

HNC Early Childhood Education and Care starting in Academic Year 2023/24

Course Leader:	Julie Haynes
Teaching Institution:	Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College
Campus:	Hereford
Awarding Body:	Pearson
Final Award:	HNC
Intermediate Award(s):	N/A
Mode of Study:	Full-time
Qualification number:	603/3899/4
Date of programme specification preparation/revision:	31/08/23

Educational aims of the programme

The aim of the Higher National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is to develop students as professional, self-reflecting individuals able to meet the demands of employers in the early education and care sector and adapt to a constantly changing world. The qualifications aim is to widen access to higher education and enhance the career prospects of those who undertake it. It offers an in-depth introduction to the subject area via a mandatory core of learning, while allowing for the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills and experience through specialist pathways.

QAA and professional academic standards and quality

The HNC in ECEC is located at level 4 of the Framework for Higher Qualifications (2014).

The following university and further education tutors, employers, Professional Body representatives and other individuals have generously shared their time and expertise to develop the HNC and HND qualifications: Chartered College of Teaching, Childcare Partnership (Northern Ireland), Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network, Early Education, East Sussex County Council Early Years Improvement Team, Guernsey College of Further Education, Institute of Education, University of Reading, Morningside Children's Centre, North West Regional College, Northern Ireland Social Care Council, Northern Regional College, Nottingham Trent University, Rachel Trenchard Consulting, Solihull College and University Centre, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, Southern Regional College, Southern Eastern Regional College, Sunderland College, The Best Practice Network, The Centre for Research in Early Childhood, The Open University, University of East London, University of Sunderland and the University of Wolverhampton.

National Occupational Standards

The content and level of the Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate and Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care have been written following advice from the professional bodies listed above and are intended to support articulation to Level 6 in early education and care-related degree courses, excepting degrees to regulated professions such as Primary School Teaching.

To support progression to Level 5 or Level 6 in early education and care-related degree courses through accreditation of prior learning or articulation, units in the Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care are referenced against national early childhood education and care standards in the UK.

Higher-level Skills

On completion of this programme, learners studying the HNC ECEC will be able to:

- Demonstrate a sound knowledge of the fundamental concepts, values and principles of early education and care practice, and the skills to perform effectively as a worker in a number of different settings in the early education and care sector.
- They will be able to communicate accurately and appropriately, and they will have the behaviours and qualities needed for employment that requires some degree of personal responsibility. T
- They will have developed a range of transferable skills to ensure effective teamwork, independent initiative, organisational competence and problem-solving strategies.
- They will also demonstrate regard for ethical responsibilities of the early childhood practitioner and the importance of their role in supporting the development of happy, healthy children. T
- They will be adaptable and flexible in their approach to work, showing resilience under pressure, and the ability to meet challenging targets within a given reasonable pre-set timeframe.

Students need both good qualifications and employability skills to enhance their career prospects and personal development. Pearson BTEC Higher National Early Childhood Education and Care qualifications embed throughout the programme, the development of key skills, attributes and strengths required by 21st century employers. Where employability skills are referred to in this specification, this generally refers to skills in three main categories:

- Cognitive and problem-solving skills: critical thinking, approaching non-routine problems by applying expert and creative solutions, use of systems and digital technology, generating and communicating ideas creatively.
- Intra-personal skills: self-management, adaptability and resilience, self-monitoring and self-development, self-analysis and reflection, planning and prioritising.
- Interpersonal skills: effective communication and articulation of information, working collaboratively, negotiating and influencing, self-presentation.

Course Structure

The HNC ECEC is a qualification with a minimum of 120 credits, of which 120 credits are mandatory.

Unit Number		Unit Level	Unit Credit
Mandatory units			
1	Personal and Professional Development through Reflective Practice	4	15
2	Protecting Children in Early Education and Care Environments	4	15
3	Play and Learning in Early Childhood	4	15
4	Supporting and Promoting Children's Development (Babies and Toddlers)	4	15
5	Supporting and Promoting Children's Development (Young Children)	4	15
6	Promoting Healthy Living	4	15
7	Preparing for Research (Pearson-set)	4	15
8	Promoting Inclusive Early Education and Care Environments	4	15

Learning and Teaching Methods

Students will learn through a series of lectures, practical sessions, workshops, seminars and tutorials. They will also be required to undertake substantial independent study. Typically, this will involve completing online activities, reading journal articles and books, watching selected videos, working through example problems, working on individual and group projects, undertaking research in the library and online, preparing assignments and presentations.

Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course.

In a typical week, students will normally have 8 hours of face-to-face teaching. The course normally runs over 30 weeks.

