



**Centre for Educational Development,
Appraisal and Research**

**Reviewing Early Childhood Intervention
and Early Childhood Special Education training
in UK's University and College courses**

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SUMMARY

At present, Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) have a specific body of knowledge, based on various research fields, which supports the intervention of professionals, aiming to enhance the development of children up to six years in a situation of established, biological or environmental risk. This body of knowledge emphasizes the importance of intervening as early as possible, in a family-centered approach, based on a collaborative work, performed in natural and inclusive environments. In this context, training is a critical element for success, demanding a reorientation in the ECI/ECSE professionals' attitude, towards the new intervention requirements.

With the aim of studying ECI/ECSE training in UK's Universities and Colleges (UniCs), a course search was completed but no specific courses were found in this domain. However, multiple UniCs were identified which offered more than 150 courses in the connected areas of special education, inclusion, disability, and additional support, involving training offers working across the age range, including infants and young children. In addition, UniCs with courses in Early Childhood Education (ECE) were also assembled, since these are aimed specifically at professionals working with children 0 to 6.

As the total of course offers was excessively large for the intended comprehensive analysis, a sample of these UniCs was selected comprising the ten top UK Universities and five Colleges with courses in different Special Education and ECE. An in-depth analysis was performed on the 80+ courses these 15 UniCs offered, which were assembled in four groups: 1. Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, Special Educational Needs and Disability Studies; 2. Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties; 3. Learning Support Courses and 4. Early Childhood Education Courses. This in-depth analysis included these courses aims, contents, learning/teaching process, and assessments. A second phase was then completed with reference to other emergent themes, namely: research, child development, learning/teaching strategies and approaches, becoming a professional, policy/Government frameworks and standards, and regarding specific links with ECI fundamental principles.

Results show that although some ECI/ECSE current recommendations were present in the courses analyzed, ECI/ECSE main principles regarding a family-centered approach, and collaborative work performed in natural and inclusive environments, were only partly included in the UniCs' training offers. Questions concerning the need to have specific ECI courses in UK UniCs, or to adjust existing courses including these contemporary fundamental principles, are considered, in view of the positive impact this might have on professionals intervention and, consequently, on children's development and families' well-being.

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Choosing ECI and ECSE training in UK's University and College courses

First approach: Internet Universities and Colleges course search

To complete a comprehensive review of the UK courses in the domain of Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) - which involves a broad range of at risk, vulnerable children, including children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities, ages 0 to 6, and their families - a first Internet Universities and Colleges (UniCs) course search was completed in October 2012.

In this first internet search, a combination of keywords was used to limit and define it, associating the words "courses", "training", "masters", "bachelors", "undergraduate" and "postgraduate" with "early childhood intervention", "early childhood special education", "inclusion", "special educational needs" and "disability", in the United Kingdom.

No specific courses in Early Childhood Intervention or Early Childhood Special Education were found, but this first search led to a high number of courses in the related areas of special education, special educational needs (SEN), inclusion, disability and additional support that included, but were not limited, to working with infants and small children 0 to 6.

Several courses in Early Childhood Education (ECE) area were also analysed, since these are designed at those working with children 0 to 6 and potentially had aims and contents connected to ECI|ECSE. This underlined the need of not exclusively exploring the Special Education/Inclusion area but also Early Childhood Education UniCs courses.

Since most of these emergent special education, SEN, inclusion, disability and additional support courses were part of UniCs Education departments, which also include ECE courses, research was carried on reviewing courses from UniCs Education departments only. Consequently, the next step was to find a method of inventorying all UniCs with education departments in the UK confirming and expanding the first Internet keyword search, and to have their training offers analysed in the specific domain of the study but also in the adjacent field of Early Childhood Education.

For this purpose, information was collected using the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)¹ list of courses in Education, embedded in its 43 specific subject areas (including early childhood education, special education needs, teaching education, etc.).

¹ The British admission service for students applying to university.

From this process, 153 Universities and Colleges (UniCs) with Education Departments/Courses were assembled (102 Universities and 51 Colleges).

A second internet search was then performed, now visiting these 153 UniCs sites to verify the existence of courses in the SEN domain, across all education areas, in each UniC. At the same time, we looked, in these UniCs, for training courses in the ECE area where contents concerning ECI and ECSE could potentially be found.

From this procedure, 91 UniCs with courses in the SEN domain and with Courses in the field of ECE were selected.

The 91 UniCs with courses in the SEN domain included different types of training options – from global Inclusion and Special Education (SEI) to Specific Conditions, Disabilities and Difficulties (SC) and Learning Support (LS) course offers – leading to a **first Group(s) organization:**

Group 1. Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, Special Educational Needs and Disability Studies, including:

- Disability studies; Inclusion; Special Education & Special Educational Needs and Learning Support in these domains.
- Education, Education Studies, Early Childhood Studies, Primary Education and Inclusion/Special Education/SEN
- Special Educational Needs Coordinator SENCO
- Inclusion and Special Education Research Centres and Units with PhD/EdD courses

Group 2. Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties:

- Autistic spectrum disorder
- Behaviour
- Deafness (including 'Mental Health and Deafness')
- Developmental and/or intellectual disabilities
- Learning Disabilities (including Dyslexia and Difficulties in literacy development)
- Multisensory impairment (Deafblindness)
- Visual impairment (Additional Support for Learning – Visual Impairment)
- Other: Inclusive Education and Additional support to Bilingual learners; Gifted Education

Group 3. Learning Support courses

- Additional Support for Learning - Bilingual Learners; Pupil Support
- Education Studies (Learning Support) and Educational Support
- Learning Support
- Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools
- Other (Supporting and Managing Learning in Education , Supporting Inclusive Learning and Practice, Teaching and Learning Support, etc)

One hundred and sixty seven (167) courses were found in these 91 UniCs, embedded in the three courses categories (Table 1)²:

Table 1

Three different categories of SEN courses and training offers found in the analysed 91 UniCs

	Courses categories	Sub-categories	Number of courses in each sub-category	Number of courses in each group
SEN courses	1. Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, Special Educational Needs and Disability Studies (SEI Courses)	• Disability studies; Inclusion; Special Education & Special Educational Needs (including Learning Support in these domains)	42	84
		• Education, Education Studies, Early Childhood Studies, Primary Education and Inclusion/Special Education/SEN	25	
		• Special Educational Needs Coordinator SENCO	8	
		• Inclusion and Special Education Research Centres and Units with PhD/EdD courses	9	
	2. Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties (SC courses)	• Autistic spectrum disorder	12	54
		• Behaviour	8	
		• Deafness (including Mental Health and Deafness)	11	
		• Developmental and/or intellectual disabilities	5	
		• Learning Disabilities (including Dyslexia and Difficulties in literacy development)	13	
		• Multisensory impairment (Deafblindness)	1	
		• Visual impairment (Additional Support for Learning – Visual Impairment)	1	
		• Others: Inclusive Education and Additional support to Bilingual learners; Gifted Education	3	
	3. Learning Support (LS courses)	• Additional Support for Learning - Bilingual Learners; Pupil Support	2	29
		• Education Studies (Learning Support) and Educational Support	3	
		• Learning Support	9	
• Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools		6		
• Other (Supporting and Managing Learning in Education , Supporting Inclusive Learning and Practice, Teaching and Learning Support, etc)		9		
			Total	167

² From this first selection, we excluded courses articulating SEI courses with other domains (i.e., psychology, arts, theology, etc) since their aims and contents were too broad considering our initial purpose to find courses in Early Childhood Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education fields.

Report

Reviewing Early Childhood Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education training in UK's University and College courses

Second approach: selecting courses for an in-depth analysis

Since the totality of courses was excessively large for the aimed in-depth, qualitative analysis on their aims, contents, teaching and learning processes and assessment, the next step was to choose a smaller number of UniCs in order to be able to accomplish it. For this purpose, we took two different options considering we wanted to analyse training courses both in Universities and Colleges.

a) Selection Criteria - Universities

Each year, three national rankings of Universities take place in the UK, including Education courses rankings:

1. Times University Guide – top education courses of UK universities 2013 (74 Universities);
2. Guardian Guide 2013: league table for education (75 Universities)
3. The complete University Guide independent trusted 2013: league table for education (80 universities).

The criterion chosen was to select Universities, in the Education field, that were simultaneously present in the Top 25 of these three rankings with both SEN and ECE Courses - only nine fitted this criteria. To this UniCs group, we added the Institute of Education, University of London, since the Institute tops the league table for education research, according to the latest official audit of UK universities (RAE 2008 Analysis Quality Rankings) and has courses in the field of Inclusion and Special Education (Table 2).

Table 2

Selected Universities for an in-depth SEI and ECE courses analysis

Top 25 UK Education Universities 2013 in alphabetical order with SEN and ECE courses	Rankings 2013 - Times University Guide; Guardian Guide and The complete University Guide independent trusted.
University of Aberdeen Scotland	Times – 16 Guardian - 9 University Guide – 7
University of Birmingham	Times – 10 Guardian - 16 University Guide – 21
University of Cambridge	Times – 1 Guardian - 1 University Guide – 1
University of Edinburgh Scotland	Times – 7 Guardian - 21 University Guide – 3
University of Glasgow Scotland	Times – 4 Guardian - 12 University Guide – 6
University of Leeds	Times – 10 Guardian - 11 University Guide – 24

University of Reading	Times – 17 Guardian - 3 University Guide – 22
University of Warwick	Times – 6 Guardian - 20 University Guide – 11
University of the West of Scotland	Times – 3 Guardian - 7 University Guide – 9
University rankings in Education research UK	
Institute of Education, University of London	First in the UK for education research by the UK government's Research Assessment Exercise - RAE 2008 Analysis Quality Rankings

b) Selection Criteria – Colleges

Since UK Colleges are not part of these rankings, all UK Colleges with Education subjects were then listed following UCAS information. Those with SEN Courses (including at least one Bachelor or Master Course) *and* ECE Courses were then selected - only five Colleges fitted these criteria (Table 3).

Table 3

Selected Colleges for an in-depth SEN and ECE courses analysis

UK Colleges with SEI (including at least one Bachelor or Master course) and ECE Courses in alphabetical order		
	SEI Courses	ECE Courses
Blackburn College	4	3
Blackpool and The Fylde College an Associate College of Lancaster University	1	2
Bradford College	1	5
South Essex College of Further & Higher Education	1	1
Farnborough College of Technology	2	4

Fifteen UniCs were thus selected. These included 40 SEN Courses, distributed in different subcategories, and 40 ECE courses.

Courses analysis within the selected Universities and Colleges

Special educational needs courses were gathered in the different courses categories previously presented:

1. Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disability Studies (SEI courses)
2. Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties (SC courses)
3. Learning Support Courses (LS courses)

Each group includes several courses from the chosen 15 UniCs (Table 4).

