Programme Specification

	This document applies to academic year 2019/20 onwards	

1	**Awarding institution/body**	University of Worcester
2	**Teaching institution**	ChildVision, National Education Centre for Blind Children, Dublin
3	**Programme accredited by**	N/A
4	**Final award**	Certificate in Higher Education
5	**Programme title**	Working with People with a Visual Impairment
6	**Pathways available**	N/A
7	**Mode and/or site of delivery**	ChildVision, Dublin
8	**Mode of attendance**	Part time over two years, weekends and evenings
9	**UCAS Code**	N/A
10	**Subject benchmark statement and/or professional body statement**	QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Education Studies, February, 2015
11	**Date of Programme Specification preparation / revision**	January 2018 for 2018/19 onwards August 2018 – AQU amendments February 2019 – AQU amendments

12 Educational aims of the programme

The course is designed to enhance the skills, knowledge and insights of students who either work with people with a visual impairment or have a general interest in the field. It is an introductory award and as such makes no assumptions about prior knowledge or experience of visual impairment.

Aims:

- to provide an innovative and professionally relevant series of learning opportunities relating to different aspects associated with working with people with a visual impairment;
- to highlight the importance of working in a ethically sensitive manner with people with a visual impairment;
- to provide opportunities for wider learning which builds on best practice in the specific fields of orientation and mobility, independent living, assistive technology, alternative formats and Multiple Disabilities and Visual Impairment (MDVI) that can, where relevant, be translated into practice in different contexts;
- to enable students to have access to an inclusive learning opportunity which will facilitate the needs of a diversity of students, including those with a visual impairment;
- to develop a range of academic writing and study skills;
- through a range of varied and creative assessment strategies, to enable students to articulate their knowledge and insights and demonstrate skill derived from the different modules;
- to offer a programme of study that is accessible to all and takes account of different learning styles.

13 Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

Knowledge and Understanding		

ILO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	demonstrate an ability to apply a rigorous approach to the acquisition of new knowledge that will benefit a range of visually impaired people including those with additional disabilities in respect of support and intervention strategies;	UCVI1009 UCVI 1010 UCVI 1011
2.	effectively communicate the benefits of using assistive technology and alternative formats for people with a visual impairment and demonstrate an introductory level of competence in using some of these mediums.	UCVI 1004 UCVI 1006

Cognitive and Intellectual skills		

ILO no.		Module Code/s
3.	demonstrate an understanding of ethical principles as they apply to working with vulnerable people;	UCVI 1007 UCVI 1011

Skills and capabilities related to employability		

ILO no.		Module Code/s
4.	reflect upon a range of specialised personal and practical skills associated with orientation and mobility and independent living and evaluate different approaches used within these fields.	UCVI 1006 UCVI 1010

Transferable/key skills		

ILO no.		Module Code/s
5.	communicate the outcomes of academic enquiry using a range of media;	UCVI 1004 UCVI 1006 UCVI 1010
6.	demonstrate a range of academic writing and study skills that are consistent with first year undergraduate study.	UCVI 1007 UCVI 1009 UCVI 1010

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The course is not practice-based. Practical and transferable skills are addressed implicitly in all modules and explicitly in some, as a part of course-based activities. The modules support the development of reflective, analytical and research skills, appropriate to the level of study,

throughout the course. Many modules have a specific focus on particular areas of knowledge and skills that are directly applicable to future workplaces and specifically address transferable skills.

The Certificate programme provides a coherent synthesis of knowledge and understanding, application, reflection and transferable skills, which form the basis of the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of the whole course and individual modules.

Tutors use blended learning techniques to ensure that all students are able to access information consistent with their preferred learning style. Emphasis is placed upon the development of the critically reflective and autonomous learner who is able to maximise a range of study skills, including information and communication technology.

A range of teaching strategies are employed providing students with the opportunities to display their skills including:
- lectures
- student individual and group seminars
- group discussions
- workshops
- tutorials
- library-based activities
- on-line research activities
- practical demonstrations
- visiting speakers
- assignment planning
- developing an information pamphlet or equivalent item
- individual and group seminars/presentations
- reflective journal
- audit of a learning environment
- constructing a tactile diagram
- poster presentations or equivalent

Learning and teaching methods using the VLE Blackboard which support and develop these practical and transferable skills include; demonstrations, seminars, tutorials, student led presentations, visits to education facilities or visits from those involved in education facilities and on line activities (for example Twitter). Assessments are varied and include; essays, group presentations, reviews of literature and audio visual materials and reports. Examples of assessment include student led presentations, ICT based discussions and presentations, student reflective journals, individual and group presentations, poster presentations and literature reviews.

