

Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree: Playwork

Statement of Requirement

Action based research programme for Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree: Playwork

Pilot phase

Contents

Section A: Introduction and Background	2
Section B: Introduction to Foundation Degrees	6
Section C: Programme Requirements	14
Annexe 1 - Summary of Core Learning Outcomes	
Annexe 2 - Full Statements of Core Learning Outcomes.	

January 2005

Section A: Introduction and Background

1) The Purpose of the Statement of Requirement

This document sets out the Statement of Requirement for the content and delivery of the Sector- Endorsed Foundation Degree for Playwork Senior Practitioners. The Statement is the outcome of a Feasibility Research Study and Report that incorporated the views of the self-employed in the playwork sector, of playworkers, training and educational providers, relevant trade unions, regional development organisations, researchers, a key national training organisation, and the views of practitioners with cross professional experience in early years, play and youth work. Playwork for the purposes of this Statement has been defined as work with children and young people in play-settings.

The development of the Sector Endorsed Foundation Degree: Playwork (SEFD Playwork) has been strongly supported by the DfES, and is substantially based upon existing guidance for the Early Years Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree and contemporary guidance from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

The development of the Statement of Requirement and Learning Outcomes has been overseen by the Playwork Higher Education Committee (PHEC) and its specifically-formed Foundation Degree Steering Group hosted by SkillsActive. The work has been progressed during a period of rapid change and an action – based research methodology has been adopted. This is an approach that has proceeded to piloting and implementation of the Foundation Degree Playwork, ever mindful of the need for the inclusion of emergent ideas and experiences.

This Foundation Degree allows a new employment level known as Senior Practitioner to be defined and accredited. Foundation Degrees are located within the Intermediate level of the Framework for Higher Education qualifications (FHEQ) for England Wales and Northern Ireland, and are recognized as an award that would be generally equivalent to level 5 (of 8) within the National Qualification Framework (September 2004 version)

The Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree provides a self-standing qualification of specific value, but is also expected to provide for opportunities for further (life-long) study, which could take a number of different forms.

It is anticipated that route-specific outcomes to playwork trainer, management and development roles will be developed in the future and similarly, progression routes to qualification in professions comprising the Children's Work Force, for example, Early Years and Youth & Community Work.

The SEFD Playwork will normally link to at least one programme leading to a Bachelors degree with honours.

The purpose of the Statement of Requirement is to:

- provide guidance to allow Higher Education Institutions to meet the standards and qualities for the design of the Foundation Degrees, as outlined by QAA;

- assist universities, and their FE college and employer partners, to design Foundation Degrees which meet the needs of the sector in terms of both content and delivery and so can be Sector-Endorsed;
- bring a consistent approach to the definition of the achievements required for the award of Senior Practitioner;
- enable the Foundation Degree to form a progression route to an Honours Degree Playwork and/ related Children's Workforce qualifications;
- anticipate the development of route-specific learning outcomes relevant to the role of playwork trainer, manager and development worker.
- anticipate the development of progression routes to related professions comprising the Children's Workforce, for example, Early Years and Youth & Community Work.

Publication of the Statement of Requirement is part of the ongoing work of the sector bodies such as SkillsActive, the Playwork Higher Education Committee and Foundation Degree Steering Group, private employers, professional organisations, and the DfES to raise the quality of Playwork and related services.

This document may be updated in the future to reflect changing requirements for the Foundation Degree and from the sector. It is hoped its adoption will contribute to improved career opportunities for Playwork and other practitioners and help to raise the status of the services they provide.

2) How the Statement may be Used

Because the statement sets out what the sector requires to recognise the Senior Practitioner level, it is hoped that all universities / FE colleges and Consortia designing Foundation Degrees for Playwork and related areas will make use of it.

This will involve:

- specific reference to The Academic Infrastructure referred to by QAA and comprising the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), the Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (the code) programme specifications and subject benchmark statements;¹
- adopting the learning outcomes specified in Section C of this document, and the annexe;
- designing delivery arrangements which use the guidance in this document to ensure maximum support and guidance to learners.

The Statement allows considerable flexibility for universities and colleges. For example, the learning outcomes may be packaged in a variety of ways. The balance between activities may be altered to place greater or lesser emphasis on work-based learning. The learner support arrangements, for example mentoring, may be offered in a variety of ways, such as face to face and online or some combination of the two.

¹ The Benchmark Statements for Playwork in Higher Education (2003) referred to in this document have not yet been submitted to QAA for approval.

3) Status of the Statement

The Statement carries considerable authority because it represents the sector's view of the nature and standards of achievement required of practitioners to be recognised as Senior Practitioners. The required content and delivery approach for the Playwork Sector - Endorsed Foundation Degree has been prepared in close collaboration with universities and colleges to ensure that it satisfies their need to maintain academic rigour. It is hoped that it will be broadly welcomed by all involved as a contribution to consistency, excellence and quality of learning.

4) Benefits of Adopting the Statement

There are considerable benefits for both learners and learning providers.

