

## | Middlesbrough College

| Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Practice

| Programme Specifications

January 2024



## Programme specification

*(Notes on how to complete this template are provided in Annexe 3)*

### 1. Overview / factual information

<b>Programme/award title(s)</b>	Foundation Degree in Early Years Practice
<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Middlesbrough College
<b>Awarding Institution</b>	The Open University (OU)
<b>Date of first OU validation</b>	September 2018
<b>Date of latest OU (re)validation</b>	January 2024
<b>Next revalidation</b>	2028/2029
<b>Credit points for the award</b>	240
<b>UCAS Code</b>	A161
<b>HECoS Code</b>	100457
<b>LDCS Code (FE Colleges)</b>	
<b>Programme start date and cycle of starts if appropriate.</b>	September 2018
<b>Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)</b>	Early Childhood Studies (2022) Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement
<b>Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes. For apprenticeships, the standard or framework against which it will be delivered.</b>	SEEC Credit Level Descriptors Framework for Higher Education Qualifications QAA Quality Code
<b>Professional/statutory recognition</b>	None
<b>For apprenticeships fully or partially integrated Assessment.</b>	
<b>Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL, Mix of DL &amp; Face-to-Face) Apprenticeship</b>	PT Face-to Face including work-based learning, extended by 10 weeks with blended learning. (40 weeks)  FT Face-to Face including work-based learning. (30 weeks)
<b>Duration of the programme for each mode of study</b>	PT: 2 years (40 weeks) FT: 2 years (30 weeks)
<b>Dual accreditation (if applicable)</b>	N.A.

<b>Date of production/revision of this specification</b>	December 2023
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**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. Programme overview**

<b>2.1 Educational aims and objectives</b>
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The overall aim of the programme is:

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

The objectives are to:

- develop students to become independent learners;
- develop detailed 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 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 develop their skills in managing professional development;
- develop the personal and transferable skills critical to practitioners working with children and families;

- provide full and part-time study routes to support the individual needs of the students and the organisation for which they work. It is recognised that part time study may support organisations in enabling students to be available to attend formal teaching sessions.

## 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 Level 3 qualifications or equivalent in childcare (48 UCAS Tariff Points) and have experience including a current job/placement within the sector. On completion of the foundation degree in Early Childhood Practice students have the opportunity to progress a BA Honours Degree in Early Childhood Professional Studies top up award which is being developed by the Programme Team concurrently with this programme.

## 2.3 For Foundation Degrees, please list where the 60 credit work-related learning takes place. For apprenticeships an articulation of how the work based learning and academic content are organised with the award.

Students who are not currently in employment in the Early Years/ Education sector are required to arrange a work placement and complete 150 hours (e.g., 1 day throughout the academic year) which is a compulsory part of the program. Students will need to organise the placement themselves, but support will also be given if any issues arise. Placements are vetted according to college policy and procedures to ensure the suitability and safety for the students.

Students at Level 4 are prepared for placements during the theory component of the 40-credit work-based learning module; Continuous Professional Development (CPD). While Level 5 students build upon the skills they have learnt. In the CPD module at both level 4 and level 5, an e-Portfolio is developed to reflect on relevant aspects of early childhood practice and professional development within the sector.

Students are supported in practice by a Mentor and an Academic Tutor. The Mentor can either be a nominated member of staff from the practice setting who is an experienced practitioner; or a mentor employed by the University, who is also in practice within the education sector. The Mentor's role is to support the student during their work-based practice and act as a critical friend.

All Mentors sign to confirm that:

1. Any written work the student has completed is relevant to the practice setting.
2. The student has completed the required practice hours.

3. The student has behaved in a manner that demonstrates safe and effective practice relevant to their role.

The Mentor and student are also supported by the Academic Tutor, who will visit the student and Practice Mentor if this is required at any point during the programme to discuss the student's progress. The Academic Tutor and Placement Mentor are available for support via telephone or email at any point in the programme, particularly where the Mentor or student has concerns e.g., regarding the student's practice or the Practice Placement.

The Mentor is provided with a Mentor Handbook detailing their role and responsibilities. The Mentor Handbook also includes details of the programme and the student's learning requirements, including assessments and dates for formative meetings in practice. Practice Mentor workshops are offered biannually to provide training and introduce them to the requirements of the e-portfolios. The workshops are also an opportunity for dialogue, sharing of good practice, and problem-solving between Mentors from different practice settings. The first workshop is offered in the autumn term once students have been allocated to a placement and Practice Mentors have been identified. The aim of the meeting is to inform the Mentor of the expectations the university has of the students and defining their role. The second workshop, taking place in early Spring Term, has a 'focus on finishing' and details of payment. Emphasis is to ensure students are on track to complete the statutory element of their work – based learning, linking theory to practice within their electronic portfolio.

