

Programme Specification

Foundation Degree in Children's Development and Learning

For students entering Part 1 in September 2026

NFCDLDUM

This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	2 years
Length of Programme with placement/year abroad	
Accreditation	N/A
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	Education Studies, Levels 4 and 5.

Programme information and content

The programme is delivered at the following partner colleges:

- Basingstoke College of Technology (code: NFCDLBCOT)
- Windsor Forest Colleges Group: Berkshire College of Agriculture (code: NFCDLBCA)

The Foundation Degree (FD) provides a model of vocational higher education based on close collaboration between employers and providers of higher education. The programme will furnish candidates with the knowledge, skills and understanding to progress in their chosen career working with children in childcare or educational schools/settings and achieve a Level 5 qualification.

Students studying the Foundation Degree in the partnership colleges are taught in small teaching groups. The delivery team are academic tutors to the students and support their learning at the college and their workplace. Students also attend the University of Reading campus for cross-college events and have access to the support services from the University.

Many students will progress to the one-year top-up BA in Children's Development and Learning that is delivered on the University campus to gain an honours degree. They can then progress to become Early Years Teachers or achieve QTS.

Part 1:	Introduces students to underpinning theories of children's development and learning, both classic and contemporary. It also focuses on the development of reflective practice and use of analysis and evaluation to make effective links between theory and practice.
Part 2:	Provides students with further input across a range of modules to develop academic skills further and explore theory that may apply to the workplace. In particular, students will complete a research module which will give the

	opportunity to explore a development and learning area in depth. This will help to prepare for a final year top up to BA honours if choosing to continue their studies.
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Programme Learning Outcomes - Foundation Degree in Children's Development and Learning

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

	Learning outcomes
1	Draw on a range of theoretical perspectives and academic disciplines to underpin knowledge and understanding of key theories of child development and learning.
2	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features of psychological, sociological, economic, political, historical and philosophical perspectives and influences on children (0-18) and their families' lived experiences locally, nationally and globally.
3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the principal features of different educational approaches and apply these to the professional context.
4	Demonstrate understanding of the professional responsibilities of the practitioner or teacher working in the setting/school in terms of promoting the inclusion and outcomes of all children (0-18) that are set out in government policy, legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance and current initiatives.
5	Develop the skills of reflective practice and use them as a tool to interrogate work-based practices and processes and support personal and professional development.
6	Develop professional skills including communicating ideas, principles and theories, arguments and analysis effectively in speech and writing, using visual and ICT media as tools where appropriate, to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
7	Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of effective communication and other relevant strategies when working collaboratively with children (0-18), parents and other professionals in the children/young people's workforce in order to develop professional practice.
8	Demonstrate appropriate critical thinking skills including the ability to identify the main points in an argument, drawing on appropriate evidence, literature and theory, examining issues from a range of professional and theoretical perspectives and summarise the main points for the reader.
9	Access, retrieve, organise and use a range of sources of information including primary sources in order to underpin evidence-informed practice, recognising the limits of your understanding.
10	Design a small-scale research project using appropriate ethical guidance, literature searches, research design and data collection methods. Present and interpret empirical findings and draw appropriate conclusions from the results.
11	Become more independent, resilient, responsible and pragmatic and develop as an autonomous learner.

12	Explore examine and evaluate the significance of the cultural, historical and contemporary features of a range of policies, institutions and agencies, locally, nationally and globally, regarding children's development.
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You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

In addition to the learning outcomes stated above if you are on a placement or study abroad programme you will have the opportunity to develop the following learning outcome:

Module information			
Each part comprises 120 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.			
Part 1 Modules:			
Module	Name	Credits	Level
ED1FIP	Inclusive Practices	40	4
ED1FPC	Partnership with Parents/Carers	20	4
ED1PSY	Professional Skills in the Children/Young People's Workforce	20	4
ED1TDL	Theories of Development and Learning	40	4
Part 2 Modules:			
Module	Name	Credits	Level
ED2FCA	Creativity to Support Learning	20	5
ED2FEC	Exploring Childhood	40	5
ED2FLC	Leadership in the Children/Young People's Workforce	20	5
ED2FPA	Research Project	40	5

Placement opportunities
Foundation Degrees integrate academic and work-based learning through close collaboration between employers and programme providers. Students on the Foundation Degree must be working or volunteering at least 0.5 FTE (18.5 hours) in a childcare or educational schools/setting with children from birth to 18 years of age. Most modules rely upon students applying theory to their practice. A work-based 'critical friend' will support students while they study.

Optional modules:

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Teaching and learning delivery:

You will be taught primarily through a mixture of lectures, tutorials and seminars. Some modules may include group work. Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology. The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon the module within the course. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

- The programme assumes that students are working (on a paid or voluntary basis) at least 0.5 FTE in an early years setting, educational school/setting with children birth-18 years old.
- Provision of a suitable reference on request.
- DBS clearance

Assessment

The assessment of the FD will be through coursework based on University-approved assessments that will include a mixture of assignments. These will include formative assessments to feed into summative assessments, essays, reports, presentations, and other formats.

In line with the nature of Foundation Degrees, assignments require students to link theory to practice in the workplace. It is expected that descriptions and evaluations of practice will include references to relevant literature. Work-based learning will provide an essential contribution to the achievement of the outcomes.

Progression

Part 1

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 1, a student will normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain an overall weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1;

- (ii) Obtain a mark of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to not less than 80 credits taken in Part 1; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in modules amounting to 120 credits. (A Fail in a Pass/Fail module will be treated as not meeting the minimum threshold requirement for progression or classification. Pass/fail modules are excluded from weighted average calculations but must be passed to avoid failure of the Part or degree.)

In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 1 qualifies a student for a Certificate of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Part 2

To qualify for a Foundation Degree at Part 2, a student shall normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain a weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (ii) Obtain marks of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to at least 80 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to at least 120 credits. (A Fail in a Pass/Fail module will be treated as not meeting the minimum threshold requirement for progression or classification. Pass/fail modules are excluded from weighted average calculations but must be passed to avoid failure of the Part or degree.)

Classification

Foundation degrees

The University's classification scheme is based on the following:

Mark Interpretation

70% - 100% Distinction

60% - 69% Merit

40% - 59% Pass

0% - 39% Fail

The weighting of the Parts/Years in the calculation of the degree classification is:

Part 1: pass/fail only

Part 2: 100%

Details of the classification method is given in detail in the [Assessment Handbook](#) under:

- Section 17: Awards (Bachelor's), or

- Section 18: Awards (Integrated Master's programmes). Students who do not progress to Part 4 of the Integrated Master's will normally be subject to the method detailed under Section 17: Awards (Bachelor's)

Please note that there may be a specific version of the above for your year of entry.

Additional costs of the programme

During your programme of study you may incur some additional costs. For textbooks and similar learning resources, we recommend that you budget up to £200 per year, depending on your preference to have your own books rather than borrow from the Library. A range of resources to support your curriculum, including reading lists are available through the University library and your college.

Students are expected to attend some events at the University of Reading which will incur additional travel costs, the amount of which will vary depending on mode of transport. There are four events of this kind over the two years of the Foundation Degree, and students are advised to car share to reduce costs. Printing and photocopying facilities are available on each Foundation Degree College campus: individual Colleges will advise of costs. Essential costs in this area will be low as coursework will be submitted electronically.

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. Estimates were calculated in 2025.

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Foundation Degree in Children's Development and Learning for students entering Part 1 in session 2026/27

21 July 2026

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