Programme Specification – Definitive Document

Section 1: BASIC INFORMATION

1.1	**Awarding Institution:**	University of St Mark and St John
1.2	**Teaching Institution:**	University of St Mark and St John
1.3	**Locus of Delivery:**	University of St Mark and St John
1.4	**Final Award Title:**	**Foundation Degree Arts**
1.5	**FHEQ Level:**	**4 & 5**
1.6	**Programme Title:**	**Early Years**
1.7	**Mode and Duration of Study:**	Full-time 2 years Part-time 4 years
1.9	**Admission Criteria:**	A level grades DDD BTEC grades MMP Access to HE 33 level 3 credits at Merit/Distinction Other qualifications will be considered on an individual basis. Non standard entry may be considered where applicants have extensive practice experience In addition, all applicants must be engaged in a minimum of 10 hours per week relevant employment (paid or unpaid) and supply details of their work and employer at application. Applicants' employers will need to supply the University with a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) number and

		date and confirm that there is no additional information.

Prospective students will be expected to engage in an informal discussion with a Programme staff member prior to being offered a place. This may be conducted face to face or using Skype or phone. This should ensure that students properly understand the nature of the work- based learning foundation degree they are applying for but will not be used as a means of withholding offers from applicants who meet the entry criteria.

International students will be expected to meet the English language requirements of IELTS 6.0 or equivalent |
1.8	**UCAS Code(s):**	X900 Early Years
1.10	**Accrediting Professional Body/ PSRB:**	N/A
1.11	**QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s):**	Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark (2010)
1.12	**Other External Points of Reference:**	Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014)

Early Years: Guide to the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice(DfE, 2014) [online] accessed on 7.3.2016 The Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce (CWDC 2010)

Subject Benchmark Statement for Early Childhood Studies (Oct 2014) [online] accessed

on 28.3.16 |
| 1.13 | **Language of Study (for learning,** | English |

	teaching and assessment):	
1.14	**Work-Based Learning Arrangements:**	3 x 20-credit modules
1.15	**Foundation Degree Progression Routes:**	A range of opportunities for progression exist, including: B.A. (Hons) Early Childhood Education B.A. (Hons) Primary Education
1.16	**Arrangements for Distance Learning:**	None
1.17	**Original Date of Production:**	March 2016
1.18	**Date of Commencement:**	September 2016
1.19	**Review Date:**	September 2022

2.   Programme Outline

A work-based learning foundation degree comprising 6 x 20-credit modules at level 4 and 6 x 20-credit modules at level 5. The programme includes 1 work-based learning module at level 4, and 2 at level 5.

2.1   Integrating Sustainability into the Curriculum

'The concept of sustainability focuses on achieving human well-being and quality of life, pursued through the maintenance, care and equitable use of natural and cultural resources.' (HEA 2011) accessed at https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/esd_artwork_050412_1324.pdf on 28/2/16. Issues of sustainability will be discussed in terms of safeguarding children and working to ensure their, and workforce, wellbeing; supporting children to achieve their potential; promoting resilience; and inculcating the curiosity and criticality to keep learning throughout the life-course (both in our students and the children and young people they work with). Increasing use of digital material and communication mean that we are minimising our carbon footprint thus making a small contribution to environmental sustainability.

3.   Distinctive Features

The programme is delivered to students who are current Early Years practitioners. The programme is distinctive in terms of its work-based learning element which comprises 25% of the credits overall. Students attend university on a fortnightly basis so there is a strong emphasis on blended learning. Compared to similar offers from local providers (see Appendix A) this FdA has a higher entry tariff, a lower fee, and fewer days' attendance on campus. University staff teaching at Level 6 report that graduates of these foundation degrees are better-prepared academically than those students coming from other institutions, which is borne out by the three students from our own foundation degree programme achieving First Class Honours in 2015. The qualification is delivered direct by its awarding institution and so allows students full access to campus based facilities including a university-standard library together with full access to the range of electronic and

other resources. This contrasts with qualifications delivered by franchised institutions. Student representatives have commented to the Staff/Student Liaison Committee (March 2016) that 'going to university' carries for them positive connotations of quality and progression to a higher level, in contrast to 'going back to college'.