The full-time route for the programme is delivered over 30 weeks and the CPDP modules are delivered over the full academic year. This time frame supports students who are not employed in the sector, providing a longer period in which to secure a suitable placement opportunity and to achieve the required learning. The part-time study route CPDP is delivered over weeks 1- 40.

#### 2.4 List of all exit awards

Cert. HE Early Childhood Practice [120 Credits]  
Foundation Degree Early Childhood Practice [240 Credits]

### 3. Programme structure and learning outcomes

*(The structure for any part-time delivery should be presented separately in this section.)*

<b>Programme Structure - LEVEL 4</b>					
<b>Compulsory modules</b>	<b>Credit points</b>	<b>Optional modules</b>	<b>Credit points</b>	<b>Is module compensatable?</b>	<b>Semester runs in</b>
Higher Education Study Skills	20			Y	Weeks 1-10
Supporting Children's Development	20			Y	Weeks 1-10
Learning within Early Childhood	20			Y	Weeks 11-20
Policy and Practice in the Early Years	20			Y	Weeks 21-30
Continuous Professional Development (CPD)	40			N	Year Long Weeks 1-30 FT Weeks 1-40 PT

Intended learning outcomes at Level 4 are listed below:

<b><u>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 4</u></b>	
<b>3A. Knowledge and understanding</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<b>A1:</b> Describe and explain theoretical perspectives of child development.	<b>A1:</b> Student learning is facilitated through a blend of tutor and student-led activities, supported by discussion, journal presentations, Q&A, individual and group research activities as well as feedback on formative work so that students are in a position to individually explain relevant perspectives of child development. This learning outcome will be formally addressed in three modules Supporting Children’s Development, Learning within Early Childhood and the Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD) although students will have the opportunity to explore key perspectives informally in the remaining Level 4 modules to build up a wider picture.
<b>A2:</b> Describe and explain key concepts associated with learning in early childhood	<b>A2:</b> Student learning is facilitated through a blend of tutor and student-led activities, supported by discussion, journal presentations, Q&A, individual and group research activities as well as feedback on formative work so that students are in a position to describe relevant key concepts associated with learning in Early childhood and explain how they support learning. This learning outcome is addressed formally in two modules <i>Learning within Early Childhood</i> and the <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> although students will have the opportunity to explore further key perspectives informally in the remaining Level 4 modules to build up a wider picture.
<b>A3:</b> Describe and explain how current policies enhance the lives of children within the early years.	<b>A3:</b> Student learning is facilitated through a blend of tutor and student-led activities, supported by discussion, journal presentations, Q&A, individual and group research activities as well as feedback on formative work so that students are in a position to individually describe a range of effective working policies applicable to early childhood. Relevant policies

<b><u>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 4</u></b>	
<b>3A. Knowledge and understanding</b>	
	will be explored in the modules <i>Policy and Practice in the Early Years</i> and the <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> .
<b>A4:</b> Describe and explain the relationship between different pedagogical approaches within an early years setting.	<b>A4:</b> Student learning will be facilitated through a through a combination of tutor led lectures, academic support tasks, group discussion tasks and through work-based learning where students will be able to apply theory to practice. This learning outcome will be formally assessed in the modules <i>Learning within Early Childhood and Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> although students will have the opportunity to explore relevant pedagogical approaches informally in the remaining Level 4 modules to build up a wider picture.
<b>A5:</b> Describe, explain and utilise key underpinning concepts that enhance practice and support child development	<b>A5:</b> Student learning will be facilitated through a through a combination of tutor led lectures, academic support tasks, group discussion tasks and through work-based learning where students will be able to apply theory to practice. This learning outcome will be formally assessed in the Module <i>Higher Education Study Skills and Supporting Children’s Development</i> .



<b>3B. Cognitive skills</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<b>B1:</b> Identify meaningful patterns in play, behaviour, and experience.	<b>B1:</b> While there is a large element of teacher centred/led activity, the aim of each session is to blend in student led/centred activity so learners can develop their understanding of key aspect of learning within early childhood and see how they apply in the practice setting. This learning outcome is particularly relevant to the modules <i>Supporting Children's Development, Learning within Early Childhood</i> and <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> .
<b>B2:</b> Identify information about assessing learning in early years	<b>B2:</b> While there is a large element of teacher centred/led activity, the aim of each session is to blend in student led/centred activity so learners can develop their understanding of the role of assessment within early childhood education and have opportunities to explore how it applies in the practice setting. This learning outcome is relevant to the modules <i>Supporting Children's Development and Learning within Early Childhood</i> .
<b>B3:</b> Recognise how policies influence the way we work with children and families.	<b>B3:</b> While there is a large element of teacher centred/led activity, with some tutor led lectures and discussions the aim of each session is to blend in student led/centred activity so learners have the chance to explore relevant policies and develop understanding of the role of them in supporting practice within early childhood as well as having opportunities to explore how they apply in the practice setting. This learning outcome is relevant to the modules <i>Policy and Practice in the Early Years</i> and <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> .

