

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information

1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	Social Sciences / Clifton
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	BA (Hons.) Childhood Studies, FT
4.	Normal Duration:	Three years
5.	UCAS Code:	X390 FT

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

This BA Course is a broad-based degree studied full-time, over three years. You will focus on the holistic development, education and experiences of children between birth and early adolescence (0-11 years). You will examine areas as diverse as development, behaviour, cultural perspectives and the effect of environments. The underlying principle is of the child as an active, responsive and decisive individual, at the centre of families and their communities, interacting with societies and situated within an international context.

The distinctive features of the course are breadth, connection and experience. Firstly, the breadth of module areas studied and the range of potential career possibilities makes the Course an ideal choice if you are sure you want to work with children but are as yet undecided about the focus of that work. Secondly, there are three themes that thread through the course – ‘Active Learners and Communicators’; ‘Effective Practitioners’ and ‘Knowledgeable Professionals’. These themes promote cross-modular links both through and between the years of the course allowing you to make strong connections with knowledge and understanding of children and childhood that is essential for employability. Thirdly, there are opportunities for diverse work-based learning experiences in a variety of settings, most particularly with the chance to undertake an international experience. All three features work together to ensure you will be a strong candidate for employment.

Our relationships with current employers, through work-based learning opportunities as well as direct consultation, confirm the course meets their needs as it allows future graduate employees to develop a broad base of skills, knowledge and understanding about the whole child and their diverse contexts. Employers feel this enables flexibility in the workforce and confidence in adapting and responding to change.

In addition to current employers, the Staff team are professionals who have had experience of working with children and families. There is also a growing body of Graduates from the Course who continue to inform us about developments in the work-place, which endorses the relevance of the Course to current practice.

The Course therefore enables those of you who aspire to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding as practitioners, to support and co-ordinate current initiatives within education, social services, health services and community / voluntary project work, whilst also developing the professionalism and confidence to respond to future initiatives.

You will undertake work-based learning opportunities in Year 1 (level 4) and Year 2 (Level 5) that are integral to two modules. Level 4 focuses on inter-

professional approaches in Early Years settings. Level 5 focuses on developing an international and community perspective of childhood, when you organise your own work-based learning experiences with other communities, either overseas or in the UK.

For those of you who are interested in supporting and working alongside children and their families, but are unsure as yet as to the precise setting or career pathway, the broad context of modules on the Course offers you opportunities to help identify your strengths and interest areas. This ensures, in terms of employability, that there are a range of different career pathways from the Course, which may be considered including teaching, social work, speech therapy, play work, charity work, community projects, nursing, environmental projects, refugee support and other roles within Local Authorities. Some of these pathways will require further specialist study at either academic or professional level.

In summary, the overall aims of the Course are:

1. To develop your potential by applying new knowledge, skills and understanding to academic and contextual domains;
2. To demonstrate awareness of the nature and theory of learning in children, and develop a strong understanding of their holistic needs;
3. To develop your knowledge and understanding of current practice, policy and inter-professional approaches that exist in both the UK and abroad;
4. To explore the relationship between the child, family and society;
5. To aspire to become a reflective practitioner, by linking theory and practice, in order to support children's needs at various stages of their lives;

6. Course outcomes

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Critically evaluate how children learn and develop referencing theory and the values of the children's sector. (B)
- Critically evaluate the importance of the role of play referencing theory and the values of the children's sector. (B)
- Critically evaluate provision and issues within the children's sector and reflect upon these to inform future practice. (B)
- Critically evaluate what contributes to the development of quality provision and services for children and families.
- Critically review how established and new initiatives contribute to the design and development of policies, both nationally and locally. (B)
- Critically evaluate the concept of childhood as a social construct. (B)

(B) = indicates these outcomes having specific reference to the QAA Education (and/or Early Years) Benchmark statements.