Table 4

SEN groups and number of courses analysed

SEI Courses sub-categories	Number of courses analysed
1. Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disability Studies (SEI courses)	15
2. Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties (SC courses)	15
3. Learning Support Courses (LS courses)	10
Total	40

In turn, Early Childhood Education (ECE) Courses include the following subcategories:

- Early Years
- Childhood practice
- Childhood Studies/ Early Childhood Studies
- Educational /Education Studies
- Education
- Primary Education (3-12)
- Other Courses

Within the ECE group, 40 courses were also found (Table 5)

Table 5

ECE group - subcategories and number of courses analysed

ECE Courses subcategories	Number of courses
Early Years (including Early Years Practice, Early Years Childcare and Education and Early Years Childcare and Education Sector-Endorsed)	15
Childhood practice	4

Childhood Studies/ Early Childhood Studies	6
Educational /Education Studies	4
Education	5
Primary Education (3-12)	2
Other Courses (including Working with Children: Education and Well-Being, Childhood, Education and Society, etc.)	4
Total	40

Data was then gathered from SEI and ECE courses, considering five categories:

1. Overview

- 1a) Awards (undergraduate and post graduate)
- 1b) Study options (part time, full time, both)
- 1c) Type of course (taught, on-line, both, other)

2. Aims

3. Contents

4. Teaching and learning process

5. Assessment

6. Singularities

This data was first retrieved from the UniCs websites in November 2012 and then re-verified in April 2013.

Information available about **courses overview** was complete in all UniCs concerning awards, partially complete about study options (10 UniCs) and incomplete in what regards the type of courses (6 UniCs with full information); considering the **courses aims**, only one university didn't present them; in what concerns i) **course contents** (modules/programmes), and ii) **learning/teaching process and assessment**, the accessible data was diverse in terms of details – from very complete information in seven UniCs to partial information in eight (e.g., only modules names but not programme specification/details). In what respects to connections with the specific area of interest – ECI and ECSE – themes related to recruitment, teaching and learning processes, assessment and other topics, emerged in 12 UniCs, as will be further on presented.

Qualitative data analysis computer software NVivo 10 (2012) was the tool used to gather and analyse data in terms of the courses five chosen categories - overview, aims, contents, learning and teaching processes, assessment and singularities. Results of the data analysis will be presented next.

2. Results

2.1 UniCs courses overview

The courses overview considered their: a) awards (undergraduate and post graduate), b) study options (part time, full time, both) and c) type of course (taught, on-line, both, other).

2.1a) Awards

Results show that SEN Groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3) predominantly offer more than one award for each course: courses have different combinations of awards (ranging from two to five) accessible to students according to their choices. For example, “Inclusion and Special Educational Needs” course (UniC 2) offers five different undergraduate and postgraduate awards – Master (Med/MA), Postgraduate (Postgraduate Diploma/ Postgraduate Certificate) and Bachelor. In contrast, only one ECE course offers two awards (Table 6).

Results also reveal that there are more postgraduate courses in the SEN groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3) and that undergraduate courses are more frequent in the ECE group (Group 4).

Table 6
Awards offered

	Group 1 SEI courses 15 courses	Group 2 SC courses 15 courses	Group 3 LS Courses 10 courses	SEN Courses total 40 courses	Group 4 ECE Courses Total 40 courses
Overview					
Awards total	29	33	25	87	41
Undergraduate	5	12	4	21	26
Adv. certificate	1	4			
Foundation	1	1	2	4	7
Bachelor	4	7	2	17	19
Post graduate	24	21	21	66	15
PG Certificate	3	1		4	4
PG Diploma or Master	-	2	-	2	2
PG Diploma	-	-	-	-	1
PG Certificate or PG diploma or Master	16	15	21	52	-
Just master	5	3	-	8	5
Other	-	-	-	-	3

2.1b) Study options

Study options are also diverse, with **part-time courses or both options (part-time and full time) to be chosen by SEN students. Only within ECE courses the full time option is mandatory for 14 of the 40 courses analysed** (Table 7). In the SEN groups, six UniCs didn't provide complete or clear online information about study options and the same happened in nine UniCs on the ECE group.

Table 7

Study options

	Group 1 SEI courses 15 courses	Group 2 SC courses 15 courses	Group 3 LS Courses 10 courses	SEN Courses total 40 courses	Group 4 ECE Courses Total 40 courses
Overview					
Study options					
Part time only	4	8	7	19	8
Full time only	-	-	-	-	14
Both – part time or full time	8	6	1	15	9
Incomplete information	3	1	2	6	9

2.1c) Type of Course

Information about the type of courses offered in ECE was only complete in 19 courses, in contrast with information concerning SEI courses which was available for almost all courses analysed (38 in 40) (Table 8).

In the SEN group of courses, there is a good balance between the offer of taught only/on-campus courses (15) and courses that combine both offers taught/on-campus and on-line (17). On-line courses and mostly offered in Group 2.

In the **ECE Courses** analysed, although we could only find this particular information in half of the courses chosen (21 out of 40), **taught only/on-campus courses were the most prevalent**; a new type of course emerged – **the campus and work based courses**.

Table 8

Type of course

	Group 1 SEI courses 15 courses	Group 2 SC courses 15 courses	Group 3 LS Courses 10 courses	SEN Courses total 40 courses	Group 4 ECE Courses Total 40 courses
Overview					
Type of course					
Taught only (on-campus)	9	6	-	15	8
On-line/distance only	1	4	-	5	2
Both – taught and on-line³	4	5	8	17	2
Campus and work based	-	-	-	-	7
Other - Based in local authorities	1	-	-	1	-
Incomplete information	-	-	2	2	21

Table 9 synthesizes all information gathered concerning courses overview.

Table 9

Courses overview – awards, study options and type of course.

	Awards		Study options				Type of course				
	UG	PG	PT	FT	PT FT	ICI	T_OC	OL_D	Both	Other	ICI
1. SEI Courses	5	24	4	-	8	3	9	1	4	1	-
2. SC Courses	12	21	8	-	6	1	6	4	5	-	-
3. LS Courses	4	21	7		1	2	-	-	8	-	2
SEN Courses total	21	66	19	-	15	6	15	5	17	1	2
4. ECE Courses total	26	15	8	14	9	9	8	2	2	7	21

UG – Undergraduate; PG – Postgraduate

PT - Part time; FT - Full Time; ICI - Incomplete Course Info;

T_OC – Taught on campus; OL_D - On-line Distance

³ A blended learning course involves part of the 24 hour taught element delivered on campus and part accessed online from home or school (UniC4).

legislation, governmental and inspection reports, and both national and international research evidence" (UniC6) and emphasized that courses should offer "opportunities for students to increase their knowledge and understanding of the key messages inherent in current Government policy within the area of social care and education. (UniC 11).

Within the aims continuum, SEI courses also underlined a range of aims that varied from ample Inclusion and SEN themes - like the importance of providing "training for teachers of learning support in mainstream and special schools" and "study across a wide spectrum of inclusion and special educational needs" (UniC5) - to those that highlight the importance of "understand(ing) the relationships between equal opportunity, social justice and policy formulation, adoption, implementation and evaluation" (UniC3). In fact, a significant number of UniCs aims contained an intention of articulating knowledge with diverse contexts, building upon students experiences, such as to "enable practitioners to build upon the range of experiences and different perspectives found amongst groups of colleagues supporting pupils with additional support needs, in a variety of contexts and settings" (UniC1), "help understand disability issues and the context in which different professionals work with people who are disabled" (UniC11) and "Developing and appropriately applying knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to inclusive and special education and the contexts in which it takes place"(UniC4).

Group 2 - Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties (15 courses)

Training courses concerning specific conditions included:

- Autism (3 courses)**
- Visual Impairment (1 course)**
- Deaf Blindness (1 course)**
- Learning difficulties (2 courses)**
- Language and communication (1 course)**
- Behaviour (2 courses)**
- Hearing impairment/deaf education (3 courses)**
- Development disorders (1 course)**

Courses from Group 2 comprised a very few number of aims connected to global educational and **some** aims connected to Inclusion and SEN within the Specific Condition they addressed (Figure 2)

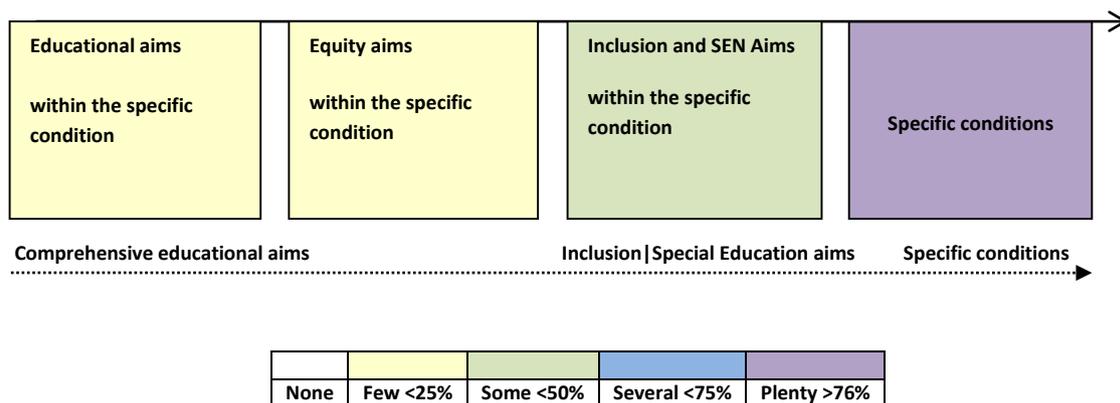


Figure 2. Specific conditions courses aims (Group 2)

The few Equity aims included subjects like “To develop knowledge and critical understanding of the concept of inclusion and associated principles of equality, social justice, participation and partnership” (UniC1_Autism). More specific aims related to Inclusion and SEN, underlined their connection with the specific condition addressed – e.g. “a detailed understanding of special educational needs in relation to children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and the relevant current legislation” (UniC10_Language & Communication) - with aims emphasizing the importance of a) developing “knowledge, understanding and skills that will enable teachers to work confidently and effectively in a variety of educational settings with children who have visual impairment, with their families and with the professionals who support them” (UniC2_Visual Impairment), b) combining “underpinning academic knowledge and work-based learning and assessment to allow students to understand how current policy and trends inform the working environment” (UniC11_Behavior) and of c) concretely understanding how the establishment of effective communication is “a basis for cognitive development and access to the curriculum [which] must be an educational priority for all deaf children.”(UniC6_Deaf Education).

Nevertheless, a large number of aims regarded detailed knowledge of the specific conditions addressed, e.g. “to develop a deep understanding of the complex conceptual issues in Autism, and the key theories, principles and issues in the field” (UniC1_Autism), “to give students knowledge of the autism spectrum, based on theory, research and practice” (UniC2_Autism-Children), “to provide an understanding of the effects and implications of dual sensory impairment on development, learning, and communication, through theoretical and practical work.” (UniC2_Deafblindness); these were frequently connected to students practice

underlining how “to use acquired knowledge and understanding [of autism] to reflect critically upon practice” (UniC1_Autism).