<b>3B. Cognitive skills</b>	
<b>B4:</b> Recognise how different pedagogical strategies influence education in early years.	<b>B4:</b> Tutor led lectures and student led seminars will encourage students to develop an understanding of and reflect on pedagogical approaches that have influenced various curriculum initiatives. This learning outcome is embedded formally within the modules <i>Learning Within Early Childhood and Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i>
<b>B5:</b> Gather, record and justify data or information from a range of sources to demonstrate best available evidence	<b>B5:</b> Student learning will be facilitated through a through a combination of tutor led lectures, academic support tasks, group discussion tasks giving the students opportunities to explore best available evidence to support children’s learning and development. This learning outcome will be formally assessed in the modules <i>Higher Education Study Skills and Policy and Practice in the Early Years.</i>
<b>3C. Practical and professional skills</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<b>C1:</b> Communicate the key factors influencing child development.	<b>C1:</b> This outcome underpins all Level 4 modules. Sessions and tutorials are designed to assist students in identifying key factors influencing child development and to allow them to communicate their findings in both formative and summative assignments. Students will have opportunities to present their work in a range of ways including orally through presentations or student led discussions and written through academic blogs, and essay style assessments.
<b>C2:</b> Apply ethical concepts to the needs of children and families.	<b>C2:</b> Sessions and tutorials are designed to assist students in developing their awareness of relevant ethical concepts so that they can operate ethically when supporting the needs of children and families. This learning outcome is relevant to the modules <i>Policy and Practice in the Early Years</i> and the <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> .

<b>3C. Practical and professional skills</b>	
<b>C3:</b> Recognise the needs of the multi-disciplinary team.	<b>C3:</b> Sessions and tutorials are designed to assist students to be able to consider the ways in which they are part of a multi-disciplinary team supporting the needs of children. Opportunities within formative and summative assessment and 1:1 sessions and tutorials will help students identify key components of multi-disciplinary working and reflect on their practice.
<b>C4:</b> Identify professional and practical skills that could be improved.	<b>C4:</b> Students through formative, summative assessment, 1:1 sessions and tutorials will have opportunities to identify the skills they have and consider professional and practical ones they feel they will need to develop to enhance their practice. This learning outcome is formally assessed in the modules <i>Higher Education Study Skills and Continuous Professional Portfolio (CPD)</i>
<b>3D. Key/transferable skills</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<b>D1:</b> Identify how policies influence professional practice.	Key transferable and academic skills development are embedded throughout the programme.  <b>D1:</b> This learning outcome is relevant to the modules <i>Policy and Practice in the Early Years and Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> . Students in tutor and peer led sessions will have opportunities to explore relevant policies and identify how they have influenced practice either nationally, locally or within the practice setting. Feedback within formative and summative tasks will allow students to identify transferable knowledge and skills.

<b>3D. Key/transferable skills</b>	
<b>D2:</b> When communicating use a range of sources.	<b>D2:</b> Students will have opportunities to access a range of relevant sources of information to support learning and their work through formative tutor and student led sessions. This can be seen in modules such as <i>Learning Within Early Childhood and the Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> . The portfolio has a specific HE academic skills component to support student's ability to use a range of sources.
<b>D3:</b> Recognise the need to assess one's own skills and reflect on them for future learning.	<b>D3:</b> Students are supported through lectures, tutorials and seminars to explore appropriate models of reflection as well as developmental feedback on summative work. A range of assessment opportunities allow students the opportunity to reflect on their own skills and identify those that they could develop. These skills are formally assessed in the Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)
<b>D4:</b> Use appropriate IT skills and demonstrate the ability to access and use a range of learning strategies.	<b>D4:</b> Tuition assisting and guiding students in how to adapt appropriate IT skills for a given purpose is embedded in all modules but formally in the <i>Supporting Children's Development and Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> . Formative assessments and class work allow students to receive feedback on the skills they are developing. In addition, tutorials will also assist in identifying any further development learners may require. The college also provides students with a range of support opportunities delivered via the VLE in addition to support at the programme and module levels.