Learners will:

- know that their Foundation Degree is based upon what is actually required in employment;
- be able to perform at a level recognised by employers as having the Status of Senior Practitioner;

and in the future:

- be able to focus on specific playwork roles through the training, development and management route-specific outcomes;
- be able to progress to professional degree study in other sectors of the children's workforce.

Universities and colleges will:

- have confidence that their Foundation Degree is sector – endorsed and therefore will deliver the achievements actually required in employment;
- know that their graduates will be able to perform at the level of Senior Practitioner;
- be able to progress learners to honours degree playwork or other relevant degree;
- be supported , in the future, to offer route-specific outcomes relating to playwork training, management and development.
- be supported, in the future, through the development of progression routes to professional degrees characterising other sectors of the children's workforce.

5) Contact

Queries about this Statement of Requirement may be addressed to SkillsActive, Castlewood House, 77- 91, New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1PX

email paul.bonel@skillsactive.com

Section B: Introduction to Foundation Degrees

6) The Definition of Foundation Degree and its Implications for Playwork

The Definition of Foundation Degrees

The Department for Education and Skills maintains the website dedicated to foundation degrees (www.foundationdegree.org.uk). This website defines foundation degrees as new employment-related higher education qualifications which:

- provide students with the specialist technical knowledge and skills needed for jobs at professional, managerial and higher-grade technicians involving the management and training of others;
- have been developed in conjunction with employers;
- are delivered flexibly in a variety of ways, such as via the internet or distance learning, and locally at further education colleges;
- will increase students' career opportunities and earning potential;
- allow students to progress on to further study: they can complete a related honours degree both full-time, with 15 months of study, or pro-rata part-time, following the Foundation Degree, or go on to take further professional development in the workplace;
- have a distinctive set of core features that all Foundation Degree programmes must include. These are summarised in the table on the next page;
- are awarded by universities and higher education colleges.

Opportunities for Playwork and Early Years

The Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree can provide both enhanced career progression and academic credibility for the skills and knowledge embedded in the Senior Practitioner role in Playwork.

The specification in this paper has been developed from the National Occupational Standards that underpin the Level 4 (National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and which:

- were developed by the sector to capture the skills and knowledge embedded in the Senior Practitioner role;
- will give direct access to the Foundation Degree for people typically with a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 3 qualification or equivalent;
- will allow APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning) against specific standards which have been obtained for the NVQ/SVQ Level 4 award;

The expectation of flexible delivery is another important advantage for the sector.

The development of the Foundation Degree provides a progression route into the final year of an Honours Degree Playwork and, it is envisaged, to other qualifications in the Children’s Workforce.

Thus, the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree is designed typically to:

- build upon participants’ NQF Level 3 achievement and provide the competences, knowledge and understanding required at Senior Practitioner level;
- provide the first two years’ learning towards another degree in Playwork or, eventually, in degrees pertaining to related to professions comprising the Children’s Workforce, for example, Early Years and Youth & Community Work .

7) Defining Characteristics of Foundation Degrees

The table below proposes five defining characteristics of foundation degrees.

Employer Involvement	In the design and review of foundation degree programmes, where possible the delivery and assessment of the programme and the monitoring of students particularly in the workplace. (FD’s should directly refer to the National Occupational Standards)
Accessibility	The design of programmes of study containing work-based learning and “earn and learn” opportunities.
Articulation and Progression	Access to Foundation Degrees is likely to be through a variety of routes including a diversity of qualifications eg prior experiential and certificated learning ² The programme states from the outset arrangements for articulation to Honours Degree level –with the expectation that this should not normally exceed 1.3 years of full-time equivalent study Bridging programmes may be necessary; these should be included at the validation of the programme. Employability is a key aspect and FD programmes provide work- relevant employment and skills needed in the workplace and relevant to careers progression or change.
Flexibility	Flexible delivery modes/study patterns e.g. full-time, part-time, distance, work & web-based. Flexibility with regard to admissions requirements and progression routes.

² By reference to the Guidelines on the Accreditation of Prior Learning QAA 2004
 Foundation Degree: Pilot
 Statement of Requirement
 January 2005
 CJT

Partnerships	Between employers, Higher Education Institutions, FE Colleges & Sector Skills Councils. FD's to be validated and awarded by institutions with degree awarding powers. This awarding HEI is also responsible for ensuring the standards and qualities of the programmes offered under its powers. Students can negotiate learning contracts to meet their learning needs in academic and work-based contexts.
---------------------	--

Main implications for the delivery of the Foundation Degree Playwork

It is important that the Foundation Degree in this area is tailored as closely as possible to the requirements and circumstances of participants. It is intended that the majority of participants will be:

- qualified to NQF Level 3 or equivalent;
- in appropriate employment;
- strongly motivated to achieve Senior Practitioner level or Honours Degree study in playwork or other areas of the Children’s Workforce.

Arrangements should be available within the academic institution to meet these needs. Participants are also likely to have family and domestic commitments, and be required to “juggle responsibilities”.

