

Programme Specification for the FdA Birth and Beyond with the National Childbirth Trust

This document applies to Academic Year 2018/19 onwards.

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	National Childbirth Trust (NCT)
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award	FdA
5.	Programme title	Foundation Degree Birth and Beyond
6.	Linked Honours Degree progression route	BA (Hons) Birth and Beyond
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Teaching is via blended learning through online study and block teaching at NCT regional locations around the UK
8.	Mode of attendance	Full-time or Part-time
9.	UCAS Code	L521
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	March 2016 August 2017 AQU amendments and updates August 2018 AQU amendments and updates

12. Educational aims of the programme

This programme is for those wishing to work with and support parents as they prepare for the transition to parenthood, providing the qualification required to become an NCT Practitioner.

Level 4 modules give the core skills and knowledge, then at Level 5 students can choose modules that lead to qualifications as NCT Antenatal Teachers, Breastfeeding Counsellors, Postnatal Practitioners, NCT Yoga for Pregnancy or Mother and Baby Yoga Teachers, NCT Birth Doulas, or NCT Baby Massage Teachers.

The modules at Level 5 also allow current NCT practitioners to develop further discrete skill sets, or to study a particular topic in more depth.

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 the Level 6 Birth and Beyond Modules.

The aims of the programme are to:

1. Develop NCT Practitioners who are fit for practice, who are innovative, proactive and adaptable, and who accept responsibility for continuing professional development.
2. Develop the knowledge base, skills and self-awareness of students through reflective practice, analysis of issues and the use of research-based evidence.

3. Develop critically reflective practitioners who have the ability to utilise contemporary knowledge, research and evidence on which to base their practice.
4. Develop intellectual competence, ability and interpersonal skills to the appropriate level.
5. Empower students to work in a person-centred manner that respects individual's beliefs and needs, values experience and fulfills NCT's vision and purpose.
6. Encourage students to broaden their perspective in order to enable a sensitive and holistic approach to the varying and changing psychological and physical needs of those they work with.
7. Ensure that students develop the knowledge and skills required to meet the essential educational needs of all parent groups, working effectively in diverse communities.
8. Provide a rewarding and transformational learning experience which ensures the development of a range of transferable academic and practical skills which meet the needs of students, parents, NCT and the wider community.
9. Promote an ethos of partnership with other NCT practitioners and health and social care professionals, enabling parents to benefit from a holistic approach.

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

Learning Outcomes for the Foundation Degree Birth and Beyond

Knowledge and understanding:

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

Learning Outcome	Module Code
1. Demonstrate a critical understanding and knowledge of the issues affecting the health and wellbeing of both parents and baby across the transition to parenthood.	All
2. Identify a range of ways in which to effectively apply the concepts and principles of adult learning, self-realisation and support to promote the preparation and support of all parents across the transition to parenthood.	All

Cognitive and intellectual skills:

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

Learning Outcome	Module Code
3. Learn independently using reflection, evaluation, feedback, self-directed study and time management skills to meet set objectives, whilst understanding the limits of their knowledge and how this may influence their interpretation and analysis of issues.	All

4. Demonstrate ability to access up-to-date knowledge, research and evidence, and to critically analyse and evaluate it before use in practice.	All
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Practical skills relevant to employment:

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

Learning Outcome	Module Code
5. Demonstrate a range of effective group and one-to-one facilitation and listening skills that clearly meet the practical, emotional and relationship needs of parents across the transition to parenthood.	All
6. Demonstrate a range of effective person-centred skills when working with parents and professionals, showing respect for an individual's beliefs and needs and valuing their experience.	All
7. Critically evaluate the effectiveness of both the courses and one-to-one interactions that they facilitate, and the support they provide, identifying strategies for improving their practice.	All level 5 modules

Transferable/key skills:

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

Learning Outcome	Module Code
8. Consistently use a range of strategies for working effectively with groups or one-to-one and for promoting adult learning in a holistic and experiential manner.	All
9. Employ appropriate and effective communication and interpersonal skills that can be used in a range of circumstances.	All
10. Assume personal responsibility for practice, learning and continuing development, undertaking further training where necessary to develop existing skills and demonstrate new competencies.	All
11. Consistently demonstrate a non-judgmental attitude that values individuals, their needs and their experiences.	All

Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:

The programme is delivered using a blended learning approach, which includes an element of work-based learning, allowing theory and practice to be integrated. NCT tutors model the approach taken by NCT Practitioners when working with students.