**[Please insert here title(s) of exit award(s) at Level 4, if applicable]**

Cert. HE Early Childhood Practice [120 Credits]

<b>Programme Structure - LEVEL 5</b>					
<b>Compulsory modules</b>	<b>Credit points</b>	<b>Optional modules</b>	<b>Credit points</b>	<b>Is module compensatable?</b>	<b>Semester runs in</b>
International Perspectives in Early Years	20			Y	Weeks 1-10
Working Together to Protect Children	20			Y	Weeks 11-20
Research Inquiry in the Early Years	20			Y	Weeks 21-30
Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (WBL)	60			N	Year Long Weeks 1-30 FT Weeks 1-40 PT

Intended learning outcomes at Level 5 are listed below:

<b>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 5</b>	
<b>3A. Knowledge and understanding</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<b>A1:</b> Apply an understanding of appropriate theories or concepts impacting upon early years.	<b>A1:</b> Student learning is facilitated through a blend of tutor and student-led activities, supported by discussion, journal article reviews, Q&A, individual and group research activities as well as feedback on formative pieces of work. This activity ensures that students are in a position to individually explore in detail relevant theories and concepts. This learning outcome is found in the modules <i>International Perspectives in Early Years</i> and <i>Research Inquiry in the Early Years</i>

<b><u>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 5</u></b>	
<b>3A. Knowledge and understanding</b>	
<b>A2:</b> Recognise areas of policy and practice that enhance the lives of young children.	<b>A2:</b> The modules <i>Research Inquiry in the Early Years and Working Together to Protect Children</i> underpin the importance of the core aspects of early childhood represented in this learning outcome and students are supported in their learning to explore ways in which policy and practice can enhance the lives of young children. This will be facilitated through a blend of tutor and student-led activities, supported by discussion, journal article reviews, Q&A, individual and group research activities as well as feedback on formative pieces of work .
<b>A3</b> Apply an understanding of how children’s holistic needs are met within early childhood.	<b>A3:</b> This learning outcome is embedded in the modules <i>Interntional Perspectives and Continuous Professional Development Portfolio(CPD)</i> where students are given the opportunity to explore how children’s holistic needs can be met using a variety of perspectives and to identify best practice. Learning will be facilitated through a blend of tutor and student-led activities, supported by discussion, journal article reviews, Q&A, individual and group research activities as well as feedback on formative pieces of work.
<b>A4:</b> Recognise relevant areas of early years professional practice from a variety of settings.	<b>A4:</b> This learning outcome is embedded in the modules <i>Interntional Perspectives, Working Together to Protect Children and Continuous Professional Development Portfolio(CPD)</i> and supports students to identify key areas of professional practice. Learning will be facilitated through a blend of tutor and student-led activities, supported by discussion, journal article reviews, Q&A, individual and group research activities as well as feedback on formative pieces of work.

<b><u>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 5</u></b>	
<b>3A. Knowledge and understanding</b>	
<b>A5:</b> Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the benefits of partnership and multi-agency working within the early years.	<b>A5:</b> This learning outcome is embedded in the modules <i>Working Together to Protect Children</i> and <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> and it allows students to explore links to other partners and to understand their own - and others' - roles when working in partnerships. Learning will be facilitated through a blend of tutor and student-led activities, supported by discussion, opportunities to critique recent and contemporary government safeguarding policy by applying an understanding of the historical events and social processes that shape policy and early years' practice, journal article reviews, Q&A, individual and group research activities as well as feedback on formative pieces of work.
<b>3B. Cognitive skills</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<b>B1:</b> Synthesise information to justify conclusions in reflecting on professional practice.	<b>B1:</b> The modules <i>Research Inquiry in Early Years</i> , <i>Working Together to Protect Children</i> and <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> have been designed to provide opportunities for students to research, collect and synthesise information to justify conclusions linked to professional practice. They will be supported through discussion, case study analysis, journal presentations, Q&A, individual and group research activities as well as feedback on formative pieces of work.

<b>3B. Cognitive skills</b>	
<p><b>B2:</b> Employ balanced, logical and supported argument in analysing pedagogical strategies or learning and teaching initiatives within early years.</p>	<p><b>B2:</b> This learning outcome is embedded in the modules <i>International Perspectives in Early Years</i> and <i>Research Inquiry in the Early Years</i>. Discussion, seminars, and tutorials aim to support students in investigating a range of initiatives and perspectives. While lectures aim to elicit key theoretical ideas in early years which support students in evidencing their assertions on the role of learning, assessment, observation, and planning.</p>
<p><b>B3:</b> Analyse the ways in which children’s holistic development can be enhanced.</p>	<p><b>B3:</b> This learning outcome is embedded in the <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> module. Lectures and seminars will encourage students to explore key areas of holistic development and to consider their effectiveness and how they could be integrated into practice or developed further. Formative work will encourage students to reflect on relevant holistic approaches and explore relevant critiques.</p>
<p><b>B4:</b> Analyse the ways in which learning, resources and self-evaluation can be integrated within practice.</p>	<p><b>B4:</b> This learning outcome is embedded throughout the <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i>. Students will be encouraged to use reflection as a tool to affirm the ways in which a range of perspectives are utilised and established in early years today. Through in-session peer support, student will be encouraged to share ideas, apply their practice, and make comparisons to past ideas and present innovations under the appropriate educational frameworks.</p>



