



MCAST



**Institute
for Education**

MQF Level 6

CS6-W12-21p

**Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Early Years, Learning and Care
(Top-Up)**

Course Specification

Course Description

Throughout this course, learners are given the opportunity to acquire and apply skills that enable them to ensure children in the early years reach their full potential. Learners explore early years pedagogy together with an understanding of current practice to become professional early years practitioners. The course includes a practice placement which allows learners to delve into professional behaviour and practice to foster and promote high standards in the early years. Learners also experience action research which allows for a deeper analysis of early years practice.

Programme Learning Outcomes

At the end of the programme the learners are able to:

1. *Implement learning activities using the Emergent Curriculum approach to foster children's learning;*
2. *Apply early years pedagogy and practice in relation to the holistic development of the child;*
3. *Demonstrate positive leadership skills in an Early Years Environment;*
4. *Carry out action research to further develop early years competence.*

Entry Requirements

Applicants are required to be in possession of the following minimum requirements;

- A Higher Diploma in Advanced Studies in Early Years (MQF Level 5, 120 ECTS), or equivalent;
- Or MCAST-BTEC MQF 5 Early Years Learning and Development;
- Or MCAST-BTEC Higher National Diploma in Advanced Studies in Early Years;

While applications will be on a first-come first-served basis, persons in full time employment as Early Years Educators will be given first preference. Applicants are required to provide an updated GP47 and/ or Jobsplus employment history as proof of their employment status.

Applicants are to ensure that all required documentation are submitted upon application. Incomplete applications or missing documentation will render the application incomplete.

Current Approved Programme Structure

Unit Code	Unit Title	ECTS	Year
CSEYS-603-2004	Microteaching	3	1
CSEYS-606-2005	Leadership and Classroom Management	6	1
CSEYS-603-2006	Everyday Science for the Young Learners	3	1
CSEYS-603-2007	Action Research and the Reflective Practitioner	3	1
CSEYS-602-2008	Outdoor Learning through Nature for Young Learners	2	1
CSEYS-603-2009	Children's Rights and Legislation	3	1
CSEYS-606-2010	Critical Engagement of the Early Years Practitioner	6	2
CSEYS-603-2011	Digital Citizenship: Enriching Learning through Web-Based Applications	3	2
CSEYS-606-2012	Social Issues in the Early Years	6	2
CSEYS-610-2013	Emergent Curriculum in Practice	10	2
CSEYS-603-2014	Children's Emotions and Well-Being	3	2
CSDIS-612-2002	Dissertation	12	2
Total ECTS		60	/

Unit: CSEYS-603-2004 Microteaching

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 3

Unit Description

The unit on microteaching will be used to prepare prospective educators to the real early years setting (Brent & Thomson, 1996) and train them to experiment with main educators' behaviours. Microteaching makes use of real early years setting situations in order for educators to evaluate and improve their knowledge and teaching skills. Course participants will learn how to upgrade their teaching skills through presentations and reinforcement skills, by observing their peers, using their own recorded teaching sessions and analysing feedback received.

Lectures will be completely hands-on and practical in nature where the microteaching cycle, knowledge acquisition, skills acquisition and transfer of skills learnt, will be put in use. Practice essential teaching skills in this field is of outmost importance as it helps the learners gain teaching experience and develop the knowledge, skills and right attitude to be used in the early years setting. Prospective educators will plan lessons on a given topic; implement the lesson by teaching it whilst recording themselves; use self and peer assessment; reteach or re-implement the skills discussed and provide constructive feedback to oneself and others in order to achieve appropriate teaching learning goals.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the student will be able to:

- 1. Evaluate own teaching techniques.*
- 2. Appraise peers' teaching methods and objectives.*
- 3. Utilise self and peer assessment to judge early years setting strategy and management.*
- 4. Evaluate activities based on feedback provided.*

Unit: CSEYS-606-2005 Leadership and Classroom Management

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 6

Unit Description

Teachers are used to working in an environment where the Head/Principal is responsible to take all decisions. Being a teacher leader requires a paradigm shift in the thinking of how schools operate.

