

**Foundation Degree in Children's Development and Learning- Berkshire College of Agriculture**  
**UCAS code: X310**

**For students entering Part 1 in 2011/2**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Arts, Humanities and Social Science Faculty
Programme length:	2 years
Date of specification:	09/Aug/2012
Programme Director:	Teresa Wilson
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	Board of Studies for the Children and Young People's Workforce
Accreditation:	

**Summary of programme aims**

The Foundation Degree (FD) provides a model of vocational higher education based on close collaboration between employers and providers of higher education. The programme will furnish candidates with the knowledge, skills and understanding to progress in their chosen career within related childcare or education. Many students will become Early Years Professionals or Higher Level Teachers Assistants as a result of this programme. It provides an appropriate base for progression to honours and QTS, if required.

The aims of the FD are to develop:

- the knowledge and critical understanding of child development and learning principles and the way in which these have evolved
- the ability to apply underlying concepts and principles to the work context and to argue their effectiveness
- a knowledge of the main methods of enquiry and an understanding of how to use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information
- an ability to critically evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches and to apply these to the work context
- an understanding of how limited personal knowledge can influence analyses and interpretations
- effective synthesis and communication of information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- a desire to improve knowledge, skills and understanding throughout students' professional lives

**Transferable skills**

During the course of their studies at Reading, all students will be expected to enhance their academic and personal transferable skills in line with the University's Strategy for Learning and Teaching. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to develop such skills, in particular relating to communication, interpersonal skills, learning skills, numeracy, self-management, use of IT and problem-solving and will have been encouraged to further develop and enhance the full set of skills through a variety of opportunities available outside their curriculum.

There are a number of generic transferable skills that all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to career management, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem solving, team working and use of information technology.

Students will be able to:

- communicate ideas, principles and theories, arguments and analysis effectively in speech and writing, using visual and ICT media as tools where appropriate, to specific and non specific audiences
- demonstrate appropriate critical thinking skills, including the ability to:
- identify and summarise the main points in an argument
- present and develop an argument, drawing upon appropriate evidence, literature and theory
- analyse and synthesise research, theories and ideas from multiple sources
- examine issues from a range of professional and theoretical perspectives
- produce critical and evaluative responses to the content of the learning outcomes
- use ICT to support their own and children's development and learning
- work within a team and individually to complete relevant and agreed projects or tasks
- solve theoretical and practical problems that occur in the work place
- improve their own performance through critical self reflection, the implementation of evidence-based practice and continual professional development activities.

## Programme content

### Part 1 (three terms)

#### *Compulsory modules*

ED1FDL	Theories of Development and Learning	20	4
ED1FCS	The Child in Society (1)	20	4
ED1FLS	Learning Spaces	20	4
ED1FPP	Partnership with Parents	20	4
ED1FCW	Professionalism in the Children's Workforce	20	4
ED1FEC	Effective Communication	20	4

### Part 2 (three terms)

#### *Compulsory modules*

ED2FAR	Action Research	40	5
ED2FCS	The Child in Society (2)	20	5
ED2FCT	Creativity and Critical Thinking	20	5
ED2FDL	Supporting Development and Learning for 0-11 years	20	5

Optional modules: students choose between:

ED2FIP	International Perspectives	20	5
ED2FCW	Leadership in the Children's Workforce	20	5

## Progression requirements

In order to progress to Part 2 of the degree, a student must obtain an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1 and obtain a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits taken in Part 1.

### Award of Foundation Degree

The Foundation Degree is a classified award, with the mark interpretation as follows:

Distinction 70 or above

Merit 60 - 69

Pass 40 - 59

In order to pass the Foundation degree overall, students must pass Part 1 and obtain an overall average of at least 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2, and obtain a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits taken in Part 2.

The weighting of the Parts in the calculation of the degree classification:

Part 1: pass/fail only

Part 2: 100%

Lesser awards

The Certificate of Higher Education is available as an exit award following successful completion of Part 1.