Several aims were particularly detailed regarding the courses domains, as the following examples highlight “[this course] examines four major developmental disorders in children: Dyslexia, Developmental Coordination Disorder (often know as Dyspraxia), Attention Deficit Disorder and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (...) The programme examines the evidence for the nature, diagnosis, assessment and intervention of the disorders, and considers how to provide the best possible support for children with these disorders.” (UniC6_Developmental Disorders); underlining that “The programme will aim to study systematically, critically and in-depth, aspects of educating children and adults with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties.” (UniC2_ Severe, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties) or that the course aimed to “Evaluate the nature of specific learning difficulties (SpLD) (dyslexia) across the life span and analyse the implications of its identification” (UniC10_Dislexia).

Group 3 - Learning Support Courses (10 courses)

This group of ten courses included seven courses from a Scottish University. Since 2004, when passing the Educational Act 2004⁴ in Scotland, the term Additional Support Needs replaced the term Special Educational Needs (SEN) aiming to broad its “narrow definition . . . which was typically used to define children with special needs to incorporate additional support needs” (Reid⁵, 2011). This Act established a renewed framework for inclusion policies, advocating that “all children and young people benefit from school education when they can access a curriculum which supports their learning and personal development; where teaching and support from others meet their needs; where they can learn with, and from, their peers and when their learning is supported by the parents in the home and their wider community.” (Code of Practice, 2010, p.19)

Thus, although some Learning Support Courses relate to specific conditions (i.e, Deaf Education, Learning Disabilities, Specific Learning Difficulties, Visual Impairment, UniC4) or point to more global approaches such as those found in Group 1 courses (i.e., Inclusive Education, Pupil Support, UniC4; Teaching and Learning Support, UniC 11, and Education/Learning Support, UniC14), they were intentionally integrated in this third, distinct group, to allow us the

⁴ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/11/03140104/4>

⁵ Reid, G. (2011). *Dyslexia: a complete guide for parents and those who help them* (2nd Edition). West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

understanding of potential differences between previous course groups and Learning Support courses.

Aims from the Additional Support for Learning Scottish courses were integrated in the modules these courses offer, some of which were present in all or most of the seven courses:

- The Sources of Knowledge (all courses)
- Collaborative Working in Children's Services (all courses)
- Research Methods: Planning research (all courses)
- Conceptualizing Research (six courses)
- Education for All (five courses)

These modules included a few number of aims connected to Educational and Equity domains (education, participation, equity, diversity, etc.) and to concrete Inclusion and SEN aims (Figure 3). **Different to what was observed in Group 2 (Specific Conditions), these more comprehensive aims are not primarily connected to the specific condition they address, presenting an approach that integrates specific conditions within an inclusive global perspective**, as the following aims exemplifies - "Critically compare and contrast theories of child development, family/individual therapy, ecological/environmental models, notions of children's rights/agency and post-structural approaches to children's services" ("Collaborative Working in Children's Services" Module, present in all seven Additional Support for Learning courses), "explore theoretical perspectives of 'Social Justice' in the development and delivery of Human Services (Education/Social Work/Health) . . . around three interrelated themes: 'Inclusion' . . . 'social exclusion' . . . [and] 'discrimination'" ("Education for All" Module, present in five of the seven Additional Support for Learning courses).

Specific conditions are then approached in other modules that particularly aimed to build up understanding about them, as creating "professional attitudes appropriate to working with children and young people with visual impairment, including those with additional disabilities, their teachers and families in a range of learning environments" (UniC4), showing "critical understanding of the different constructions (e.g. medical, social, cultural of deafness)" (UniC4) or "to explore and engage with the current key thinking on, and models of practice in, the support offered to individual children and young people in difficulty or distress in school" (UniC4).

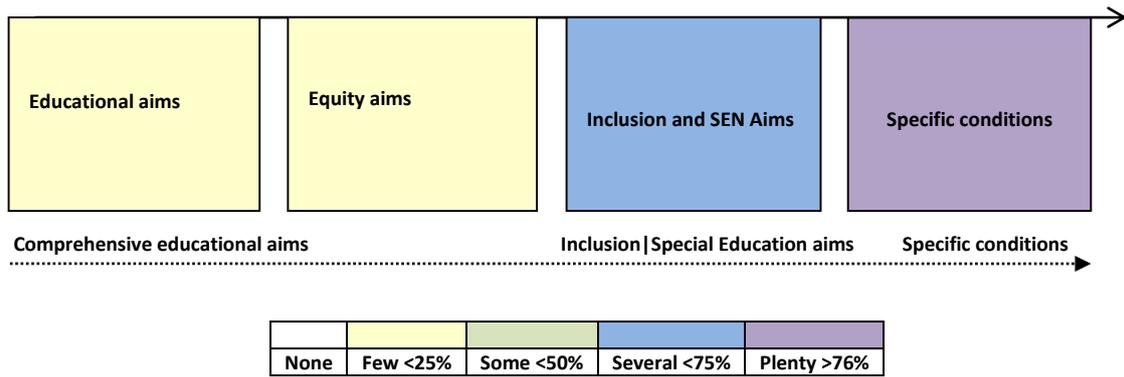
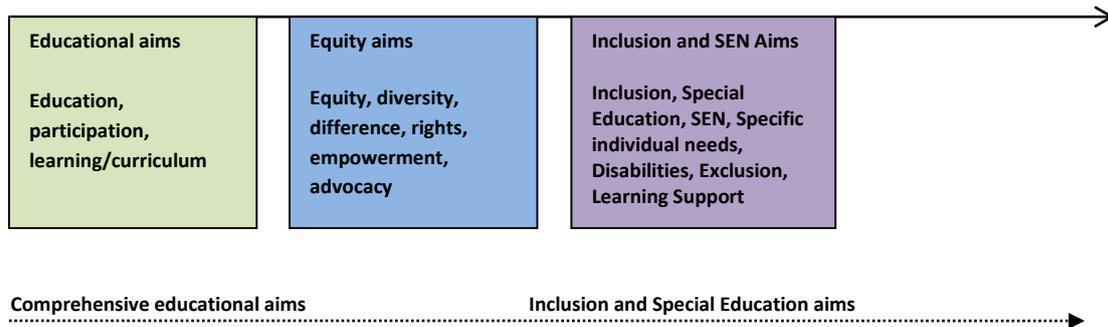


Figure 3. Learning Support Courses aims (Group 3)

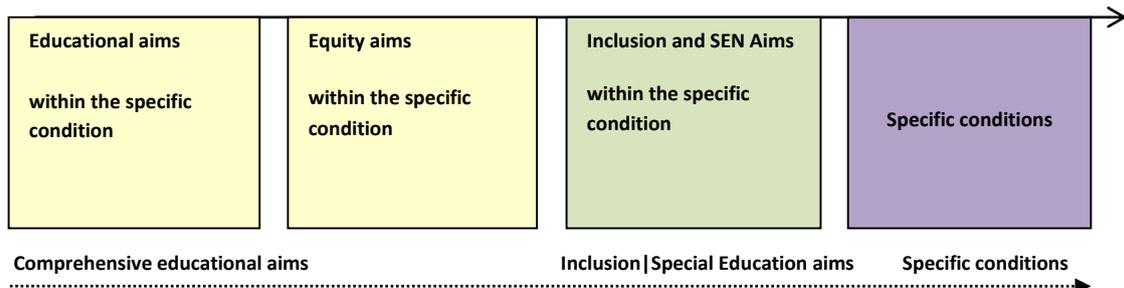
Considering the three SEN Course Groups, Group 1 has some Educational aims, several Equity aims, plenty of Inclusion and SEN aims and no specific conditions aims. Groups 2 and 3 both had few Educational and Equity aims and plenty of specific conditions aims; they differed in what was concerned to Inclusion and SEN aims, with Group 2 having some and Group 3 having several of these kind of aims.

Differences between the aims distribution in these three courses are highlighted in Figure 4:

Special Education, Inclusion, Disability Courses



Specific conditions courses



Learning support courses

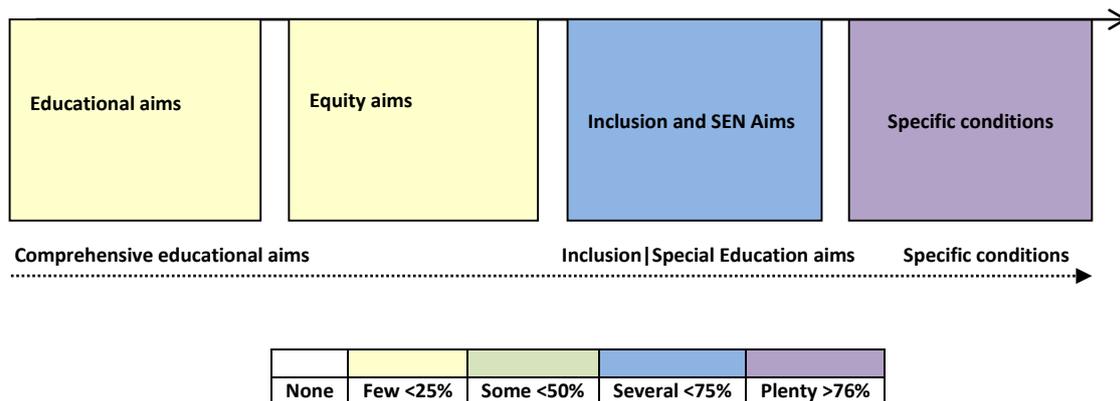


Figure 4. Global view of SEN courses aims (groups 1, 2 and 3)

Group 4 – Early Childhood Education Courses (40 courses)

Early Childhood Education courses included a large number of educational aims related to inclusion principles of accessibility, participation, belonging and success for all children. They also include several aims related to equity, diversity, difference, rights, empowerment, and advocacy; some aims specifically connected to Inclusion, Special Education, SEN, Specific individual needs, Disabilities, Exclusion and Learning Support, and a small number of aims related to Specific Conditions.

This analysis specifically showed that six of the 15 UniCs courses aims explicitly address themes regarding Inclusion, SEN and Specific conditions in Early Childhood Education (Table 11). One UniC in particular addresses aims concerning Early Childhood Intervention, namely expressed in the desire to develop “Skills and autonomy pertinent to working both independently and collaboratively, communicating effectively and being proactive in developing and leading practice which supports early intervention and meets the needs of individuals.” (UniC11) and “Identifying and applying appropriate forms of early intervention for short and long term outcomes” (UniC11). These, and other course particularities connected to all courses analysed, will be further on highlighted and discussed within Singularities theme.

All 15 UniCs had course aims that were connected with Inclusion principles, namely regarding to participation, diversity, children’s rights, equality, prevention (child protection), quality of Early Years practice and meeting the individual needs of children, parents, families and other professionals (engaging with multidisciplinary services).