Skills, qualities and attributes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Utilise research skills in specific areas of interest, relevant to future employability. (B)

- Demonstrate the capability to advocate for children and their families. (B)
- Critically reflect on the design of learning experiences for children that meet their holistic needs; (B)
- Demonstrate professional conduct and attitudes that will support the meeting of professional responsibilities. (B)

(B) = indicates the outcomes having specific reference to the QAA Education (and/or Early Years) Benchmark statements

7. **Teaching and learning methods**

The Institute of Education's commitment to enhancing the quality of your experiences involves providing a framework for learning and teaching that supports independent and lifelong learners. Learning and teaching approaches are diverse and continually monitored and developed to take account of new research, external reports and initiatives, and supported through staff development.

In order to optimise this learning, you will have opportunities to experience:

- range of learning and teaching methods with which you can express your growing competency as a learner and professional and meet the specific and generic Course outcomes;
- Seminars, workshops, small group and individual tutorials, field study, presentations and conferences, directed and independent study tasks, small scale research and interaction with the university learning portal;
- The development and enhancement of your knowledge and understanding of childhood, child development, families and the wider social context as well as explore the skills and professional attributes required to work alongside children, families and support services within the ethos of anti-discriminative practice and advocacy;
- Using modern technologies alongside your prior experiential learning as we encourage the widening participation of lifelong learners; this includes e-learning as a key transferable skill, and work based experiences both nationally and overseas as you develop your ability to make connections between theory and practice and identify the diverse ways people learn and practice their professional roles;
- A development in self-perception and knowledge of meta-cognition, and to develop, engage in, and understand, deep level learning. Through reflection, discussion and presentation we will encourage you to challenge yourself, your peers and lecturers as we explore diverse ways of solving problems and researching ideas.

You will study the modules in seminar groups, which are smaller divisions of whole year cohorts. Within these groups you will be given further opportunities to separate into smaller working groups to work on collaborative tasks or for small group/individual tutorials to discuss independent work, field study or preparation for assignments.

8. **Assessment methods**

You are required to achieve all Course outcomes and these are assessed through the learning outcomes of the individual modules. Not all module learning outcomes are assessed but those that are use a variety of assessment strategies to ensure that you can demonstrate the range of learning outcomes. Our aim is that you should be able to demonstrate personal and professional responses to teaching and learning strategies, curriculum content and experiential tasks.

There are no formal examinations; all assessment is by coursework with knowledge, understanding and skills being assessed through:

- Reflective journals;
- Group presentations;
- Discussion papers;
- Resource Folders;
- Creation of artefacts or learning tools;
- Projects;
- A Creative Arts Portfolio;
- Web based coursework;
- Essays
- Case Studies;
- Notebooks; and
- Research.

Transferable skills are assessed generally via on-going assignments but some such as 'working collaboratively' and 'delivering presentations' are assessed specifically via related modules.

We provide feedback during the modules to support you in your ability to recognise strengths and weaknesses in your own strategies, and to negotiate targets for improved learning. At the end of the module, assessments are used to establish the level of achievement and to provide further feedback and support. **To obtain an Honours degree you must pass all of the Course modules. Your final degree classification will be based on the aggregate grade for Level 6 modules and will include a contribution of 20% from the aggregate grade from Level 5 modules.**

9. **Course structure and curriculum**

You will undertake the following modules:

Level 4 Modules

The Child, Policy and Professional Practice	20 credits	CORE
Communicating with Children & Families	20 credits	CORE
Early Learning in Context	40 credits	CORE
Diversity & Inclusion	40 credits	CORE
Developing Professionalism	0 credits	CORE
	120 credits	

Level 5 Modules

Becoming a Researcher	20 credits	CORE
International & Community Perspectives	40 credits	CORE
Childhood as a Social Construct	40 Credits	CORE
Enriching Learning	20 credits	CORE
	120 credits	

Level 6 Modules

Research Dissertation	40 credits	CORE
Leadership & Management	40 credits	CORE
Health & Well-being	40 credits	CORE
	120 credits	

If you do not reach the final year of study, you will be eligible for a Certificate of Higher Education for successfully completing Level 4 and a Diploma in Higher Education for completing Level 5. An Ordinary Degree may be available for you if you complete successfully Level 4 and 5 and accrue 60 credit points in Level 6.