### **Assessment and classification**

For the Foundation Degree the focus on skills and their application in the workplace, underpinned by academic knowledge and understanding, is critical. Work-based learning is central to the degree and students undertaking the programme will need to be working in an early years/educational setting (0-11 years).

Teaching is organised in modules that typically involve lectures, work-based learning and practical work. Teaching will be delivered by the FE colleges, in conjunction with employers, using a mixture of face to face teaching, web-based and distance learning methods, self-directed studies, project work and problem-based learning

Students will take a range of modules over 2 years. The structure of the modules enables students to specialise in an age range relating to their employment base and choices for progression.

The assessment of the FD will be based on University-approved assessments that will include a mixture of assignments. These will include formative assessments to feed into summative assessments, essays, presentations, evaluations of practice, development of an e-portfolio and other formats.

In line with the nature of Foundation Degrees, assignments require students to link theory to practice in the work place. It is expected that descriptions and evaluations of practice will include references to relevant literature.

Work-based learning will provide an essential contribution to achievement of the outcomes.

An appropriate mentor will be agreed in conjunction with the college. The role of the mentor will include supporting work-based assessments (WBA) that will contribute to the formal assessment of modules.

### **Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

Level 3 qualification in a work related area. Equivalent qualifications will be considered. Those students who do not hold a level 3 qualification may discuss APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) procedures with their intended institution of study.

Grade C or better in English in GCSE

Level 2 qualification in maths (preferably at least Grade C GCSE)

At least two years experience of working in a setting within the sector, such as a registered early years setting, school or an extended school setting. (Students will normally require five years experience in order to apply for HLTA status assessment.) Provision of a suitable reference on request.

Entrants whose first language is not English will be subject to English language requirements: an IELTS score of 6.5 (minimum 6.0 in all skills) or a TOEFL score of 88 (internet based), or equivalent.

**Admissions Tutor:** Era Singh (esingh@bca.ac.uk) Berkshire College of Agriculture

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

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Student Employment, Experience and Careers Centre (SEEC), In-sessional English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@il) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see [www.reading.ac.uk/student](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)

All students on the FD will be members of the University of Reading and able to use the facilities of the University. The University has recently reviewed the provision of learning resources for collaborative programmes and has agreed that certain electronic resources will be made available to colleges as franchised partners of the University.

All students are members of one of the three FE provider colleges and as such are able to access support and resources available there. All three colleges receive funding from the University (to be agreed on an annual basis) which is used to ensure that the colleges are able to resource the programme appropriately. This might include provision of textbooks for the library, visiting speakers, electronic journals and programme materials.

As a work-based programme, all students on the FD are expected to identify (with guidance from programme tutors) a mentor with whom they will complete a number of assessments. Mentors receive initial training and provision of a mentor handbook, plus access to drop in sessions, website information and regular networking meetings.

In addition to the schedule of tutorials, Link tutors visit the students in their workplaces on a termly basis (two visits in term one), to offer additional one to one support and clarify expectations of the work based assessments. The purposes of setting visits include:

- To clarify programme expectations to students and mentors
- To reinforce the importance of the work-based element of the programme
- To offer clarification and support to the student and their employer
- To moderate one of the year one work based assessments
- To offer additional one to one tutorial and pastoral support

Students will attend the University on a regular basis as part of their programme, in order for the three cohorts to work together and to familiarise themselves with the resources that the University is able to offer them. This also supports the transition to the BA in Children's Development and Learning, for those who select this progression route.

Upon registration, all students are provided with a University of Reading username and password, plus an email address. They will have access to their course on the virtual learning environment, Blackboard, where they are able to access programme information, termly dates, assessment information and access to a discussion board to which they are expected to contribute.

Information is provided in a number of publications:

- Provider's Handbook (for staff)
- Module Handbooks (containing aims, learning outcomes, module content summary, assessments, reading lists)
- Programme Handbook (containing module overview, programme guidance, requirements of the University including information about assessment, extenuating circumstances, academic misconduct, referencing)
- Timetables
- Mentor Handbooks

All students and mentors will receive training to support access to this information as part of the induction process.