If we relate the characteristics of the participants to the features in the table above the following delivery features are required:

- learners must have the opportunity to receive credit for previous study in relation to the requirements for particular learning outcomes. This should include a scheme for the accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL);
- there should be procedures for valuing work-based learning not purely for its experiential dimension, but for its worth in terms of achieving credit towards the learning requirements of the degree;
- there should be a variety of learning modes and the facility for learners to progress at pace which suits them. This should include the provision of on line and distance learning to increase the flexibility and accessibility of the learning process;
- there should be access to support in the workplace, ideally through mentoring arrangements;
- there should be arrangements for peer group support and learning.

Other important issues for course planners in Playwork include:

- the emphasis on vocationally relevant skills and specific employer involvement;
- the requirement for each learner to produce a personal development plan /learning contract;
- progression arrangements, both into employment and to honours degree;

8) Levels in the National Qualifications Framework

Foundation degrees are placed within Level 5 of the NQF established by QCA³ and summarised in the diagram below:

(adapted from website –www.qca.org.uk/nq/framework).

National Qualifications Framework Levels (Revised September 2004)	Framework for H E Education Qualifications Levels
L8 New & creative approaches that extend existing knowledge or professional practice. Leading experts/practitioners.	D (doctorate)
L7 High & specialist levels of Knowledge/ in- depth original responses to complex problems and situations. Senior professionals and managers.	M (masters) Degrees, postgraduate certificates and diplomas
L6 Original and research-based responses to complex problems & situations. Knowledge-based professionals / managers.	H (honours) bachelors degrees, graduate certificates & diplomas
L5 Ability to increase depth of work- relevant knowledge and formulate solutions and responses to complex problems and situations. Higher grade technician professionals or managers.	I (intermediate) Diploma's in Higher & Further education/ foundation degrees, higher national diplomas
L4 Specialist high level knowledge base &analytic skills relevant to technical & professional jobs managing & developing others.	C (certificate) Certificate of Higher Education
Entry: L1 GCSE grade (D-G) Part of Vocational GCSE L2 GCSE (A-C) NVQ Level 2 Vocational GCSE L3 A level; Vocational A level NVQ Level 3	

³ As revised and into effect on 1st September 2004 – the transition period for the introduction of raised levels running until January 2006.

All foundation degrees must also follow the descriptors set out for the Higher Education qualifications published by QAA. According to these descriptors holders of qualifications at this level will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field.

They will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

This level – Intermediate level in the QAA framework – includes ordinary (non-honours) degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education, and other higher diplomas, as well as foundation degrees.

A more detailed description of this level (taken from www.qaa.ac.uk) is reproduced in the table below which compares Intermediate level with Certificate level.

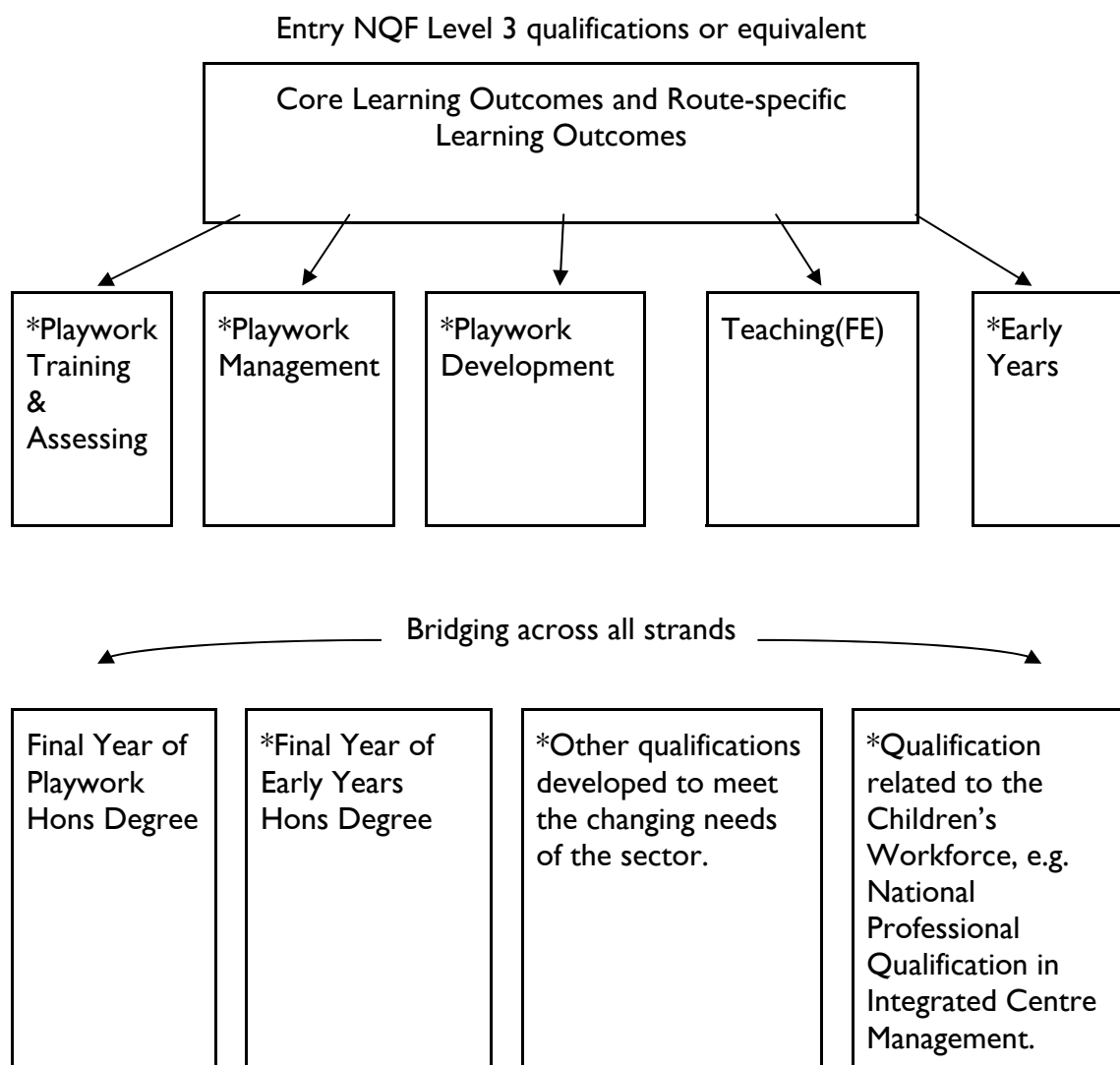
Descriptor for a qualification at Certificate Level (this is broadly equivalent to completing the first level of the Foundation Degree):	Descriptor for a qualification at Intermediate Level (this is equivalent to completing the Foundation Degree):
Qualifications at this level are awarded to Students who have demonstrated:	
(i) knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study;	(i) knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed;
(ii) an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.	(ii) ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context;
	(iii) knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subject(s) and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study;
	(iv) understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:	
(i) evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work;	(i) use a range of established techniques to initiate & undertake critical analysis of information and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis;
(ii) communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments;	(ii) effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis, in a variety of forms, to specialist and non-specialist audiences and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively;
(iii) undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment;	(iii) undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within the organisations;
and will:	
(iv) have qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.	(iv) have qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision making.

