

Proposal for Postgraduate Degree Programme

Advanced Studies in Global Childhood and Youth (working title)

MSc and PhD

Introduction

The University of Edinburgh has a wealth of expertise in childhood and youth studies,¹ across its Schools and Colleges. There is considerable informal and productive cross-over between colleagues, over courses, research and postgraduate supervision. We wish to capitalise on this considerable activity and networks, to create a coherent postgraduate offer to external audiences and create efficient and productive synergies between what we already do and can offer.

We are proposing a joint programme between the Moray House School of Education (MHSE) and the School of Social and Political Science (SSPS), with collaboration through postgraduate courses, postgraduate supervision, CPD and other potential activities with colleagues in other Schools (e.g. links have already been made with Edinburgh College of Art, School of Health in Social Science, School of Law, and the Usher Institute). Its strongest presentation would be as a combination of advanced studies, with the MSc degree at its core, and the potential for progression onto a PhD and complementary CPD opportunities.

The MSc itself would be an umbrella degree, from which students would specialise and have differentiated exit awards. Such an approach has proved highly successful for other MSc programmes, such as the global health MScs in SPSS and the MSc in Education in MHSE. These have brought together related degrees for strong student recruitment and efficiencies in programme delivery.

The proposed MSc builds on existing provision and maximises existing resources. For example, it will amalgamate the current MSc in Childhood Studies; its core courses will be used across the programme pathways. The degree will use courses already being delivered, most currently cross-listed with the MSc in Childhood Studies, to become core to particular pathways or to ensure students have suitable optional choice. It provides the opportunity to develop a vocational strand in the early years, which has been an on-going demand from applicants for years and has both national and global resonance. This vocational strand has already received initial validation in the MHSE, in 2011. This strand will particularly bring in the success of current Froebel CPD training,² offered through the MHSE, to the degree programme.

Childhood and Youth Studies is a dynamic teaching and research area of study. Academic disciplines such as psychology have been joined by others (from human geography, to

¹ We will broadly use the global definitions of childhood and youth: i.e. the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines children up to the age of 18, while youth is defined up to the age of 25 for UN statistics.

² <http://www.ed.ac.uk/education/professional-learning/froebel>

philosophy, to design and architecture) to investigate and understand children and young people's lives and experiences and how childhood and youth are constructed by policy and practice. The interdisciplinary nature of Childhood and Youth Studies is both challenging and exciting intellectually, for both students and staff collaborations. It is also highly applicable to policy and practice, both locally and globally. Much of public spending is on children and youth, from social security to education to health. The recognition of children in human capital debates has spurred UK and global attention to the early years, with considerable financial and political investment.³ International development is highly involved with children and youth, with an array of international organisations specialising with these age groups (e.g. from World Vision, to Save the Children, to UNICEF). In the Global South, children and youth can be the majority of a country's population; in the Global North, children and youth continue to be a substantial portion of the population (30% in the UK),⁴ and questions of intergenerational justice and societal futures are major issues. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most ratified human rights treaty ever (only the USA has not yet ratified) and this stimulates a recognition of children and young people as social actors and associated legal and policy agendas. At the University of Edinburgh, we have leading expertise on all these aspects, which we can bring together in a dynamic, outward-facing postgraduate programme.

These developments fit well with the University's Strategic Vision for 2025.⁵ It will exemplify the 'unique Edinburgh offer', in drawing on inter-disciplinary expertise and having a clear supported pathway through to a PhD. Current PhD requests for supervision in childhood and youth studies' topics outstrip supervision capacity, with PhD workloads currently far in excess of the CAHSS's stated objective of 2.5 students per staff member;⁶ the new umbrella programme will provide a way to draw in a wider group of relevant supervisors and attract and nurture excellent PGR students of international quality. It will build on the existing Childhood & Youth Studies Network⁷ of postgraduate and early career researchers across the University, to foster a strong internal community. It will also be outward-facing both locally and globally, using the extensive networks of both staff and students. It fits well with CAHSS and School agendas, about streamlining MSc provision and emphasising quality of applicants, support and student experience.