Blackboard is the virtual learning environment used by the University of Reading and students are expected to make use of it from the outset of the programme. In addition to the written information that is provided in the handbooks (above), training on the use of Blackboard and the development of e-portfolios will be provided for all students. This will initially take place during induction events, but further training is also included in programme modules.

### **Career prospects**

This Foundation Degree provides the underpinning knowledge and skills required for a number of progression routes in both education and early years settings. Its predecessors have been recognised through sector endorsement by both the Children's Workforce Development Council and the Training and Development Agency. Transferable skills which are itemised in the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce have been mapped to the programme.

Most of those completing the Foundation Degree progress to the BA (Children's Development and Learning) at University of Reading or similar programmes such as the BA (Hons) Childhood and Youth Studies at the Open University. The programme can also provide an invaluable grounding for those candidates who wish to work in other educational fields, such as education officers for museums and theatres. Further progression routes will be explored and modules have been written in order to provide a suitable grounding for third year routes that are suitable for family support workers, outreach workers, play workers and parenting practitioners.

Students have also been able to access a progression route for Early Years Professional Status.

The FD provides a suitable basis for progression to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) after honours or through an appropriate Registered Teacher Programme (RTP). Acceptance on such a programme will depend upon the candidate holding appropriate qualifications, as set down by the TDA and is subject to further interview.

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

Foundation Degrees integrate academic and work-based learning through close collaboration between employers and programme providers. As such, this programme offers substantial work -based experience in early years/educational settings (0-11) and there will be opportunities to visit other placements. The programme assumes that students are working at least 0.5 in an in early years/educational setting. Most modules rely upon students applying theory to their practice and undertaking tasks related to college inputs.

It may be possible to complete elements of the programme through the Erasmus scheme.

## Programme Outcomes

### Knowledge and Understanding

#### A. Knowledge and understanding of:

- the age-related expectations of children
- the aims and pedagogy of work based learning
- play, care and education value and belief systems, including those relating to anti-discriminatory practice and equality of opportunity
- relevant statutory frameworks and legal definitions
- significant current and emerging theories and principles related to factors that can affect the way children learn and develop
- the cyclical process of planning, development, implementation and evaluation of provision
- difference and diversity, recognising individual needs whilst developing tolerance and understanding of others
- the potential effect of personal attitudes, values and behaviour on work with children,
- parents and colleagues and other inter-professional relationships
- how ICT can be used to advance their own and children's development and learning
- a range of appropriate strategies to establish a purposeful environment and to promote good behaviour.
- how to acquire further knowledge, to contribute effectively and with confidence to the work in which they are involved
- the effects of cultural, societal, political, historical and economic contexts on developing and learning, including education policies, moral, religious and philosophical underpinnings, and issues of social justice
- social and developmental psychology and the philosophy, sociology and history of childhood
- knowledge of management and leadership, working with other professionals, working with families and knowledge of organisational structures.
- the processes of learning, including some of the key paradigms and their impact on practice

#### Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Acquisition of knowledge is promoted across the programme through lectures, tutorials, seminars, workshops, case studies, role-play exercises, IT-based exercises, guest lectures, work-based assignments and through individual consultation with academic staff, mentors and personal tutors. The modules from Part 1 focus on developing students' understanding of the general principles of supporting children. E.g. ED1FDL covers children's development 0-11 and the impact on learning, whilst ED1FCW considers the contextual aspects of the role and pedagogical and professional considerations of the practitioner within the Children's Workforce. The statutory frameworks and the position and status of childhood are explored in ED1FCS, and ED1FPP is a module which recognises the role and influence of the family in children's development. Further learning is acquired through modules relating to environment (ED1FLS), professional practice, including use of ICT and work-based practice linking to theory, thus ensuring an in-depth understanding of a particular age range within a context of a wider age range. The pivotal role of communication, both in terms of working with adults and children, is explored in depth in ED1FEC.