Table 10

Early Childhood Education aims in connection to Education, Equity, Inclusion, SEN, Early Childhood Intervention and Specific conditions

Early Childhood Education course aims	
<p>Education aims</p> <p>Education, participation, learning</p>	<p>Developing the capacity to analyse critically evidence and arguments to support professional judgments in complex and ambiguous situations relating to Early Years Education (UniC1)</p> <p>How educational policy can promote, or frustrate, attempts to develop justice (UniC2)</p> <p>Deepen understanding of a variety of issues related to childhood and services for children and their families. (UniC9)</p> <p>Develop skills in assessing the quality of early years practice (UniC10)</p> <p>Ability to critically analyse their role in meeting individual needs, working with parents, families and professionals and engaging with multi-disciplinary services (UniC11)</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of child development (birth to 8 years), how children learn (...) behaviour and individual needs and safeguarding the child (UniC14)</p>
<p>Equity aims</p> <p>Equity, diversity, difference, rights, empowerment, advocacy</p>	<p>Critically evaluate the meaning of and range of indicators that may signify child abuse and protection (UniC4)</p> <p>Recognize the importance of key social categories, such as gender and ethnic identity, within a child's early understanding of self and others. (UniC6)</p> <p>Know how to use examples from different societies to illustrate alternative solutions to diversity issues (UniC6)</p> <p>Challenging inequalities in society and embracing anti-discriminatory practice (UniC11)</p> <p>Observation and analysis in relation to aspects of children's lives how to recognize and challenge inequalities in society, and to embrace an anti-bias curriculum (UniC12)</p>
<p>Inclusion and SEN Aims</p> <p>Inclusion, Special Education, SEN, Specific individual needs, Disabilities, Exclusion and Learning Support</p>	<p>Recognizing and meeting the complex learning needs of young children (UniC3)</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge of different contexts of family and learning (e.g. family and school) and a variety of family types (e.g. those described in disabilities studies). (UniC4)</p> <p>Evaluate approaches to disability and additional support and critically discuss the pitfalls of providing support services to parents/carers and families (UniC4)</p> <p>Look at how certain factors, such as class, race, gender, disability, religion or nationality, can impact upon a child's education and identity, and discuss ways that you can support children from a range of diverse backgrounds. (UniC6)</p> <p>Understand the implications of educational research and the way it shapes policy and practice with regard to special educational needs; investigate, through readings of current research, the effectiveness of inclusive education programmes. (UniC8, Module Aims)</p> <p>Demonstrate critical understanding of rights, diversity, equality and inclusion in relation to working with children, parents, carers and families. (UniC11)</p>
<p>Early Childhood Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education</p>	<p>Skills and autonomy pertinent to working both independently and collaboratively, communicating effectively and being proactive in developing and leading practice which supports early intervention and meets the needs of individuals. (UniC11)</p> <p>Identifying and applying appropriate forms of early intervention for short and long term outcomes (UniC11)</p>
<p>Specific conditions</p>	<p>Compare and contrast the nature of integrated working in different service and family contexts e.g. bilingualism, multilingual communities, visual impairment, etc (UniC4)</p> <p>Provide knowledge and understanding with regard to areas of need such as specific learning difficulties (developmental dyslexia and dyspraxia), autistic-spectrum disorders; language difficulties, as well as the educational needs of gifted and talented children (UniC8, Module aims)</p>

Other emergent course aims related to SEN and ECE courses | Second level aims

After analysing these more comprehensive aims closely related to education, equity, inclusion, SEN, and specific conditions, other categories of aims emerged from the analysed data in SEN and ECE courses, which were designated as second level aims. These were related to: research, child development, learning/teaching strategies and approaches, becoming a professional, policy and/or Government frameworks and standards, and with specific connections between courses aims and Early Childhood Intervention fundamental principles. They will now be described one by one.

Research

All four Course Groups included aims connected to research, that ranged from broad educational research aims to those explicitly connected research in special needs and inclusion (Table 11).

Table 11

Aims connected to research

Course Groups	Aims linked to research
Group 1 Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disability courses	<p><u>Ample educational research aims</u></p> <p>Develop extended skills in research and enquiry, including the use of literature, reviewing evidence, gathering, organizing and evaluating data, responding to evidence and providing critical comment (UniC4)</p> <p>Research Methods Module will enable you to explore the principles of research (UniC12)</p> <p><u>Explicit special and inclusive education research aims</u></p> <p>Carry out a focused inquiry into educational practice related to special and inclusive education by exploiting relevant literature sources and/or conduct an empirical study (UniC3)</p> <p>Our research-informed courses will help you to think about practice and policy in the light of current educational thinking and enable you to consider how an inclusive education system might operate in schools and other educational institutions (UniC5)</p> <p>Develop ability to critically engage with the literature on special and inclusive education (UniC15)</p>
Group 2 Specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties courses	<p><u>Explicit specific conditions research aims</u></p> <p>To critically evaluate current research in the field [of autism] (UniC1_Autism)</p> <p>To provide a conceptual framework that is derived from relevant literature and research, and structured around the national SEN specialist standards for the Mandatory Qualification in Visual Impairment (UniC2_Visual Impairment)</p> <p>This PGCert distils the expertise and research on developmental disorders within the School of Education: research funded by agencies such as the ESRC, Action Research, and private and charitable UK organizations that work with children with such [developmental] disorders (UniC6_Developmental Disorders)</p>
Group 3	<p><u>Broad educational research aims</u></p> <p>Use research skills appropriate to evaluation and enquiry (UniC14)</p>

Learning Support courses	<u>Explicit learning support research aims</u> Understand fundamental concepts that underpin research in order to be able to critically evaluate the strength of the research discussed throughout their [specific] programme of study (UniC4, seven courses)
Group 4 Early Childhood Education courses	<u>Comprehensive educational research aims</u> Develop, articulate and justify a professional position regarding childhood, school and social services that is based in current research literature (UniC3) Understand the role of research evidence in developing pedagogic practice (UniC6) Critically evaluate the probable impact of sector developments, published research findings and new legislation on professional practice (UniC12)

Child development

Understanding child's development was an emergent theme in ECE courses and some SEN Courses (Table 12): SEN courses, namely in Groups 2 and 3, included some aims about children's development in connection to the specific conditions they address. ECE courses, Group 4, included aims about child development which were namely related to theories of child development, underlining its importance to understand children and to promote effective practice in the early years.

Table 12

Aims linked to Child development

Course Groups	Aims linked to Child development
Group 2 SC courses	Enhance your knowledge of how children develop speech, language, literacy and numeracy; Develop your awareness of the social and emotional development and needs of children with SLCN (UniC10_Language & Communication) Developmental Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence (UniC2_Behavior)
Group 3 LS courses	Examine issues from a range of perspectives and with regard to established theoretical frameworks in explaining behaviours and needs; Meet and promote learner's health, welfare and safety needs, and the conditions that enable them to flourish (UniC14)
Group 4 ECE courses	How people, and especially children, develop and learn in cultures around the world; Identify and evaluate different ways of knowing about and understanding children and young people and their behaviour (UniC2) Understanding the holistic developmental considerations vital to effective practice in the early years (UniC3) Critically appraise theories of child development (UniC4) You will consider how children develop and learn. We introduce you to the major theories of social, emotional and cognitive development, and help you to critically assess a range of ideas - UniC6 Constructively critique theories and research of child development (UniC11) Knowledge and understanding of child development (birth to 8 years), how children learn (...) behaviour and individual needs and safeguarding the child (UniC14) Discover the skills needed to facilitate children's development (UniC15)

Learning & Teaching strategies and approaches

Concrete aspects of teaching all children, but namely those with SEN, are also present in all course groups, with particular emphasis in Group 2, Specific Conditions (Table 13).

Table 13

Aims linked to learning & teaching strategies and approaches

Course Groups	Aims linked to learning & teaching strategies and approaches
Group 1 SEI courses	<p>The programme aims to help practitioners review and enhance the learning experience of all children and young people, including those with additional support needs. (UniC1)</p> <p>Promoting the pupil's inclusion in the school community and access to the school's curriculum, facilities and extra-curricular activities. (UniC2)</p> <p>Develop specialist knowledge of current concepts, information and techniques related to special educational needs . . . analyse and evaluate the evidence behind effective strategies for teaching and learning. (UniC6)</p>
Group 2 SC courses	<p>To critically review a variety of strategies and approaches and their evidence base; To apply acquired knowledge and understanding of autism to formulate effective support for learners on the spectrum. (UniC1_Autism)</p> <p>To develop critical and analytical enquiry-based learning skills to enable teachers to work successfully in the range of contexts where children with visual impairment are educated. (UniC2_Visual Impairment)</p> <p>Introduce recent theory of cognitive and affective processes involved in reading and writing, and their development in children and adults; Analyse and evaluate the implications of research and theory for teaching learners struggling with reading, writing and spelling; Develop your understanding of the key principles of learning and reflect on the aspects that underpin your own teaching approach. (UniC10_Dislexia)</p> <p>Provide information about assessment processes and intervention procedures for children with SLCN; Focus on language and communication needs from an educational, health and social perspective. (UniC10_Language & Communication)</p> <p>SEBD Strategies, Interventions and Approaches; Improving Classroom Achievement. (UniC2_Behavior)</p> <p>The programme focuses on the importance of developing age-appropriate language, whether signed or spoken, where visual-gestural language is considered as strength rather than a weakness. A central theme of this provision is that the establishment of effective communication as a basis for cognitive development and access to the curriculum must be an educational priority for all deaf children. (UniC6_Deaf Education)</p>
Group 3 LS courses	<p>Broaden awareness of perspectives thus enabling professionals to identify and support young people with this [dyslexia] specific learning difficulty through examination of the curriculum and consideration of more flexible curricular arrangements. (UniC4)</p> <p>Develop critical knowledge and understanding of the pastoral role of the teaching assistant with specific reference to life skills through PSHE and curriculum enrichment. (UniC14)</p>
Group 4 ECE courses	<p>Evaluate developmentally-appropriate and subject-led curricula for young children. (UniC6)</p> <p>Learn to teach the key skills, knowledge and attitudes to pupils across the ability range and across the curriculum. (UniC8)</p> <p>Engage with current understandings of teaching and learning; Engage with new developments in teaching, and make innovative use of new technologies. (UniC10)</p>

Becoming a professional

Courses also underline numerous aims related to professional skills, knowledge, understanding, awareness and attitudes. Group 1 is particularly rich in aims connected to professional development/personal competencies, underlining the importance of reflective processes, critical understanding and awareness and transformative professionalism (Table 14). The connection between training and work contexts was also underlined.