Contact time
Typically, modules are delivered through a mix of weekday evening sessions (usually 3 x 3 hours) and Saturday sessions (2 x 7 hours). The contact time of one module is typically two weekends and one twilight session which translates to being Friday 5.00pm – 8.00pm and Saturday 9.30am to 4.30pm times two along with the twilight session mid-module on Wednesday 5.00pm – 8.00pm. Modules are presented on a six-weekly basis. This delivery model is intended to make the course accessible to those in full-time employment.

Independent self-study

In addition to the contact time, students are expected to undertake personal self-study as a part of each module. Typically this will involve reading in preparation for and following taught sessions, reflecting on learning, library searches, drafting assignments and engaging with the virtual learning environment. Each 15 credit module consists 150 hours engagement which incorporates learning, teaching and assessment. The six modules (inclusive of the two 30 credit modules) of the Certificate in Higher Education combine to 1200 hours with a value of 120 credits. Typically, a 15 credit module involves 45 hours of guided independent study, and 85 hours of assessment preparation. Over the six weeks of a module this typically equates to 7.5 hours of guided independent study per week and 7.5 hours of assessment preparation for a 15 credit module, with additional assessment preparation in the assessment period at the end of the six week taught period.

Independent learning is supported by a range of learning facilities, including the library at ChildVision, virtual learning environment and electronic learning resources.

Teaching staff

Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course. All are Registered Lecturers with the University of Worcester.

14   Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategies are designed to enable students to demonstrate their achievement of the course aims and learning outcomes. A variety of methods of assessment, both formative and summative, are used to enable students to demonstrate a range of skills required in higher education.

All assessment items are marked using Subject Assessment Criteria at Level 4 and Generic Undergraduate Grade Descriptors. These can be located in the course handbook.

Module	Essay	Journal/ Portfolio of Evidence	Practical	Case Study	Presen ation	Test
UCVI 1004		100%	Pass/Fail			
UCVI 1006				50%	50%	
UCVI1007		100%				
UCVI 1009	50%					50%
UCVI 1010		60%			40%	
UCVI 1011	100%					

15   Programme structures and requirements

Certificate in HE: Working with People with a Visual Impairment
Level FHEQ 4: NFQ 5 Ireland

Modules/codes/credit

Module Code	Module Title	Module Credit
UCVI1004	Alternative Formats	15
UCVI1006	Assistive Technology	15
UCVI1007	Study Skills	15
UCVI 1009	Nature and Causes of Visual Impairment incorporating Multiple Disability and Visual Impairment	30
UCVI 1010	Orientation and Mobility and Technical Skills	30
UCVI 1011	Policy and Practice	15

Indicative structure of the Certificate in HE

The Certificate will be taught over two academic years:

YEAR ONE
UCVI 1007 Study Skills
UCVI 1009 Nature and Causes of Visual Impairment incorporating Multiple Disability and Visual Impairment
UCVI 1004 Alternative Formats
YEAR TWO
UCVI 1010 Orientation and Mobility and Technical Skills
UCVI 1011 Policy and Practice
UCVI 1006 Assistive Technology

UCVI 1009 and UCVI 1010 are available as stand-alone University Certificate courses, providing a short course opportunity in each academic year.

16   QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

The Certificate programme is situated within the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework (TCRF) at the University of Worcester. It takes account of the QAA subject benchmark statement for Education Studies (2015).

The Certificate programme is located at level 4 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2014) and is recognised as an award that is equivalent to Level 6 National Framework of Qualifications: Ireland.

A number of key documents have informed the development of this programme:

- Removing Barriers to Achievement: The Government's Strategy for SEN (DfES, 2004)

- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) (DES, 2004)
- Disability Act (2005) [Ireland]
- QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education (2014)
- International Review of the Literature of Evidence of Best Practice Models in the Education of Blind and Visually Impaired Children in Ireland (Douglas et al. 2009)
- Report of the National Reference Group on Multidisciplinary Services for Children Aged 5-18 [Ireland] (HSE, 2010]
- Review of role, organisation and management of visiting teachers for children with hearing and visual impairment service, Ireland (McLinden and McCracken, 2014).

