

Programme Specification for the Cert HE NCT Perinatal Education and Practice

This document applies to Academic Year 2023/24 onwards

Table 1 programme specification

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	NCT
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award or awards	Cert HE
5.	Programme title	NCT Perinatal Education and Practice
6.	Pathways available	N/A
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Teaching is via blended learning through taught sessions, asynchronous online learning, and guided independent study. Taught sessions take place both in-person at NCT regional locations and through virtual synchronous seminars.
8.	Mode of attendance and duration	Full-time over one academic year or part-time over two academic years
9.	UCAS Code	L523
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	N/A
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	Approved June 2021 August 2021 – AQU and NCT amendments March 2022 - Addition of part time pathway July 2023 – annual updates

12. Educational aims of the programme

NCT has a long tradition of training practitioners, and our students have a variety of personal, social, and cultural backgrounds, as well as a range of academic experience. This course is designed to train those wishing to work professionally with parents during their unique journeys through pregnancy, birth, infant feeding, and into early parenthood, providing accurate, impartial information through the delivery of courses and classes. NCT's vision is that everyone who becomes a parent feels confident, connected and safe. NCT practitioners are mindful of their responsibility as a professional, they demonstrate an ability to be self-aware, respectful of others and responsive to feedback.

The course offers a flexible approach, and for some students studying with NCT gives them an opportunity to engage with Higher Education. This course has been designed with layered learning and strong links between modules to facilitate an integrated and cohesive experience. The Educational Aims have been written to reflect this integrated nature of the course.

Students who successfully complete this course will be awarded a Certificate in Higher Education. To be awarded the NCT Licence to Practise students also need to successfully complete an additional NCT element: learning in the workplace practice placement. Details for the requirements of this element are available in the Course Handbook and the Practice Placement Handbook. For full-time students the practice placement element will continue after the end of the Certificate in Higher Education, across approximately 3 months. For part-time students the learning in the workplace practice placement will be completed during the 2-year span of the course. Once this is successfully completed the student will be awarded the NCT Licence to Practise to enable them to work as an NCT practitioner.

The aims of the programme are to:

- 1 Provide a rewarding and transformational learning experience which ensures the development of a range of transferable academic and practical skills to meet the needs of students, parents, NCT and the wider community.
- 2 Develop the knowledge base, skills and self-awareness of students through reflective practice, exploration of systemic and personal bias, analysis of issues and the use of research-based evidence.
- 3 Broaden students' perspective in order to enable a sensitive, empathetic, responsive and holistic approach to the varying and changing psychological and physical needs of those they work with.
- 4 Ensure that students develop the knowledge, skills and anti-discriminatory approach required to meet the needs of all parent groups, working effectively across all communities.
- 5 Develop NCT Practitioners who are fit for practice, proactive, adaptable, and critically reflective, and who accept responsibility for their own continuing professional development.
- 6 Promote an ethos of partnership, both internally with other NCT practitioners, staff and volunteers, and externally with health and social care professionals, so enabling parents to benefit from a holistic approach.

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

Table 2 knowledge and understanding outcomes for module code/s.

Knowledge and Understanding		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Describe the physiology and basic pathology of pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding.	NCTC1203 NCTC1205
2.	Demonstrate a socially competent understanding of the issues that affect the health and wellbeing of both parents and their baby across the transition to parenthood, relating to pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding and the postnatal period.	NCTC1203 NCTC1204 NCTC1205
3.	Explain a range of strategies for promoting adult learning in a holistic and experiential manner.	NCTC1201

Table 3 cognitive and intellectual skills outcomes for module code/s

Cognitive and Intellectual skills		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s

Cognitive and Intellectual skills		
4.	Use reflection, evaluation, feedback, and time management skills to meet set objectives, whilst being aware of the limits of personal knowledge and understanding, and how this may influence the interpretation and analysis of issues.	NCTC1202
5.	Demonstrate the ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop and explore lines of argument in accordance with basic theories and concepts related to informed decision making and self-efficacy.	NCTC1206

Table 4 skills and capabilities related to employment outcomes for module code/s.