<b>3C. Practical and professional skills</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<b>C1:</b> Demonstrate a critical understanding of the links between ideologies, culture and practice within early childhood.	<b>C1:</b> This learning outcome is found in the modules <i>International Perspectives in Early Years and Research Inquiry in Early Years</i> . Learning will be facilitated through a blend of tutor and student-led activities, supported by discussion, journal article reviews, Q&A, individual and group research activities as well as feedback on formative pieces of work.
<b>C2:</b> Operate ethically and respond to the needs of children and families.	<b>C2:</b> This learning outcome is embedded within the modules <i>Research Enquiry in the Early Years and Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> The significance of operating ethically and responding to the needs of children is facilitated through a blend of tutor and student-led activities, supported by discussion, case study analysis, Q&A sessions, individual and group research activities as well as feedback on formative pieces of work. This activity should enable students to be in a position individually to appreciate and operate ethically in a range of relevant contexts.
<b>C3:</b> Demonstrate how multi agency working contribute to best practice and acknowledging children's rights.	<b>C3:</b> This learning outcome is found in the modules <i>Working Together to Protect Children and Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> . Student learning will be facilitated through a blend of tutor and student-led activities, supported by discussion, case study analysis, Q&A sessions, individual and group research activities as well as feedback on formative pieces of work. The overall aim is to develop students' understanding of the role of multi-agency working and of children's rights.

<b>3C. Practical and professional skills</b>	
<b>C4:</b> Develop a range of relevant professional and practical skills that can be improved.	<b>C4:</b> This learning outcome is embedded in the module <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> . Sessions and tutorials are designed to assist the students in developing relevant practical & professional skills within early years education sector and will be assessed both in formative and summative assignments.
<b>3D. Key/transferrable skills</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<b>D1:</b> Reflect upon knowledge and understanding of personal learning.	Key Transferable and academic skills development are embedded throughout the programme both formally and informally.  <b>D1:</b> Students are supported through tutorials and seminars as well as provided with developmental feedback on summative work. A range of assessment opportunities allow students to address many different academic and professional skills, including both written and spoken skills. This activity is formally embedded in the modules <i>International Perspectives in the Early Years</i> and the <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> . The college also provides students with a range of support opportunities delivered via the VLE.
<b>D2:</b> Incorporate differing communication styles effectively	<b>D2:</b> Students will have opportunities to use differing styles of communication within formative and summative tasks. This can be seen in modules such as <i>International Perspectives in Early Years</i> and the <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> . Students will be supported through tutorial and 1:1 sessions to use different methods to communicate relevant information effectively

<b>3D. Key/transferable skills</b>	
<b>D3:</b> Apply digital technologies in order to enhance learning in early years.	<b>D3:</b> Tuition assisting and guiding students in how to adapt appropriate IT skills for a given purpose is embedded in all modules but formally in the <i>Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (CPD)</i> . Formative assessments and class work allow students to receive feedback on the skills they are developing. In addition, tutorials will also assist in identifying any further development learners may require. The college also provides students with a range of support opportunities delivered via the VLE in addition to support at the programme and module levels.

**[Please insert here title(s) of exit award(s) at Level 5, if applicable]**

Foundation Degree Early Childhood Practice [240 Credits]

#### 4. Distinctive features of the programme structure

- **Where applicable, this section provides details on distinctive features 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
- **Additional considerations for apprenticeships:**
  - how the delivery of the academic award fits in with the wider apprenticeship
  - the integration of the 'on the job' and 'off the job' training
  - how the academic award fits within the assessment of the apprenticeship

##### 4.1 Full and Part Time Delivery

The Foundation Degree Early Childhood Practice 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 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 formal scheduled teaching sessions and academic support;
  - Academic Support hours for part-time students are delivered via the VLE;
  - students are allocated tasks and activities designed to build on the content delivered in formal scheduled teaching 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 can 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.
- Laptop 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 academic support sessions.
- Mentor support from the HE Office (Teaching and Learning) is ongoing.

#### 4.2 Employability

The programme enhances the employability of 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 to diversify skills to meet the needs of the current climate. A key feature is the opportunity at Level 4 and Level 5 to engage in modules which develop the students in both specialist areas such as learning needs, multiagency working, safeguarding, policy and practice and to develop the transferable skills to enable employability in Early Childhood practice such as education, childcare, health and social care.

### **5. Support for students and their learning**

*(For apprenticeships this should include details of how student learning is supported in the workplace)*

#### 5.1 Induction

The following activities are provided in Induction Week:

- Students are given an induction to the College IT systems, this includes the VLE and any other communication/file sharing tools necessary. Any required support is also provided
- Students also have an induction session with the College Learning Resource Centre staff.