Table 14

Aims linked to becoming a professional

Course Groups	Aims linked to becoming a professional (skills, knowledge, understanding, awareness, attitudes...)
<p>Group 1</p> <p>Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disability courses</p>	<p>Develop and appropriately apply knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to inclusive and special education and the contexts in which it takes place. (UniC4)</p> <p>Improve professional practice through greater knowledge, skills, understanding and awareness. (UniC10)</p> <p>In all sectors of work, you will come into contact with people who are disabled. Whether you're a support assistant within a school, care assistant within a workplace, a parent with a child or family member with an additional need; our course will help you understand disability issues and the context in which different professionals work with people who are disabled. Throughout the course our dedicated teaching team will challenge your perception of what you believe it means to be disabled, engage you in debates surrounding inclusivity, equality and diversity and broaden your knowledge of this growing subject area. (UniC11)</p> <p>This programme is for those looking to progress to teaching, social work or management in the special education and social care sectors and will give you the skills and knowledge you need to create safe, stimulating and supportive learning environments. (UniC13)</p> <p>Reflective practice</p> <p>It endeavours to give experienced practitioners the time, opportunity and support to examine existing practice in the light of new knowledge and insights. (UniC1)</p> <p>Enhance capacities for professional reflection, judgment, decision-making and action to make effective provision for all aspects of individual need. (UniC3)</p> <p>In the field of Special and Inclusive Education, the programme aims to develop capacity for critical self-reflection. (UniC15)</p> <p>Critical understanding and awareness</p> <p>Develop ability to use theory to critique, evaluate and understand practice. (UniC3)</p> <p>Reflect critically on the relationships between theory and practice and explore issues in the implementation of educational and social principles and ideals. (UniC4)</p> <p>These courses are designed to develop a critical understanding of educational issues, informed by a critical awareness of contemporary issues at the forefront of professional practice. (UniC12)</p> <p>Transformative Professionalism</p> <p>[Transformative professionalism is] an enhanced and extended professionalism which has at its core the need for practitioners to take evidence-based action to generate professional knowledge and move practice forward. This form of professionalism, in contrast with older formulations, is characterized not by self-interest and external regulation, but rather by the motivation to contribute to the collaborative development of practice and make informed contributions to professional debate. (UniC1)</p>

<p>Group 2</p> <p>Specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties courses</p>	<p>To conduct professional enquiries and use research evidence to generate professional knowledge and enhance understanding and practice; To apply acquired knowledge and understanding of autism to contribute to staff development and school / workplace improvement. (UniC1_Autism)</p> <p>Students will be provided with support to enable them to analyse critically and improve their own theory and practice and they will be encouraged to evaluate and develop their collaborative work across disciplines and agencies. (UniC2_ Severe, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties)</p> <p>Develop your professional expertise in assessing children and adults and in writing professional reports containing recommendations for intervention (UniC10_Dislexia)</p> <p>There is also the opportunity for students to engage in personal development and reflection to build their confidence and further their career opportunities. (UniC11_ Positive Practice with Children & Young People)</p>
<p>Group 3</p> <p>Learning Support courses</p>	<p>Be critically aware of theoretical principles and processes that underpin interpersonal skills in education and children's services, including issues of change management, leadership, risk and responsibility. (UniC4_seven Courses)</p> <p>Develop critical knowledge and understanding of the skills required for independent learning and reflective practice; improve your own learning and performance, including the development of study and research skills, information retrieval, and a capacity to plan and manage learning, and to reflect on your own learning. (UniC14)</p>
<p>Group 4</p> <p>Early Childhood Education courses</p>	<p>Applying advanced knowledge and understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives and approaches to enhance personal professional practice in a variety of Early Years settings. (UniC1)</p> <p>Skills and competencies necessary to develop graduate careers in the UK, Europe and beyond. (UniC2)</p> <p>A systematic process of self-development activities will support the students to progressively develop the capacity to act as reflective practitioners. (UniC4)</p> <p>Encourage you to reflect creatively on your professional experience. (UniC10)</p> <p>Develop a pathway for lifelong learning and the opportunity to progress to professional qualifications. (UniC12)</p> <p>Meet the needs of employers by including personal, practical and transferable skills. (UniC14)</p> <p>Enhance critical thinking skills; learn to become a reflective practitioner. (UniC15)</p>

Policy and/or Government Frameworks and Standards

Aims connected to policy and/or government frameworks, legislation and standards were also present in all four groups of courses, from a more comprehensive educational approach to specific SEN policy (Table 15).

Special Educational Needs Coordination courses were regulated by National Award for SEN Coordination requirements, as well as Visual Impairment Courses, which were structured around the national SEN specialist standards for the Mandatory Qualification in Visual Impairment. Deaf courses were also aligned with Training and Development Agency for Schools standards to achieve qualified teacher of the deaf status.

One ECE course (UniC11) had specific references to Early Childhood Intervention policy documents (which will be further analysed in "Courses singularities"), stating that this course programme "has been designed in response to major changes in the government's policies in working in the sector these include: Dame Claire Tickell's Review of the Early Years Foundation

Stage (2010), Graham Allen's 'Early Intervention: The Next Steps' (2011) and Frank Field's 'The Foundation Years: Preventing Poor Children Becoming Poor Adults' (2010)"; it aimed to "Contribute to a culture of responsive, early intervention which support the safeguarding and welfare of all stakeholders" (UniC11).

Table 15

Aims linked to Policy and/or Government Frameworks

Course Groups	Aims linked to Policy and/or Government Frameworks
Group 1 Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disability courses	<p>It is fully aligned with the requirements of the National Award for SEN Coordination. (UniC6)</p> <p>MA Special Educational Needs considers the principles, policies and practices in the inclusive education of learners with special educational needs (SEN), and draws upon current legislation, governmental and inspection reports, and both national and international research evidence. (UniC6)</p> <p>The National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination (SENCO) is a training programme supported by the government. It is a modular master's programme which builds on and supports the experience that SENCOs have. (UniC7)</p> <p>This Foundation Degree programme . . . has been designed in response to major changes in the government policies these include: the report by the Strategy Unit 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled people', the report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection: 'Growing up matters, better transition planning for young people with complex needs' (2007), the Governments review document Aiming High for Disabled Children (2007) and Benchmark Statements for Health and Social Care (2008). All of these identify the need to develop the workforce in order to provide well trained professionals to help deliver the government's vision for disabled peoples' services. (UniC11)</p>
Group 2 Specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties courses	<p>To provide a conceptual framework that is derived from relevant literature and research, and structured around the national SEN specialist standards for the Mandatory Qualification in Visual Impairment (UniC2_Visual Impairment)</p> <p>The programme uses the Teaching Agency's competencies for core and expert standards for working with pupils experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). From these standards the programme provides a wider context for knowledge and understanding of SEBD, the development of skills and expertise in meeting these pupils' needs, and professional experience upon which to promote good practice. (UniC2_Behavior)</p> <p>Combines underpinning academic knowledge and work-based learning and assessment to allow students to understand how current policy and trends inform the working environment. (UniC10_Positive Practice with Children & Young People)</p> <p>The degree reflects the changes under the Every Child Matters: Change for Children (DfES 2003) agenda. (UniC11_Positive Practice with Children & Young People)</p> <p>The programme aims to equip teachers who are already qualified to teach school-aged children in England to meet the relevant TDA standards to achieve qualified teacher of the deaf status. (UniC2_Hearing Impairment)</p>
Group 3 Learning Support courses	<p>Understand current and political activities in relation to deaf people, e.g. the Scottish Parliament debate on BSL, the work of the Scottish BSL and Linguistic Access Working Group (UniC4)</p> <p>Develop critical knowledge and understanding of the underpinning knowledge relevant the standards required for the status of HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) where appropriate (UniC14)</p>
Group 4 Early Childhood Education courses	<p>Understand Government policy and new initiatives at national and local level (UniC3)</p> <p>Show knowledge of the National Care Standards, The Social Service Council Registration Criteria for Childhood Practitioners, Curriculum of Excellence, the 3-5 Curriculum and Birth to 3 Curriculum (UniC4)</p> <p>Understand the development of Foundation Stage and Key Stage One and Two curricula, assessment and pedagogy; Understand the current legal and regulatory framework for State intervention in the family (UniC6)</p>

The degree course has been designed to meet the Standard for Childhood Practice through training and study of learning within childhood, leadership and management, reflective practice and research. (UniC9)

Contribute to a culture of responsive, early intervention which support the safeguarding and welfare of all stakeholders. (UniC11)

Critically evaluate the probable impact of sector developments, published research findings and new legislation on professional practice. (UniC12)

Connections between courses aims and Early Childhood Intervention fundamental principles

A set of fundamental principles underpins current concepts and best practices in Early Childhood Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education, founded on research and scientific evidence, namely (a) a family-centered orientation, (b) based on a collaborative team process, (c) held in inclusive, natural learning environments (Bruder, 2010). Aims (and contents to be further presented) were also analysed in connection with these fundamental pillars to understand their presence/absence in the chosen courses. Table 16 highlights several aims, from each group of courses, which particularly focus on each ECI principle.

Table 16

Connections between courses aims and Early Childhood Intervention fundamental principles

Principles that underpin current concepts and best practices in Early Childhood Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education and examples of aims that express them				
	Group 1 SEI courses	Group 2 SC courses	Group 3 LS Courses	Group 4 ECE Courses
Family-centered orientation	<p>Liaising with and providing information to a parent of the pupil on a regular basis about that pupil's special educational needs and the special educational provision being made for those needs. (UniC2)</p> <p>The programme addresses special educational needs for a wide range of age groups, and covers issues such . . . partnerships with parents. (UniC6)</p>	<p>Taking the perspective of the individual child or young person on the autism spectrum is paramount, and listening to parents, carers and families on what they need and value is also stressed. (UniC2_Autism-Children)</p>	<p>Critically reflect on theoretical constructs of childhood, the constructs of other professionals and compare them to a range of theories that underpin professional practice with parents and children. (UniC4 - seven courses)</p>	<p>Demonstrate knowledge of different contexts of family and learning (e.g. family and school) and a variety of family types (e.g. those described in disabilities studies). (UniC4)</p> <p>Demonstrate critical understanding of rights, diversity, equality and inclusion in relation to working with children, parents, carers and families. (UniC11)</p>
Collaborative team process	<p>The programme addresses special educational needs for a wide range of age groups, and covers issues such . . . inter-agency working. (UniC6)</p>	<p>To develop collaborative partnerships with individuals on the spectrum, parents, colleagues and other agencies. (UniC1_Autism)</p>	<p>Enable students to demonstrate specialist knowledge and understanding of collaborative working in children's services. Taking schools, nurseries, out of school care, youth/ community</p>	<p>Building positive working relationships within a team of professionals which will include colleagues and external agencies. (UniC3)</p> <p>Appreciate the importance of</p>

		To develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that will enable teachers to work confidently and effectively in a variety of educational settings with children who have visual impairment, with their families and with the professionals who support them. (Unic2_Visual Impairment)	work and family work (including integrated teams and children/ family centers) as its focal point, it will enable students to consider issues of inter-professional collaboration. (Unic4 - seven courses)	professionals from differing disciplines working in partnership. (Unic9)
			Work effectively and in collaboration with parents, carers and other agencies. (Unic14)	Working collaboratively with others; including parents, carers and other professionals. (Unic12)
Inclusive, natural learning environments	Promoting the pupil's inclusion in the school community and access to the school's curriculum, facilities and extra-curricular activities. (Unic2)	(...) work confidently and effectively in a variety of educational settings. (Unic2_Visual Impairment)	Critically explore that . . . the main roots of social exclusion are to be found in interpersonal and systemic discrimination, frequently exerted via unexamined habitual institutionalized practices as well as the conscious misuse of power rather than in individual deficits, dysfunctional lifestyles and prejudice. (Unic4 - five courses)	Examine how culture and society can shape childhood and youth experiences. (Unic6)
	Special Education Studies is about making sure that everyone, regardless of their needs, is given the opportunity to participate in learning experiences that are tailored and delivered in ways that address their needs, interests and ambitions. (Unic13)		The impact of learning environments on learner's achievements. (Unic14)	Knowledge of the ecology of early childhood, encompassing contexts of family and early childhood services in both time and geographical space in order to recognize the development of children in context and have a critical awareness of the implication for practice. (Unic11)

Family centered orientation was particularly present in courses from Groups 3 and 4, and less present in courses from Group 2; courses from Group 1 only have some aims connected to this ECI principle. Collaborative team process aims were predominantly found in Groups 3 and 4, with some aims present in Groups 1 and 2. The reference to Inclusive, natural learning environments only had very few courses aims in Group 2, but were well present in all other groups (Figure 5).

