

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Programme Title:

**Foundation Degree in
Early Childhood Studies**

Awarding Body:

Staffordshire University

Teaching Institutions:

Part time: 2 Years

**Ashton Sixth Form College
Burton and South Derbyshire College
Newcastle-under-Lyme College
Stafford College
South Staffordshire College
Stoke-on-Trent College
Shrewsbury College**

Final Award:

**Foundation Degree of Arts in
Early Childhood Studies**

Intermediate Awards:

**Certificate of Higher Education in
Education (Level 4)**

Mode of Study:

Part-time

UCAS Codes:

X310

QAA Benchmarks:

Early Childhood Studies 2014

JACS Code:

L520

Date of Production:

March 2017

EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

- Increase your competence as a learner and aid you to develop transferable skills such as communication, self-awareness, reflection, evaluating your effect on others and their environments.
- Provide flexible and high quality, teaching and learning experiences which will encourage you to relate theory to practice and prepare you for a range of vocational roles in early years care and education, in accordance with your prior experience.
- Ensure that you can demonstrate that you have adopted appropriate, value and belief systems for the early years' sector, including anti-discriminatory practice, safeguarding children, equal opportunities and inclusion.
- Develop your ability to construct and sustain a reasoned argument, informed by research about a wide range of issues, engaging critically with evidence based reflective practice.
- Develop your knowledge and an in-depth understanding of current practice, legislation and initiatives in the early years' sector and gain understanding of how approaches in other societies may differ.
- Provide you with a firm basis for progression to further study (e.g. a BA Honours degree) or to attain an early years' sector specific professional status.
- Promote your capacity and commitment to act as an advocate for young children and the disposition to work for change.
- Support your study of early childhood studies which aims to cross the boundaries between disciplines and professions to promote multi-professional understanding, respect and collaboration.
- Extend your knowledge and understanding of the continuum of holistic growth and development of young children and support your commitment to promoting the holistic development of the child

What is distinctive about this programme?

The content, delivery style and organisation of this programme have been developed as a result of our experience of delivering a Foundation Degree for practitioners in the early years' sector since 2003. In consultation with students and local employers, we have combined features of traditional academic study with more innovative teaching, learning and assessment strategies to design a programme that both experienced and aspiring practitioners will find stimulating and relevant to the growing demands of their roles in developing the high quality early childhood provision expected in 21st century society.

We have well-established and effective collaborative partnerships with all the organisations delivering the award, providing you with a choice of places to study close to home or work, across a wide geographical area.

The programme is designed to be flexible, with the partners offering a variety of days and times for part-time attendance of practitioners wishing to fit their studies around full-time employment.

The University and our partners are active members of Sector Endorsed Foundation Degrees in Early Years (SEFDEY), a national body which seeks to establish a network of institutions with high standard programmes and to promote the development of graduate practitioners to work within the sector. Programmes offered by SEFDEY members have been developed with reference to the Foundation Degree quality benchmark, the Early Childhood Studies subject benchmark and the Common Core Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce standards.

The Staffordshire Graduate

The Staffordshire Graduate represents a set of qualities that the University passionately believes is necessary for success in the 21st century. The Staffordshire Graduate is a reflective and critical learner with a global perspective, prepared to contribute in the world of work.

This programme enables students who are new to the sector to gain and evidence practical skills and competences in preparation for employment and will enhance the knowledge and skills of experienced practitioners to prepare them for the responsibilities of senior roles associated with leading practice and influencing change in early years' provision. Students start to develop reflective thinking skills at the beginning of the programme and critical reflection on practice and learning is emphasised throughout. The Foundation Degree Early Childhood Studies Award will provide you with early years' practitioner status equivalent to level 3 which will enable you to gain employment working with children.

The content has been designed to initially encourage students to consolidate understanding of the impact of national legislation and policy on practices and issues they will experience first-hand, before challenging them to consider global perspectives on early childhood issues and the influence these may have on their own practices as they progress through the programme.

PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

What will this programme teach me to do?