This unit is designed to develop the learner's knowledge and understanding of managing a class of children, managing learning, supporting educators and parents. This module will prepare teachers for this professional experience. It will empower teachers to collaborate professionally by working together, sharing knowledge and experiences with other professional team members to improve learning and learners' wellbeing.

Effective teaching during the formative years of children, contributes to their health and wellbeing and in a class room this can only be achieved through efficient class management. The purpose of this unit is to understand the contexts involved in being a classroom teacher to become a more effective professional.

Learners will be given the opportunity to spend a number of hours observing a teacher during a normal day in class to help them observe and be exposed to the roles and responsibilities entailed in this position. The effective teacher is constantly looking for ways to improve the organisation of the children's learning and seeking the best use of time, space and resources including his/her own teaching skills and the children's capacity to respond. This unit will consider important elements in managing a classroom.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the student will be able to:

1. *Demonstrate good leadership and management skills in the role of a class teacher;*
2. *Describe the key features of managing the environment as a resource for learning and the physical setting as an important influence on the education of children;*
3. *Explain the importance of working in partnership with parents and learning support educators as a major part in child education;*
4. *Manage the progress of each child in the classroom including children on special need programmes.*

Unit: CSEYS-603-2006 Everyday Science for the Young Learners

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 3

Unit Description

This unit specifically equips learners with the necessary tools to develop knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of science which could be implemented with Early Years learners. It will show how the teaching of science can be delivered in a meaningful way so that it develops children's sense of curiosity and inquiring skills. Learners throughout this unit will enhance their skills on how to plan activities with Early Years children to promote their development whilst targeting their individual learning needs. This unit will also show how science can be taught in an engaging and practical way through a variety of approaches through different types of inquiry learning. Through the teaching of this unit, the emphasis is to maintain links and connections to everyday scientific phenomena as well as to focus on the local context.

This unit prepares learners to tackle a series of topics which form the basic principles of science; namely physical sciences which looks at materials, physical properties of objects, properties of water, magnets, light and heat, Earth sciences which will look at seasons, the weather, the moon, different environments, Life sciences looking at living and non-living things, plants, animals, the human body and scientific experiments and investigations. Through such topics learners should be able to apply fundamental concepts underlying science for young learners. This unit also prepares learners to plan science activities which are amalgamated with other subjects/concepts and which reflect upon the use of effective educational and age appropriate resources. This includes the use of digital tools and applications.

This unit is segmented into four main learning outcomes. Focus is particularly given to different approaches which could be used to implement and deliver scientific concepts and the way teachers can promote the construction of knowledge. The learning outcomes which follow address how science can be related to local policies and legislative framework and how to create a learning environment which stimulates the use of science within a classroom setting. Through the teaching of this unit learners will also learn to plan science based activities in an innovative and constructive manner.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the student will be able to:

- 1. Identify critically approaches to deliver scientific concepts in an engaging and practical way to Early Years learners.*
- 2. Apply fundamental concepts and topics underlying science for Early Years learners which reflect upon the national curricular guidance.*
- 3. Develop a range of activities for Early Years learners that align objectives, methods and assessments and which include scientific concepts.*
- 4. Create a learning environment which stimulates the subject of science in Early Years children's education.*

Unit: CSEYS-603-2007 Action Research and the Reflective Practitioner

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 3

Unit Description

This unit is designed to be a small-scale research project into an aspect of the learners' practice. Undertaking an action research project would involve looking in depth and gathering and assessing the evidence before implementing new ideas or changing one's practices.

In the first part of this unit the learners will be introduced to the different parts of an action research, the theoretical underpinnings, and how to get started in doing research, such as formulating an aim, research question, conducting a literature search, writing up a critical literature review and planning an intervention. Literature search and writing is considered as a vital part of the project. Reading academic sources related to a particular research area will give a model for academic writing as well as help learners build a literature review by evaluating existing sources.