9) Structure and Progression for the Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree: Playwork

Figure 1 below summarises the proposed structure, entry requirements, and post-degree progression opportunities.

Figure 1: Envisaged Progression Routes for the Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree: Playwork



*Work to be progressed on these anticipated initiatives

I0) Bridging Requirements

As mentioned above, “programmes must clearly state subsequent arrangements for progression to honours degrees and to professional qualifications or higher-level NVQs.”

Foundation Degree proposals will need to specify where graduates can go in terms of:

- employment opportunities;
- progression to honours degree.

Bridging arrangements for the progression to Honours Degree study must be specified in terms of:

- learning outcomes required (at the specific levels);
- learning and assessment methods;
- duration and delivery arrangements;

Section C: Programme Requirements

This specification for the Foundation Degree covers the learning outcomes for Senior Practitioners in Playwork settings. These outcomes, in the main, are taken from the National Occupational Standards for Playwork Level 4 (2004) and contain newly drafted standards that have been informed by the Benchmark Statements for Playwork in Higher Education HE (2004) and other existing influences in playwork education and training.

The Foundation Degree, with its flexible delivery systems, offers a new alternative higher-level qualification route for Senior Practitioners in the above settings. Although based on National Occupational Standards Level 4 the Foundation Degree will offer differing learning opportunities and progression routes for students including:

- progression on to further study;
- a related ordinary or honours degree both full-time, with 15 months of study or pro-rata part-time;
- flexibility of delivery, for example, via the internet or distance learning and locally at further education colleges;
- the development and assessment of key and transferable skills;
- APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning) against specific standards which have been obtained for the NVQ/SVQ Level 4 award.

As indicated above, the Foundation Degree provides a progression route into the final year of an Honours degree, following appropriate bridging where necessary.

11) Educational Aims of the Programme

The programme aims to provide the learner with knowledge skills, understandings and work-based experiences, such that by the end of the Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree Programme they are able to demonstrate the:

- knowledge and critical understanding of playwork principles and practice, and the way in which these principles have developed;
- successful application in the workplace of the range of knowledge and skills learnt throughout the programme;
- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, and the application of those principles in a work context;
- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in playwork and the ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in playwork and play settings and how these apply in a work context;
- understanding of the limits of their knowledge and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge in playwork and play settings;

- ability to identify and integrate into work practice, playwork theory, values, assumptions and principles, especially those relating to play, children's rights, issues of equality and diversity and inclusive practice;
- capacity to develop personal insight and reflective practice, including the ability to evaluate their effect on other people and in the environment in which they work;
- knowledge of the legal and regulative frameworks relevant to playwork and to work within this;
- delivery of the professional and practical skills and competences which are required to work as a Senior Practitioner in Playwork /as a Senior Practitioner in Early Years settings across the playwork age range.