Courses groups	Fundamental Early Childhood Intervention Principles		
	Family centered orientation	Collaborative team process	Natural learning environments
Group 1 - SEI Courses			
Group 2 - SC Courses			
Group 3 - LS Courses			

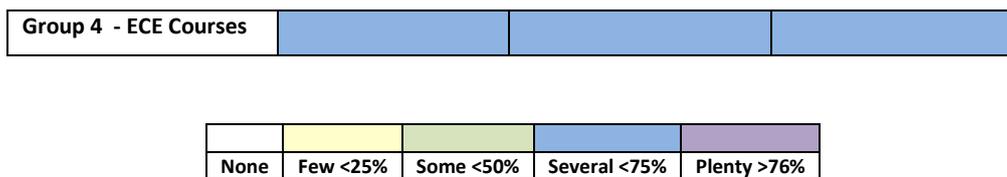


Figure 5. Aims connected to Early Childhood Intervention principles in all course groups

2.3 UniCs courses Contents

Courses contents available on UniCs websites varied in terms of the amount of information they offered – seven UniCs gave very complete information and eight gave partial information only (modules names but not programme specification or details).

Core and optional modules contents were analysed considering the previous comprehensive and more singular (second level) categories:

Comprehensive categories:

- Education, participation, learning
- Equity, diversity, difference, rights, empowerment, advocacy
- Inclusion, Special Education, SEN, Specific individual needs, Disabilities, Exclusion, Learning Support
- Specific Conditions

Second level categories:

- Research
- Child development
- Learning & Teaching strategies and approaches
- Becoming a professional
- Policy and/or Government Frameworks and Standards
- ECI principles - Family-centered orientation; Collaborative team process; Inclusive, natural learning environments

Education, participation, learning

Broad contents related to education, participation and learning were particularly present in courses from Group 1; courses in Groups 2 and 3 only have few modules in this category.

Early Childhood Education courses had several modules comprising education, participation and learning contents connected with Inclusive Education, namely in what concerns “Contemporary Issues in Education and Theories in Education/Learning” but also regarding “Childhood and Education - Theories of Childhood and Children's Rights” (e.g. “Crisis, Controversy and Critique: debating matters in education and social policy”, UniC2; “Children, Education and Social Justice”; UniC4; “Key issues & debates in contemporary childhood”, UniC5; “Social and Cultural Constructions of Childhood and Youth”, UniC6; “Policies and practices of childcare – national

and international perspectives”, UniC9; “Theories of Childhood and Children's Rights”, UniC10; “Debates in Early childhood”, UniC13; “Contemporary issues in early years”, UniC15). Table 17 includes these modules designation and a distinction between Core and Optional Modules.

Table 17

Education, participation, learning contents

	Group 1 - Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disability courses	Group 2 – Specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties courses	Group 3 – Learning Support courses	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses (with contents related to Inclusive education)		
Education, participation, learning	Contemporary issues in Education Theories in Education/Learning	3 M 2 OpM 1 CM	Special Studies in Education/ Contemporary Issues in Work with Young People	2 M 1 OpM 1 CM		
	Comparative studies	1 M 1 CM	Contemporary Issues in Education Theories in Education/Learning	24 M 23 CM 1 OpM		
	Education and... Literacy, Arts, Language, Psychology	6 M 1 NdM 5 OpM	Education and... social psychology of education	1 M 1 OM		
	Participation and learning	1M 1 CM	Participation and learning	1 M 1 CM	Participation and learning	2 M 1 CM 1 OM
	Childhood and Education - Theories of Childhood and Children's Rights	22 M 17 CM 5 OP				
Subtotal	10M 7 OpM 2 CM 1 NdM	3 M 1 OpM 2 CM	4 M 2OpM 2CM	46 M 40 CM 6 OpM		

M – Modules; CM – Core modules; OpM – Optional modules; NdM – Non designated module

Equity, diversity, difference, rights, empowerment, advocacy

Again, considering the themes of equity, diversity, difference, rights, empowerment, advocacy, courses from Groups 1 and 4 have several modules particularly connected to them (Table 18), with more core modules in Group 1 (e.g. “Exploring Difference and Diversity”, UniC1; “A Society fit for All”, UniC10; “Advocacy”, UniC13) and some optional modules in Group 4 (e.g. “Effective learning in diversity”, UniC10; “Children, Families and Cultural Diversity: Philosophical Perspectives”; UniC6)

Table 18

Equity, diversity, difference, rights, empowerment and advocacy contents

	Group 1 - Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disabilities	Group 2 – Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties	Group 3 – Learning Support	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses (with contents related to Inclusive education)
Equity, diversity, difference, rights, empowerment, advocacy	Advocacy and Empowerment	1 M 1 CM		
	Diversity and Difference	2 M 1 OpM 1 CM		Diversity and Difference

M – Module; CM – Core module; OpM – Optional module; NdM – Non designated module

Equality, Human growth, Rights, Education for all	3 M 3 CM		Equality, Human growth, Rights, Education for all	1 M 1 CM	Equality, Human growth, Rights, Education for all	16 M 8 CM 8 OpM
Protection and vulnerability	2 M 1 CM 1 NdM				Challenge, Risk and Safeguarding	3 M 3 CM
Subtotal	8M 1 OpM 6 CM 1 NdM	—		1 M 1 CM		22 M 12 CM 10 OpM

Inclusion, Special Education, SEN, Specific individual need, Disabilities, Exclusion, Learning Support

In this category, once more, courses from Groups 1 and 4 had the prevalent number of Modules connected to these subjects, specially Group 1 (Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disabilities) (Table 19). Group 3 had some core global contents related to this topic and Group 2 presented some contents that related this category with each specific condition. Group 1 had an almost equal number of core and optional modules; other Groups have more core than optional modules. Group 4 had one module explicitly connected to Early Intervention, which will be further on analysed in “Courses singularities”.

Table 19

Inclusion, Special Education, SEN, Specific individual need, Disabilities, Exclusion, Learning Support contents

	Group 1 - Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disabilities	Group 2 – Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties	Group 3 – Learning Support	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses (with contents explicitly related to Inclusive education)
Inclusion, Special Education, SEN, Specific individual need, Disabilities, Exclusion, Learning Support	Exclusion, alternatives to	1 M 1 Op		Exclusion Outcast Children: a history of moral panics
	Disability and Environment, The law, Identity, Historical perspectives	6 M 4 CM 2 NdM		Disability and learning support
	Inclusive Education, Practice, Leadership, Pedagogy/Inclusion	11 M 6 CM 5 OpM		Inclusive Education/ Education for all
	Inclusive and Special Education, Contexts, Concepts, approaches, debates	3 M 3 CM	Understanding specific conditions in context s of Inclusion and Special Education	5 M 5CM
	Learning Support/ Therapeutic Interventions	6 M 1 CM 2 NdM 3 OpM		Inclusive education and practice
	SEN, principles, practices, International Perspectives/Specific Learning Needs/ Individual needs	11 M 5 CM 5 OpM 1 NdM	International perspectives about Specific Conditions	9 M 4 CM 5 OpM
	SENCO	6 M 2 CM 4 OpM		
				Early Identification and Intervention
				1 M 1 CM

Report

Reviewing Early Childhood Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education training in UK's University and College courses

	Subtotal	44 M	5 M	5 M	16 M
		18 OpM	1 OpM	5 CM	10 CM
		21 CM	4 CM		6 OpM
		5 NdM			

M – Modules; CM – Core modules; OpM – Optional modules; NdM – Non designated module

Specific Conditions

Specific conditions are mainly connected to Groups 2 and 3 in what concerns core modules (Group 2 – 72 core modules in a total of 85 modules; Group 3 – 42 core modules within a total of 47 Modules) and with Group 1 in what relates to optional modules (38 optional modules in a total of 40 modules) (Table 21)

Table 21

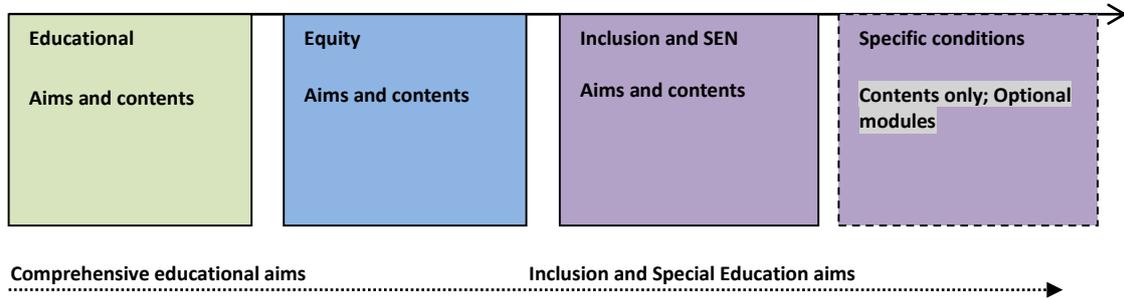
Specific conditions contents

	Group 1 - Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disabilities	Group 2 – Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties	Group 3 – Learning Support	Group 5 - Early Childhood Education courses (with contents related to Inclusive education)	
Specific Conditions	Attention Deficit Disorder	1 M 1 OpM			
	Autism, ASD	7 M 7 OpM	Autism (3 courses) 15 M 15 CM		
			Behavior (2 courses) 20 M 17 CM 3 OpM	Children's Health and Wellbeing (visual impairment, ADHD, mental health, health promotion projects) 1 M 1 CM	
			Deaf Blindness (1 courses) 5 M 5 CM	Bilingual learners 8 M 8 CM	
	Deaf Education	4 M 4 OpM	Deaf education/Hearing Impairment (3 courses) 16 M 14 CM 2 OpM	Deaf Education 8 8 CM	
	Developmental Coordination Disorder	1 M 1 OpM			
	Developmental Disorders in the Early Years	1 M 1 OpM	Developmental Disorders (1 course) 4 4 CM		
	Gifted	2 M 2 OpM			
			Language and Communication (1 course) 11 M 4 CM 7 OpM		
	Learning Difficulties/disabilities/ Specific LD Dyslexia	9 M 4 OpM 1 NdM 4 OpM	Learning Difficulties (2 courses) 8 M 7 CM 1 OpM	Learning disabilities 16 M 7 CM Specific learning Difficulties 4 CM 5 OpM	
	Mental Health	1 M 1 OpM			
	Multi-sensory Impairment	1 M 1 OpM			
				Pupil support 7 M 7 CM	
	Severe, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	1 M 1 OpM			
	Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties	7 M 6 OpM 1 NdM			
	Speech & Language Difficulties	2 M 2 OpM			
	Visual impairment	3 M 3 OpM	Visual impairment (1 course) 6 M 6 CM	Visual impairment 8 M 8 CM	
	Subtotal	40 M 38 OpM 2 NdM	85 72 CM 13 OpM	47 42 CM 5 OpM	1 M 1 CM

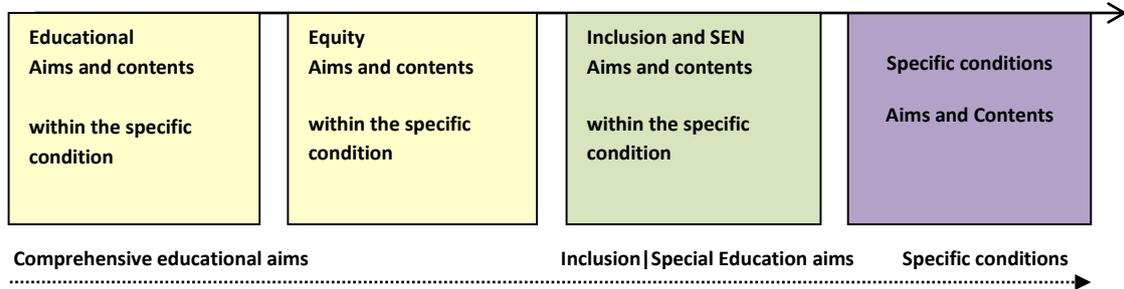
M – Modules; CM – Core modules; OpM – Optional modules; NdM – Non designated module

These results are well connected with courses aims results, except for Group 1 where aims don't mention specific conditions, but contents do (38 optional modules) (Figure 6).