The broad range of modules gives opportunities for you to develop both personally as a learner and professionally by incorporating the world of work and international perspectives into your studies. Key transferable skills are embedded in the modules through teaching, learning and assessment, and reinforced whilst working alongside experienced practitioners. All modules have the child, family and community at the core of the content enabling you to assimilate an extensive knowledge of the discipline of childhood studies as well as the wide range of careers that support children and families which are open to graduates. The modules are further grouped into three themes to facilitate cross-modular connections and understandings.

The first theme, 'Active Learners and Communicators', encompasses both personal and professional learning. There is a strong focus on inquiry-based study running in Levels 4 and 5 through the '*Diversity and Inclusion*' and '*Becoming a Researcher*' modules, where your ability to solve problems, improve your own skills, work collaboratively, investigate your own needs to plan and work effectively, are actively encouraged and assessed.

Another thread running through this theme is that of communication. At Level 4, this is included in '*Communicating with Children and Families*'.

This theme will culminate in Level 6 in a '*Research Dissertation*' module where the threads of inquiry-based study and communication already studied, form the basis which will allow you to choose an area to research and demonstrate critical thought, self-directed learning and your ability to plan work and use time effectively.

The second theme, 'Effective Practitioners' focuses on promoting your development as practitioners working with children, from starting out as relative novices in Level 4 through to becoming accomplished practitioners in Level 6 developing leadership and management skills for the workplace.

In Level 4, through '*Early Learning in Context*' the focus is on how children develop and learn holistically and examines both typical development and the experiences of children and families for whom this is not true, within a variety of contexts.

In Level 5 this is built upon to expand beyond the UK experience and to explore what it means to be a child and a practitioner in other settings around the world through '*International and Community Perspectives*'.

In Level 6, the focus turns towards the needs of the workplace and examines the skills needed to both function as an effective practitioner and to further develop the necessary skills for '*Leadership and Management*'.

You will also experience work-based learning in Level 4, organised as part of the '*Early Learning in Context*' module and have an opportunity in Year 2 to investigate, organise and undertake a work-based experience overseas as part of the '*International & Community Perspectives*' module. Alternatively you can decide in Level 5 to stay in the UK and secure an experience within a range of cultural and community contexts. In Level 6, whilst there is no formally organised work-based learning experience, there is an expectation that research for the modules will take place in real-life settings through your individual negotiation with those settings regarding access.

The third theme, ' Knowledgeable Professionals' begins in Level 4 with a module, '*Diversity and Inclusion*', which focuses on developing awareness of special educational needs to underpin your studies of the diverse needs of all children and how they might be fully included in all settings.

In Level 5 the focus develops further to look at '*Childhood as a Social Construct*' by exploring our understanding of 'childhood' through examining the differences that time, place and adversity make, thereby enabling discussion of historical, legal and social justices issues.

This heightened awareness to the issues relating to children and childhood will be extended in Level 6, becoming more focussed through '*Health and Well-being*' where the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to offer more specialist support to children and their families, is studied.

All the modules contribute to supporting the attainment of the Course Learning Outcomes. A 'Curriculum Map' is available showing how they interrelate.

10. **Admission to the course**

Entry requirements.

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the 'Applying' tab on the NTU course information web page.

11. **Support for learning**

When you begin the degree, we provide a series of induction activities to help you get to know one another and the students already studying in Level 5 and Level 6, as well as beginning to understand the content and expectations of the Course. These Course-specific activities are dovetailed with a series of University-wide events held in your first few weeks here. Information about all events is sent out to you prior to arriving at the University.

In addition to getting to know fellow students, you will also get to meet the team of tutors who are responsible not only for teaching you but also in providing support for your learning. For help with a specific module, you would first approach either your Teaching Tutor or the Module Leader. For more generic, pastoral support there is your named Personal Tutor, the Year Leader, and for more specialist support, you may need help from the Course Leader.

The Personal Tutors and Year Leaders will provide you with information about the Course and relevant procedures, target setting and developing an academic and professional portfolio. They will help to:

- Support your induction;
- Improve the quality of your academic work;
- Guide you to support information and careers advice within the university;
- Identify your strengths and weaknesses;
- Support the development of portfolios that represent and reflect academic, professional and university achievement during the course, in preparation for graduate employment, further qualifications and experience;
- Liaise with Student Support Services where necessary;
- Liaise with the Course Leader to monitor and evaluate your experience;
- Advise you on exceptional circumstances with regard to assignments;
- Liaise with academic tutors to assure quality and management of learning and teaching; and
- Advise you on your rights and be informed about the students' charter and all university policies pertaining to the conduct of students and staff.