12) Professional and Practical Skills

Upon completion of the Foundation Degree, students will be able to:

- draw upon an understanding of play and playwork theory when being a playworker;
- carry out effectively and efficiently, the work roles expected of a Senior Practitioner in a playwork setting, and meet these expectations with regard to regulative and legislative requirements, for example those pertaining to Health and Safety, Anti-Discriminatory Practice, the Children Act and Children's Rights;
- reflect on practice in relation to self, personal play experiences and insight, appreciate how this influences, and is influenced by, the play setting, discuss with peers and relevant others and, through further reflection, develop practice so that it is informed by change in search of improvement;
- provide a play environment and plan and programme activities and events in play settings;
- work with groups of children;
- work as a member of a team;
- develop good relationships with children and others relevant to the play setting, for example, carer/parents, management, partners, community members and relevant professionals comprising the Children's Workforce;
- evidence knowledge and commitment to the values expressed in the National Occupational Standards for playwork, and the contemporary statement of playwork principles, in routine practice;
- work with a strong sense of the professional playwork identity and an appreciation of the identities, values and principles characterising relevant professions in the Children's Workforce;
- participate in playwork networks and contribute to contemporary debate;
- draw upon awareness of the networks and debates characterising relevant professions in the Children's Workforce;

- effectively manage, or contribute to the management of aspects of the playwork setting, for example with regard to policies and procedures, funding and financial systems, physical and human resources;
- manage and organise their own time resources records and information to support decision-making;
- demonstrate a thorough understanding of difference and diversity, recognising individual needs as well as developing tolerance and understanding of others;
- contribute to the management of the disclosure of abuse by a child / children, in a way that is sensitive, appropriate and seeks to provide support to all affected in the play-setting, and is in accordance with appropriate organisational and referral protocols.

The professional and practical skills will need to be authenticated with work-based evidence.

13) Knowledge, Understanding and Skills

Upon completion of the Foundation Degree students will be able to demonstrate:

- knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles in their field of study and the way in which those principles have developed e.g. to demonstrate a commitment to the values expressed in the National Occupational Standards and contemporary statement of playwork principles in routine practice; to demonstrate work-based awareness of relevant organisational structures and related principles with working in an inter-professional context;
- successful application in the workplace of the range of knowledge and skills learnt through the programme; eg draw upon play and playwork theory and apply interdisciplinary understandings as a resource for problem solving/development and change in the playwork context;
- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, and to apply those principles in a work context e.g. the relevance of the historical and ideological origins of playwork and theories of playwork intervention and community development to practice in the playwork setting;
- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subjects and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in their field of study and apply these in a work context e.g. use of observations, case studies, reports and self reflective studies in playwork practice;
- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge in their field of study and in a work context, e.g. the relevance of legislations and regulations and attendant tensions as they relate to the playwork environment.

Typically, upon completion of the Foundation Degree Programme students will be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis in their field of study and in a work context;
- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume responsibility within organisations;

and have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment and progression to other qualifications requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision- making;
- the ability to utilise opportunities for life-long learning;
- the regulative and legislative requirements as they relate to the role of the playworker and the play-setting, for example, Health and Safety, Anti-Discriminatory Legislations, the Children Act, the UN Convention on Children's Rights;
- indicators of child abuse, how to respond sensitively and appropriately to disclosure, involve relevant others according to agreed policies and procedures of the play-setting, and, with regard to duties and responsibilities to the support of the child and referral to appropriately designated agencies, to gain appropriate personal support, when involved with such experiences and to make provision for all those in the play setting affected by the disclosure;
- understanding of data protection, and confidentiality and security of information;
- the ability to access and review literature to underpin evidence-based practice and how to use this knowledge within extended written projects, case studies, reports and self-reflective studies.

14) Key and Transferable Skills

Upon completion of the Foundation Degree, students will be able to:

- communicate ideas, principles and theories, arguments and analysis effectively in speech and writing, using visual and ICT media as tools where appropriate to a diversity of audiences;
- demonstrate appropriate critical thinking skills, including the ability to identify and summarise the main points in an argument, represent and develop an argument, drawing upon appropriate evidence, literature and theory;
- analyse and synthesise research, theories and ideas from multiple sources;
- produce critical and evaluative responses to the content of the learning outcomes;

- use ICT to support personal development;
- work within a team and individually to complete a relevant and agreed project or task;
- solve theoretical and practical problems when they have occurred, or are likely to occur, when carrying out the role of a Learner Senior Practitioner within playwork or early years setting;
- improve their own performance through critical self reflection, the implementation of evidence-based practice and continual professional development activities.

15) Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy for each area of study within the Foundation Degree programme, including the assessment of work-based learning should be specified at the time of validation.

The assessment strategy should be subject and learner appropriate and may include a variety of formal and informal, formative and summative techniques provided that they are all capable of rigorous testing and independent verification.

Wherever possible, employers should be involved in the assessment of work-based learning. If necessary training for employers (in for example, assessment) should be provided. Agreements for assessment arrangements should be specified at the outset of the programme.