Skills and capabilities related to employability		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
6.	Demonstrate a range of effective group facilitation skills that clearly meet the practical, emotional and relationship needs of parents across the transition to parenthood.	NCTC1201 NCTC1203 NCTC1204
7.	Demonstrate a range of facilitation and communication skills when working with parents and professionals, showing respect and empathy for an individual's beliefs and needs, valuing both personal experience and the personal, social, and cultural context of the individual.	NCTC1202 NCTC1206
8.	Evaluate the effectiveness of the sessions facilitated, and the support provided, identifying strategies for improving their practice.	NCTC1201 NCTC1202

Table 5 transferable/key skills outcomes for module code/s

Transferable/key skills		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
9.	Employ appropriate, responsive, and effective communication and interpersonal skills that can be used in a range of circumstances and with diverse groups of people.	NCTC1201 NCTC1206
10.	Assume personal responsibility for learning, practice, the development of existing skills and new competencies.	NCTC1202
11.	Consistently demonstrate a non-judgmental and anti-discriminatory attitude that values individuals, their needs, and their experiences.	NCTC1202 NCTC1206
12.	Develop broader digital capabilities to access up-to-date information, research, and evidence, through both digital and traditional sources, and to interpret and evaluate it for use in practice.	NCTC1203 NCTC1204 NCTC1205

Learning, teaching and assessment

The programme is delivered using a blended learning approach, a combination of face to face in person and virtual seminars and tutorials, asynchronous online learning and guided independent study. There is also an element of learning in the workplace, allowing theory

and practice to be integrated. NCT tutors model the approach taken by NCT Practitioners when working with students.

Teaching

Students are taught through a combination of experiential and interactive face to face (both in-person and virtual) seminars and tutorials, asynchronous online learning, and guided independent study. Interactive tutorials and seminars are intended to develop knowledge, skills and understanding and the application of learning through small group activities, practice facilitation, discussion and debate, and modelling. Alongside the modelling and practice of facilitation, practice scenarios, case studies and inquiry-based learning will also be used. Asynchronous online teaching and learning, along with guided independent study will give students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the topics and concepts and further develop both skills and knowledge. Additionally, students will take part in supervised learning in the workplace to integrate theory and practice in the field with parents.

Each student will have a personal academic tutor who will be available to offer support throughout the course with meetings scheduled on at least four occasions in the year.

The University places emphasis on enabling students to develop their independent learning capabilities that will equip them for lifelong learning and future employment, as well as academic achievement. A mixture of independent study, teaching and academic support from Student Services and Library Services, and the Personal Academic Tutoring system, enables students to reflect on progress and build up a profile of skills, achievements and experiences that will help them to flourish and be successful.

Contact time

This course will be delivered across two semesters with 20 weeks of teaching per semester; students can choose to study full or part-time. The delivery patterns are laid out in the course handbook.

Students will complete 6 hours contact time per week if studying full-time, or on average 3 hours contact time per week if studying part-time. Students will complete approximately 40% of these taught sessions in person at an NCT regional location and approximately 60% online as face-to-face synchronous virtual. Taught sessions take place on weekdays - each group will have a specific day for their group.

Typically, contact time will be structured around:

- Interactive and experiential activities
- Inquiry based learning
- Practice facilitation, discussion and listening skills
- Small group work
- Practice scenarios and case studies

Full-time study

Contact time consists of 1 day (6 hours) scheduled virtual synchronous contact time per week, plus once every 4 weeks 1 day (6 hours) in person. In addition, students will attend 1 weekend per semester and 1 in person assessment day and 1 skills development day across the year. Students will be given a detailed timetable at the start of the course.

Semester 1 – Sept to end of January 20 weeks	Semester 2 – February to end of June 20 weeks
Each week – 1 day face-to-face online (2 module seminars)	Each week – 1 day face-to-face online (2 module seminars)
Every 4 - 6 weeks - 1 day (6 hours) face-to-face in person (in these weeks no online sessions)	Every 4 - 6 weeks - 1 day (6 hours) face-to-face in person (in these weeks no online sessions)
+ Weekend at University of Worcester (2 days)	+ Weekend at University of Worcester (2 days)
+ Assessment day x 1	+ Skills development day x 1
+ Learning in the workplace (practice placement) – 42 hours across semester*	+ Learning in the workplace (practice placement) – 42 hours across semester*
A typical week will have 6 hours taught contact time, either face-to-face online or in-person + approximately 22 hours guided independent study + learning in the workplace (Practice Placement) = approximately 30 hours study per week over 40 weeks * <i>full-time students will complete a further 21 hours following completion of the CertHE</i>	

Part-time study

Students will complete half the overall contact time in year 1 and the other half in year 2. The exact time per week depends on the specific modules being studied in the semester but will consist of on average 3 hours of scheduled virtual synchronous contact time per week, plus approximately every 4 - 6 weeks 1 full day (6 hours) in person.