The involvement of student-practitioners with a wide range of practice experience in diverse settings, together with the discursive nature of formal learning and teaching on the programme, provides rich opportunities for students to converse, debate, negotiate, persuade and challenge the ideas of others whilst identifying best practice. Throughout, students are required to make links between the taught and work-based components of the course, linking theory with practice. Many work settings make positive changes as a result of having an employee engaged in the foundation degree, as evidenced at three-way meetings involving the student, their workplace supervisor, and a member of academic staff.

The employment-friendly attendance requirement coupled with a low fee and the good reputation of the institution in the subject areas, make this an appealing and unique local offer to potential students. The programme is supported by Plymouth City Council's Early Years team in terms of bursaries and the provision of expert supervisors to students working in Plymouth settings. Many prospective students report informally that the foundation degrees offered by the University are recommended by alumni in the workplace, to colleagues whom they have identified as having the potential to progress further in their careers (informal discussions at Open Days and Evenings). Student representatives approved the proposed sharing of all modules across the programmes as they felt this would give them a good understanding across the context of 0 – 18 education (SSLC, March 2016).

Provision of supervisors by the work setting, the Masters level training offered to these supervisors, and the workshops hosted by the University of St Mark and St John build positive links with local employers and enable good practice to be disseminated with consequent benefits for service users. Workshops offer opportunities for employers to engage with programme staff in

discussions around the continuing relevance of the programme to practice, the operationalisation of the work-based learning modules, and the effectiveness of the employer/university interface.

Our Specific Learning Needs Advisor has been closely involved with the development of the programme, particularly the Engaging with Learning module, where we have also engaged closely with the Melt team (e-learning). We have endeavoured to take an 'inclusive assessment' approach across the programmes, because we understand that a high proportion of students are likely to have some form of dyslexia or other identified learning need. The range of assessments offered ensures that students build their confidence and skills in using digital media, for example 5 out of the 12 modules incorporate/allow the use of digital media in assessment tasks. The Engaging with Learning Module will ensure that from the start of the programme, each student will assess at their individual digital learning needs and engage with this learning at an appropriate level.

4.   Programme Aims

The programme aims to:

1. Enable employers, students and the University to work collaboratively in order to enhance the quality of practice
2. Develop students as critically reflective practitioners who are committed to ongoing learning in the workplace
3. Enable students to understand and appreciate diversity and challenge inequalities and discrimination
4. Develop student competence in independent learning to a level commensurate with a Foundation Degree level award
5. Provide a learning experience relevant to those working with babies, toddlers and young children and their families
6. Promote knowledge and understanding of development within a bio-psycho-social and ecological framework, for children from conception, and for young people
7. Promote knowledge and understanding of the wider social context in which children and young people develop, including the development of policy and multiagency services and

influences of globalisation.

5.   Programme Learning Outcomes

Knowledge & understanding:

By the end of this programme students should be able to demonstrate:-

1. An understanding of the role of critical reflective practice in the workplace
2. A critical awareness of issues of equality of opportunity, discrimination and diversity together with an appreciation of young children as active participants
3. A critical understanding of the nature and use of research including its application in practice, and its ethical dimensions.
4. Knowledge and understanding of child development from conception within a bio-psycho-social and ecological framework
5. Knowledge and understanding of the interrelationships between political, economic, cultural and ideological contexts in the lives of children and their families and communities
6. Knowledge and understanding of key concepts and theoretical approaches relevant to practice in Early Years settings, including international practices

Intellectual skills:

By the end of this programme students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:-

7. Make links between their learning experiences across modules and with their practice
8. Access, retrieve, organise and use a range of sources of information, and evaluate their relevance
9. Listen carefully to others and offer and justify an informed point of view
10. Analyse policies and practices with a range of theoretical perspectives and articulate intellectual, professional and value-based judgements
11. Review and critically evaluate relevant theory and research from a range of sources and apply these to practice

12. Engage in independent enquiry within an ethical framework relevant to their practice role and setting

Practical skills:

By the end of this programme students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:-

13. Operate as critically reflective practitioners who are able to link theoretical concepts to practice
14. Are able to make informed judgements on ethical, relational and professional issues
15. Competently engage in a range of relationships with families, colleagues, other professionals and communities within an anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory framework

Transferable / key skills:

By the end of this programme students should be able to demonstrate:-

16. Communication skills in a variety of forms
17. Learning, study and research skills.
18. Use ICT appropriately as part of the learning process in a range of contexts, both at their own level and to enhance provision for children
19. Effective planning, organisation and time management skills
20. The ability to select and implement appropriate quantitative and qualitative techniques for data collection, presentation, analysis and problem-solving.