The awarding institution and the provider are responsible for ensuring that all assessment, including work-based learning is applied consistently and is appropriate to the expected learning outcomes relevant to a qualification that is located within the Intermediate level of the FHEQ.

a) Credit for Previous Study

Learners presenting for the Foundation Degree could have GCSE “A “ levels, vocational and other qualifications including those at NQF level 4. There are two main advantages to offering credit for previous study and experience within the framework of the Foundation Degree:

- learners may have achieved some of the competences and/or underpinning knowledge and understanding required for the degree from previous study, e.g. on a vocationally-related qualification programme or the NVQ/SVQ Level 4 programme; it would be unproductive and demoralising to simply ignore this;
- when credit is given, the time taken to complete the degree requirements can be shortened, or the original timescale maintained, allowing more time to focus on new learning.

Good practice indicators in the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree

Institutions demonstrating good practice in this aspect of the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree will:

- specify the Foundation Degree in a way which enables the required learning outcomes to be identified, and previous study matched to them;
- publish policies and procedures on recognising certificated achievement which show how they apply to the Foundation Degree.

b) Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

It will be particularly important to recognise learning from playwork and other relevant settings, not only for the credit it may bring, but also as a way of validating learners' experience in the workplace. At the same time, its limitations should be recognised. It is not a substitute for new learning, and the amount of credit it can lead to will usually be quite small. These factors should not, however, detract from its real benefits. Used sensitively it says to learners; "We value what you have already learned, and relate to you as an active learner, not as an empty vessel which we must fill..."

Good practice indicators in the Playwork Sector- Endorsed Foundation Degree

Institutions demonstrating good practice in this aspect of the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree will:

- specify the learning outcomes of the Foundation Degree clearly so that APEL can be a straightforward process;
- have in place procedures which outline the evidence of achievement which could be considered. Evidence of achievement which should be considered could include, for example in a playwork setting, products, reports, witness statements and sometimes photographs.

16) Student Learning and Support

a) Offering a Variety of Learning Modes

Flexibility, with adequate support, will be the key to success for learners following this career pathway. Learners will be performing demanding work roles and have complex domestic situations. It is important that the opportunity to learn is continually available, as far as possible, without restriction of time and place. This needs to be the case whatever the fixed points such as scheduled tutorials or requirements for attendance at the university or college concerned.

Good practice indicators in the Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree: Playwork

Institutions demonstrating good practice in this aspect of the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation degree will:

- enable individuals to develop a personal development plan / learning contract. This plan will be carefully negotiated at the start, setting out learning goals and sources of learning and support;
- provide each learner with paper-based materials which permit learning where and when they choose, with positive signposting to additional resources such as libraries and electronic media;
- support all learning, whether work-based or traditional, with electronic resources. This will include access to on-line programmes and the internet.

b) Individual Support

As important as individual delivery will be individual support. Learners need to feel that their academic tutor is available on a reasonably accessible basis so that a learning relationship can quickly be established. This places demands on both which requires robust pre-planning. Learners need to be able not only to continue to work and manage their domestic affairs, but to feel part of the university or college and the wider group of learners. The test of adequacy is always: when some aspect of the degree programme is to be delivered by a means which is time or place constrained (e.g. lectures, tutorial groups), there are alternative means available by which the same learning could be accessed.

Good practice indicators in the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree

Institutions demonstrating good practice in this aspect of the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree will make sure that tutors and learners agree a pattern which includes:

- face-to-face meetings through traditional tutorials or specially arranged meetings such as “learning clubs” which take place on a regular basis;
- telephone contact at a pre-arranged time each week;
- communication by email with agreed response times;
- opportunities for learners to contact with each other;
- use of email on a regular basis;
- access to a ‘conference’ facility on the existing university or college websites, or through a virtual learning environment (VLE) through which learners can post comments and questions and carry on dialogue.

c) Individually Paced Learning

Clearly connected with the variety of learning modes is the issue of pace of learning. Work-based learners must be able to control the pace of the learning, within reasonable limits. The key to this is that pace is treated as a matter for individual discussion and agreement. The university or college concerned will wish to set some

boundaries, but within them learners need to have responsibility for learning and meeting deadlines.

The minimum time a learner could expect to take to achieve the Foundation Degree is two years. Some learners may prefer a longer period over which to secure the required achievements, and will take three or more years to complete.

Good practice indicators in the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree

Institutions demonstrating good practice in this aspect of the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree will make sure that:

- adequate pre-planning is undertaken so that pace and duration of study are agreed with the tutor and controlled by the learner;
- barriers to continuous learning represented by traditional “terms” and holidays are removed with learning opportunities continuously available.

d) Online and Distance Learning

There are two specific ways in which these technologies can be beneficial to learners on the Foundation Degree:

- to improve their own learning skills because ICT is now a key skill, on a par with literacy and numeracy;
- to acquire information and participate in interactive learning for all elements of their degree programme.

Work-based learners are ideally placed to benefit from this technology, and its availability indicates a university’s or college’s commitment to them. Careful pre-planning is required so that online learning becomes a natural part of learners’ expectations rather than an added extra.