- Students are provided with Programme Handbooks. The Programme Handbook provides details of learning and support resources available to students at this level of study. It also includes contact details of relevant staff and an overview of the programme, including module timetables and assessment dates.
- Students have the opportunity during induction week to meet with the programme team and staff that they may come into contact with throughout their programme.
- Induction includes information about the range of support that is available to students; this includes an explanation of the different academic staff and roles that they may encounter throughout the programme such as Programme Leader, Module Tutor, Personal Tutor, Higher Education Office staff, including the Director of HE.
- alumni speak to new students about their experience of the programme.
- a representative from the Student Union helps to elect student representatives.

#### 5.2 Engagement Support

Engagement 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 contacted at the end of the session, asking if the student is well and reminding the student that they are required to inform lecturers if they cannot attend.

Where a 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 and Pastoral Support

- Student tutorial opportunities are embedded in all modules. Formative and summative feedback tutorial sessions are also designed into each module and feedback tutorial sessions are listed in Module Handbooks.
- Students are assigned a Personal Tutor in the first few weeks of the programme and are encouraged to meet with their Personal Tutor at least once a term, who will discuss, record and monitor their progress. The Personal Tutor is able to provide pastoral and educational guidance throughout the programme. This guidance may include signposting students to workshops and seminars

available to support students for academic and life skills development available at the College.

- The programme team is relatively small and includes the Personal Tutor and Academic Mentor (as practice link), this consistency of academic support is designed to enhance communication, feedback, and support for students across the modules and year.
- Students are introduced to the HE Student Support and Participation Coordinator (SSPC) and the support services available are outlined to them at induction. This support may also be suggested in written assessment feedback. If a specific need is recommended for a student - e.g., assessment for dyslexia - this need is highlighted to the Programme Leader who liaises with the HE Support and Participation Coordinator (SSPC), who is responsible for arranging the referral and supporting the student through the process. The outcome of this process is fed back to the student and Programme Leader so that any specific needs/resources or reasonable adjustments can be addressed.
- Academic tutorials are 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.

#### 5.4 Equality, Inclusion and Diversity

At Middlesbrough College we strive to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in every aspect of our provision. We recognise and appreciate individual uniqueness and believe these should be embraced. We foster a culture where every individual feels supported, valued, respected and accepted regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, or any other characteristic that makes them who they are.

Every programme reflects our commitment to create an inclusive environment where everyone has equal opportunities to achieve and succeed. Discriminatory practice, unconscious biases and systemic barriers are challenged and eliminated. We will continue to develop a learning environment where we celebrate diversity, treat everyone with respect, dignity, and fairness.

Inevitably, within this programme there will be a focus on wider structural and cultural issues that can potentially result in exclusion and disadvantage. These issues will be discussed and addressed at a module level and will be responsive to high profile events, media focus and the changing nature of society.

#### 5.5 Supporting Transition to Level 4

- Students are introduced to academic study skills and principles of evidence-based practice to enhance their searching skills in the *Higher Education Study Skills* module. This module prepares students for the demands of higher education study and embraces the wide diversity of students attending the programme.

- Throughout the programme, key academic skills are embedded within the modules and students are encouraged to reflect upon their feedback and use this to improve their written work.

#### 5.6 Reassessment Period

Tutorials and all essential resources are provided for students who are offered reassessment opportunities by a properly constituted Exam Board.

#### 5.7 Academic Support

The delivery of many modules is based upon individual sessions that consist of two parts – a lecture (which introduces concepts and theory) followed by a facilitated session in which students undertake some form of research activity that encourages the increasing independence of students to find and locate academic source material. This delivery strategy ensures that theory is always applied, that key academic skills, knowledge and understanding are regularly checked, and that formative feedback is continuous as well as focussed at specific points in academic year.

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

- Members of the programme team - module leaders and lecturers.
- The programme leader & year tutors: the programme leader (who has overall responsibility for the programme) is available to discuss assessment extensions and barriers to learning. Programme team members are identified to act as personal tutors and are available to discuss emerging issues with personal circumstances and support needs.

Students are supported throughout the programme to explore their progress and determine their continued learning needs through reflection, so developing the attributes necessary to become lifelong learners.

At key points during the academic year, students are supported to identify their continuing personal development needs and are also offered opportunities to review additional educational provision and career opportunities available to them. A Career Service is available within the College. This activity includes help with completing applications for further study or employment and interview technique.

#### 5.8 Programme Documentation and Online Learning Support

Students are provided with programme and module handbooks that contain comprehensive information on how their programme and modules are structured and delivered. These documents are also available to students throughout each academic year (and for the duration of their registration) via the College Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). All teaching and learning content is made available via the VLE. This online resource includes lecture notes and a range of materials. Assessments are communicated to and submitted by students using the VLE.