Part 2 provides students with a significant range of subjects, enabling them to deepen their understanding of children's development up to age 11, with their work-based focus remaining targeted on a particular age range, context or subject area, according to their interests, current employment and career plans. A student will gain significant knowledge and understanding of the needs of children across a range of curriculum areas through the module ED2FDL. Assessments are developed with criteria which are linked to the work environment of the learner, in order that students have the opportunity to develop their expertise with a work-based focus. There are blended learning study options: one supports professional development towards Early Years Professional Status (ED2FCW); for those that will not be taking this route, the International Perspective module (ED2FIP) is suitable for all practitioners within the Children's Workforce as it offers a global view of the sector. These packages provide opportunities for self-directed learning through problem solving and the examination of work - based problems. Students have the opportunity to carry out their own action research in order to develop further skills of critical analysis and evaluation (ED2FAR), and to

prepare them further for year 3 studies if they so choose.

#### *Assessment*

Feedback is initially given through formative assessed work. Knowledge is tested through a combination of coursework and assessment of practice in work-based settings. A range of assessment methods is used, including essays, group projects, presentations, use of reflective journals, resource files, portfolios of evidence of practice, tutorial and seminar papers and reports.

### **Skills and other attributes**

#### **B. Intellectual skills - able to:**

- access and review literature to underpin evidence-based practice
- use literature within extended written projects, case studies, reports and self-reflective studies
- assimilate, evaluate and analyse information
- critically reflect upon observations and first hand experience of the environment and practice in relation to work with children, parents and colleagues from within the organization and from other organizations
- identify key issues
- choose appropriate methods to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively
- analyse a range of information in order to make informed judgements
- understand the complex matrix of factors that affect the process of teaching and learning
- have high expectations of all children, respecting their social, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds and committed to raising their achievement.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

The programme is designed to progressively develop students' intellectual skills and to enable them to progress to an honours route, if they wish. In Part 1 the aim is to develop a range of fundamental skills to help students make the transition from work to university study. Professionalism (ED1FCW) provides a range of outcomes that are reinforced through other modules, such as reflective practice, the development of analysis and evaluation and the application of pedagogical principles to practice. These skills are developed through lectures, tutorials, seminars, workshops, case studies, role-play exercises, IT-based exercises, visits to settings, guest lectures, work-based assignments, and through individual consultation with academic staff, colleagues at work, mentors and personal tutors. Students are involved in reflective evaluations of work-based activities with colleagues, tutors and mentors. They assimilate, evaluate and analyse observations and practice. Students contribute to presentations, written reports and assignments and lead seminars. In Part 2, each student undertakes a supervised, work-based piece of research, building upon Part 1 achievements (ED2FAR).

#### *Assessment*

Feedback is initially given through formative assessed work. Intellectual skills are tested through a combination of coursework and assessment of practice in work-based settings. A range of assessment methods is used in Part 1 and again in Part 2, including essays, group projects, presentations, use of reflective diaries, portfolios of evidence of practice, tutorial and seminar papers and reports. The requirement for work based assessment ensures that students develop skills of analysis, evaluation and application and synthesis of theory to their practice.

#### **C. Practical skills - able to:**

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

- design, implement, monitor and assess effective activities which support the individual development and learning of children and which meet the statutory and regulatory requirements, in consultation with other professionals where necessary
- promote and support the inclusion of all, recognising and responding effectively to equal opportunities issues as they arise, including challenging stereotyped views, bullying or harassment, following relevant policies and procedures
- manage, organise and evaluate their own time, resources, records and information
- to support decision making
- build and maintain successful relationships
- improve their own practice, including through observation, evaluation and discussion with colleagues
- interest and motivate children to progress
- select and prepare resources and activities that meet the diversity of children's needs and interests and support inclusion.
- contribute to the planning of opportunities for children to develop and learn in a range of contexts
- monitor children's responses to activities and modify approach accordingly
- monitor children's participation and progress, giving constructive support
- maintain and analyse records of progress.
- communicate effectively and sensitively with children to support them
- use effective behaviour management strategies
- organise and manage safely the activities, the physical space and resources
- use common ICT tools

#### **D. Transferable skills - able to:**

- communicate ideas, principles and theories, arguments and analysis effectively in speech and writing, using visual and ICT media as

Practical skills are developed through linking theory to work placements. This is supported by a mixture of lectures, tutorials, seminars, workshops, case studies, role-play exercises, IT-based exercises, guest lectures, work-based assignments and through individual consultation with academic staff, mentors and personal tutors.