On completion of the programme you should be able to:

Common learning outcomes and related QAA subject benchmark statements	LEVEL 5
Knowledge and Understanding 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 15	Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of the main theories and research appropriate to the holistic development of the child including meeting children's individual needs.
Learning 8, 16, 35, 41, 42	Understand the limits of their knowledge, (theory to practice) in relation to child education and care organisation and management, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge
Enquiry 11, 13, 14, 20, 21, 25, 28	Demonstrate knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in Early Childhood Studies and demonstrate application of the key principles of Information Literacy.
Analysis 11, 12, 20, 23	Use a range of established techniques to critically analyse the management processes and procedures for a childcare/education setting of information
Problem Solving 19, 22, 25, 26, 33	Evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems and propose solutions to problems arising from analysis
Communication 17, 19, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40	Communicate effectively independent points of view, information and arguments precisely and convincingly in a variety of forms, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively and ethically
Application 9, 16, 17, 18, 41	Apply underlying concepts and principles of personal responsibility and decision making that will enable you to assume significant responsibility both within the early years vocational sector and outside the context in which they were first studied
Reflection 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 24, 34, 37, 38, 42	Demonstrate new and existing qualities and transferable skills such as organising own learning, time management, collaboration and increasing levels of autonomy in familiar and unfamiliar situations with open mindedness, necessary for employment or further training.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE, MODULES AND CREDITS

Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies

1. A Programme Overview

The structure of the part-time, two-year programme

FdA Early Childhood Studies

	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	
Y E A R 1	1.Practitioner's Personal, Academic and Professional Development <i>30 credits Level 4</i>	2.The Developing Child: A Holistic View <i>30 credits Level 4</i>	3.The Planning Cycle <i>30 credits Level 4</i>	4.Inclusive and Enabling Environments <i>30 credits Level 4</i>

(A Certificate in HE may be awarded with 120 credits at Level 4)

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	
Y E A R 2	5. Leading a Change in the Early Years <i>30 credits Level 5</i>	6. Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare <i>30 credits Level 5</i>	7. Working with Young Children <i>30 credits Level 5</i>	8. Professionalism and Career Development <i>30 credits Level 5</i>

HOW WILL I BE TAUGHT AND ASSESSED?

Teaching and Learning

The teaching, learning and assessment strategies have been carefully developed for this programme. They may differ depending on your level of prior knowledge and practical experience.

Students studying part-time: We recognise that your route to becoming a student on the Foundation Degree may be different to “traditional” students entering higher education and that we may need to develop and support your learning in a different way. We recognise that you bring with you a wealth of practical experience and detailed knowledge of specific contexts to share with others. The programme therefore aims to incorporate and value your vocational expertise and build upon your existing experiences. The strategies are designed to provide practical contexts for the analysis of contemporary issues and problems of a practical nature. The following strategies will be adopted to ensure that you have a supportive teaching and learning environment.

Students studying part time will be required to attend the college/ training organisation of your choice normally for four hours every week, during each ten week teaching block (which usually fits within school terms in the area). The day and time of your session will depend upon individual college arrangements. This is usually studied from beginning of September to end July each year.

The programme of study emphasises the importance of your work-based learning; learning does not just take place inside a classroom. You should not expect to learn everything you need to be successful on the course by attending sessions in college and you are expected to study extensively in your own time.

Much of the course will involve discussion groups and reflection upon your experiences in the work place. You will be reinforcing your vocational learning in an active, relevant and academic manner. Work-based learning will also form the basis of your assessment, for example analysing information about children or situations in your early years setting.

Work Related Learning – You will be required to complete work related tasks in all modules. This will provide you with the opportunity to link theoretical perspectives to your practice. It will also enable you to reflect on values, practices, assumptions and policies. Work-based activities help you to establish connections between the workplace and issues raised by the programme.

Lectures and Presentation – You will be given formal lectures which will provide theoretical underpinning of key educational concepts.

Seminars – You will be given the opportunity to contribute to seminars which discuss in depth issues covered in the lectures and presentations. This encourages discussion,

reflection and the exchange of ideas. You will be engaged in providing and receiving critical feedback from peers and tutors on presentations.

