



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Studies and Practice (Level 8)

Adult and Continuing Education Office

Take a new Path



Programme Overview

The Diploma/Bachelor of Arts (Early Childhood Studies and Practice) has been developed to meet the identified needs of practitioners in the early years' sector who wish to pursue further education and training in a flexible manner, complimenting and supporting continued employment. This 4 year part time programme of study builds on practical experience, enhancing the learner's skills through exposure to theory, policy and research and work-based learning opportunities.

The programme of study builds year to year on skills and knowledge students develop through their exposure to key areas of the course, including theory, social policy, the development of research skills, and the enhancement of practical experiential learning opportunities. By the completion of year four, the graduate emerges as a reflective practitioner with an in-depth understanding of the holistic needs of children and families and the role of early years services in the broader community and policy context.

Programme Aim

The programme aims to provide practitioners currently working in the field of early childhood care and education an opportunity to upgrade their qualifications and further develop their skills and enhance their existing knowledge in a flexible and accessible format

Intended For

This programme was developed in response to substantial evidence of the needs of childcare practitioners who may already possess a recognised qualification at levels 5 or 6 and who wish to upgrade their qualification in a manner that will support their continued employment and their workplace. Alternatively, potential students without a recognised qualification, but with extensive experience in the childcare care and education sector are also encouraged to apply.

The programme will be particularly suitable for:

- Early year practitioners in crèches, pre-schools, school age childcare services, special education services and childminding settings
- Managers of crèches, pre-schools, school age services, special education services
- Early childhood practitioners in the Health Services Executive
- City/County Childcare Committee members and staff
- Practitioners in the child and family support sector
- Special Needs Assistants

Programme Structure

This part-time distance learning programme will be delivered on a modular basis over 4 years using a blended learning approach. This allows adult learners, with work and family commitments, to study at times that suit their needs. Blended learning combines traditional learning approaches with distance learning and utilises a variety of teaching methods and assessment techniques, suited to the adult learner returning to education. These methods include the following:

- Self-study learning materials
- Required textbooks which students are expected to purchase
- Additional readings which may be available in the library or online
- Workshop sessions
- On-line learning (discussion boards, online collaboration, e-mail etc.)

Assessment techniques may include a range of the following:

- Student learning journals/diaries
- Reports
- Presentations
- Portfolios
- Demonstrations
- Essays
- Written exams (which will take place in NUI Galway)

Workshops

Students will be expected to attend a number of full day workshops throughout each academic year (September to May). In the main, participants can expect these workshops to be held on Saturdays, with the potential of two to three Friday workshops each year. Workshops will be organised to be geographically accessible to all learners. It is envisioned that outreach sites throughout the country will be established. This is contingent on student uptake and the availability of resources to support the programme.

Programme Content

<p>Year One: Certificate Cycle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Learning <i>5 ECTS</i> • Psychology: The Developing Child 1 <i>10 ECTS</i> • Creative Development in Early Years <i>5 ECTS</i> • Child Protection and Safety in Childcare Services <i>10 ECTS</i> • Health, Hygiene and Nutrition in Early Childhood <i>5 ECTS</i> • Work-based Project <i>10 ECTS</i> 	<p>Year Three: Degree Cycle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Families in Society <i>10 ECTS</i> • The Management of Childcare Environments <i>10 ECTS</i> • Working with Children and Families <i>5 ECTS</i> • Effective Leadership for the Childcare Sector <i>5 ECTS</i> • Research Methodologies <i>5 ECTS</i> • Work-based Project <i>10 ECTS</i>
<p>Year Two: Diploma Cycle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychology: The Developing Child 2 <i>10 ECTS</i> • Implementing the Early Learning Curriculum <i>10 ECTS</i> • The Child and Family in Irish Law <i>5 ECTS</i> • Quality Awareness in Early Learning <i>10 ECTS</i> • Work-based Project <i>10 ECTS</i> 	<p>Year Four: Degree Cycle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Inclusion in Early Years Care and Education <i>10 ECTS</i> • Irish Social, Family and Childcare Policies <i>10 ECTS</i> • Understanding Family Support <i>10 ECTS</i> • Dissertation <i>15 ECTS</i>

10 ECTS Modules will require attendance at a two day workshop and 5 ECTS modules will require attendance at a one day workshop.

Entry Requirements

- Applicants who have reached the age of 21 on the year of application will be admitted to the programme on the grounds of mature years.
- Students under 21 must satisfy the University's matriculation requirements.
- Applicants should be employed in an early childhood setting with up to 2 years experience working in the sector.
- While formal academic qualification are not necessary, those possessing a FETAC Level 5 or 6 qualification in the childcare or related disciplines will be encouraged to apply.
- Potential students should be disciplined, self-directed and enthusiastic learners, as course expectations see students coming to workshops and seminars prepared to discuss, explore and critically analyse subject matter which they have become familiar with through home study.
- Admittance to the programme will be subject to approval from the Garda vetting scheme.
- Students are expected to be able to access and use the internet.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Students with previous relevant qualifications may be eligible to apply for exemption from some modules on this programme of study. Alternatively, students who believe they have extensive experiential learning may be able to supplement previous certified learning to enable them to meet module learning outcomes. In this case, such learning must be demonstrated through the production of a learning portfolio. Full details of the RPL process may be obtained from the programme co-ordinator.

Tuition Fees

The tuition fee for the 2011/2012 academic year is €2,900 per year for EU students and circa €3,400 for non-EU students. A deposit of €500 must accompany the application form (bank draft or postal order only). Unsuccessful applicants will be refunded this fee.

Application Procedure

Applicants can use the application form attached to this brochure to make their application. Application forms are also available online at www.nuigalway.ie/adulteducation

Completed applications require:

- Fully completed application form
- Signed passport photograph
- Birth Certificate (Marriage Certificate if applicant is to be registered using married surname)
- Personal statement
- Deposit of €500

The closing date for completed application is Friday, 3rd of June 2011.

Successful applicants will be contacted in July and confirmation of acceptance of place must be completed no later than the 1st of August. Short-listing of late applicants may be made, should vacancies arise from the selection process. All learners who accept a place for year one of the programme will be expected to attend an orientation day in NUI Galway in early September.

Career Options

Upon completion of this degree course students will be qualified to be employed in a variety of early years settings, including preschool settings, full daycares/crèches, playgroups, after school settings, drop in centres as well as a range of specialised settings such as family intervention settings. Due to the extensive range of course topics covered, the graduate will be skilled in a wide range of issues and areas that might see them employed in county/city childcare committees, in community outreach and development settings, family and community resource centres, or in the policy development arena.

Progression Opportunities

Graduates of the Bachelor of Arts programme may wish to pursue their education and would be qualified to do so in a range of areas including higher diploma or master degrees in early childhood care and education, community development, family studies and family support, to name a few.

Accreditation

Participants will have opportunities to achieve accreditation throughout the cycle of the course, recognising their efforts and achievements at different stages:

- Certificate in Early Childhood Studies and Practice (NFQ: Level 7) will be awarded on the successful completion of Year 1.
- Diploma in Arts, Early Childhood Studies and Practice (NFQ: Level 7) will be awarded at the end of Year 2.
- Bachelor of Arts, Early Childhood Studies and Practice (NFQ: Level 8) will be awarded on the successful completion of full course, at the end of year 4.

Further Enquiries

If you have further queries please contact the programme co-ordinator:

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