In addition, students will attend 1 weekend and either 1 in person assessment day or 1 skills development day per year. Learning in the workplace will be 42 hours across year 1 and 63 hours across year 2 - the longer duration of the part-time route enables students to complete all their placement within the course. Students will be given a detailed timetable at the start of the course.

Year 1 and Year 2	
Semester 1 – Sept to end of January 20 weeks	Semester 2 – February to end of June 20 weeks
A typical week will have 3 – 6 hours taught contact time, depending on the scheduling of the module being studied, either face-to-face online or in-person + approximately 11 hours guided independent study + learning in the workplace = approximately 15 hours study per week over 40 weeks	

Independent self-study

In addition to the contact time, students are expected to undertake around 22.5 hours of guided independent personal self-study per week for full-time, and around 11 hours for part-time. Typically, this will involve completing directed online activities, reading journal articles and books, undertaking research in the library and online, preparing coursework assignments and interactive sessions, and preparing for quizzes and examinations. Independent learning is supported by a range of excellent learning facilities, including the Hive and library resources, the virtual learning environment, and extensive electronic learning resources. NCT also provide excellent resources, up to date research and information for all students and practitioners via their intranet babble and the main website.

Learning in the workplace (Practice Placement)

During the course, students will take part in supervised learning in the workplace. Students will be placed with a qualified, experienced Placement Practitioner who they will observe and shadow running courses or sessions for parents. Under their guidance, students will begin to work with parents as part of transitioning into practice. This learning in the workplace will usually take place in the evenings and / or at the weekend since this is when parent courses take place.

As part of this element of the course, students will complete a portfolio to track the development and achievement of competencies, and to reflect on observations and practice. Included in this may be sections of, or reflections on, parts of the student's personal, private reflective journal. There will opportunities for students to share and discuss their portfolio with their Personal Academic Tutor.

Students will be provided with clear guidance on all aspects of being an NCT Practitioner. There will be a preparatory session with their Personal Academic Tutor who will be overseeing progress and providing continued support.

Following successful completion of both the CertHE and the practice placement*, students will be allocated an NCT Mentor to provide further support through the first six months of their fully qualified practitioner status. Mentors are NCT excellent practitioners who have undergone a year's training programme with NCT.

** For full-time students the practice placement element will continue after the end of the Certificate in Higher Education, across approximately 3 months. For part-time students the practice placement will be completed during the 2 academic year span of the course.*

Teaching staff

You will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course. The team includes senior tutors, academics, and professional practitioners who have in the field experience. All tutors have registered lecturer status at the University of Worcester. Experienced practitioners will also contribute to the overall learning by providing mentoring for observations and shadowing during the learning in the workplace element of the course.

Teaching is informed by research and consultancy. All NCT tutors hold a degree and have also gained the skills and experience needed through the NCT in-house tutor training system which includes a specific focus on Adult Learning. In addition, around 50% have a PGCert in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy.

Assessment

The course provides opportunities to test understanding and learning informally through the completion of practice or 'formative' assignments, these align to summative assessment and can increase student confidence in achieving the modular learning outcome. Each module has one or more formal or 'summative' assessments which are graded and count towards the overall module grade. Assessment has been considered across all modules to ensure a positive learning experience for students which allows for:

- A range of assessment strategies to suit different students' learning needs
- An ability to build on skills learnt from previous assessments

Assessments combine both traditional and innovative assignments and include written assignments and those focused on assessing practical skills. Assessment methods include:

- Practical assessments to assess ability to lead facilitated discussions, interactive sessions, physical skills
- Individual presentations of detailed session plans
- Essay
- Reflective written pieces

Students will receive feedback on practice 'formative' assessments and on formal 'summative' assessments. Verbal or written feedback is given for all formative assessments. Students undertaking practical formative work at tutorials or seminars receive immediate verbal feedback from tutors and their peers. Tutors feedback on written formative work directly to each student individually. All summative assessments receive written feedback. Feedback is intended to support learning and students are encouraged to discuss it with personal academic tutors and module tutors as appropriate. Feedback and grades on formal course work assessments will be provided within 20 working days of submission.