Examples of learning and teaching methods:

- Induction Event providing an introduction to both the course and the different NCT practitioner roles
- Interactive Study Days including information giving, discussion, small group work, and the practice and development of physical skills
- Tutorials including facilitated discussions, presentations, group facilitation and physical skill work
- Depending on pathway chosen, facilitation as an NCT Practitioner in the chosen role (work-based learning)
- One-to-one sessions with tutors
- NCT Practitioner observation
- Contact with tutor and other students in tutorial group via e-group, e-mail, Skype, telephone or an online learning platform (Blackboard)
- Online and e-learning including use of Blackboard, pebblepad and specific online learning packages
- Attendance at NCT conferences and forum
- Involvement with local NCT branches
- Self-directed study

Examples of Assessments:

Skills based:

- Assessment of Course Facilitation (work-based assessment)
- Evaluation of Course Facilitation
- Assessment Days to assess ability to lead facilitated discussions and Interactive sessions, role play scenarios

Content based:

- Evaluation of Case Study
- Essay
- Report
- Reflective Commentary
- Resource File
- Knowledge based exam
- Videos

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 and include those focussed on 'content' (essays, resource files, evaluations, reflective commentaries, exams) and those focussed on 'practical skills' (facilitated discussions, interactive sessions and facilitation of a whole course, role-play).

Assessment had 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

In the Course Handbook each assessment, along with comprehensive guidelines, is outlined in the module specifications. 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. 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 Foundation Degree Birth and Beyond

To be awarded the Foundation Degree Birth and Beyond students must successfully complete 120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5.

Course Title: Foundation Degree Birth and Beyond

LEVEL 4				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)	Prerequisites (Code of Module required)
NCTC1001	Facilitating learning in groups	30	M	None
NCTC1002	Introduction to reflective practice and listening skills	30	M	None
NCTC1003	New baby – new family: part 1	30	M	None
NCTC1004	Breastfeeding knowledge for NCT practitioners	15	M	None
NCTC1005	Giving birth	15	M	None

LEVEL 5				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)	Prerequisites (Code of Module required)

NCTC2001	Antenatal skills	30	O	None
NCTC2002	Antenatal knowledge	30	O	None
NCTC2003	Developing skills as a breastfeeding counsellor	30	O	None
NCTC2005	Developing knowledge as a breastfeeding counsellor	30	O	None
NCTC2007	New baby – new family: part 2	30	O	None
NCTC2008	Facilitating postnatal groups	30	O	None
NCTC2011	NCT Yoga foundations	15	O	None
NCTC2009	NCT Yoga for pregnancy	15	O	None
NCTC2010	NCT Mother and baby yoga	15	O	None
NCTC2014	NCT Baby massage	15	O	None
NCTC2012	Dimensions of the role of the birth doula	15	O	None
NCTC2013	Realising the role of the birth doula	15	O	None
NCTC2015	Working with health and social care professionals	15	O	None
NCTC2016	Understanding the neonatal unit experience	15	O	None
NCTC2018	NCT Professional attributes	0	M for FD award	None

Level 4 can be taken as either a full-time or part-time course. The delivery patterns are laid out in the course handbook.

Level 5 can be taken as either a full-time or as a part-time course. The delivery patterns are laid out in the course handbook.

Selection of modules for practitioner pathways at level 5

Pathway Options

NCT Antenatal Teacher

You will need to take two 30-credit modules over one year

- Antenatal skills (30 credits)
- Antenatal knowledge (30 credits)

NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor

You will need to take two 30-credit modules over one year.

