

Programme Specification for BA (Hons) Birth and Beyond

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	NCT
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award or awards	BA (Hons)Top-Up (level 6 Only)
5.	Programme title	BA (Hons) Birth and Beyond
6.	Pathways available	Single Honours
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Teaching is via blended learning through online study and block teaching at regional locations around the UK.
8.	Mode of attendance	Full or part time.
9.	UCAS Code	
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	QAA Framework for HE qualifications.
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	March 2016; March 2017 error amended in Section 20

12. Educational aims of the programme

This programme allows students to ‘top up’ their NCT Foundation Degree or Diploma, or any other relevant level 5 qualification, to the BA (Hons) Birth and Beyond. The programme enables students to deepen their ability to work with parents, colleagues and fellow professionals in a range of ways during the First 1,000 Days (from conception to the age of two). It also provides opportunities for students to explore the historical, political, cultural, and spiritual context of ‘Birth and Beyond’ allowing them to gain a greater understanding of the issues and tensions within this field. Students explore the concepts of change, influence and advocacy, and study their relevance in the context of ‘Birth and Beyond’.

The blended learning nature of the programme enables students to develop transferable skills in the use of online technology.

The programme also provides a pathway for those wishing to progress to further postgraduate work and research in related fields.

The aims of the programme are to:

1. Develop a systematic understanding of how sociological and historical factors have influenced parents’ experience of their transition to parenthood, allowing students to build a holistic perception of the importance of this period in parents’ and children’s lives which is based on relevant and current theory.
2. Develop a critical awareness and understanding of research relevant to parents’ First 1,000 Days, an ability to engage with the issues underpinning the delivery of maternity and early parenting services, and an ability to apply research in practice.
3. Enable students to use their knowledge and understanding to actively engage in the broader national debate relating to parents’ First 1,000 Days, and to identify ways to facilitate change at both local and national level.

4. Develop a coherent and detailed knowledge base around the theories relating to supporting and assessing adult learning, and an ability to translate this understanding into working effectively with practitioners and parents around the transition to parenthood.
5. Provide a rewarding and transformational learning experience which ensures the development of a range of transferable academic and practical skills including reflective practice, critical analysis, and problem-solving.
6. Encourage continuing professional development and scholarship, establishing an academic community with both the motivation and the interest to push the boundaries of knowledge and research in this field.

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

Knowledge and understanding:

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

Learning Outcome	Module Code
○ Demonstrate knowledge and a critical understanding of how the experience of childbirth, breastfeeding and parenthood has been shaped both historically and currently by cultural, political, social and economic influences.	NCTC3003
○ Use knowledge and deeper understanding to work with the NCT and other parenthood organisations to inform the way in which parents are supported.	NCTC3001 NCTC3003 NCTC3004
○ Use critical evaluation of the theories and evidence concerning learning and teaching to identify a range of ways in which to promote adult learning.	NCTC3001

Cognitive and intellectual skills:

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

Learning Outcome	Module Code
○ Manage their own learning using research appropriately, and using reflection, evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, and self and task management to meet set objectives.	All
○ Critically analyse and evaluate data, concepts and theories, and to synthesise varied and diverse ideas into a coherent whole.	All

Practical skills relevant to employment:*On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:*

Learning Outcome	Module Code
○ Apply a range of effective skills to support adult learners in a range of situations; identifying through critical evaluation, strategies for supporting the learning needs of adults with diverse socio-cultural, economic and educational backgrounds.	NCTC3001
○ Utilise their deepened knowledge to inform their own practice and that of others working with parents in the First 1,000 Days.	All
○ Identify and promote a range of ways in which to enable and promote improvements in the effective support and understanding of parents in their transition to parenthood.	NCTC3004
○ Engage in the development and improvement of services relevant to antenatal care, breastfeeding support and parenthood.	NCTC3004

Transferable/key skills:*On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:*

Learning Outcome	Module Code
○ Consistently demonstrate a range of strategies for working effectively with colleagues, other professionals and parents in a holistic manner that takes account of the complexity of the factors involved.	NCTC3004 NCTC3001
○ Utilise appropriate and effective communication and interpersonal skills, and make decisions in complex circumstances.	All
○ Apply an advanced level of information and digital literacy competencies such as retrieving, evaluation and communication of information.	All
○ Assume personal responsibility for practice, learning and continuing professional development, undertaking further training where necessary to develop existing skills and develop new competencies.	All

Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:

This programme is delivered using a blended learning approach, allowing theory and practice to be integrated. In addition to tutor led work there will be an expectation of a significant amount of independent or group learning.