17. Support for students

The following are hyperlinks to University of Worcester Student Services and the Disability and Dyslexia Service.

These services are available to students at ChildVision through internet and telephone communication. Student Services at the University of Worcester are experienced in providing support to students working at a distance in partner organisations.

http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/index.htm
http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/disability-and-dyslexia.htm

All members of the teaching team at ChildVision are experienced in working with students with a range of needs. The module leaders and tutors, Course Leader and Personal Academic Tutors provide support for students at ChildVision. Where further support is required this is arranged in consultation with the Link Tutor, other colleagues in the Institute of Education and the University of Worcester Student Services team.

Induction

Induction will occur both at a general course level (course induction) with the Course Leader and Assistant Course Leader, with individual modules (module induction).

Course Induction will cover the following elements:
- meetings with key staff;
- libraries, including membership and a tour of facilities;
- internet induction;
- identification of special needs support requirements;
- course handbooks, UW regulations and expectations;
- assignment schedules, common skills and assessment procedures;
- individual timetables; and
- role and purpose of the Course Management Committee.

Personal Academic Tutors

All tutors on the Certificate programme will provide group and individual student support. Meetings for the identification and resolution of general issues may be held on a small group basis, while students are encouraged to discuss matters of individual difficulty with their module tutor in the first instance. Tutorials may be on a face-to-face basis or via e-mail where distance may militate against travelling to the teaching centre.

Support for students and their learning

- Students following the Certificate programme will experience a wide variety of learning and teaching activities designed to meet different learner styles and to facilitate development of both subject specific knowledge and skills, and transferable knowledge and key skills.
- Learning is enhanced by the use of a range of assessment strategies that enable students to develop academic and practice knowledge and skills
- Modules facilitate the application of this knowledge to practice.
- Students will receive a comprehensive Course Handbook.
- Students will be supported by the individual module tutors who have had a wide range of experience of special education environments. This support will be through the teaching and associated tutorials.
- As previously stated students will have access to 'Blackboard'. Training in the use of Blackboard and UW Library Search is included in the module, "Introduction to Study Skills" and will be on-going.
- E-mail contact with tutors and between students in peer support groups will be encouraged.
- The use of the Peer Support Group (PSG) has a lengthy history within this course. This comprises a small group of learners who are encouraged to work together to complete specific directed study activities during the module. Over time, different groups have been formulated using different criteria but in all instances, students are firmly in control of the way the PSG is created.

The role of the PSG
- collaborative study to complete directed tasks;
- planning and presentation of student seminars;
- sharing of learning resources;
- assistance with travel arrangements if appropriate; and
- emotional support.

18 Admissions

Admissions Policy

The admissions policy for the Certificate is to encourage access to higher education through a policy of equal opportunity regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status, maternity, religious belief or age. Admission will be in accordance with the University's policy on admissions detailed in Section 2 of the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework (2017). Whereas due regard will be given to conventional entry criteria laid down by the University (see below), it is hoped that having flexible entry will allow a broader range of students to be attracted.

Entry requirements

The normal minimum entry requirement for undergraduate degree courses is the possession of 4 GCSEs (Grade C/4 or above) and a minimum of 2 A Levels (or equivalent Level 3 qualifications).

The current UCAS Tariff requirements for entry to this course are published in the prospectus and on the UW website https://www.worc.ac.uk/journey/a-z-of-courses.html

Normally a Leaving Certificate or equivalent is required within the Irish context.

Students with lower qualifications will be considered and in these instances, access to a work environment that educates/cares for people with a visual impairment would be beneficial.

The Leaving Certificate caters for a broad range of candidate achievement and therefore spans Levels 4 and 5 on Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This corresponds with Levels 2 and 3 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Further detail about the Leaving Certificate is available through UCAS https://qips.ucas.com/qip/irish-leaving-certificate-new-grading-scheme-from-2017 and UK NARIC https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/.