- Developing skills as a breastfeeding counsellor (30 credits)

- Developing knowledge as a breastfeeding counsellor (30 credits)

NCT Postnatal Practitioner

You will need to take two 30-credit modules over one year

- New baby - new family: part 2 (30 credits)
- Facilitating postnatal groups (30 credits)

NCT Yoga for Pregnancy Teacher / Mother and Baby Yoga Teacher

You will need two 15-credit modules

- NCT Yoga foundations (15 credits)
- And one of:
- NCT Yoga for pregnancy (15 credits)
 - NCT Mother and baby yoga (15 credits)

(It is also possible to do all three modules and qualify in both specialisms)

NCT Baby Massage Teacher

You will need one 15-credit module

- NCT Baby massage NCTC2 (15 credits)

NCT Birth Doula

You will need two 15-credit modules

- Dimensions of the role of the birth doula NCTC2110 (15 credits)
- Realising the role of the birth doula NCTC2111 (15 credits)

Additional standalone modules

- Working with health and social care professionals NCTC2015 (15 credits)
- Understanding the neonatal unit experience NCTC2016 (15 credits)

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 and Level 5 as specified in the [Framework for HE Qualifications](#), and also with the requirements for a Foundation Degree as laid out in the [QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement](#)

This award is located at Level 5 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>

Module Tutors

Students are also supported through specific modules by Module Tutors who deliver module study days to small groups of students (up to 16) enabling them to work with individual students where necessary. They will also provide one-to-one support where requested.

Core tutors / Personal Academic Tutor

The NCT core tutor system is an important part of ensuring that every student receives the individual support that will allow them to progress academically and personally; the core tutor takes on the role of the Personal Academic Tutor for students through level 4 and 5.

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. Additional information supporting their practice as NCT Specialist Practitioners is also included.

Course logbook

For the level 4 modules the Course Logbook contains detailed information about the modules, as well as the Student Charter, the Professional Attributes and the Learning Agreement. It is a 'live document' designed to be used as a reflective logbook and diary.

At Level 5 the Course Logbook relates to the Specialist Pathways and individual modules that students may choose to take. It contains detailed information about the modules, as well as the Student Charter, the Professional Attributes and the Learning Agreement. It is a 'live document' designed to be used as a reflective logbook and diary.

Induction events

There is a two-day induction event at the start of level 4, and another at the start of level 5.

At level 4 this 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 Pebblepad)
- Student support services at the University of Worcester [Information and Learning Services](#)

At level 5 these days provide students with the opportunity to explore:

- Research
- Safe practice (health and safety, lone working, risk assessment for practitioners, boundaries, safe-guarding)
- NCT Ethos History of birth, feeding and parenting
- Reflection

Work-Based Learning – support for role as an NCT Practitioner

Students will be provided with clear guidance on all aspects of whichever NCT Practitioner role they choose to undertake. This will be in several forms outlined in the NCT Risk Assessment Procedure in addition there will be a one-to-one preparatory session with their Personal Academic Tutor. The NCT Student Contract also outlines the responsibilities and expectations of both the student and NCT.

Part of this will involve observing courses and becoming actively involved with their local NCT branch.

Students will be expected to reflect on and record the work they do as a student NCT Practitioner. Students will be practically assessed on the different aspects of their role and will be given clear guidelines on what to submit to the assessor in advance.

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

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 who is available to provide students with information and support from specific learning needs to referencing.

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> As above, the NCT academic support tutor also provides support for specific learning needs.

18. Admissions

Admissions Policy

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.

NCT seeks to recruit students who:

- Wish to work with parents in the transition to parenthood
- Are committed to the values and ethos of NCT

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

Entry requirements

The current UCAS Tariff requirements for entry to this course are published on the University website: <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/courses/birth-beyond-fda.html>

Students need evidence of relevant life and/or work experience related to birth, babies and parenting, adult education or women's issues, coupled with evidence that they will be able to succeed at this level of academic study. Applications from mature students are welcome.