Examples of learning and teaching methods:

- Induction day provides an introduction to the course and studying at Level 6.
- Interactive study days which include information giving, discussion, small group work

- Face-to-face and online tutorials including facilitated discussions, presentations and interactive sessions
- One-to-one sessions with tutors
- Contact with tutors and other students in tutorial group via e-group, e-mail, Skype, telephone or an online learning platform (Blackboard)
- Online and e-learning and e-teaching including use of Blackboard, Pebblepad and specific online learning packages
- Use of an online reflective journal or blog
- Observations of a range of teaching and learning activities
- Formative group exercise with fellow students
- Attendance at NCT and other conferences and events
- Involvement with local NCT branches and other groups such as local MSLCs
- Self-directed study
- Reading groups
- Journal club

Examples of assessments:

Skills based:

- Interactive sessions
- Presentation
- Group task to 'build a case'
- Reflective journal /log
- Production of handouts

Content based:

- Essays
- Book proposal
- Independent study

14. Assessment Strategy

Assessment is aligned with the [University's Assessment Policy](#) and is seen as a means to:

- Assess whether students have met the specified learning outcomes to the required level
- Allow students to demonstrate practical and academic progress and achievement
- Provide a supportive structure to allow students to learn from feedback
- Increase and motivate learning towards learning outcomes

Both summative and formative assessments are used. Formative assessment is seen as playing an important role in student learning and development, providing students with regular feedback on their progress. It is aligned to summative assessment and can increase student confidence in achieving the Modular Learning Outcomes.

A broad range of assessment strategies are used which are student-centred and help develop the skills needed for both Higher Education and future employment.

Assessments combine both traditional and innovative assignments.

Assessment has been considered across all modules to ensure a positive learning experience for students which allows for:

- a range (and in places a choice) of assessment strategies to suit different students' learning needs
- an ability to build on skills learnt from previous assessments.

Each assessment is outlined in the module specifications which are in the course handbook and logbook, the latter also provides students with more comprehensive guidelines. The guidelines contain explicit assessment criteria, aligned to module learning outcomes, and indicate what students need to do to complete the assessment successfully.

The assessments are marked using criteria based on UW grade descriptors. Specific grids have been developed for each type of assignment to ensure that students and tutors have a clear understanding of what needs to be covered.

15. Programme structures and requirements

Award map for the BA (Hons) Birth and Beyond

To be awarded the BA (Hons) Birth and Beyond students must successfully complete 120 credits at L6

Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status (Mandatory (M) or Optional (O))
NCTC 3003	The Cultural Shaping of Birth and Beyond	30	M
NCTC 3004	Bringing about Change in Birth and Beyond	30	M
NCTC 3001	The Adult Learner	30	M
NCTC 3002	Independent Study	30	M

The course is available full or part time and all modules with exception of the Independent Study are available as individual modules too. The delivery patterns are laid out in the course handbook.

16. QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

The intended Learning Outcomes of this programme are commensurate with a higher education qualification at Level 6 as specified in the [QAA Framework for HE Qualifications](#).

This award is located at level 6 of the FHEQ.

17. Support for students

Student support is a key element of the programme and is provided through a range of sources at both NCT and the University of Worcester. <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/index.htm>

BA tutors

The NCT tutor system is an important part of ensuring that every student receives the individual support that will allow them to progress academically and personally. BA Tutors combine an academic and pastoral role – facilitating workshops, study days and tutorials to fulfil the academic aspect of the programme, but also providing one-to-one support through tutorials, face-to-face contact, e-mail, skype and telephone.

Personal academic tutor

Each student will be assigned a personal academic tutor to provide a consistent point of contact throughout their time on the course. The personal academic tutor in addition to academic

support will provide pastoral support and give guidance and support on how to manage their time in relation to the differing module formats and submission dates.

Supervisor

Each student undertaking the independent study will be assigned a supervisor the supervisor may also take on the role of personal academic tutor.

Course handbook

The Course Handbook contains detailed information on not only the modules (with guidance on how to approach and complete the module), but also the management and requirements of the programme.

Course logbook

The Course Logbook contains additional information about the modules, the Student Charter and the Learning Agreement; it is a 'live document' designed to be used as a reflective logbook and diary.

Induction day

An induction programme provides students with the opportunity to be introduced to:

- Advanced study and academic skills at L6
- Information and learning systems at the University of Worcester and at NCT (including library services, Blackboard and Pebblepad)
- Student support services at the University of Worcester [information and learning services](#)

Babble/MIDIRS/NCT library

Students will have access to the learning and research support on NCT Group sites, these sites will also provide information and support for them in their role as a practitioner.

Academic support

Support initially provided by module tutor, supervisor or personal academic tutor. Students are able to access the University's learning support both [online](#) and through study skills advice sheets. The NCT also has an Academic Support Tutor that can be contacted by any student requiring additional support.

Student forum and e-groups

NCT students are supported by membership of a student forum and of student e-groups – many specific issues, queries and problems are addressed through these channels.

Disability and dyslexia

NCT (disability discrimination policy and equal opportunities policy) and the university (equal opportunity policy statement) promote equality in relation to race, disability, gender, age and sexual orientation.

The disability service within the university provides specialist academic support, making recommendations for reasonable adjustments to teaching and assessment based on individual need. <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/disability-and-dyslexia.htm>
The NCT disability tutor can also provide additional support if required.

18. Admissions

Admissions Policy

Admissions tutors work to identify applicants who can demonstrate their potential to succeed at this level.

