

MA in Early Childhood Education in Malta

University of Sheffield

The University of Sheffield, School of Education offers an MA programme with study Schools in Malta. The MA in Early Childhood Education is a unique, internationally renowned course, which has been running successfully since 1998, designed for a range of early childhood professionals including: early years practitioners, FE and HE lecturers, teachers, nursery nurses, preschool assistants, voluntary and independent providers, advisors, inspectors and managers working in areas relevant to early childhood. Students from around the world, including: Japan, India, Malta, Czech Republic, Germany, United Arab Emirates, Cyprus and Vietnam have successfully completed this distance learning course which covers a broad range of issues, encourages students to reflect on their practice, on current policy, and addresses theory and research relevant to their interest.

Aims and objectives of the Course

The course supports students to:

- examine their work within the changing field of early years provision;
- further understand and support children's learning and development;
- develop research skills and conduct small-scale projects;
- examine current policies;
- study international developments and consider developments in the Maltese context;
- critically evaluate a range of literature;
- enhance their understanding of early childhood education and care from birth to eight.

Weekend study schools are held at

St Catherine's High School, Pembroke, Malta.

22-24 October 2010

21-23 January 2011

6-8 May 2011

21-23 October 2011

20-22 January 2012



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Excellence.



Study with the University of Sheffield staff at Malta based study schools

Fees

For fees, and details of local arrangements please contact Mrs Sue Mifsud Midolo, our local partner, at St Catherine's High School, Pembroke – e.mail sue.mifsud.midolo@stcatherines.eu.

For further details of the programme please contact the Academic Director, Professor Cathy Nutbrown e.mail - c.e.nutbrown@sheffield.ac.uk.

The Programme Team

The programme has been designed and developed by Professor Cathy Nutbrown [BEd, MEd, PhD]. She was previously an early years teacher and has experience of LEA work in in-service training and development with teachers, multi-disciplinary training on early literacy, parental involvement and other early childhood issues. Publications include: *Early Childhood Education: History, Philosophy and Experience* (2008); *Threads of Thinking* (2006); *Experiencing Reggio Emilia* (2001) *Inclusion in the Early Years* (2006), *Key Concepts in ECEC* (2005), *Family Literacy Work with Parents* (2005) *A Students' Guide to Methodology* (2007) and *Research Studies in Early Childhood Education* (2002). Cathy is currently co-editor of *Journal of Early Childhood Research*. The team also includes, Professor Jackie Marsh and Jools Page, Lecturer in Education. The teaching team has an established national and international reputation in teaching, researching and publishing in a range of early childhood topics including birth to three, family literacy, digital literacies, bilingualism, inclusion and play.

Welcome to The School of Education

The Field of Study

The course allows students from a diverse range of settings and backgrounds to gain further qualifications, drawing on their own experience. Four features of the MA are particularly suited to the needs of those working with and for children in a range of settings and services:

- The possibility of completing the degree in two years
- A modular structure which allows course members to study at their own pace within the course timetable
- Assignments related to the professional interests and roles of all students
- The research expertise of staff within the School of Education at the University of Sheffield.
- Studying with the University of Sheffield whilst remaining locally based in Malta.

Weekend Study Schools

This mixed-mode, distance-learning course is designed to be completed in two years, with students studying 4 modules and completing a dissertation. Five compulsory weekend study schools take place in Malta; 3 in the first year and 2 in the second year. Students work with the academic team from Sheffield on a mixed-mode programme of lectures, seminars and workshops. Specialised library services exist for distance learning students including a wide range of electronic journals and data bases.

The Course Structure

Module 1: Early Childhood Education: History and Policy

The development of early childhood education provision; The history and social construction of childhood; The language of early childhood education; Early intervention studies; Current policy initiatives; Special educational needs and inclusive education; Equality and diversity.

Module 2: Development, Learning and Curriculum

Child development and learning; Babies and toddlers; policies on curriculum and learning; Curriculum development; Foundation Stage practices; Pedagogy in early education ; Theories of learning; Assessment; Parental roles in children's learning.

Module 3: Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Education

'Quality' in early education and care; Children's rights; Parental involvement; Inclusion; The Arts; Gender; Family literacy; Home learning; Birth to three; Popular culture; Digital literacies, current issues in early education in Malta.

Module 4: Research Methods and Methodology

Observation, interviews and questionnaires; Assessment; Basic research designs; Key concepts in statistics; Qualitative research; Involving children in research; Ethnography; Life historical study; Evaluation; Ethics; Research writing.

These are followed by the dissertation which is the focus of the fifth study school. The dissertation is an opportunity to focus on an issue of personal/professional interest to the student. The dissertation represents one third of the MA.

**“THANK YOU FOR YOUR
SUPPORT AND
ENCOURAGEMENT YOUR
LOVE OF TEACHING AND
CONCERN FOR YOUR
STUDENTS SHINES
THROUGH.”**

Assessment

Each module will normally be assessed through a 30-credit assignment. Students will be able to negotiate with their personal tutor assignment themes most suited to their circumstances and interests. Students meet their academic tutors at weekend schools and maintain contact by telephone, post, e-mail and meetings as convenient.

Professor Cathy Nutbrown Director – Malta Programme

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