#### 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 Continuous Professional Development Portfolio.

#### 5.10 IT Support

Students can also access remote support for learning via the college [Reboot scheme](#) and log IT support requests via the [HALO system](#).

#### 5.11 Library and Learning Resources

Students can access a range of resources through the college Learning Resource Centre (LRC) and associated online services. Online services are listed in the background document. Students can access specific sessions with the LRC staff regarding advanced academic and research skills. This activity is introduced as part of the induction sessions at the start of each year but can be revisited again throughout the year in refresher sessions. LRC term time opening hours are:

- Mon 08:30 -17:00
- Tues – Thurs 08:30 – 20:00
- Fri 08:30 – 16:30

College holiday opening hours:

- Mon – Thurs 08:30 – 16:00
- Friday 08:30 – 15:30

The LRC has space for individual and group study, including a quiet study area. There are multi-function printers on both floors. All physical books are stored in the LRC, allowing for easy access. In addition to the textbooks, fiction titles and wellbeing books are available to help students relax. Enrichment sessions offered as part of the service are held in the STEAM Lab within the LRC.

The LRC has been involved in the production of the documentation for this programme, all reading lists have been checked for updated versions and new titles purchased. The LRC provides books, e-books, and e-journals for each programme and subscribes to specialist databases needed for students to complete their assignments.

An online LRC Information section is maintained by the LRC (on M365). This is where students can search for books, e-books and e-journals, using:

- [Heritage Online](#) for books and e-books
- [Discovery](#), our one stop shop for books, e-books and e-journals
- E-resources List, which lists each platform we subscribe to individually, as we know that some students find Discovery too large. We also provide user guides, written and video, for all the e-resources on our E-resources Guides page

Each course has a dedicated HE LRC Guides page on LRC Information, which provides quick links to Heritage Online and Discovery, as well as links to:

- Information and research skills pages which include a list of copyright free and open access resources
- Referencing
- The course's reading list

The LRC offers information skills support on the following:

- Searching expertly
- Referencing
- Using e-resources
- Using Microsoft Office

This is done in a variety of ways:

- Online through LRC Information or in groups either in groups or through Teams, sessions are bookable through the [Request Tutorial](#) page on LRC Information
- For quick queries e-mail at [LRCinfo@mbro.ac.uk](mailto:LRCinfo@mbro.ac.uk), telephone on 01642 333226 or in person in the LRC

#### 5.12 Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Every programme uses the College VLE which is a key resource to support student learning as well as engagement with the programme and the College in general. All teaching materials and general course information is backed up on the VLE, ensuring that students can access what they need when they need it. The VLE is also used as a portal to other sources of support. Students can access the programme of informal workshops designed to support their learning, including: improving writing style and referencing, planning assignments, developing critical thinking and other key skills.

#### 5.13 Additional Learning Support

Any student that considers that they have, or may have, additional learning support needs can access a range of support through the college. Initial assessments by the college HE Student Support and Participation Coordinator (SSPC) are provided to support understanding of the range of support that may be needed which will then trigger the provision required. Students declaring any additional need receive a formal assessment, after which the programme team are advised on the steps they must take.

#### 5.14 Student Services

All students can access college student services which are based in the Dock Street building which has its own reception and drop in facilities. As well as general advice about the College, the student services team also provide: counselling, financial support, learning support and signposting to additional or partner services.

#### 5.15 HE Student Areas

All HE students have areas in the college that are exclusively for their use. In the University Centre, all HE students have access to an open-plan working area, which has access control to retain its exclusivity. As well as the open-access area, students may also use the teaching rooms and meeting/tutorial rooms when they are not in use for a pre-booked activity. Access to the University Centre is available 08:00 – 21:00.

#### 5.16 The 'Job Shop'

The college has its own 'Job Shop' which provides a range of support to students. As well as advertising vacancies provided by local employers, the Job Shop also provides a range of support to students, including: help with job applications, CV writing, interview preparation, job searching, writing covering letters and finding work experience. All the support is available either through drop/bookable appointments or via on-line tutorials.

#### 5.17 The Fitness Studio

All students are entitled to free membership of the Fitness Studio. The Techno Gym equipped facility, provides a range of cardiovascular and resistance exercise equipment. Together with the latest innovations in IT wellness programme monitoring, students can engage in regular exercise in a friendly and easily accessible environment. Support and guidance are available during opening hours from experienced staff.