The second part of the unit will look at methodology - data gathering tools available and ethical issues. Learners will discuss structure and processes involved in conducting action research. The aim of this part is to offer practical guidelines to action research. This will help the learner research start thinking of the project in terms of stages.

The third and final part of this unit will encourage the learners to collect data during placement/practice and will help the students to analyse and display data as well as reflecting on the implications of the findings. This should help them to arrive at a conclusion and be able to recommend further action in the action research cycle which aids the learner in becoming a reflective practitioner.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the student will be able to:

- 1. Choose an area related to early years to conduct action research;*
- 2. Plan methodology and gather data in relation to own research question;*
- 3. Analyse the data collected;*
- 4. Conclude own research to come up with recommendations for further action.*

Unit: CSEYS-602-2008 Outdoor Learning through Nature for Young Learners

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 2

Unit Description

Children's learning process follows a path forged by a natural curiosity that requires direct sensory experience rather than conceptual generalization. To be effective and engage children based upon their developmental abilities and ways of learning, their subject learning outcomes need to be modelled on immersive and open-ended experiences rather than structured and scripted learning.

Children have an innate tendency to explore and bond with nature. However, in our increasingly urban and technology-oriented lifestyles, children's natural attraction to nature is not given opportunities to flourish. Providing the right experiences requires developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn about the natural world based on principles of child development and learning.

In the context of education for sustainability, there is compelling evidence that children's lack of exposure to nature has a cost to both their personal development and significantly, to their environmental behaviour as adults.

This course introduces a key methodology for education for sustainability: through connecting children with nature. It provides early years educators with the skills and competences to deliver outdoor learning through nature. Educators will reflect on their own learning, attitudes and values that define their relationship with the natural environment and evaluate the effectiveness of their classroom practice as social leaders for sustainable living in the first part. In the second half, course participants will apply course methodology to create learning environments in nature and appraise their teaching and learning support for the benefits that learning through nature provides to children's education, physical health, emotional wellbeing, personal and social skills and environmental responsibility.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the student will be able to:

- 1. Recognise the difference between adults' and children's perceptions and ways of experiencing nature that define their relationship with it;*
- 2. Understand theories of early childhood empathy and childhood exploration;*
- 3. Explain the teacher's role as a leader in sustainability values and the link to connecting with nature as the key factor influencing motivation to change;*
- 4. Create learning environments in nature and develop a methodology to deliver learning through nature.*
- 5. Identify the challenges of structured and restrictive outdoor learning spaces whilst allowing for experiential learning through nature.*

Unit: CSEYS-603-2009 Children’s Rights and Legislation

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 3

Unit Description

This is a knowledge and application unit. It will allow learners to demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge to understand the rights of children according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Understanding is further demonstrated in considering the connection of the UNCRC with local legislation and educational policies.

This unit covers the understanding of the articles found within the UNCRC, together with how the local legal framework is ensuring that articles are being followed. This includes the awareness of the Commissioner for Children's Act who is appointed in order to ensure that the UNCRC are implemented. Learners will also become familiar with other Acts found in Maltese legislation which complement in ensuring rights of children. These include the Minor Protection (Alternative Care) Act; Civil Code Chapter 16; Criminal Code Chapter 9; GDPR and Education Act. This should be further complemented by bringing awareness to a number of policies to be followed by educational institutes to ensure compliance with legislations. These include the National Children's Policy; Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools Policy; Managing Behaviour in Schools Policy; Addressing Attendance in Schools Policy; Respect for All Framework; Trans, Gender Variant and Intersex Students in Schools Policy and the Child Protection Procedure in Schools.