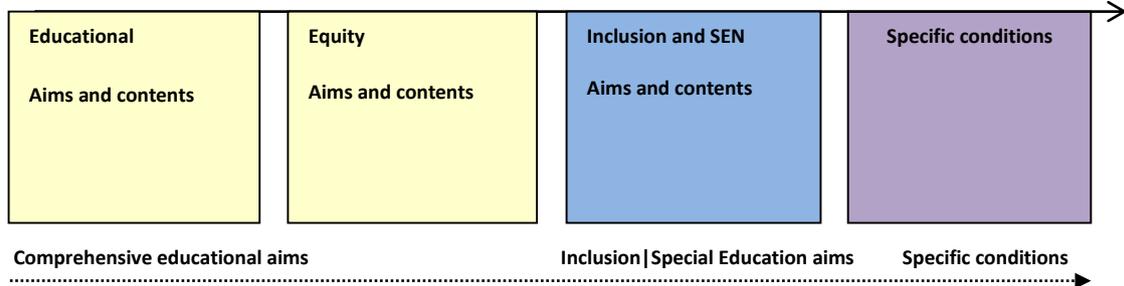
Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disabilities courses – aims and contents



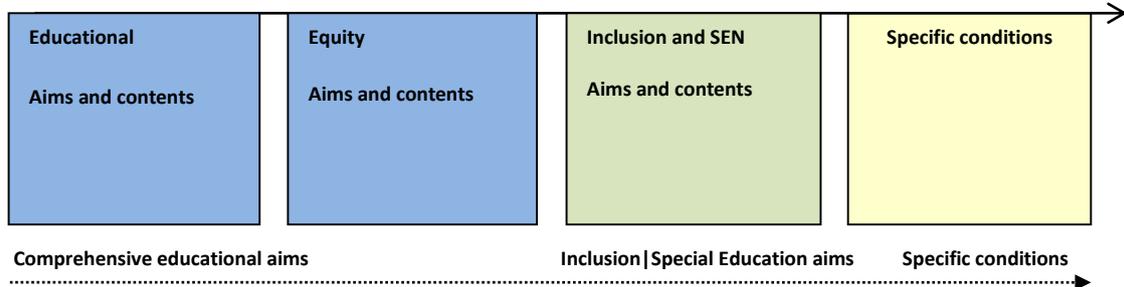
Specific conditions courses – aims and contents



Learning support courses – aims and contents



Early Childhood Education courses – aims and contents



None	Few <25%	Some <50%	Several <75%	Plenty >76%

Figure 6. Special Education, Inclusion, Disability Courses – connection between courses aims and contents

Second level categories

Research

Research modules are well represented in courses from Groups 1, 2 and 3 are mainly core rather than optional and generally more comprehensive than specifically related to Inclusion, SEN or specific conditions (e.g. “Introduction to theories of the nature of reality and knowledge and their relationship to educational research”, UniC4; “The nature of academic inquiry with specific reference to education”, UniC12; “Research methodology and project planning; individual in-depth report on a chosen topic”, UniC14).

Although all ECE courses in Group 4 have research modules connected to education, only five are implicitly related to inclusion (e.g. “Children, Education and Social Justice” and “Children's Health and Wellbeing”, UniC4). (Table 20)

Table 20

Research contents

	Group 1 - Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disabilities	Group 2 – Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties	Group 3 – Learning Support	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses (with contents implicitly related to Inclusive education)				
Research	Dissertation/ Research Project	6 M 4 CM 1 NdM 1 OpM	Dissertation/Research Project	5 M 5 CM	Dissertation/ Research Project	2 M 2 CM	Implicit contents related to inclusion (e.g. Children, Education and Social Justice; Children's Health and Wellbeing, ...)	5 M 4 CM 1 OM
	Educational and Social Research	4 M 4 CM	Educational and Social Research	3 M 3 CM	Educational and Social Research	1 M 1 CM		
	Research and Research Methods/ Methodology	6 5 CM 1 NdM	Research and Research Methods/ Methodology	6 M 6 CM	Research and Research Methods/ Methodology; Conceptualizing research	20 M 20 CM		
			Evidence based practice	3 M 2 CM 1 NdM	Influences on the 21st Century Learner Practice Based Research	1 1 CM		
			Critical Studies	1 1 CM				
			Study skills	3 3 CM				
	Subtotal	16 M 13 CM 1 OpM 2 NdM	21 M 20 CM 2 NdM	24 M 24 CM	5 M 4 CM 1 OM			

M – Modules; CM – Core modules; OpM – Optional modules; NdM – Non designated module

Child development

Contents concerning Child Development were particularly present in Group 2 with reference to specific conditions. In Group 4 several contents implicitly related Child Development to inclusive education, namely underlining the value of diversity and of using an ecologic, systemic perspective to approach it (Table 21). Modules were predominantly core rather than optional.

Table 21

Child development contents

	Group 1 - Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disabilities	Group 2 – Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties	Group 3 – Learning Support	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses (with contents <u>implicitly</u> related to Inclusive education)	
Child development and learning	Development (Stages, specific areas, typical/atypical)	5 2 NdM 3 OpM	Autism and development 8 M 8 CM	Implicit contents related to inclusion (e.g. An Introduction to Child Development, Health and Well Being in the Early Years; Disposition to learn and multiple intelligences; Foundations of Healthy Development; Development of the Learner; Understanding Children's Behaviour, ...) Child development and learning	
			Behaviour and development 4 M 3 CM 1 OpM		Behaviour and development 1 M 1 CM
					Bilingual Learner and development 3 1 CM 2 OpM
			Deaf Blindness/ Multi-sensory impairment and development 2 M 2 CM		Deaf Learners and development 1 1 CM
			Developmental Disorders 1 M 1 CM		
			Hearing Impairment and development 3 M 3 CM		
			Language and Communication and development 6 M 2 CM 4 NdM		
			Learning Difficulties and development 2 M 1 CM 1 NdM		
			Visual Impairment and development 2 2 CM		
		Subtotal	5 2 NdM 3 OpM		28 M 22 CM 1 OpM 5 ndM
				26 M 22 CM 4 OM	

M – Modules; CM – Core modules; OpM – Optional modules; NdM – Non designated module

Learning & Teaching strategies and approaches

Specific themes related to learning and teaching strategies with children with specific conditions (Groups 2 and 3) and children in general (Group 4) are highlighted. Group 1 has very little contents related to Learning and Teaching strategies and approaches (Table 22)

Table 22

Contents linked to learning & teaching strategies and approaches

Learning & Teaching strategies and approaches	Group 1 - Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disabilities	Group 2 – Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties	Group 3 – Learning Support	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses (with contents explicitly related to Inclusive education)
		Curriculum, transformation and change - learner focused 3 M 3 CM	Autism 5 M Contents include: Enabling Learning and Participation Curriculum Approaches for Children with Autism Behavior 4 M Contents include: Improving Classroom Achievement 2 CM 2 OpM Deaf Blindness/ Multi-sensory impairment 1 M Contents include: Education and provision 1 CM Developmental disorders 1 1 CM Hearing Impairment 3 Contents include: Teaching and Learning in Deaf Education 3 CM Learning Difficulties/Severe, Profound, Multiple 1 Contents include: Developing Innovations 1 CM Language and Communication 1 Contents include: Clinical management 1 NdM	Global – Learning Support 10 M Contents include: Teaching and Learning from a Creative viewpoint Managing learning and the inclusive curriculum 10 CM Behavior 1 M Contents include: Promoting positive Behaviour 1 CM Bilingual Learners 1 Contents include: Promoting achievement and Curriculum Access 1 CM Pupil support 2 Contents include: Supporting individual pupils / Supporting pupils in groups 2 CM Visual Impairment 1 Contents include: Issues and Strategies for Teaching and Learning 1 OpM
	Subtotal 3 3 CM	18 15 CM 2 OpM 1 NdM	16 15 CM 1 OpM	18 18 CM

M – Modules; CM – Core modules; OpM – Optional modules; NdM – Non designated module

Becoming a professional

Specific contents related to professional development for SEI were namely present in Groups 1 and 2 that particularly articulate work experiences and training, underlining the importance of (good) communication and interpersonal skills. They were also present in Groups 3 and 4 (Table 23).

Table 23

Becoming a professional contents

M – Modules; CM – Core modules; OpM – Optional modules; NdM – Non designated module

Professional development for inclusion and special education	Group 1 - Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disabilities		Group 2 – Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties		Group 3 – Learning Support		Group 5 - Early Childhood Education courses (with contents explicitly related to Inclusive education)	
	Professional development (Enquiry, planning)	4 M 1 NdM 3 CM	Professional Development	5 M 5 CM	Professional Development	1 M 1 CM	Learning and Teaching: The Emerging Professional 1&2	3 M 3 CM
Communication and interpersonal skills/Reflective practice	2 M 2 CM	Communication and interpersonal skills/Reflective practice	2 M 2 CM	Communication and interpersonal skills/Reflective practice	7 M 7 CM	Career options include Special Educational Needs		
Work-based learning	2 M 1 NdM 1 OpM	Work-Based Learning/ Teaching placement	4 M 4 CM	Placement/Inclusion	1 M 1 CM	Placement - Settings may include special school		
		Guiding Principles for Practice	1 M 1 CM			Placement/Fieldwork - The range currently includes working in special educational needs		
		Education and Provision	1 M 1 CM					
Subtotal	8 M 5 CM 1 OpM 2 NdM		13 M 13 CM		9 M 9 CM		3 M 3 CM	

Policy and/or Government Frameworks and Standards

Course contents include Policy and/or government frameworks/specialist standards, which frame training from universal (e.g., Children's Rights) to more specific requirements (legislation including SENCO's requirements, Mandatory Qualification for Hearing and Visual Impairments training) (Table 24).

