

M.A. in Early Childhood Studies

COURSE OVERVIEW: 2 Years, Part Time.

The Masters of Arts (Early Childhood Studies) has been developed to meet the needs of professionals working in or supporting the early years care and education sector, and may also be attractive to individuals with a particular interest in the area. The programme is designed to complement and support continued employment, however, it is not restricted to those employed in early years practice settings. This part-time blended learning programme was designed to interact with the developing policy, practice and research environment in early years care and education. It is inspired by the continued evolution of the early years sector in Ireland, with contextual influence from Europe and from International trends.

The course content has been developed to reflect contemporary approaches and understandings of family life, childhood, play and pedagogical philosophies as they inform the early years sector. Students will engage with advanced and critical theories, exploring evolving policy, social research, child protection, integrated working as well as professional leadership and practice. Cutting across all modules and underpinning the ethos of the programme will be a children's rights perspective, facilitated through a strong reflective element, supporting students to analyse, critique and challenge dominant discourses, perceived values as well as the on-going developments within the practice and policy environment.

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

The programme will be conducted on a part-time modular basis over 2 years through a combination of blended learning methods. The programme places a strong emphasis on experiential knowledge and skills, the capacity to study independently and as such places significant weighting on reflective engagement with assigned content, readings and self-directed participation in learning activities.

Programme content is viewed through a children's rights lens and is underpinned by a strong reflective element through which students will critically engage with and scrutinise current issues. Successful graduates of the programme can expect to develop a range of personal and professional skills and abilities, including specialist knowledge developed through research, reflecting each student's own particular interest area. In addition, the student's enhanced knowledge in regards to the contemporary developments in the early childhood education and care arena will ensure graduates are well placed to participate in the on-going and progressive expansion of the early years sector in Ireland.

This part-time programme will be delivered on a modular basis over 2 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 includes:

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

The programme is innovative in its approach to outreach and distance education in the material covered, format and style of learning methods of teaching, student support and assessment.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Students are normally required to have a minimum of a 2:2, NFQ Level 8, primary degree award in Early Childhood Studies & Practice, in Early Years Education and Care, in Social Care, or in a related discipline.
- Applicants should have a minimum of 3 years of relevant working experience, or equivalent
- Applicants must have good digital literacy skills and have access to the internet.
- Applicants may be required to provide evidence of proficiency in English, at the higher level required by the course.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Applicants who do not meet the normal entry criteria may be eligible to apply through the University's Recognition of Prior learning Pathway.

HOW TO APPLY

Apply online through <http://www.nuigalway.ie/apply/>

Online applications NOT open yet

FEES

EU Fees: Year 1 - €4,200 **Non-EU Fees:** Year 1 - €4,700

Year 2 - €3,700

Year 2 - €4,200

Start Date: September 2016

CAREER OPORTUNITIES

Graduates of this course will be well placed to take on leadership and development roles, impacting progressively on the ever evolving Irish ECEC sector. Potential roles include teaching and research, policy development, mentoring or inspecting, advocacy and support as well as management of ECEC settings.

You will learn how to engage with other professionals and increase your awareness of the value of integrated working across a variety of services and agencies. This will make you well placed to contribute to the development of strengths-based approaches to working with families and children.

The MA in Early Childhood Studies will provide you with the ability to take a children's rights perspective across all content, in particular, on the issues of child protection, risk and vulnerability, safeguarding children and promoting wellbeing through early years practice, policy and research. This will also expand your ability to work in broader professional roles.

Upon successful completion of this course you can expect to have developed a range of personal & professional skills and abilities, including specialist knowledge developed through research, reflecting each students own particular interest area. In addition, your enhanced knowledge in regards to the contemporary developments in the early childhood education and care arena will ensure that you are well placed to participate in the on-going and progressive expansion of the early years sector in Ireland

Upon completing this MA, students with a 2:1 or higher grad average may be interested in pursuing further education through doctoral studies in NUI Galway or another suitable institute.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Tel: 091 492659

Email: earlychildhood@nuigalway.ie

Next Intake of Students: September 2016.