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

A broad range of assessment strategies are used which are student-centred, informed by the [Inclusive Assessment and Reasonable Adjustment Policy](#) and which help develop the skills needed for both Higher Education and future employment. Each module has a guide that contains explicit assessment criteria, aligned to module learning outcomes, and indicates what students need to do to complete the assessment successfully. A grid showing assessment methods and weightings mapped to modules at each level, together with an assessment calendar of submission dates is included in the Course Handbook.

Assessments are marked using criteria based on [UW grade descriptors](#). Assessment criteria and grade descriptors are provided for each type/item of assessment in the form of a grid.

15. Programme structures and requirements

Award Map for the CertHE NCT Perinatal Education and Practice

To be awarded the CertHE NCT Perinatal Education and Practice students must successfully complete 120 credits at Level 4. The course can be taken either full-time or

part-time. The modules taken each year for the part time route are highlighted below and the delivery patterns are laid out in the course handbook.

Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)	Prerequisites (Code of Module required)
Full time route				
NCTC1201	Facilitating learning in groups	15	M	None
NCTC1202	Reflective practice	15	M	None
NCTC1203	Pregnancy and birth: knowledge and physicality	30	M	None
NCTC1204	Understanding the new baby and transition to parenthood	30	M	None
NCTC1205	Breastfeeding knowledge	15	M	None
NCTC1206	Informed decision making in practice	15	M	None
Part time route				
Year 1 - 2023 (2023 cohort)				
NCTC1202	Facilitating learning in groups	15	M	None
NCTC1203	Pregnancy and birth: knowledge and physicality	30	M	None
NCTC1205	Breastfeeding knowledge	15	M	None
Year 2 - 2023 (2022 cohort)				
NCTC1201	Facilitating learning in groups	15	M	None
NCTC1204	Understanding the new baby and transition to parenthood	30	M	None
NCTC1206	Informed decision making in practice	15	M	None
Year 2 - 2024 (2023 cohort)				
NCTC1201	Reflective practice	15	M	None
NCTC1204	Understanding the new baby and transition to parenthood	30	M	None
NCTC1206	Informed decision making in practice	15	M	None

Module specifications will be accessible via Blackboard

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

The intended Learning Outcomes of this programme are commensurate with a higher education qualification at Level 4 as specified in the Framework for HE Qualifications

This award is located at Level 4 of the [OfS sector recognised standards](#).

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.

Personal Academic Tutor

All students will be allocated a named Personal Academic Tutor for the duration of their study. The Personal Academic Tutor will support students at key transition points, enabling them to reflect on progress and set future goals for achievement academically and for employability, and to become autonomous learners. The Personal Academic Tutor system is intended to provide a stable, holistic, and developmental form of support for individual students that is course related. There will be a minimum of four meetings during the academic year with an initial meeting within the first 3 weeks.

Academic support

Students can access the University's learning support through [the Study Skills portal](#). The NCT also has an Academic Support Tutor who is available to provide students with information and support from specific learning needs to referencing.

Induction event

There is an Induction event at the start of the course providing students with an introduction to both the course and the NCT practitioner role. This event provides students with the opportunity to be introduced to:

- The principles of learning and teaching in higher education
- Study skills
- Information and Learning Systems at the University of Worcester and at NCT (including library services, Blackboard and SOLE)
- Student support services at the University of Worcester
- [Information & Communication Technology](#)
- Evidence-based practice
- Safe practice (health and safety, lone working, risk assessment for practitioners, boundaries, safeguarding)
- NCT Ethos, history of birth, feeding and parenting

<https://www2.worc.ac.uk/firstpoint/>

<https://www.worcester.ac.uk/life/help-and-support/services-for-students/home.aspx>

<https://www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia/>

Student Representation

[Worcester students' union](#), the University of Worcester and NCT are committed to ensuring that all students can influence and shape the course they study and enhance the learning experience for current and future students. All students are represented at Student Staff Liaison Committees by at least one elected Course Representative. The role of a Course Representative is to represent the views and concerns of the cohort and to make suggestions about how their course might be improved.