Tutorials – You will be given the opportunity to discuss personal, work-related and academic concerns in small groups and individual tutorials. This will support the development of your understanding and learning.

Guided reading and supported self-study – you will be provided with booklists and reading tasks to help you to engage with relevant and appropriate debates.

Practical workshops will develop application and reflection where issues, documents and materials will be analysed and discussed.

Case-study activities will be used to support the above approaches as a means of establishing connections between the workplace and issues raised by the programme.

Online tasks and assessments you will undertake a variety of independent and group learning tasks for example, Skype tutorials, asynchronous and synchronous discussions, blogs and wikis to allow for a greater flexibility in terms of your learning.

Each module will also provide opportunities for you to;

- work independently.
- develop interpersonal skills.
- demonstrate the capacity to plan, share goals, and work as a member of a team.
- communicate and present oral and written arguments.
- evaluate research and underpinning theories.

Each module will vary slightly in the teaching and learning styles adopted, however all modules will include traditional learning materials, such as hand-outs, visual and oral presentations. Much of the time will be spent in discussion and reflection, relating theory to practice. You will be briefed on assignments prior to submission, and will be issued with clearly defined assessment criteria.

The VLE ‘Blackboard’ will support your study by providing access to programme information and module materials on-line to enable you to manage your time more effectively and to improve staff/student communication through bulletin boards. This can promote on-line discussions with staff and peers. If you are studying in a college, you will also have access to your chosen college’s VLE system for internal discussion and resources.

Support

You will have the support of a **personal tutor** in the university or college where you study and their role is to support you with aspects of your study or personal life which may be preventing you from achieving. They may signpost you to many of the University services available which can provide specific guidance or information where necessary.

For part-time students, a considerable amount of your learning will take place independently during your work in an early years' setting. You will be required to name a **Critical Friend** who can support this learning (usually from your setting and usually a senior member of staff). Critical Friends are normally someone with whom you are working for the period of your studies and who has knowledge and experience of the systems and procedures in the setting. It is preferable to choose someone with higher qualifications who will have an understanding of the academic demands of studying at foundation degree level. Critical Friends are able to support you in the work/voluntary setting, meeting with you regularly to discuss your vocational strengths and areas for development in conjunction with your academic development. They may be able to suggest appropriate aspects of practice or case studies as a focus for your study and help you apply the knowledge and understanding you are gaining on the programme to your vocational role.

The role of a Critical Friend is to complement that of your module tutors and personal tutor; whilst you may consult your Critical Friend about aspects of your programme, you are advised to ask members of the University team about specific programme or module requirements or refer to any feedback or guidance they provide.

Assessment

You will be assessed in every module for which you enrol. The assessments are designed to test achievement of the module's learning outcomes and you will be given information on what is expected of them at the start of the module. Assessment types, volume and length have been considered by the University team to allow students to demonstrate skills and knowledge outlined within module assessment criteria. Some modules have more than one assessment task and some will be linked to the teaching and learning methods of the module.

The assessment tasks set over the duration of the programme have been designed to develop and build upon a wide range of personal and professional skills, whilst strongly reinforcing links between theory and practical application. The assessment strategy has been constructed to reflect the changing role of the early childhood studies practitioner at all ages from 0-7 years.

It is understandable that some methods of assessment will suit different students in different ways, therefore a range of assessment methods will be used on the programme to assess the learning outcomes of the modules.

Assessment methods include:

- Assignments
- Case Studies/Practical Planning
- Poster Presentation

- Group presentations
- Annotated bibliography
- Independent Research project
- Portfolio
- Reflective Log

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Entry Requirements (including IELTS score)

What qualifications would I need to join this programme?