Academic Strategy

We suggest that combining academic resources will create a clearer external message to potential students (and potential organisational partners for work placement, knowledge

³ E.g. see <http://allofusfirst.org/library/an-equal-start-a-plan-for-equality-in-early-learning-and-care-in-scotland/>

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalescotlandandnorthernireland>

⁵ http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/gasp/strategicplanning/Strategic-Vision_web2.pdf

⁶ CAHSS College Plan 2015-18,

<https://uo.e.sharepoint.com/sites/hss/Shared%20Documents/CAHSS%20College%20Plan%202015-2018.pdf>

⁷ <https://caysnetwork.wordpress.com/>

exchange and research partnerships), that the University of Edinburgh is 'the' place nationally and internationally for Advanced Studies in Global Childhood and Youth. Our expertise in early years, education, human rights, and social justice fits with national agendas, such as 'Closing the Attainment Gap' and 'Getting it Right for Every Child'. The MSc in Childhood Studies is already recognised as a world leader, as exemplified by external requests to evaluate and examine related provision elsewhere (e.g. Swiss Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education and King's University College London Canada) and its election to the management committee within the Children's Rights European Academic Network. The MSc in Education and related MScs have recruited widely, with considerable attraction to international students. The excellence and contribution of the Froebel CPD course was highlighted within the 2015 Scottish Government Review of Workforce training for the early years and out of school care,⁸ and continues to recruit strongly. Further developments of specialist courses at postgraduate level (e.g. Children & Technology (MHSE)) demonstrate the academic expertise of existing staff, including the childhood and youth interests within the Edinburgh College of Art. Childhood and youth studies courses are frequently popular with students, particularly if the courses address and recognise their cross-national and global interests.

Taking an inter-disciplinary approach, the new MSc degree -- MSc in Global Childhood and Youth Studies -- will provide an advanced understanding of how policies and practices address childhood and youth and give opportunities for critical review and analysis of how well they meet the rights of children and young people. The programme will be underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and human rights more generally, as a necessary legal and policy context for those working in the field (in practice or in research) as well as a rich topic for consideration and critique. It will build on the increasing recognition academically and in practice that children and young people are not simply passive recipients of services and cares but are active participants in their own lives and the lives of others. The degree will take a global and cross-national perspective throughout, as both an academic necessity and practically to meet students' current interests and future work aspirations.

The MSc degree will be a taught programme. The programme will have two compulsory courses and students will choose a majority of courses from a list of choices between MHSE and SPSS as well as agreed courses from other Schools.

The Market

A joint degree is necessary due to the interdisciplinary nature of the degree and the associated need to recruit programme applicants from a range of academic disciplines. Core feeder undergraduate programmes include: educational studies degrees, particularly in early years pedagogy and childhood practice; community education, social work and youth studies; law; and the social sciences, including policy studies/ social policy, social anthropology and sociology. Applicants also come from employment, such as early years practitioners, international development staff, lawyers, social workers and teachers.

⁸ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/5902>

The vocational strand would be a substantial addition to the existing MSc in Childhood Studies, in meeting national priorities in training the early years and out of school workforce. This is further explicated in the proposal for Childhood Practice which, as stated above, has successfully gone through the initial validation process in MHSE in 2011. In 2011, the Scottish Government estimated 4000 staff would have to obtain such an award in the next 10 years. Currently, around half of this number has been achieved; however, the Scottish government will double the amount of funded early years provision by 2020, requiring a further 2500 degree level managers. Such swift increases could only be achieved through further intensive master level degrees.⁹ Only 2 such programmes are currently offered (University of Glasgow and University of Strathclyde) at masters level. Beyond those required to take the qualification are staff who voluntarily would take the qualification in children's organisations (circa 5000), family support services (circa 6000) and staff at 3500 integrated service centres (e.g. children's, centres and family centres). Potential managers with social work or community education background need additional Level 11 credits, in order to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The Scottish market is thus strong. Further, the interest in early years has considerable global as well as national appeal. The proposed 2011 Childhood Practice degree provides a basis to develop training appropriate for a global audience, of which we have considerable inquiries from China and India. The other two Scottish masters programmes do not target this market explicitly.

The MSc in Childhood Studies is currently part of the Children's Rights European Academic Network, which brings together related programmes across Europe. There has been considerable growth in Europe, Latin America and Australia/New Zealand on Childhood-related degrees. Current competitors include:

- International Child Studies MA at King's College London
- Masters of Laws: Advanced Studies in International Children's Rights at Leiden University
- M.A. and PhD in Childhood Studies, Rutgers Camden USA
- Masters of Advanced Studies, Children's Rights, University of Geneva

The most successful degrees in terms of recruitment are those that address international development (e.g. International Child Studies MA at King's College London) and human rights (e.g. Leiden University, Master of Laws: Advanced Studies in International Children's Rights).

The new MSc would directly address these elements, as well as highlight what makes us unique:

- A vocational pathway for the early years, suitable for both national and international students
- Advanced research methods of directly involving children and young people
- A 'follow through' programme for those wanting to progress to a PhD

⁹ <http://allofusfirst.org/tasks/render/file/?fileID=C36E421F-A8F4-3A98-B7FCEED6184483F4>

- Deep and ongoing collaborations with leading policy and practice organisations, locally and globally (e.g. children’s rights alliances and children’s commissioners across the UK, the Froebel Trust, local authorities such as Edinburgh, Glasgow and Midlothian Council, UNESCO Family Support Network, UNICEF UK and the UNICEF Innocenti Centre)

Programme Structure

We currently propose 5 pathways for the programme. Titles and pathways are provisional.