#### 5.18 Other facilities

The college has a wide range of other facilities which students can access either free of charge or at subsidised or nominal rates. Examples include:

- 156 seat theatre which produces several performances throughout the year many of which are free for students to attend.
- Hair Salon providing low-cost services.
- Beauty Spa facility which offers:
  - jacuzzi, light therapy, sauna, steam room, flotation room, 39 private treatment rooms, and nail bar
- Fully equipped recording studios and control rooms.

#### 5.19 Laptop Scheme

Middlesbrough College's MC Click scheme provides all HE students with a Microsoft Surface to assist with their studies. Students who complete the laptop scheme for 2 years get to keep the device. Any student who leaves within 2 years is required to return the device to the College.

### **6. Criteria for admission**

*(For apprenticeships this should include details of how the criteria will be used with employers who will be recruiting apprentices.)*

Typically, applicants will progress from the College's Level 3 programmes in Childcare, applications are also welcomed from students who have completed other related Level 3 qualifications or have an A-Level profile that demonstrates strong performance in a relevant subject and are working/have a placement within an early years setting. Applicants need to demonstrate that they have a strong vocational interest in developing their career in the childhood sector.

Non-standard entrants will be interviewed to assess their ability to complete the course. They will also need to participate in the 'Recognition of Prior Learning' (RPL) process to demonstrate their prior learning. This activity entails a review of any professional experience and training gained in the workplace to ensure that this adequately prepares them to cope with the academic level of study.

All applicants must have completed a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check. Placements may commence following induction to the module, and upon completion of a satisfactory DBS check. DBS checks are completed prior to enrolment onto the programme, however, as described above, flexibility has been built into the programme to allow students sufficient time to complete placements in the event of a delay in processing the DBS application.

All applicants are required to have English and Maths at GCSE Grade 4 or equivalent such as Functional or Key Skills Level 2 Maths and English or be working towards it.

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, however, this decision is dependent 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.

**7. Language of study**

English

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

N/A

## 9. For apprenticeships in England End Point Assessment (EPA)

*(Summary of the approved assessment plan and how the academic award fits within this and the EPA)*

N/A

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

### 10.1 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 and 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 is to place 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. These approaches have been further refined to form part of the college departmental review process.

### 10.2 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 [UKPSE](#) 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 college 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 so that the students become 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.

### 10.3 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 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 both formal and ad hoc tutorials.

### 10.4 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. The academic year 20/21 saw the introduction of Teaching Innovation Groups (TIG).

### 10.5 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.

### 10.6 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, 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 has a research and scholarly activity procedure which encourages and supports staff to maintain and annually update both pedagogical and subject expertise.

### 10.7 HE Digital Champion

The College is focussed on providing the highest quality online provision to enhance programmes delivered face to face. Each department has been allocated a 'digital champion', who is an expert practitioner using Microsoft 365 for teaching and learning. Digital champions are the first point of contact for any staff member requiring support with online teaching and learning, and they regularly provide in person and online sessions tailored to the specific requirements of staff. Digital champions are managed by

the College Director of Digital Innovation who holds regular cross-college meetings where information/updates are shared to be passed on to departments.

### **11. Changes made to the programme since last (re)validation**

The inclusion of one new 20 credit modules at Level 4. This newly created module will allow for the introduction of Higher Education Academic Skills to support student development in this key area. To enable the additional module credits, the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) module has been reduced from 60 credits to 40 credits.

The scheduling for the teaching of two of the level 5 modules 'Research Inquiry in Early Education' and 'Working Together to Protect Children' has been changed. 'Working Together to Protect Children' will now be taught week 11-20 and 'Research Inquiry in Early Education' will now be taught weeks 21-30. The latter module is aimed at giving students an opportunity to explore research methodology as well as engaging in a piece of small-scale research in preparation for the dissertation module at level 6 and is a steppingstone for this.

Annexe 1: Curriculum map

Annexe 2: Notes on completing the OU programme specification template

## Annexe 1 - Curriculum map

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

Level 4	Study Module/unit	A 1	A 2	A 3	A 4	A 5	B 1	B 2	B 3	B 4	B 5	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	D 1	D 2	D 3	D 4
	Higher Education Study Skills					x					x				x		x	x	x
	Supporting Children's Development	x				x	x	x				x							x
	Learning Within Early Childhood	x	x		x		x	x		x		x				x	x		
	Policy and Practice in the Early Years			x					x		x		x			x			x
	Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (WBL)		x	x	x		x		x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Level 5	Study Module/unit	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B 1	B 2	B 3	B 4	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	D 1	D 2	D 3
	International Perspectives in Early Years	x		x	x			x			x				x		
	Research Inquiry in the Early Years	x	x				x				x	x				x	
	Working Together to Protect Children		x		x	x	x						x			x	
	Continuous Professional Development Portfolio (WBL)			x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x



## Annexe 2: 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 than English** must have programme specifications both in English and the language of delivery.