NCT is committed to widening participation in line with its Strategy, and to recruiting a diverse student cohort that is representative of the areas and groups in which they will subsequently work.

Entry requirements

Students entering the programme need to have completed one of the following:

- the Foundation Degree Advanced Birth and Beyond Practitioner
- the Foundation Degree Birth and Beyond
- the Diploma of Higher Education (Antenatal Education, Breastfeeding Counselling or Postnatal Group Facilitation)

or

- an alternative appropriate level 5 qualification of 240 credits

In addition:

- The L5 qualification held must include an element of research studies. If it is not the NCT FdA commencing in 2016 -17 applicants will need to demonstrate that they have an appropriate qualification or the necessary knowledge. Accepted qualifications are the NCT Level 5 Research module (UW), the NCT Level 6 UoB module. Alternatively the student can apply for NCT Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or attend an internal NCT research short course.

Admissions procedures

All applicants are considered on an individual basis:

- Current UW students apply via their SOLE page
- Part time applicants apply via the University of Worcester website
- Full time applicants apply via the University of Worcester website for 2016-17, from 2017-18 onwards they will apply via UCAS.

Visit NCT's [website](#) for information on assistance with fees.

Where a decision cannot be made on the basis of the application form an interview may be required.

19. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

A range of strategies is used to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality and standards of teaching and learning

- a) Mid and end of module evaluations by students
- b) Annual NCT student questionnaire in addition to National Survey (NSS)
- c) Review by Course Management Committee in conjunction with NCT Academic Board
- d) Evaluation and Feedback from students studying for FdA and BA (Hons) with NCT
- e) Recruitment and involvement of StARs in a range of meetings and consultations.
- f) Peer observation of teachers and tutors
- g) On-going staff CPD and scholarship
- h) Regular staff meetings
- i) External Examiner Reports.

j) These culminate in an annual Evaluation Report and NCT Annual Education Report

20. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's Taught Courses Regulatory Framework

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- All modules have attendance requirements
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 5 days of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 5 days but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations see Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to re sit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade, unless the failure was due to non-attendance.
- Reassessment items that are passed are graded at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module).

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
Degree (non-honours)	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at Level 6.
Degree with honours	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 6.

Classification

Classification determined on the profile of the best grades from 120 credits attained at Level 6 only

21. Indicators of quality and standards

External Examiners have consistently judged the previous NCT awards (BA Educational Studies NCT and BA Birth and Beyond Educator) to be robust programmes providing positive and rewarding learning experiences that met appropriate academic standards.

In the field of 'supporting parents in the transition to parenthood', the skills demonstrated by NCT practitioners are widely acknowledged and laid out in the NCT Competency Standards Framework.

In October 2015 a Periodic Partnership Review of the NCT programme confirmed that the awards reviewed were aligned with the FHEQ and take account of relevant subject benchmark statements. It was also confirmed that the awards reviewed remained current, valid and true to the programme specification and course documentation. Several points of good practice were highlighted including adherence to University Quality Assurance requirements and the course team's responsiveness to students and external examiners.

22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

Career openings

Successful completion of the BA (Hons) Birth and Beyond would provide an excellent background to a range of roles in the field of parent support both antenatally and in the early years. Areas such as health, Children's Centres, Early Years Departments or family support may all have roles that this course would be appropriate for.

For NCT practitioners it provides an excellent preparation and grounding for moving onto more senior roles within NCT such as Excellent Practitioner, Supervisor, Mentor, Peer support trainer and eventually Assessor and Tutor.

Progression routes/further study opportunities

Successful completion of the BA (Hons) Birth and Beyond enables students to progress to postgraduate study with NCT College and undertake research relating to supporting parents in the transition to parenthood or to adult learning. There are also internal NCT courses leading to specialist roles within NCT that may be undertaken. Alternatively students could progress to external postgraduate study such as a Masters or PhD course, including for example a PGCE in Early Years or Primary Education.

Student employability

The course prepares students for employment by ensuring that the programme includes an in-depth exploration of the key factors of the Birth and Beyond field as well as a range of advanced skills which will enhance employability for a range of roles within the field of Birth and Beyond and Early Years.

Students will have also acquired a wide range of transferable skills which could be used to apply for a much wider range of careers that require degree level education.

NCT is committed to encouraging personal and career development of its practitioners and provides information on its internal web site and also arranges regular 'Developing your role days'.

Links with employers

To date the main employer of graduates of NCT degree courses has been the NCT. As both the employer and the body which has developed and is delivering the course, NCT is in a unique position to ensure that the course is aligned with the requirements NCT has of its practitioners. With the new BA (Hons) Birth and Beyond we would initially expect the NCT to remain the main employer but as the course develops and particularly for those entering this 'Top Up' course with non NCT L5 qualifications this will broaden and links will be made as appropriate.

Whilst there is currently no professional body for those supporting parents in the transition to parenthood, NCT has developed a set of competencies for work in this field. The BA (Hons) Birth and Beyond is aligned with these competencies.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module outlines and the course handbook provided to all students at the start of the course.