1. Advanced Research
2. Child Protection & Welfare: Theory and Practice
3. Early Childhood
4. Policy & International Development
5. Youth

We would follow the University of Edinburgh’s structure of 6 x 20 credit courses, plus a dissertation/work placement element.

We would look to developing the dissertation/work placement courses to be suitable to the particular pathway: for example, the advanced research pathway would be an empirical research project or research proposal; Policy & International Development would be a work based placement or a policy analysis; early childhood vocational pathways would require a practice-based project, to meet external registration requirements.

All pathways would have two core courses, adapting the existing courses:

- Childhood and Children’s Rights (PGSP11303)
- Listening to Children: Research and Consultation (PGSP11012)

Each pathway would have additional core courses, which are already existing:

1. Advanced Research
Research Skills in the Social Sciences: Data Collection ([PGSP11016](#)), Core Quantitative Data ([SCIL11009](#)) and Research Design (PGSP11208)
2. Child Protection & Welfare: Theory and Practice
Foundations of International Child Protection (EDUA11314) and Communicating with Children (currently developed as CPD; Social Work subject group intends to develop into a 20 credit course listed within the proposed MSc in Advanced Professional Studies in Social Work).
3. Early Childhood
Collaborative Working in Children’s Services (EDUA 11249); Education for All (EDUA 11014); Work-Based Learning 2 (currently Level 10 course); Practice based requirement (the existing Froebel CPD course would look to be accredited through the University)

This would have differentiated exit awards, depending on types of dissertation projects undertaken:

- a. Professional Qualification in Childhood Practice (for Scottish Social Services Council registration)
- b. Professional Qualification in Early Years Pedagogy and Management (for students outwith Scotland)
- c. Professional Qualification in Froebel Early Learning

Further, there would be exit awards at Certificate and Diploma levels, for social workers and community educational workers who wish to gain the qualifications to register with the SSSC.

4. Policy & International Development – International Perspectives on Education and Training ([EDUA11011](#))
5. Youth – Youth Studies (EDUA11348)

Core courses listed above will be optional courses in other pathways. Further, an additional list of optional courses are already cross-listed for the current MSc in Childhood Studies, which could be negotiated as well for the revised degree:

Code	Course Name
PGSP11423	Anthropology of Health and Illness
PGSP11417	Building Blocks of African Studies
EDUA11034	Child and Adolescent Development
EDUA11337	Children and Technology
PGSP11104	Comparative Analysis of Social and Public Policy
CNST11034	Counselling Children and Young People
CNST11075	Creative Therapies with Children and Young People
PGSP11456	Critical Practices in International Social Work
PGSP11295	Cultures of Human Rights and Humanitarianism
EDUA11186	Developmental Disabilities: A Psychological Approach
EDUA11187	Education Policy and the Politics of Education
PGSP11373	Evaluation Research Methods
PGSP11225	Gender and Development
IPHP11009	Globalisation and public health
PGSP11363	Health Systems Analysis
PGSP11364	Health Systems: Strengthening and Reform
SCIL10023	Intimate Relationships
PGSP11184	Kinship: Structure and Process
IPHP11002	Social Determinants of Health and Public Policy

PGSP11305 Social Interventions in HIV and AIDS

SAST11002 South Asia: Roots of Poverty and Development

Resources

The proposed joint degree is extensively based on existing resources, courses and activities.

The development of postgraduate level provision in the early years will be based on the existing expertise within the BA in Childhood Practice and the Froebel CPD, with current negotiations with the Chief Executive Officer, Mark Neale, of the Froebel Trust about investment in paid student MSc numbers.

The School of Education will administer the programme, in both applications and programme delivery. Exam boards for the MSc degree will thus be convened by School of Education, with cross-School attendance. The School of Social & Political Science will continue to convene the 2 core courses (Childhood & Children's Rights and Listening to Children: Research and Consultation). Marketing will be co-ordinated across the two Schools, as the interdisciplinary profile is desirable. Agreements will be confirmed with other core and optional courses, with course convenors and their associated Schools, for their continued listing on the DPT.

With increased numbers, there would be additional demands on courses – some of which are already large (e.g. SPSS research skills courses). This could require additional tutorial support, for example.

An e-learning offering would be desirable. That would require existing staff to have dedicated time in their workloads to create e-learning resources and curricula.

The main investment would be in ensuring strong marketing of the overall programme, to maximise its attraction to excellent applicants and to provide a coherent message. It has the potential for considerable innovation, in drawing together knowledge exchange, placement and research opportunities.