On completion of the unit, learners will have a better understanding of the rights of Children and their implementation in the local scenario in respect to education. Learners will attain an understanding of rights and legislations at a practical level and equip them to view related concerns from an informed position.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the student will be able to:

1. *Recognise the Rights of the Child;*
2. *Understand how local legislation ensures the implementation of the Rights of the child;*
3. *Examine how educational policies support the Rights of the Child;*
4. *Examine the impact of the convention, legislation and policies to relevant sector.*

Unit: CSEYS-606-2010 Critical Engagement of the Early Years Practitioner

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 6

Unit Description

The current trend towards student-centred teaching and learning is bringing about a shift from promoting effective teaching towards developing an understanding of how students learn. Consequently, the early years educator needs to reflect that to be a truly effective educator one needs to understand how the students learn. Prevalent literature calls for more emphasis on the students' learning processes through increased metacognition and critical reflection. This unit will start with the assumption that learning is an intricate and complex process involving different mental processes. It will present the scenario that learning can no longer be viewed as a process which involves solely cognition (thinking). When students are going through a process of thinking during learning, they are also feeling and doing. Learning is part of our being and if one wants to learn, one must understand how one learns and then make sense of it so as to make one's mental mechanisms work most efficiently for him/her.

In this unit, learners will be able to reflect on their role as facilitative educators as opposed to didactic ones. In addition, they will be able to practice skills and competences that they require in their profession. Finally, student and educator's motivation will be discussed.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the student will be able to:

- 1. Reflect on the educator's role as a facilitative leader as opposed to didactic leader;*
- 2. Demonstrate a wide range of strategies to promote learning in the early years;*
- 3. Distinguish between cognitive, affective and conative factors and how each of these directly impact on learning;*
- 4. Evaluate the different learning processes adopted by early years learners;*
- 5. Stimulate creative thinking in planning and daily practice within the educational setting.*

Unit: CSEYS-603-2011 Digital Citizenship: Enriching Learning through Web-Based Applications

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 3

Unit Description

Teaching and learning in the 21st century uses techniques that incorporate web-based applications, many of which are used regularly by the 21st century learners even at a young age. This will not only make the learning experience attractive to the learner, but it will also provide the right skill set to interact with the current (and future) web applications in a meaningful manner.

This unit aims at helping educators to introduce students to some digital citizenship values whilst enhancing their digital skills through some web 2.0 tools that can be easily integrated in their schemes of work for the subjects taught. This unit is intended to describe the role of Digital Citizenship and Digital Skills in today's educational practices and illustrate particular digital tools that can be used as a valuable resource within the early years setting. The unit will discuss, plan and implement a cross-curricular approach to integrate Digital Citizenship and Digital Skills within the current educational framework and own current early years setting.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the student will be able to:

1. *Adopt innovative web-based applications in practice.*
2. *Ensure that the learners collaborate in an open but digitally secure environment.*
3. *Advise peers and school children on different applications.*
4. *Use appropriate web-based applications during lessons.*

Unit: CSEYS-606-2012 Social Issues in the Early Years

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 6

Unit Description

Early years learning environments are rapidly changing in Malta due to the effects of globalization, migratory pressures and inter-racial marriages. Early years setting in Malta have to rapidly adapt and meet the needs of a multicultural environment. This entails reforms and adaptations. The management teams and educators need to be empowered so as to address effectively and efficiently these new challenges. Educators need to leave behind their preconceived ideas and learn to accept and help integrate students coming from different walks of life.

This unit enables professionals, who are working within early years setting to promote social justice and equity, in or through education, to gain deeper and more critical insights into their professional practice and concerns and to address and understand the challenges that multiculturalism brings in the early years' environment. It aims to encourage participants to develop knowledge about, and insights into, the ways they can bring about change within their practice to reach all students in the early years.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the student will be able to:

- 1. Provide a student-centred equitable classroom environment for all students in the early years;*
- 2. Identify digital tools that create opportunities for diverse learners;*
- 3. Adopt strategies and resources to address cultural and religious differences that might cause conflict in the early years setting;*
- 4. Identify students that may be more vulnerable to radicalisation and address unprecedented sensitive situations.*

Unit: CSEYS-610-2013 Emergent Curriculum in Practice

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 10

Unit Description

This module focuses on the learner's engagement with young children in a work based scenario. It is directly related to a six-week long work placement experience, which takes place during the second year of the Degree course in the Early Years. This work placement gives the learners the opportunity to apply theory into practice and demonstrate their ability of managing the class on their own, reflect on their practice, enhancing their strengths and improving their weaknesses. This is a continuation of the previous placement which took place in the first year of the Degree Course Level 6 in the Early Years.