6.   Learning and Teaching Methods

A range of learning and teaching approaches are utilised to enable flexible, student-centred learning. Considerable emphasis is placed on a discursive approach to learning, in order to draw on the wide range of practice experience the students bring to their studies, and to encourage students to consider a range of practice and perspectives. Students are encouraged to develop confidence in using their practice as a site of analysis and to 'make meaning' from their

engagement with the learning (See Section 3 above). Small-group work will encourage active participation. Lectures, seminars, tutorials and on-line learning will also be used. It is intended that the programme will increasingly utilise blended learning to enable students to manage their independent studies outside taught sessions at University and to encourage their engagement with digital technologies.

Work-based learning is central to the programme and the identification of a supervisor in the workplace will enable students to explore theoretical ideas in relation to practice within their setting; this will benefit students' on-going learning and has the potential to invigorate and improve practice within the setting itself.

6.1   Learning Enhancement

Students will develop their sense of professional identity, being able to articulate the values and practices important to themselves as practitioners. Students will be encouraged to engage with the university's Employability department in order to consider a range of career development opportunities and to learn how they can best present themselves and articulate their skills and knowledge to potential employers; and/or to gain advice about managing their own settings as businesses or non-profit organisations.

6.2   e-Learning

All modules will provide information and links to literature and other resources on the University's VLE, Learning Space. Most modules will utilise a blended learning approach in which e-learning activities support face to face interaction. As University capacity evolves, students will increasingly become involved in exploring how they can utilise digital environments as part of their own pedagogy.

7.   Modes of Assessment

The programme is assessed in accordance with the University's Assessment Regulations and Procedures. It should be noted that, whilst anonymised marking provision is in place, it is expected that some module assessment tasks may in some instances identify the writer as course work will involve student writing about specific practice contexts, interventions and improvements. Assessment is viewed as an aid to learning. Oversight by the External Examiner enables a wider reference point for the standards attained. A wide range of assessment methods is used on the programme to acknowledge differences in learning styles, and as far as is practicable, assessment will be 'inclusive' – that is, will 'enable all students to demonstrate to

their full potential what they know, understand and can do' (Hockings, 2010:2).

Glossary of teaching and assessment terms:

Annotated bibliography:

A selection of identified academic or otherwise authoritative resources compiled in response to an identified theme. Notes give a rationale for the selection of each resource.

Blended learning:

A programme of learning which in part involves delivery of content and instruction via digital and online media

Case Study:

A comprehensive examination and analysis (using a variety of sources of evidence/knowledge) in relation to one particular case (e.g. an individual or a practice setting).

Debate:

Organised group discussion on a particular issue involving a range of perspectives

Development Project:

An assignment requiring students to identify, develop and demonstrate key skills for study in Higher Education.

e – portfolio:

Portfolio of work created electronically and digitally which may include digital artefacts such as video recordings

Essay:

A written response to a question based on synthesis and analysis, demonstrating appropriate knowledge and understanding of key current debates in the subject.

Groupwork:

Facilitated collaborative learning experience

Independent study:

Directed academic study with limited supervision

Learning Agreement:

Oral or written presentation of a document outlining individual learning priorities and how these will be addressed.

Lecture:

A planned talk given to a group of students to teach them about a particular subject

Multimedia Log:

Practice journal utilising digital platforms

Portfolio:

A collection of shorter pieces of writing, or evidence in other media, usually linked to seminar/workshop tasks. These may be submitted at various points within the semester.

Poster:

A visual presentation of knowledge/understanding, backed with oral explanation of its content

Presentation:

Clearly structured individual or group verbal delivery within timed conditions, delivered using appropriate methods and which demonstrates detailed knowledge and analysis; to be recorded for purposes of moderation

Production of resource:

A material or digital resource produced for assessment

Rationale:

A set of reasons which justify the choice of sources used

Report:

A written response structured to an event or activity which evaluates and assesses the processes and outcomes and makes recommendations.

Research Proposal: A detailed outline for a research project which includes relevant reading and proposed methodology.

