

Programme Specification for University Certificate in NCT Doula

This document applies to Academic Year 2024/25 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	University Certificate
5.	Programme title	University Certificate in NCT Doula
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 on UW campus and through virtual synchronous seminars.
8.	Mode of attendance and duration	Part-time over one academic year - block teaching in 4 weekends across 9 months
9.	UCAS Code	N/A
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	N/A
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	Approved June 2024

12. Educational aims of the programme

NCT has a 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 with parents as an NCT Doula, enabling them to support, inspire and guide new parents through pregnancy, birth, and the early days of parenthood. NCT's vision is that everyone who becomes a parent feels confident, connected and safe. NCT practitioners are mindful of their professional responsibility and demonstrate an ability to be self-aware, respectful of others and responsive to feedback.

This course has been designed with layered learning to facilitate an integrated and cohesive experience.

The NCT Doula training is a university-accredited qualification for Doulas, and in addition is an approved course by Doula UK. This means that subject to meeting additional practice requirements, qualified NCT Doulas can register and be supported by Doula UK if they choose to.

To be awarded an NCT Licence-to-Practise, in addition to successfully completing the University Certificate, students must support a woman / couple through their birth with the support of the tutors, confirm their intention to practise with NCT, and sign an NCT contract / pay registration. They will then be issued an NCT Licence to Practise and be able to provide NCT services for parents.

The aims of the NCT Doula programme are to:

1. Educate and train doulas who will provide a sensitive, knowledgeable, and skilled service to women / pregnant people in the late stages of pregnancy, during labour and birth and in the first days of the postnatal period.
2. Educate and train doulas to work alongside health professionals such as midwives and doctors, clearly aware of the boundaries of the service they are providing, and always focusing on the needs of parents.
3. Develop students' understanding and self-awareness through reflective practice and application of research-based evidence.
4. As a result of all the above, to enhance the experience of pregnant women and people and their partners on their journey to parenthood.

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

Table 2 knowledge and understanding outcomes for module NCTC1207

Knowledge and Understanding	
LO no.	On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:
1.	Apply practical skills and knowledge of birth physiology, and the innate ability to give birth, to doula practice.
2.	Analyse and apply responsive birth doula knowledge and skills in recognising and responding to the process of birth and in the immediate postnatal period.

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:
3.	Analyse and demonstrate an understanding of the role of an NCT Doula using evidence of appropriate boundaries, the emotional demands and how to manage them including use of supervision as a part of good doula practice.

Table 4 skills and capabilities related to employment outcomes for module NCTC1207

Skills and capabilities related to employability	
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:
4.	Interact sensitively and professionally and work within clear boundaries with the woman or birthing person, their chosen supporters, and others during labour, while responsive to individual circumstances (considering culture, ethnicity, disability, language needs).
5.	Analyse the impact of medical and midwifery staff, along with family members and friends, on the birth process.

Table 5 transferable/key skills outcomes for module NCTC1207

Transferable/key skills	
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:
6.	Reflect on and assess the impact of the NCT Doula role on their own life and the lives of family, friends and colleagues.
7.	Communicate professionally with clients, colleagues and health professionals in order to successfully practise.

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 will be taught through a combination of experiential and interactive face-to-face in-person days (block teaching in 4 weekends) and virtual tutorials, asynchronous online learning, and guided independent study. Interactive and experiential in-person days and tutorials are intended to develop knowledge, skills and understanding and the application of learning through small group activities, discussion, listening skills and debate, alongside modelling the approach used by qualified NCT practitioners and doulas. Practice scenarios, case studies and inquiry-based learning will also be used to develop 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.

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 students studying part-time. Precise delivery patterns are laid out in the course handbook.

Contact hours of teaching are built around 4 full weekends on campus at the University of Worcester, using the clinical skills rooms. Students will also take part in synchronous online tutorials and seminars timetabled in-between the weekends.

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

Independent self-study

In addition to the contact time, students are expected to undertake around 8 hours of guided independent personal self-study per week. Typically, this will involve completing directed online activities, reading journal articles and books, undertaking research in the library and online, and preparing coursework assignments and interactive sessions.

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.

Work-based Learning (Placement)

As part of the course, students are required to do a total of 24-hours observation of a midwife (for example: 3 x 8 hours or 2 x 12 hours). Students will approach their local maternity units to arrange this observation of midwives working in birth centres / labour wards. This is done with the support of NCT tutors and links with UW Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery. Any requirements by individual hospital trusts prior to the observation will need to be adhered to by the student, e.g., DBS check or vaccination check, and when completing the midwife observation, any required supervision will be provided by the relevant hospital trust.

If for some reason a midwife observation is not possible, a discussion with local midwife/s can be substituted.

Also, as part of the course, students will support a woman / pregnant person / couple through labour / birth. This will ideally take place towards the end of the course and prior to the final training weekend and will take place with the support and supervision of the tutors. However, any in-person contact with the clients is only done by the student.

Both these formative activities are linked into and prepared for within taught sessions and reflected on in assessments.

If the midwife observation or supporting a woman / couple through labour / birth is not possible within the time frame of the module, alternative experiences / resources can be used to reflect on, to enable students to successfully meet the ILOs and complete the assessments.

Teaching staff

Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the module 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.

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 PG Cert 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. The module has two formal or 'summative' assessments which are graded and count towards the overall module grade. Assessment strategy has been considered 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 and practical assignments. Assessment methods include:

- Interactive practical session
- Reflective essay
- Completion of checklist of skills and key information
- Supervision and reflective dialogue

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 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. The 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. Assessment criteria/grade descriptors are provided for each item of assessment, A grid showing assessment methods and weightings mapped to the module, 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 University Certificate in NCT Doula

To be awarded the University Certificate in NCT Doula students must successfully complete 30 credits at Level 4. The course is studied part-time.

Table 6 University Certificate in NCT Doula

Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)	Prerequisites (Code of Module required)
NCTC1207	Dimensions of and realising the role of the NCT Doula	30	M	None

Module specification 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.

Academic support

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

Induction event

The Induction event at the start of the course provides students with an introduction to the course and to NCT. The event offers students an 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
- An introduction to Anti-discriminatory practice

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.

[firstpoint](#)
[Services for students](#)

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.

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, 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 on the University webpages.

Admissions procedures

All applications follow the University of Worcester admissions regulations and procedures.

Applications are made directly through the course page of the University of Worcester website.

Each application will be considered through a review of the application form, personal statement and references in order to assess suitability for the course.

19. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#)

Requirements to pass the module

- The module is assessed using a variety of assessment activities that are detailed in the module specification
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each summative assignment
- A student is required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and a pass mark in each item of assessment is required
- 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 any failed assessment items
- 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.

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
University Certificate in NCT Doula	30 credits at Level 4 from the mandatory module 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 Doulas 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 in their chosen specialism.

Student employability / Links with employers

The course is designed to qualify NCT practitioners, so most students go on to work within NCT as a self-employed practitioner.

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 NCT training 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 they take 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.