This module observes a kindergarten class of young children. Learners will learn how to implement and use the observations to simulate the development of children. This offers the learners an opportunity to plan a project based on the interest of children. This unit gives the learners an experience of the environmental requirements for young children, and the resources and materials that need to be available in order to support an emergent curriculum. This unit entails learners to work hand in hand with other peers, parents, children and class practitioners to build upon existing knowledge of professionalism within the workplace.

This module prepares learners for furthering their studies to a higher level and satisfies industry needs and employability factors required by the Education Directorate and schools. It gives learners the experience of applying theory into practice in a vocational context which forms an important part in achieving the qualification. The learners will find the opportunity to build and gain confidence in themselves and develop the skills to reflect and improve oneself.

For this module the learners will have opportunities of self-reflection about the everyday teaching and learning experience. Consequently, analysis and evaluation of methodologies used will lead to the upgrading of techniques adopted to scaffold learning in an improved manner and on a more personalised level for the child. Evaluation of own practices will be the basis of an action research approach to this module.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the student will be able to:

1. *Create an environment which is conducive to learning whilst evaluating the placement setting.*
2. *Recognise the importance of observation for pedagogical purposes and planning on the interest of children.*
3. *Recognise the importance of effective planning and appropriate implementation of work within an emergent curriculum framework.*
4. *Evaluate own practice, and the effectiveness of planned activities for children's learning.*

Unit: CSEYS-603-2014 Children’s Emotions and Well-Being

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 3

Unit Description

This is a knowledge and application unit. It will allow learners to explore what well-being encompasses with a particular focus on emotional well-being. During the unit, learners are to demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge to understand the well-being and emotions of children and how to address these needs.

This unit covers the understanding of what well-being includes, appropriate identification of emotions and awareness of children at risk. Learners will develop awareness of how well-being in its all formats impacts children with a special focus on how it impacts them during school hours. The importance of emotional well-being is explored together with how it impacts the overall satisfaction of children. This includes being able to identify the different emotions of children and helping them to express these emotions effectively. Learners will explore how they are themselves, including use of self, conducive to the well-being of children in class and its effect on the overall well-being. Exploration of how teachers can create a positive environment would include practical examples. This unit will allow learners to also become sensitised to identify students who are at risk of not developing positive well-being, and of taking the necessary appropriate steps to counteract risks.

On completion of the unit, learners will have a better understanding of children’s positive wellbeing and emotions and their implementation in the educational setting. Learners will attain an understanding of children’s wellbeing and emotions at a practical level and equip them to view related concerns from an informed position.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the student will be able to:

- 1. Understand what constitutes positive well-being in Children and its importance;*
- 2. Identify emotions in Children;*
- 3. Assist children at risk of not developing positive well-being;*
- 4. Examine the impact of self in creating a conducive environment of emotional well-being.*

Unit: CSDIS-612-2002 Dissertation

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 12

Unit Description

This unit requires learners to undertake an individual research project in an area of specialisation identified by the learner. This part of the course requires the individual to construct research questions, identify and critically evaluate appropriate literature of the respective field, devise and carry out appropriate research methods, and critically interpret and examine the results and contribution of one's research.

In the process, the learner is expected to comply with academic rigour and present findings in a well-structured and cogently argued form using the appropriate reference style, as instructed during the unit.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the student will be able to:

- 1. Conduct research related to identified question to produce the literature review;*
- 2. Propose the most suitable methodology to address own formulated research question;*
- 3. Analyse results and findings in relation to current studies and theories;*
- 4. Use the most suitable format to present findings, recommendations and limitations of own study.*