For part-time study:

All part-time applicants are individually assessed on their qualifications, skills and experience. However you would *normally*

- Be in employment (either paid or voluntary) within an early years setting for at least four hours a week.
- Have a pass in an appropriate Level 3 vocational qualification (eg. CACHE DCE, NNEB, DNN, Level 3 Diploma, BTEC National Diploma Early Childhood Studies, NVQ Level 3 Early Childhood Studies/Playwork, etc)
- GCSE qualifications in English and Maths or demonstration of a level 2 competence. *
- If English is not your first language you will be expected to have achieved an IELTS score of 6.0 or above

Entry will be subject to a successful interview and applicants providing evidence that they have a clear enhanced DBS check (formally a CRB check) which confirms that there are no reasons why a candidate should not work with children

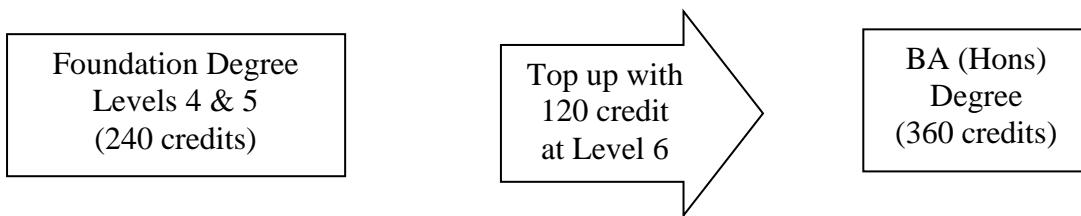
***Note:** To progress to the PGCE Primary, you will be required to hold GCSE grade 'C' in maths, English and science.

Disability Statement

Staffordshire University operates a policy of inclusive teaching and learning to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to fulfil their educational potential. Details about how to apply to have your needs assessed can be found at:

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/courses_and_study/disabled_students/index.jsp

AWARD SPECIFIC INFORMATION



Possible Progression Routes from Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies

Teaching FE: Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector. Cert Ed.	BA/BA (hons Social work/ Education/ Nursing	BA/BA (hons) Top-up Early Childhood Studies/ Education	Teaching: Registered Teacher Programme.	Employment: Family/children centres, care support, educational admin and management, playwork, learning support etc. Employment outside the vocational area	Early Years Teacher Status (Pre-requisite ordinary degree)
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Foundation Degree in
Early Childhood Studies
(On successful completion of level 5)

(Note: Entry to teacher training (including Early Years Teacher Status) will require each applicant to have GCSE English/Maths/Science at level C or above, prior to application.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: QAA Early Childhood Studies Subject Benchmark Standards (mapped to Foundation Degree Modules)

Appendix 2: FD Early Childhood Studies modules mapped against The DfES (2005) Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce

Appendix 3: Staffordshire Graduate Characteristics mapped to the award modules

Foundation Degree Modules and Assessments

Further information about the award can be found in the relevant Student Handbook and on the University Website. This includes information about optional modules, learning outcomes at levels below honours, student support, and academic regulations.

APPENDIX 1

QAA Subject Benchmark Standards Early Childhood Studies

Threshold Standard

Subject Knowledge

On graduating with a FdA candidates would be expected to have an understanding and knowledge of these criteria commensurate with their qualification at level 5:

1. Understand the conceptual underpinnings of ECS as a subject area.
2. Have a basic understanding of babies and young children and childhood, nationally and globally from psychological, sociological, health, welfare, educational, cultural, philosophical, legal, historical, political, and economic perspectives.
3. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the areas of interest contributing to ECS across the core subject-specific areas, and how they interrelate.

This includes:

4. Understanding of all aspects of significant policy and provision for babies and young children, families and communities.
5. Understanding of multi-professional, interprofessional, multi-agency and inter-agency working, in order to meet the needs of children and families.
6. Knowledge and understanding of pedagogical approaches for working with babies and young children, families and communities.
7. Awareness of issues in relation to rights, diversity, equity and inclusion in relation to working with babies and young children, families and communities.
8. Knowledge of the methods required for systematic study and research relative to children and childhood.

Subject-specific Skills

On graduating with a FdA candidates would be expected to have an understanding and knowledge of these criteria commensurate with their qualification at level 5:

:

9. Reason clearly, and demonstrate the relationship between theory and evidence, and be able to adopt multiple perspectives in relation to Early Childhood.