Course reps attend Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC), in person or by virtual conference, as well as taking part in working groups on issues affecting students. NCT student course representatives are supported by a tutor team lead, and they regularly communicate amongst themselves via email, virtual environments, and phone. Course representatives are encouraged and supported to communicate with the student body in person, via student e-groups and a dedicated NCT email address.

[The Disability and Dyslexia Service](#) within the university provides specialist academic support, making recommendations for reasonable adjustments to teaching and assessment based on individual need. As above, the NCT academic support tutor also provides support for specific learning needs.

18. Admissions

The admissions policy for the programme is designed to encourage access to higher education through a policy of equal opportunity. Students will need to demonstrate that they will be able to succeed at this level of academic study. Students will also need to demonstrate through the application process that they show the potential to meet the requirements of an NCT Practitioner profile.

The NCT Admissions team works to identify applicants who can demonstrate their potential to succeed at this level, and who will be able to practise and contribute as NCT Practitioners, or in other ways, to support parents in the transition to parenthood.

Entry requirements

One A Level (or equivalent) at Grade C or other acceptable equivalent Level 3 qualification (i.e. a BTEC, CACHE or Access to Higher Education Diploma). These qualifications do not have to be in a related subject. GCSE English Language at Grade C/4 or evidence of level 2 literacy is required, for example key skills or functional skills at level 2.

We welcome applicants who may not meet our standard entry requirements but can demonstrate the ability to study this subject at university level and have relevant life and/or work experience related to birth, babies and parenting, adult education, or women's issues. Details of acceptable level 3 qualifications, policy in relation to mature students or applicants with few or no formal qualifications can be found in the prospectus or on the University webpages.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Information on eligibility for Recognition of prior learning for the purposes of entry or advanced standing is also available from the University webpages or from the Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111). Further information on [Recognition of Prior Learning](#) can be found under Registry Services.

Admissions procedures

All applications follow the University of Worcester admissions regulations and procedures. Full-time applicants complete the UCAS application form, via UCAS website, using course code L523. Part-time applications are made directly through the course page of the University of Worcester website.

Each application will be considered by the NCT Education Operations Manager. References and personal statements will inform the selection of candidates and students will be selected through a review of their application. The review assesses an insight into their qualities and values, interpersonal, communication and written skills and suitability to becoming an NCT Practitioner. All short-listed applicants will be required to attend a mandatory Applicant Day session where their qualities and values will be assessed in more depth through task related activities and through group work around course content and NCT requirements. In addition, this may be followed by an individual interview if deemed necessary.

19. 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 that are detailed in 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
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- A student who submits course work late but within 7 days (one week) of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted
- A student who submits work later than 7 days (one week) will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances
- For full details of submission regulations see the [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
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module; the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments
- A student who, by the time of the reassessment Board of Examiners, has failed 90 credits or more (after exhausting all reassessment opportunities) during the academic year, will have their registration with the University terminated

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
Certificate of Higher Education Cert HE NCT Perinatal Education and Practice	120 credits at Level 4 from all mandatory modules identified in the award map.

Classification

This award is not classified.

20. Graduate destinations, employability, and links with employers

Graduate destinations

This programme qualifies students as NCT Practitioners and enables them to apply for an NCT Licence-to-Practise. Taken over the past 3 years an average of 85% of completing students moved into practice.

Student employability

The course is designed to qualify NCT practitioners, so most students go on to work within NCT as a self-employed practitioner. The course enables graduates to apply for an NCT Licence-to-Practise.

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. Therefore, graduates will have developed skills transferable to a range of

careers in the early years and childcare sector, as well as being transferable to any working environment.

The programme also opens up work and training opportunities within the health and social care sector. Past students have found that completion of an NCT Cert HE has provided a successful transition to Midwifery programmes.

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 associated course documentation e.g., course handbooks, module outlines and module specification.