Seminar:

A scheduled activity or discussion with a group of students

Short Development Project:

Written or digital evidence of a student's own academic / professional development

Self and Organisation Assessment:

Engagement in a process to produce an evaluation of self and organisation

Self and Peer Assessment:

Engagement in a process to produce an evaluation of self and peers

Structured Assignment:

A format specified by the module leader usually related to an extended piece of research and/or own reflexive practice. This may include the production of a digital artefact

Supervision in the workplace:

A process whereby a student meets with a member of workplace staff to discuss and reflect on theory and practice

Team Response:

A timed exercise in which a team of students produces a response to a previously unseen scenario

Tutorial:

A teaching session given to one or a small group of students

Workshop:

A facilitated activity or problem-based learning experience

8. Exemptions to University Regulations

In order to progress to an Honours year, students will need to have achieved an average mark of 50% or above across the two years of the foundation degree as an institutional requirement.

9. Work-Based Learning / Placement Learning

All students will take 3 x 20-credit modules of work-based learning based in their usual place of employment (paid or voluntary). This will be supported by an identified supervisor in the workplace who will meet with the student on a regular basis to facilitate reflexive discussion. The learning will be assessed by the submission of academic pieces of work for marking by module staff. It is envisaged that many students will, as a result of their studies, progress further within their career or widen their aspirations to consider a range of careers/further studies that may become open to them.

10. Programme Structure

	Module Code[1]	Module Title	Credits	Assessment			Semester/ Term^	C/O*	Non-condonable#
				%age Course work	%age Written exam	%age Practical exam			
Level 4	ERYC14	Bio-psycho-social development in children and young people	20	100			A	C	C
	LETC01	Safeguarding Children and Young People	20	75		25	A	C	C
	LETC02	Reflective and Professional Practice 1	20	100			X	C	C
	ERYC90	Engaging with Learning	20	80		20	X	C	NC
	LETC03	Learning and Teaching	20	100			B	C	C
	ERYC15	Policy and Practice	20	100			B	C	C
Level 5	ERYD10	Global Childhoods	20	60		40	A	C	C
	LETD01	Creative Pedagogies	20	100			A	C	C
	ERYD11	Reflective and Professional Practice 2	20	100			A	C	C
	LETD02	Diversity in Learning	20	100			B	C	C
	ERYD12	Research in Practice	20	100			B	C	C
	LETD03	Reflective and Professional Practice 3	20	100			B	C	C

Key:

^ For modules delivered by semester:

- A or B = Semester A or B
- X = modules delivered across Semesters A and B

* C = compulsory; O = optional

\# A tick indicates that the module is non-condonable on this programme.

[1] a definitive module descriptor is required for each module

11. Accrediting Professional Body / Professional Regulatory and Statutory Body (PSRB)

N/A

12. Professional Advisory Group

Workshops offered each year to supervisors from employing agencies enable sharing of information and intelligence on the practice landscape, comment and discussion of the programme and how this links to practice, and group discussion of practice and learning issues.

13. Academic Progression Opportunities

Following achievement of a B.A. Honours progression year, students may progress on to postgraduate opportunities such as Early Years Initial Teacher Training, Schools Direct, and Post Graduate Certificate of Education.

14. Employability and Career Progression Opportunities

Graduates of this programme have progressed to higher or managerial roles in Early Years settings, and some have set up their own Early Years provision.

15. Support for Students and for Student Learning

The module Engaging with Learning, delivered in small groups of 8 students led by their Personal Development Tutor, sets out to inculcate in the student a sense of belonging in Higher Education, together with an understanding of how they themselves learn (metalearning) . Support is also available via

- Academic Advice
- Academic Skills
- Accommodation
- Computing and e-learning support
- Disability and Inclusion Advice Service
- Employability and Careers Development
- Finance and Welfare

- Health

- Student Counselling and Wellbeing

The Student Support department is Matrix accredited.

Student support and guidance is further promoted by the following:

- Personal Development Tutor

- Academic staff: programme leaders, module leaders and tutors

- Library; library staff

- 'Study and Learn' e-learning resources

- Programme handbooks and module guides

- The Chaplaincy Centre, at the heart of the University, for people of all faiths and none; offering a social space, quiet and reflective space and prayer

- On-campus nursery facility

16. Student Feedback Mechanisms

- National Student Survey

- Staff-student liaison groups meeting three times per year

- Student Experience Council

- Feedback evaluating each module as it finishes, which feeds into programme reports

17. Other Stakeholder Feedback

See 12 above; also at 3-way meetings in the workplace

18. Quality and Enhancement Mechanisms

The quality of the foundation degree programme is managed and quality assured through standard University regulations and procedures relating to assessment. Student achievement is managed via by Module Assessment Boards, which are attended by the External Examiner as well

as module leaders. Progression is managed by the relevant Progression and Award Board, attended by the Chief External Examiner. The quality of learning in the workplace is assured by 3-way meetings involving the student, supervisor and member of the University teaching staff, which will sample a number of workplaces each semester.