Recognition of Prior Learning

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. 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 procedures

Full-time applicants apply through UCAS (L521)
Part-time applicants apply directly to NCT
<http://www.nct.org.uk/train-nct/how-apply>

All applicants will attend an applicant day, which involves sharing of information, group work and one to one.

Information on assistance with fees can be found at <http://www.nct.org.uk/train-nct/fees-funding/help-fees>

See Section 22 of the Programme Specification for information regarding the admissions arrangements for progression to the linked Honours Degree(s)/Top-Up Degree(s).

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.

- End of module evaluations by students
- Annual NCT student questionnaire
- External Examiner reports
- Annual Evaluation Report
- NCT Annual Education Report
- Review by Course Management Committee in conjunction with NCT Academic Board
- Evaluation and feedback from parents attending NCT Courses
- Evaluation from NHS Trusts and Children's Centres contracting NCT Courses

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 that are detailed in module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module, except the 0 credit module NCTC2018.
- NCTC2018 Professional attributes is assessed as pass or fail.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and a pass mark in each item of assessment will be required.
- 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 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 (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative 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

- Students at Level 4 will be permitted to progress to Level 5 when they have passed 90 credits at Level 4
- 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
CertHE	120 credits at Level 4 or higher
Foundation Degree FdA	120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5 and a pass in NCTC2018 NCT Professional attributes

This award is not classified.

21. Indicators of quality and standards

External Examiners have consistently judged the previous NCT awards (Diplomas of Higher Education Antenatal Education, Breastfeeding Counselling and Postnatal Group Facilitation) to be robust programmes providing a positive and rewarding learning experience that met appropriate academic standards.

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 the University Quality Assurance requirements and the course team's responsiveness to students and external examiners.

NCT Student Survey outcomes from 2015 demonstrate students' positive overall evaluation of the course:

- 89.83 % of students thought the content of the modules was good or very good
- 91.74 % of students thought the study days were good or very good
- 91.86 % of students thought the tutoring was good or very good
- 87.5 % of students thought the tutorials were helpful or very helpful
- 95.83 % of students thought the support from their core tutor had been helpful or very helpful

22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

Specific modules of this programme qualify students as NCT Specialist Practitioners and enable them to apply for an NCT Specialist Licence-to-Practise.

Specialist Practitioner Roles:

NCT Postnatal Practitioners are able to:

Facilitate NCT Postnatal courses through the NCT or through NHS Trusts and/or Children's Centres

NCT Antenatal Teachers are able to:

Facilitate NCT Antenatal courses through the NCT or through NHS Trusts and/or Children's Centres

NCT Breastfeeding Counsellors are able to:

Support mothers on a one-to-one basis and to facilitate the breastfeeding element of an NCT antenatal course

NCT Yoga for Pregnancy Teachers are able to:

Teach NCT Yoga for Pregnancy classes through the NCT or through NHS Trusts and/or Children's Centres

NCT Mother and Baby Yoga Teachers are able to:

Teach NCT Mother and Baby Yoga classes through the NCT or through NHS Trusts and/or Children's Centres

NCT Birth Doulas are able to:

Support women and couples through the experience of pregnancy, labour and birth

NCT Baby Massage Teachers are able to:

Teach NCT Baby Massage classes through the NCT or through NHS Trusts and/or Children's Centres

Progression to Linked Honours Degree(s)/Top-Up Degree(s)

On completion of the Foundation Degree, students are eligible to continue to relevant study at Level 6, including the [BA \(Hons\) Birth and Beyond \(Top Up\)](#)

Student employability

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. These include:

- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Organisational and time management skills
- Skills of reflection and evaluation
- The ability to accept feedback

- The ability to critically analyse research and evidence
- Awareness of personal and professional boundaries
- The ability to take responsibility for professional development

The programme also opens up work and training opportunities within the health and social care sector.

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.