Work experience/placement requirements - In addition to the teaching, 375 hours' work placement or experience in early education and/or care settings which is in line with the Nutbrown review 'Only settings that are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted should be able to host students on placement". Students who are employed in a setting rated as Requiring Improvement or Inadequate by Ofsted will be required to complete 75 hours of the 375 hours in a Good or Outstanding setting.

Students who are full and relevant and employed in good or outstanding settings will be required to complete 25 hours of the 375 hour with an age range they are not responsible for and complete a reflective account of the experience.

All students will also need to complete a Practical Reflective Evidence Portfolio (PREP), including reflective accounts, over the duration of the programme.

A minimum of two different settings is required. Ideally, you will have a minimum of 75 practice hours with each of the following age ranges:

- From birth to one year, 11 months
- From two years to four years, 11 months
- Five years to seven years, 11 months.

Where a student undertakes work placement/experience in two settings only, at least one of these settings must enable the student to meet the practice hours requirements for at least two of the age ranges specified above.

Means of Assessment

Students working at higher levels should be capable of undertaking independent study and research, developing strategies to improve their own performance, supported by teaching staff.

Students will be required to complete coursework as they progress through the programme and undertake assessments at the end of each semester. The assessment of Pearson Higher National qualifications is criterion-referenced and we are required to assess learners' evidence against published learning outcomes and assessment criteria. All units will be individually graded as 'pass', 'merit' or 'distinction'. To achieve a pass grade for the unit learners must meet the assessment criteria set out in the specifications. Merit and distinction grades are awarded for higher-level achievement.

All grades awarded are provisional until they are confirmed at the assessment board. This usually takes place at the end of an academic year.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is 'a method of assessment that considers whether an individual can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills that they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning'. If individuals can produce relevant evidence that fully meets learning outcome requirements then RPL can be given for their existing knowledge, understanding or skills

External Examiner

The External Examiner (EE) is a subject assessment specialist appointed by Pearson to conduct external examination. They verify that the management of programmes and assessment decisions meet national standards. External examination is usually conducted by an annual visit, usually in the summer term.

Additional Support

Developing effective study skills is an essential element in achieving academic success. All module leaders provide individual academic support. This is in addition to Personal Academic Tutor support.

All students are provided with a Course Handbook that comprehensively outlines the programme and provides advice and guidance. Module outlines and assessment details are provided for all modules. During your studies you will have access to fully equipped classrooms, practical workshops, Library with text and electronic resources and Student Services.

The College is committed to ensuring that disabled people, including those with specific learning difficulties and/or mental health difficulties are treated fairly. Reasonable adjustments to provision will be made to ensure that disabled students are not disadvantaged. The Learning Support Service is your initial point of contact.

Entry Requirements

Entry criteria detail a typical offer but the College considers all applications on an individual basis which means that we could make offers based on qualifications, personal profile and experience. If you have any queries regarding your offer, please contact our Admissions Team.

Typical offer:

Four GCSEs at grade C or above including GCSE English Language at C or above (or recognised equivalency). Evidence of Level 2 Literacy is required, for example Key Skills Level 2 or GCSE English Language at C or above or equivalent. If you do not have evidence of Literacy at Level 2, it will be necessary to complete a non-standard entry essay to demonstrate competence in written English. Maths GCSE at grade C or above (or recognised equivalency) is desirable.

A minimum of one A Level or a Level 3 qualification equivalent to three or above A Levels, for example the CACHE Diploma or BTEC National Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development. The current UCAS tariff requirements for entry are 32 UCAS points.

In addition to this, practitioners who do not hold the qualifications outlined above will be considered on the basis of prior professional experience and related learning.

The following are required for both standard and non-standard entry:

- A statement of support from your current employer to provide the time, opportunity and support for work-based requirements and release to attend university-based study.
- A testimony from an appropriately qualified referee.
- Evidence of current police check (DBS) clearance to work with young children.

Course Exit Points

To achieve the qualification a student must complete 120 credits and pass 105 credits at or above the level of the qualification.

Progression Route

The Level 4 Higher National Certificate provides a solid grounding in early education and care practice, which students can build on should they decide to continue their studies beyond the Certificate stage. Successful completion of the HNC allows progression to Level 5. The Level 5 Higher National Diploma allows students to specialise by committing to specific career paths and progression routes to degree-level study.

On successful completion of the Level 5 Higher National Diploma, students can develop their careers in the early education and care sector through:

- Entering employment
- Continuing existing employment
- Completing a higher apprenticeship programme
- Linking with the appropriate Professional Body
- Committing to Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Progressing to university.

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 associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks and module specifications.