The University is an accredited Investor in People. This Award demonstrates the University's on-going commitment to good employment practice and to developing the potential of all its employees. The University also holds the following awards: Disability Two Tick, Mindful Employer and is a Stonewall Diversity Champion.

19.   Key Information Set (KIS) Data

Year 1

Scheduled Teaching 10%

Independent Study 80%

Work-based Learning 10%

Year 2

Scheduled Teaching 10%

Independent Study 70%

Work-based Learning 20%

Appendix 1 - Learning Outcomes Mapping Matrix Early Years

Module Code	Knowledge and Understanding							Intellectual Skills							Practical Skills				Transferable/Key Skills				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
ELYC14		X		X				X		X	X	X		X	X	X				X	X	X	
LETC01	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
ELYC15			X					X	X										X	X	X	X	
LETC02	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
ELYC16		X			X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X			X	X	X	
LETC03	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
ELYD10	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
LETD01	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
LETD02	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
ELYD12		X	X						X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
ELYD11	X	X				X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
LETD03	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Appendix 2: Quality Assurance Framework

CREDIT LEVEL 4 (Certificate)	Students awarded a qualification at this level will have demonstrated:
Knowledge and understanding	- factual and/or conceptual knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study using appropriate terminology; - an awareness of ethical issues in current areas of study with an ability to discuss these in relation to personal beliefs and values.
Intellectual skills	- the ability to analyse using given classifications/ principles; - the ability to synthesise ideas and information in a predictable and standard format; - the ability to evaluate the reliability of data using defined techniques and/or tutor guidance; - the ability to apply tools/methods accurately and carefully to a well defined problem and begin to appreciate the complexity of issues.
Practical skills	- the ability to operate in predictable, defined contexts using a range of specified (subject specific) techniques; - the ability to act with limited autonomy, under direction or supervision, within defined guidelines.

Transferable / key skills	- the ability to work effectively with others as a member of a group and meet obligations to others (e.g. tutors, peers and colleagues); - the ability to work within an appropriate ethos, using and accessing a range of learning resources; - the ability to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses within criteria largely set by others; - responsibility for their own learning with appropriate support; - the ability to communicate effectively in a variety of formats appropriate to the discipline(s) and report practical procedures in a clear and concise manner; - the ability to apply tools/methods accurately and carefully to a well defined problem and begin to appreciate the complexity of the issues of the discipline.

CREDIT LEVEL 5 (Diploma)	Students awarded a qualification at this level will have demonstrated:
Knowledge and understanding	- detailed knowledge of major theories of the discipline(s) and awareness of a variety of ideas, contexts and frameworks; - an awareness of wider social and environmental implications of area(s) of study; - an ability to debate issues in relation to more general ethical perspectives.
Intellectual skills	- the ability to analyse a range of information with minimum guidance using given classifications/principles and can compare alternative methods and techniques for obtaining data/information; - the ability to reformat a range of ideas and information towards a given purpose; - the ability to select appropriate techniques of evaluation and evaluate the relevant and significance of the data/ information collected; - the ability to identify key elements of problems and choose appropriate methods for their resolution in a considered manner.
Practical skills	- the ability to operate in situations of varying complexity and predictability requiring the application of a wide range of techniques; - the ability to act with increasing autonomy, with minimal direction or supervision, within defined guidelines.

Transferable / key skills	- the ability to interact effectively within a team, giving and receiving information and ideas and modifying responses where appropriate;
	- the ability to manage learning using resources relevant to the discipline;
	- a professional working relationships with others;
	- the ability to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses, challenge received opinion and develop own criteria and judgement;
	- the ability to manage information; select appropriate data from a range of sources and develop appropriate research strategies;
	- the ability to take responsibility for own learning, with minimum direction;
	- the ability to communicate effectively and in a variety of formats appropriate to the discipline(s), in a clear and concise manner;
	- the ability to identify key areas of problems and select appropriate tools/methods accurately for their resolution in a considered manner.