10. Reflect upon a range of philosophical, historical, psychological, sociological, cultural, health, welfare, legal, political and economic perspectives and consider how these underpin different understandings of babies and young children and childhood, nationally and globally.
11. Evaluate competing positions in relation to the construction of babies and young children and childhood by different subject disciplines, societal agents and time, place and culture.
12. Constructively critique theories and research in the area of child development.
13. Detect meaningful patterns in behaviour and experience.
14. Explore, examine and evaluate the significance of the cultural and historical features of various agencies and institutions in regard to babies and young children and childhood.
15. Demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the skills needed for different relational pedagogical approaches.
16. Demonstrate the ability to plan for, and where appropriate implement play and the curriculum, assessment, evaluation and improvement of creative learning opportunities, taking account of babies and young children's health, well being, protection and safety, and the conditions that enable them to flourish.
17. Demonstrate the ability to plan for, and where appropriate implement, meeting and working effectively and in collaboration with parents, carers and other agencies.
18. Demonstrate the ability to plan for, and where appropriate implement, meeting and promoting children's health, welfare and safety needs, and the conditions that enable them to flourish.
19. Demonstrate the ability to lead, support and work collaboratively with others in the early childhood context.
20. Produce critical arguments for improvements to multi-agency, multi-professional and interprofessional practices for babies and young children.
21. Explore critically the interrelationship between political, economic, cultural and ideological contexts in the lives of babies and young children.
22. Pose and operationalise research questions in relation to early childhood and demonstrate competence in research skills through practical and theoretical activities.

23. Use skills of observation and analysis in relation to aspects of the lives of babies and young children.
24. Reflect upon the ethics of studying babies and young children, families and communities.
25. Initiate, design, conduct and report an empirically-based early childhood research project under appropriate supervision.
26. Be aware of ethical principles and demonstrate this in relation to personal study, particularly with regard to the research project.
27. Demonstrate the ability to give voice to and where appropriate act as an advocate for babies and young children, families and communities.
28. Demonstrate the ability to recognise and challenge inequalities in society and to embrace an anti-bias curriculum.

Generic Skills

On graduating with a FdA candidates would be expected to have an understanding and knowledge of these criteria commensurate with their qualification at level 5:
:

29. Communicate ideas and research findings by written, oral and visual means.
30. Present a range of theoretical positions and offer a point of view.
31. Interpret and use numerical, and other forms of data.
32. Present information to others in appropriate forms.
33. Approach problem solving in a systematic way.
34. Listen carefully to others and reflect upon ones own and others' skills and views.
35. Use a range of sources of information.
36. Use the communication skills necessary to converse, debate, negotiate, persuade, and challenge the ideas of others.
37. Be aware of contextual and interpersonal factors in groups and teams.
38. Have insight and confidence in leading and working collaboratively with others.
39. Write for different purposes.
40. Use ICT appropriately as part of the learning process in a range of contexts.

41. Undertake self-directed study and project management in a supportive environment.
42. Recognise the need to assess one's own skills and to harness them for future learning.

**Foundation Degree Early Childhood Studies modules
mapped against the QAA bench mark statements**

	Mod 1	Mod 2	Mod 3	Mod 4	Mod 5	Mod 6	Mod 7	Mod 8
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APPENDIX 2

FdA Early Childhood Studies modules mapped against the DfES Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce

In 2005 the DfES worked with a partnership of service users and employers to produce a Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce, to practice at a basic level in six areas of expertise.

*"The Common Core reflects a set of common values for practitioners that promote equality, respect diversity and challenge stereotypes, helping to improve the life chances of all children and young people. It also acknowledges the rights of children and young people and the role that parents carers and families play in helping children and young people to achieve the outcomes identified in **Every Child Matters**".* (DfES 2005 p 4)

The Government and their partners are expecting this Common Core to form the foundation of the design of all in-service courses and training. In time all qualifications for work with babies, children and families will include an appropriately differentiated Common Core.

**Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce
mapped against the FdA Early Childhood Studies modules**

	Effective Communication and Engagement	Child and Young person Development	Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of the Child	Supporting Transitions	Multi-agency Working	Sharing Information
1. Practitioner's Personal, Academic & Professional Development						
2. The Developing Child: A Holistic Approach						
3. The Planning Cycle						
4. Inclusive and Enabling Environments						
5. Leading a Change in the Early Years						
6. Working with Young Children						
7. Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare						
8. Professionalism and Career Development						

Appendix 3
THE STAFFORDSHIRE GRADUATE

The Staffordshire Graduate represents a set of qualities that the University passionately believes is necessary for success in the 21st century. The Staffordshire Graduate is a reflective and critical learner with a global perspective, prepared to contribute in the world of work.

The table below indicates where, within your award, these characteristics are addressed:

AWARD TITLE:	Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies	
Characteristic	Award Module(s) including level and number of credits	Method of Assessment
Be prepared to be work-ready and employable	1. Practitioner's Personal, Academic & Professional Development 30 credits L4	Professional Development Portfolio
	8. Professionalism and Career Development	Reflections and presentation
	3. The Planning Cycle 30 credits L4	Portfolio planned activities
	7. Working with Young Children 30 credits L5	Reflective account of professional development
	2. The Developing Child: A Holistic View 30 credits L4	Portfolio of child observations and assessments
	6. Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare	Essay
Understanding of enterprise and entrepreneurship	4. Inclusive and Enabling Environments 30 credits L4	Presentation of resource Essay
Understanding of global issues and their place in the global economy	4. Inclusive and Enabling Environments 30 credits L4	Presentation of resource Essay
Communication skills	4. Inclusive and Enabling Environments 30 credits L4	Presentation of resource
	3. The Planning Cycle 30 credits L4	Portfolio planned activities
	2. The Developing Child: A Holistic View 30 credits L4	Portfolio of observations Academic poster

Presentation skills	2.The Developing Child: A Holistic View 30 credits L4 4. Inclusive and Enabling Environments 30 credits L4	Portfolio of observations Academic poster Presentation of resource
The ability to interact confidently with colleagues	8. Professionalism and Career Development 30 credits L5	Reflections and presentation
	3. The Planning Cycle 30 credits L4	Portfolio planned activities
	2. The Developing Child: A Holistic View 30 credits L4	Portfolio of observations Academic poster
	4. Inclusive and Enabling Environments 30 credits L4	Presentation of resource
Independence of thought	5. Leading a Change in the Early Years	Lead a change
	8. Professionalism and Career Development 30 credits L5	Reflections and presentation
Skills of teamworking	4. Inclusive and Enabling Environments 30 credits L4	Group film presentation
	3. The Planning Cycle 30 credits L4	Portfolio planned activities
	7. Working with Young Children 30 credits L5	Case Study
	5. Leading a Change in the Early Years 30 credits L5	Lead a change
Ability to carry out inquiry-based learning and critical analysis	3. The Developing Child: A Holistic View 30 credits L4	Portfolio of observations
	4. Leading a Change in the Early Years 30 credits L5	Lead a change Critical reflection
Skills of problem solving and creation of opportunities	3. The Planning Cycle 30 credits L4	Portfolio planned activities
	5. Leading a Change in the Early Years	Lead a change
Technologically, digitally and information literate	2. The Developing Child: A Holistic View 30 credits L4	Poster presentation
Able to apply Staffordshire Graduate attributes to a range of life experiences to facilitate life-long learning	1. Practitioner's Personal, Academic & Professional Development 30 credits L4	Professional Development Portfolio
	5. leading a Change in the Early Years 30 credits L5	Lead a change Critical reflection

ADDENDUM FOR DELIVERY AT A PARTNER INSTITUTION

This section should record any matters within the programme specification which do not apply to the delivery at the partner. It should also note any differences in delivery, course content, module choice etc.

Name and location of partner	
Partnership Context	E.G., The awards listed below are part of a franchise arrangement with Staffordshire University.
Awards to be offered at partner	
Aims / Learning Outcomes	
Curricula	
Teaching and Learning	
Assessment	
Admissions Criteria	
Specific Regulations	
Date of completion	

All of the above sections should be completed as appropriate for each partner organisation.

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