentor support is provided by the HEO and experienced staff throughout the first year of delivery.

9.7 Ongoing Subject and Pedagogic Development

All HE teams share resources and good practice via the HE Staff Zone located in the HEO. The area is set up to encourage HE staff from across the College to meet, both formally and informally, to share good practice and discuss ideas and approaches to module and programme design and delivery. All teaching staff are supported by more experienced members of the team who act as mentors. In addition, the Cross-College learning and teaching mentors, made up of advanced practitioners, provide 1:1 support to teams as well as tailored CPD sessions. The College is adding a new post for the start of 2018, to further support the HE team as the College develops a range of new programmes and increases the number of Level 6 awards it offers. The College has a HE Research and Scholarly Activity procedure which encourages and supports staff to maintain and annually update both pedagogical and subject expertise.

10. Changes made to the programme since last (re)validation

N.A.

Annexe One: Curriculum map

Annexe Two: Notes on completing the OU programme specification template

Annexe One - Curriculum map

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✓) particular programme learning outcomes.

Level	Study module/unit	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2	D3	D4
6	Reflective Practice for Professional Development			✓	✓	✓	✓					✓					✓			✓	
	Leading and Managing in the Childhood Professions	✓	✓									✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
	Historical context of Children's Literature and its Impact in the 21st Century	✓	✓						✓					✓			✓				
	Assessing Children's Needs in the Multi-agency Environment			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
	Independent Research Project					✓		✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓

Annexe Two: Notes on completing programme specification templates

1 **-** This programme specification should be mapped against the learning outcomes detailed in module specifications.

2 – The expectations regarding student achievement and attributes described by the learning outcome in section 3 must be appropriate to the level of the award within the **QAA frameworks for HE qualifications**: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Pages/default.aspx

3 – Learning outcomes must also reflect the detailed statements of graduate attributes set out in **QAA subject benchmark statements** that are relevant to the programme/award: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx

4 – In section 3, the learning and teaching methods deployed should enable the achievement of the full range of intended learning outcomes. Similarly, the choice of assessment methods in section 3 should enable students to demonstrate the achievement of related learning outcomes. Overall, assessment should cover the full range of learning outcomes.

5 - Where the programme contains validated **exit awards** (e.g. CertHE, DipHE, PGDip), learning outcomes must be clearly specified for each award.

6 - For programmes with distinctive study **routes or pathways** the specific rationale and learning outcomes for each route must be provided.

7 – Validated programmes delivered in **languages other then English** must have programme specifications both in English and the language of delivery.