We welcome applicants who hold alternative qualifications/experience different to those detailed on the University website https://www.worcester.ac.uk/journey/entry-requirements.html who can demonstrate the ability to benefit from the course and show their potential to complete the course successfully. Although recent preparatory study at an appropriate level (e.g. an Access course) is recommended, students may be considered on the basis of prior evidenced professional/work experience and/or other assessment procedures, and the assessment of personal suitability.

University Admissions staff will be able to offer information, advice and guidance on this process, as will the team at ChildVision.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Details of acceptable 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. 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 at:
http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm

Admissions procedure

Part-time applicants apply directly to the University of Worcester, through ChildVision.

Admissions/selection criteria

Potential students are invited to complete and return the UW application form to ChildVision. This is processed at ChildVision, and successful applications are forwarded to Admissions at the University of Worcester.

The entry requirements are Leaving Certificate standard of education or equivalent.
Experience in the realm of visual impairment is also taken into consideration.

If students meet the entry requirements they are offered a place. Students are then notified by letter of the start date and induction process. Subsequently, they are invited to meet the Course Leader for an informal discussion as a part of the welcome and induction process. This ensures that candidates are fully aware of the nature and demands of the course, as well as helping to identify personalised learning needs.

Candidates entering the programme or students transferring from another similar programme are welcomed in accordance with UW Admissions Policy and RPL policy.

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 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.
- 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; 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.

Requirements for progression

- A student who fails 90 credits or more due to non-submission will be required to withdraw from the University.

Requirements for awards

Award	Requirement
University Certificate in Nature and Causes of Visual Impairment incorporating Multiple Disability and Visual Impairment.	Passed 30 credits at Level 4 (UCVI 1009)
University Certificate in Orientation and Mobility and Technical Skills	Passed 30 credits at Level 4 (UCVI 1010)
Certificate of Higher Education, Working with People with a Visual Impairment.	Passed 120 credits at Level 4 or higher

Institute-level Assessment Boards review and confirm results for modules, and the Board of Examiners considers students' mark profiles to make decisions about progression, awards and degree classifications as appropriate.

20 Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

There are possibilities for progression to a Level 7/8 award within the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

- One student in Dublin has progressed to complete the All Hallows College BA (Hons) (ALBA)
- Five students in Dublin have undertaken a specialist complementary course in Braille taught at ChildVision (Level 5: NFQ)
- One student from ChildVision has completed a Graduate Diploma in Habilitation and Disabilities of Sight (Children and Young People) at London University and is now teaching the specialism of Orientation and Mobility

Student employability

It is envisaged that the majority of the students will normally be working with people with a visual impairment and/or additional special educational needs and as such this award will enhance their own knowledge and understanding of the wider field of VI and improve their employability within the SEN sector. For those who are not in a work setting, the award will provide evidence of their knowledge in the VI field and boost their future employment options.

The Certificate programme could support a range of career pathways within a variety of education/care settings. For example:

- Possible access to a relevant Diploma HE.
- Work as a special needs assistant (SNA) (Ireland) to support children in a school context or learners in an FE training context.
- Work in the Learning Support department of a further education college.
- Employment within other VI organisations in Ireland (e.g. National Council for the Blind).
- Working with the residential team on community-based living projects.
- Professional advancement as a member of a care team (e.g.at ChildVision).

Links with employers

ChildVision maintains links with employers through its national database which incorporates specialist and regular teachers in both first and second level education, therapists (Speech and Language, Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapists), Special Need parent support groups, DeafBlind Ireland, Special Needs Assistants, the Anne Sullivan Foundation to name a few.

Since 2016, ChildVision is chairing the umbrella organisation VISPA which includes three other organisations for the Visually Impaired; National Council for the Blind of Ireland, Fighting Blindness and Guide dogs for the Blind. ChildVision has links to the Learning Tree Integrated Montessori and the National Association of Housing for the Visually Impaired. It also has links with Sense NI (Northern Ireland), Guide Dogs NI along with the Royal National Institute for the Blind RNIB (Northern Ireland).

In addition, ChildVision is itself an employer, and past students have included both members of staff and parents/carers associated with the organisation.

Skills for employability addressed within the course include transferable skills which are skills that are not specific to one particular career path but are generic to other related employment sectors. The skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes gleaned from the combination of modules within this course provide confidence in articulation and communication and these can be translated into practice in different contexts thereby providing opportunities for wider learning.

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.