

PROGRESSION AGREEMENT

The Building Pathways Project

The Building Pathways Project is a partnership of 11 Further Education Colleges and 4 Higher Education Institutions in South Yorkshire and neighbouring areas. The main aim of the Project is to open access to Higher Education for local people through the development of clear progression routes from FE to HE. The project is jointly funded by the Higher Education Funding Council and the Learning and Skills Council.

Throughout 2000-2001, a project group of partners worked together to map and articulate the contents of the Edexcel HNC/HND Early Childhood Studies and Cache Advanced Diploma in Child-care and Education courses delivered in local FE Colleges, against the BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies Degree in Sheffield Hallam University (plus other degree programmes with Qualified Teacher Status such as the BA (Hons) 3-8 Early Years Education). The aim of the group was to identify opportunities for crediting learners achieving at FE Level 4 against the corresponding units of study delivered on the HE Level 1 programme. Consequently, a clear understanding of the quality and level of study was agreed. Below is outlined the criteria to be met by students applying for admission onto the second year of the BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies programme. It is assumed that students undertaking the HNC/D will have placement/practice experience whilst studying.

What credits can students with a HNC/ADCE in Early Childhood Studies qualifications expect when applying for the BA Social Work Studies degree at Sheffield Hallam University?

Students applying with the HNC/ADCE in Early Childhood studies for the BA Early Childhood Studies Degree will be credited with 120 general CAT points at Level 1. Those with the HND should expect 240 general credits.

How can this general credit be made more specific so students can omit part of the degree programme?

The detailed mapping of the contents of the two programmes has encouraged staff involved to feel confident that although the programmes do not offer a specific match, in general, a high percentage of the contents are similar, ensuring students will have covered most the contents of the first year of the degree programme and should be given 120 specific CAT points. HND students should be given 240 specific credits.

Can all students expect to be given the full credit or should they expect to complete their programme of study at a specific level of achievement?

Students should be able to show that they have developed their skills and knowledge whilst completing the HNC/D and ADCE programme. It is expected that students will achieve the majority of units in the final year of the HNC/D and ADCE at *Merit* grade. Students applying through the UCAS process or directly for a part-time programme of study should indicate in their personal statement their expected level of achievement and their Tutor's Reference should indicate this.

What will the process be for a HNC/D or ADCE student applying for admission onto the second or third year of the degree programme?

The process is the same as for all students i.e. through the UCAS system. However, the student can indicate on the form that they will be starting the programme in Year 2 or 3. All students applying from colleges within the Building Pathways Partnership can write 'Building Pathways Project' after the name of their institution. This will make it easier for staff in SHU Registry, and the School of Education admission tutor to identify that they have potentially met all the criteria for admission onto the second or third year of the degree programme.

Is there a part-time BA Early Childhood Studies Degree and would the same criteria apply for admission onto that programme?

The same criteria exist for a part-time Early Childhood Studies Degree. If students want to apply for this programme, they can make a direct application to the admission tutor of the programme. Programme leaders in local colleges should contact the admission tutor for the application forms.

Can Early Childhood Studies students do anything else that would support their application to the Early Childhood Studies degree programme and speed up their progress on it?

Yes, they can and this is where the Building Pathways Project has proved beneficial.

HNC/ ADCE students' final year project should focus on early years education and/or a National Curriculum subject area. In addition, they should complete relevant ICT work, the contents of which shadow that of the degree. (An ICT checklist is available from the Degree admissions tutor or the Building Pathways Project)

HND students, can support their application by undertaking a Preparation for Enquiry unit and a final year project focused on early years education and/or in a National Curriculum area. The ICT experience is also needed.

Are there any other requirements for student's applying for the Degree programme?

Students need to be competent in three National Curriculum subjects. They need GCSE English and Maths and for those born after 1/9/79 they must also have GCSE Science grade C or above. Equivalent qualifications in these subjects are acceptable such as the OCN Access English, Maths and Science qualification.

Does the agreement mean that students meeting the criteria will have an automatic place on the Degree programme?

No. The Early Childhood Studies programme requires students to have particular social skills and experience. It is important that admission tutors get the opportunity to interview everyone they feel could be a suitable candidate.

Obviously, the enhanced relationship between colleges and SHU staff will support the application of students from partner colleges but there is no guarantee of an interview.

Is there anything else I could do to support my students in their application for the degree programme?

Yes. Students should be supported in their UCAS application Personal Statement and an honest reference from the College course tutor is needed. Students should be encouraged to objectively view their ability and not to apply for a programme if they are not ready for the level of study expected. The Tutor's reference should indicate this.

Does the BA Childhood Studies Degree provide a progression to Qualified Teacher Status and will students automatically gain admission to a PGCE?

The BA Childhood Studies Degree does not provide QTS. Students who want a QTS qualification should apply for another degree such as the 3-8 QTS Early Years Education degree. Students who want to qualify to teach will need to undertake Post-graduate training. However, students should be aware that the places for the courses in early years teaching are limited and students should not expect automatic transfer to these programmes.

What credit will be given to students who do apply to the QTS programmes?

HNC/ADCE students who apply for the BA (Hons) 3-8 Early Years Education degree, need to ensure they meet all the criteria required for the Early Childhood Studies degree as outlined above. These requirements will give them 120 general credits but only 60 specific credits against the first year of the QTS degree programme. This credit will be given for completion of specific units of study equivalent to three particular units of the degree. (Details from the Admission Tutor). Students therefore will still need to attend and be assessed for particular first year units of study of the degree. In addition, they will need to complete all school placements required by the programme.

HND students will be given 120 general credits against the QTS degree but the specific credit allowance has still to be finalised. At the present they will be given credit the same as for the HNC/ADCE but may expect further credit to be agreed in the near future.

Should College staff do anything to inform the School of Education about the students applying for this route?

The partners in this new policy agreement suggested that Colleges could enhance the agreement by regular communication with the School of Education. This will assist the school in planning their programme to accommodate any increased demand for places on to the second year or third year. A timetable for this is as detailed:

- Final year HNC/D/ADCE students will make their UCAS applications for the second/third year of the Degree programme between September and November
- College tutors should inform the SHU admissions tutors of the numbers applying for the course
- In the spring, the School of Education will conduct interviews for students, possibly en bloc.
- Students will be offered conditional places with the appropriate credit allowed.

In addition, course leaders and the School of Education admission tutors will meet on a regular basis to discuss changes to programmes and share knowledge and understanding of the quality of work delivered in both sectors. The partnership hope to monitor and evaluate the progress of students following this new progression route and provide feedback to support other non-traditional learners wanting to follow the route.