Good practice indicators in the Playwork Sector- Endorsed Foundation Degree

Institutions demonstrating good practice in this aspect of the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree will make sure that: learners are encouraged to use ICT in all aspects of their work, for example:

- collecting and analysing data;
- word processing assignments and other documents;
- handling figures and money through simple spreadsheets;
- making presentations, for example in Power Point;
- handling personal records, correspondence etc;
- sending/receiving emails;
- searching on the internet for information;
- access to learning and assessment at any time and every day, for example through an existing website and/or VLE, which is loaded with materials, assignments and guidance, specially designed for remote learners.

d) Work-Based Learning

The term 'work-based learning' derives from the fact that fulfilling a role in the workplace is itself an educative experience. Just as what is learned in lectures and seminars, or arises from independent study can be credited in relation to the requirements of the Foundation Degree, so can what is learned in the workplace. For this reason, it needs to be reflected upon and related to theory in a systematic way- it will be important that learners are provided with an appropriate framework for this.

Similarly important is that work-based learning is carefully integrated with 'traditional' learning, so that learners can be clear that both are of equal value.

Good practice indicators in the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree

Institutions demonstrating good practice in this aspect of the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree will make sure that:

- the degree structures support a constant interaction between learning from work and learning from non-work contexts such as lectures, tutorials, book and screen-based study;
- these structures form a fundamental part of the planning and delivery of the Foundation Degree. In particular, any impression that 'real' learning goes on away from work, with the workplace as merely offering useful experience, must be avoided;
- the strategies for work-based learning are set out clearly from the outset for learners.

e) Support and mentoring in the workplace

Work-based learning requires as much support and 'tutoring' as traditional learning. It usually includes mentoring by which a more experienced practitioner supports the learning process.

Although they have other roles, for the purposes of this guidance, providing mentoring functions in the workplace is an extension of the responsibilities of the university or college providing the Foundation Degree. At minimum, there need to be arrangements for:

- identifying /appointing and training experienced practitioners to support work-based learners;
- linking learners with an appropriately experienced practitioner;
- agreeing a pattern of communication and support;
- providing support and recording action points.

The benefits to learners include:

- direct support for learning in the workplace including through e-mentoring;

- regular and ongoing feedback on practice from a critical but supportive colleague;
- opportunities to reflect on practice with professional support.

The functions of a mentor

The functions of a mentor might be provided in the workplace or by tutors from the providing HE/FE institution. There are a variety of roles for the mentor:

- to provide professional support, guidance and training in playwork for work-based learning outcomes;
- to guide practitioners with written, oral and work-based assessment requirements;
- to contribute to the assessment of the work-based element of the award;
- to support the practitioner in keeping up-to-date with professional development;
- to encourage reflection and provide mentor's reports on practice-based learning;
- to provide strategies for professional development.

Who would they be?

The mentor should be someone with relevant experience and/or qualifications, and demonstrable good practice in a relevant occupation.

For example, they may include:

- peer practitioners with more, or in some cases, equivalent experience;
- line managers or LEA representatives;
- tutors with practitioner experience;
- peer practitioners with mentor training.

The university link tutor may provide the training/coaching function visiting the student only occasionally or they may have a much more central role in relation to the student. Support functions are essential but may be provided at a distance, for example, through online support, mentoring and tutoring. Examples of the roles a university link tutor will provide where the mentoring and tutoring are provided by different people will include:

- supporting the mentor through regular contact;
- monitoring the quality of the training experience;
- engaging in the evaluation of the mentor's role;
- having a key role in mentor training.

Essentially, however, the university link tutor will:

- support the learner through regular contact;
- engage in relevant assessments of the learners;
- in some instances, act as the learner's mentor.

SkillsActive will seek to explore existing models of good practice in mentoring with a view to developing further guidance on this aspect of work-based learning.

Good practice indicators in the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree

Institutions demonstrating good practice in this aspect of the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree will:

- offer work-related and pastoral support for learner;
- involve mentors from within the sector (who may be line managers) who can offer appropriate professional support to learners;
- ensure that the whole setting is aware of the mentoring arrangements in order for it to be given status and recognition of importance;
- provide guidelines / guidance for all those who are part of the student support system;
- ensure that the students work-based reports are written by reference to standardized formats and submitted in accordance with the learners assessment schedule;
- ensure that mentors have a point of contact from the foundation degree provider.

f) Peer Group Support

Learners gain both support and insights from other learners, and work-based learning presents specific challenges for universities and colleges in this respect. Many of the learners on this programme will be individuals drawn from a multiplicity of settings. They will have a mentor, but opportunities to interface with other learners will need to be provided outside individual workplaces. The simplest way to achieve this is on a locality basis, by which one setting agrees to host a regular meeting for the learners from neighbouring settings. In some cases, the college or university will offer the most useful venue. The key to success is that such meetings, and the relative degree of formality they will take, must be planned in advance.

Other methods of peer group support include email communication and online conferencing, described above. The most important factor is that learners feel the supportive relationship, and subsequent ability to expose possible weaknesses, which characterises a traditional learning group.

17) Admissions

Because students will complete the degree by a variety of routes the Foundation Degree should allow students to continue working in appropriate setting whilst completing their degree. As the degree is closely linked with the National Occupational Standards, advanced standing against the degree may be given.

A core feature of the degree is that it should offer wide access for students who should not normally be able to access university provision. Therefore applicants should be considered with a combination of academic qualifications, experience and motivation to demonstrate the potential to complete the programme successfully.