The Course Administrator will support your general Course queries and questions concerning registration and processes. You will have electronic access to information which describes University systems and procedures as well as information about your Course of study through the virtual environment referred to as NOW (NTU's On-line Workspace).

As a student enrolled on the Course you will have access to all of the University facilities including the Library and IT resources, both on campus and electronically through the University's Libraries and Learning Resources (LLR) department.

There is also the University-wide Student Support Services who offer a range of services including Financial Support Services, Counselling, Disability Support, International Student Support, Mature Student Support, Progression Support and access to affiliated health centres.

12. **Graduate destinations/employability**

This degree offers a broad, contextual foundation for a number of graduate careers and post graduate training. Our extensive contact with many employers, as providers of our current work-based learning opportunities, means they support and inform our provision of a broad base of skills, knowledge and understanding about the whole child in diverse contexts, which they feel allows flexibility in the workforce and develops confident practitioners willing and able to adapt and respond to change.

We are also actively in contact with individuals from a local authority's Early Years team; head-teachers from special schools in a different local authority and our own Childhood Studies graduates to ensure currency with a variety of employers.

Each of the three themes running through the Course contributes to building graduates with marketable skills, knowledge and understanding.

'Active Learners and Communicators' offers you the opportunity to develop your own learning and professional skills, useful for roles such as:

- *Learning Mentors* for children with Autism / other Special Educational Needs;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teachers</i> on PGCE, GTP and SCITT courses for the Primary and Post Compulsory sectors. <p>'Effective Practitioners' offers you the chance to link a range of work based learning opportunities with theoretical ideas and work alongside experienced practitioners across the childcare and educational domain with a global perspective. This is useful for roles such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Practitioners</i> in SureStart nurseries and Children's Centres; • Accessing specialist fast-track training as <i>Occupational Therapists</i>; • Teaching English within International schools in Thailand and Italy and nurseries in Hong Kong. <p>'Knowledgeable Professionals' offers you the opportunity to develop more specialist knowledge relating to diverse needs; historical, legal and social justice issues as well as health and well-being issues. This is useful for opportunities for further study through <i>Masters courses</i> and roles such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Social Workers working on Child Protection teams</i>, • <i>Graduate Trainees as Speech and Language Therapy Assistants</i> prior to completing further post-graduate training. • <i>Therapists</i> involved with Play Therapy or Counselling. 				
13.	<p>Course standards and quality</p> <p>For each module you study there are two main opportunities for feedback. Your tutors give you detailed feedback about your assessed work but you also have an opportunity to respond to the module by providing feedback on your learning experiences through student evaluation. Module Leaders use student evaluations along with their own evaluations to create a Module Report which, with other reports, become part of the annual monitoring and reporting process. The draft report, written by the Course Leader, is then scrutinised by the Course Committee and the final report is submitted to the School Academic Standards and Quality Committee (SASQC) who make recommendations to the Course Committee for future action.</p> <p>The Course has an External Examiner who examines the assignment marking and reports on the quality of the assessment process to the Board of Examiners and then in a formal report to the university. This report becomes an appendix of the annual monitoring report.</p> <p>The subject benchmarks of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) have also been addressed in the Course's learning outcomes.</p> <p>The University has been the subject of a number of successful institutional audits by QAA. For information, please see the latest QAA Audit Report.</p>				
14.	<p>Assessment regulations</p> <p>This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:</p>				
	None				
15.	<p>Additional Information</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Collaborative partner(s):</td> <td>N/a</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Course referenced to Quality Assurance Agency for Higher</td> <td>QAA benchmark statements for education Studies and Early Years (B)</td> </tr> </table>	Collaborative partner(s):	N/a	Course referenced to Quality Assurance Agency for Higher	QAA benchmark statements for education Studies and Early Years (B)
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Education (QAA) Benchmark Statements:	
Course recognised by:	NCTL as an Early years Educator qualification
Date this course specification approved:	June 2017
Any additional information:	None.