The aim of Part 1 is to develop, in stages, a range of fundamental skills to help students to improve their work - based practice and to move to reflective practice. The module ED1FCW helps to develop not only academic skills, but also professional skills such as assertiveness and team building.

ED1FLS encourages students to consider the range of practical elements that promote a positive environment and ED1FEC develops practitioner strategies of supporting children' communication. The use of technology is encouraged and ED1FCW includes a skills audit which is used as the starting point for the development of additional skills.

The options in Part 2 apply and extend the skills developed in the option in Part 1 and in other modules into more specialised contexts. For example, ED1FCT explores key theories and identifies strategies to support creativity and areas of development. The research based project (ED2FAR) focuses on those skills related to the student's work setting and so develops the appropriate practical as well as analytical skills. Many modules require students to prepare resources to support their practice and guide students to write in plain English.

All students attend sessions on career development and effective applications.

Trainees are encouraged to visit other settings for observation and evaluation.

The strong focus on work based practice within assessments requires students to apply theory to practice throughout the programme.

#### *Assessment*

Students are assessed through a combination of coursework and assessment of practice in work-based settings. Students are assessed in relation to their chosen route and receive formal assessment of their practice through a system of mentoring. Assessment methods, including essays, group projects, presentations, reports, use of reflective journals, portfolios of evidence of practice, tutorial and seminar papers, all relate theory to practice. of reflective journals, portfolios of evidence of practice, tutorial and seminar papers, all relate theory to practice.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

The teaching and acquisition of these transferable skills is firmly embedded in the programme. As a work-based degree, there is particular emphasis on

tools where appropriate, to specific and non specific audiences;

- demonstrate appropriate critical thinking skills, including the ability to:
- Identify and summarise the main points in an argument;
- Present and develop an argument, drawing upon appropriate evidence, literature and theory;
- Analyse and synthesise research, theories and ideas from multiple sources
- Examine issues from a range of professional and theoretical perspectives;
- Produce critical and evaluative responses to planned outcomes
- use ICT to support their own development, and the learning and development of children;
- work within a team and individually to complete a relevant and agreed project or task
- solve theoretical and practical problems that occur
- improve their own performance through critical self reflection, the implementation of evidence-based practice and continued professional development activities.
- demonstrate and promote the positive values, attitudes and behaviour they expect

the acquisition and personal development of a wide range of transferable skills.

For example, communication skills are taught in ED1FEC, but are also considered in ED1FPP, and ED1FCW and these are also deployed in the group presentations, individual reports and work - based experiences.

A care and education culture permeates the programme fed by module content and the intended learning outcomes, staff (and student) links with practice, lectures by visiting practitioners, visits to other settings and the analysis of video material. The use of ICT is embedded throughout the programme, although there is particular emphasis in the inputs of ED1FCW and ED2FDL and ED2FAR.. Oral presentations, team work and career planning are included in modules and in meetings with a personal tutor.

Time management and use of library resources are essential for effective completion of a degree whilst working; advice is given in pre-programme documentation, induction week and ED1FCW. The programme's strategy on career management incorporates the use Careers Advisory Services incorporating a taught session and / or on-line learning material There is a timetable and schedule of visits from University of Reading staff to prepare students for progression to honours, EYPS, QTS and / or career development.

#### *Assessment*

As a result of this 'pervasive' approach to transferable skills, students' performance is assessed across the full range of skills throughout the programme on a module-by-module basis through coursework when feedback is provided.

Written feedback from mentors and tutors and some written assignments and reports reflect these skills.

**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 he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**