For example, in practice, entrants to the Foundation Degree aged under 21 years would normally have as a minimum one of the following:

- an appropriate full A-level or vocational A-level;
- NVQ/SVQ Level 3 or other appropriate vocationally related NQF Level 3 qualification;
- Advanced Modern Apprenticeship in Playwork or another appropriate subject.

18) Structure Of the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree

The Summary of Playwork Learning Outcomes (Annexe 1) outlines the minimum requirements for the Playwork Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree.

It outlines the main learning outcomes to be achieved by the end of the Foundation Degree. The levels have not been specified to allow maximum flexibility for institutions offering Playwork Sector-Endorsed Degrees

The main learning outcomes are based on the National Occupational Standards (L4) for Playwork and some of those that underpin the Early Years NVQ/SVQ Level 4 Advanced Practice Award; they are also based on the Higher Education Benchmarks for Playwork(2004) and a review of a submitted sample of Certificate, Diploma in HE and Honours Degree programmes in Playwork and “Criteria and guidelines for the accreditation of Foundation Degrees by University Vocational Awards Council and SPRITO (now SkillsActive).

Details of the knowledge and understanding and professional practice required is specified in Section C.

The professional practice has to be assessed in the workplace, when a learner is carrying out the normal duties of a Senior Practitioner within a play-setting.

Assessment evidence from work-based learning, practice and assessment, although demonstrating competence across the performance and knowledge specified, should be holistic, i.e. rather than collecting individual pieces of evidence for each piece of knowledge and professional practice, students are expected to gather evidence to illustrate their ability to apply knowledge skills and understanding across learning outcomes which naturally link together in terms of whole job operations.

As shown in the figure, each major outcome must be achieved across both levels covered by the foundation degree:

- Play and playwork theory and playwork practice;
- The play environment;
- The playing child and the practising playworker;
- Playwork values & ethics and professional playwork practice
- Play-links: relating and communicating;
- Play-links: working with professional diversity;
- Contribute to management and development of the play-setting;
- Contribute to the protection of children from abuse;

- Uphold and advocate children’s rights and actively address issues of equality and diversity.

It is expected that in the core learning outcomes learners will cover the playwork age range.

In the route-specific outcomes learners can select a route in which they wish to specialise and complete and learning outcomes in that route. These will be developed over time and are likely to include: Playwork Training and Assessment, Playwork Management and Playwork Development; as well as Early Years and other sectors comprising the Children’s Workforce.

Routes through the Foundation Degree

The following examples illustrate how students from different backgrounds can take advantage of the flexible provision offered by the Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree.

All students will receive tuition in the underpinning knowledge and understanding. This should be delivered in a variety of forms, but will provide an ‘off-the-job’ component of the Foundation Degree

Example A

A has been a playworker for 8 years and has an NVQ level 3 playwork. He enjoys daily contact with children on the playground and his playground is much appreciated by the local community and children who attend. A feels he belongs to a community of playwork peers, with whom he loves to discuss his work. He wants to develop his practice, skills, knowledge and understanding further. He therefore undertakes the Foundation Degree Playwork.

It is likely that A will complete all the learning outcomes of the Foundation Degree. If he decides at some point to diversify his career in playwork to become a trainer, development worker or take up a manager role, he can take up the route-specific outcomes of his chosen career direction or look to APEL learning outcomes in relation to NVQ Level 4 Playwork Management.

Example B

B is working full-time in a senior position within playwork setting and has completed the NVQ/SVQ level 4

B will be able to use APEL procedures to gain exemption from learning outcomes which she has already covered through professional experience and achieving the NVQ/SVQ units. This should cover a substantial amount of the Foundation Degree. B will access other necessary knowledge and understanding and professional practice learning outcomes through her normal practice with top-up tutorial support where appropriate.

A personal plan must be developed for students such as B to plan which areas of professional practice many need extra “off the job” tuition.

Example C

C is working full-time in a senior position within a playwork setting and has completed some NVQ/SVQ standards.

C will be able to use APEL procedures to gain exemption from learning outcomes which he has already covered through professional experience and achieving the NVQ/SVQ standards. C will access necessary professional practice learning outcomes through her normal practice with top-up tutorial support where appropriate.

A personal plan must be developed for students such as A to plan which areas of professional practice many need extra “off the job” tuition.

Example D

D works as a nursery assistant during the day at the local community nursery and as an assistant playworker for four evenings per week at the local adventure playground. D has an NVQ Level 4 in Early Years and Childcare and wishes to learn more about playwork.

D chooses to undertake the Foundation Degree Playwork. APEL provides credit for several modules, and D studies the compulsory core modules for playwork.

Example E

Several years ago E worked as a playgroup helper and on the summer playscheme that her children attended. E is returning to work with children and young people.

As a result E may need more support within the educational institution providing the Foundation Degree before she is placed in a work-based setting. She may also need extra mentoring in the work place to achieve the learning outcomes specified within the route she is working towards. Thus some preliminary work placements may be required for E, or she might have to revisit some activities on the second work placement to ensure that she meets the professional practice requirements.