Table 25

Connections between courses contents and Early Childhood Intervention fundamental principles

M – Modules; CM – Core modules; OpM – Optional modules; NdM – Non designated module

Group 1 - Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disabilities	Group 2 – Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties	Group 3 – Learning Support	Group 5 - Early Childhood Education courses (with contents explicitly related to ECI principles)
Team/Family collaborative work/working practices 6 M 3 CM 2 OpM 1 NdM	Autism 6 M Contents include: 6 CM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging effectively with parents and carers; Parent Partnership: Supporting the parents of Children on the Autism Spectrum Models for Practice when working with people on the autism spectrum; Caring for and working with children on the autism spectrum 	Team/family collaborative work/working practices 9 M 9 CM	Contents include: 62 M 50 CM 12 OM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child in the socio-cultural context Learning and Teaching: School and Community Children and The Family Integrated Working in Children's Services Children, Families and Society: A Sociological Introduction to Diversity and Equal Opportunities Supporting Families? Analysing the Theory and Practice of Family Support Ecological Approaches to Child Development Children, Families and Cultural Diversity: Philosophical Perspectives Inter-professional Communication: Case based learning Developing Integrated Working Integrated children's services Bringing up children: parents, care workers and the state Facilitating Positive Parenting Learning Organizations Working in Partnership Working Together for Children and Young People Meeting Needs of Diverse Communities Education beyond the Classroom Partnership and Multi-Agency Working Working with Children: Key Players Management and organizational studies
	Behavior 6 M Contents include: 6 CM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in Partnership Working with Groups Supporting Families through change Family Policy & Practice 	Behavior 1 M Contents include: 1 CM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational Behaviour in an Educational Context 	
	Deaf Blindness/ Multi-sensory impairment 1 M 1 CM		
	Developmental Disorders 1 M 1 CM		
	Hearing Impairment 1 M 1 CM		
	Learning Difficulties/Severe, Profound, Multiple 1 M 1 CM		
	Visual Impairment 1 M 1 CM		
Subtotal 6 M 3 CM 2 OpM 1 NdM	17 M 17 CM	10 M 10 CM	62 M 50 CM 12 OM

The child in the socio-cultural context – Family, School, Community.

The next table summarizes the connection between comprehensive and second level categories and the number of core and optional contents present in all groups of courses (Table 26)

Table 26

Connection between comprehensive and second level categories and the number of core and optional contents present in all groups of courses

Comprehensive categories	Group 1 - Courses on Inclusion, Special Education, SEN and Disabilities	Group 2 – Courses on specific conditions, disabilities and difficulties	Group 3 – Learning Support	Total SEN groups (Groups 1,2,3)	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses
A - Education, participation, learning	10 M 2 CM 7 OpM 1 NdM	3 M 2 CM 1 OpM	4 M 2 CM 2 OpM	17 M 6 CM 10 OpM 1 NdM	46 M 40 CM 6 OpM
B - Equity, diversity, difference, rights, empowerment, advocacy	8 M 6 CM 1 OpM 1 NdM	—	1 M 1CM	9 M 7 CM 1 OpM 1 NdM	22 M 12 CM 10 OpM
C - Inclusion, Special Education, SEN, Specific individual needs, Disabilities, Exclusion, Learning Support	44 M 21 CM 18 OpM 5 NdM	5 M 4 CM 1 OpM	5 M 5 CM	54 M 30 CM 19 OpM 5 NdM	16 M 10 CM 6 OpM
D – Specific Conditions	40 M 38 OpM 2 NdM	85 M 72 CM 13 OpM	47 M 42 CM 5 OpM	172 M 114 CM 56 OpM 2 NdM	1 M 1CM
Second level categories					
Research	16 M 13 CM 1 OpM 2 NdM	21 M 20 CM 1 OpM	24 M 24 CM	61 M 57 CM 2 OpM 2 NdM	5 M 4 CM 1 OpM
Child development and learning	5 M 3 OpM 2 NdM	28 M 22 CM 1 OpM 5 NdM	5 M 3 CM 2 OpM	38 M 25 CM 6 OpM 7 NdM	46 M 40 CM 6 OpM
Learning & Teaching strategies and approaches	3 M 3 CM	18 M 15 CM 2 OpM 1 NdM	16 M 15 CM 1 OpM	37 M 33 CM 3 OpM 1 NdM	18 M 18 CM
Professional development for inclusion and special education	8 M 5 CM 1 OpM 2 NdM	13 M 13 CM	9 M 9 CM	30 M 27 CM 1 OpM 2 NdM	3 M 3 CM
Policy and/or Government Frameworks and Standards	7 M 2 CM 4 OpM 1 NdM	12 M 9 CM 3 OpM	7 M 5 CM 2 OpM	25 M 16 CM 9 OpM 1 NdM	3 M 3 CM
ECI principles - Family-centered orientation; Collaborative team process; Inclusive, natural learning environments	6 M 3 CM 2 OpM 1 NdM	17 M 17 CM	10 M 10 CM	24 M 21 CM 1 OpM 2 NdM	62 M 50 CM 12 OpM

M – Modules; CM – Core modules; OpM – Optional modules; NdM – Non designated module

Few <30	Some <60	Several <90	Plenty >91

2.4 Teaching and learning processes

Teaching and learning processes offer information about **how** contents are delivered. When gathering and analysing them from UniCs websites, diverse approaches and methods emerged, namely concerning training events and activities within **class contact** and/or **on-line training** (blended courses include approaches from both contexts – class contact and on-line training).

Specific teaching and learning methods/processes related to **self-directed study, collaborative study, practical/field relevance** and **with specific research connections (evidence based teaching and learning processes)** was also identified and analysed.

Since teaching and learning methods were similar across the different SEN groups they will be presented together.

Class contact

Class contact methods include (in alphabetical order): case studies; conferences; discussions/debates; demonstrations; lectures; micro-teaching exercises; practical exercises, scenarios and tasks; simulated case conferences; presentations; role playing; seminars; teaching sessions; tutorials and workshops (Table 27). SEN groups particularly show diverse teaching and learning methods.

Table 27

Class contact teaching and learning processes

	SEN Groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3)	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses
Class contact	Case studies	Case study analysis
	Conferences Simulated case conferences	
	Demonstrations Live or video demonstrations	
	Discussions / Debates Group discussion of issues arising from work placements Individual discussion	Discussions / Debates Optional Module Discussion - taster sessions Student led discussions
	Lectures Tutor-led lectures Interactive lectures	Lectures Structured lectures supported by classroom activities Lecture based presentations Keynote lectures from experts in their field of education
	Practical exercises Practical exercises and scenarios Practical tasks	
	Presentations	Presentations Presentations by external speakers Student led presentations
	Role-plays	Role play Practical sessions including role play and observation

<p>Seminars Lively seminars Small seminar groups Interactive seminars</p>	<p>Seminars Seminars supported by classroom activities Oral seminar presentations Student led seminars Seminar events, organized by student learning clusters, attended by course members Seminars delivered by specialists in the age group</p>
<p>Teaching sessions</p>	<p>Taught sessions</p>
<p>Tutorials Group tutorials Small tutorial groups Individual tutorials</p>	<p>Tutorials Tutorial and practical activities promoting interaction at peer and tutor level Small group tutorials Structured, targeted and open-door tutorials Personal tutorials Extensive induction and tutorial system</p>
<p>Workshops Delivered by specialists, parents, young people with a specific condition, representatives from parents organizations, etc.</p>	<p>Practical workshops</p>
<p>Other: Assignment-based activity Micro-teaching exercises</p>	

On-line training is mostly connected to SEN courses (Groups 1, 2 and 3), since only very few ECE courses analysed (four in 40) offered on-line or blended training.

The on-line training includes **collaborative on-line tasks, discussion and interaction; several e-learning strategies; specific on-line materials, resources and e-support; self-assessment revision tests and formative exercises** and diverse kinds of **tutorials** (Table 28).

Table 28

On-line training teaching and learning processes

	SEN Groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3)	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses
On-line distance learning training	<p>Collaborative on-line tasks, discussion and interaction On-line contact which allows students to learn with each other Peer support - technology to assist reflection Group discussions via collaborative conferences Sharing of resources via a shared on-line area</p> <p>E-learning strategies ICT materials and facilities (use of) IT and library facilities (use of) Learning portals and hyper-linked resource-materials Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Pod-casts Synchronous and asynchronous on-line activities and discussions UWS's virtual learning environment Virtual learning environment called Blackboard for trainees to keep in touch, share their reflections and to learn from each other</p>	<p>On-line tutorials</p>

SEN Groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3)	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses
<p>On-line materials, resources and e-support Reading/viewing task materials Online materials Power-point and other software-based lecture material Multimedia resources On-line support Access to web based resources and e-support</p> <p>Self-assessment revision tests and formative exercises</p> <p>Tutorials Regional Tutorials Allocated tutor in a small tutorial group which allows students contact on-line tutorials</p>	

Self-directed study encourages students to investigate, compare and contrast, based on what they already know and on their learning styles. It includes **critical understanding and thinking skills, individual actions, reading and writing activities** and **reflective work** (Table 29).

Table 29

Self-directed study

	SEN Groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3)	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses
Self-directed study	<p>Critical understanding and thinking skills Critical understanding of theories associated with the areas explored Challenging perceptions (e.g., what you believe it means to be disabled) Autonomy and initiative using theory to inform and enhance their practice</p>	<p>Critical understanding and thinking skills Critical thinking skills Understanding change Devising and sustaining arguments to solve problems; using ideas and techniques which are at the forefront of early year's research, policy and practice. Analysis of critical incidents using problem-based learning</p>
	<p>Individual actions Individual research Individual projects</p>	<p>Individual actions Independent focused research Individual project work Individual presentations</p>
	<p>Reading activities Critically engage with the literature on special and inclusive education Reading books, journals and using electronic resources Module reading Reflection on provided and self-selected readings Engagement in the task threads (both posting and reading the contributions of fellow participants and the tutor); completing additional relevant but self-selected reading/viewing</p>	<p>Reading activities Critical reading Directed Reading</p>
	<p>Reflective work Reflective thinking Reflecting and critically evaluating everyday practice within school and services– Active engagement in the process of reflection on practice Professional reflection, judgment, decision-making and action</p>	<p>Reflective work Reflective practice Reflective practice provides a framework for critical reflection of policy into practice Systematic process of self-development activities</p>
	<p>Self-Study materials Home study</p>	<p>Self-study Promotion of students to manage their own learning</p>
		Work on academic standards of writing

Collaborative approaches, include **activities built upon the students experiences; collaborative enquiry; collaboration with students from other degrees; several types of group/peer group work; peer assessment/review; and reflection, discussion and critical appraisal** (Table 30).

Table 30

Collaborative approach

	SEN Groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3)	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses
Collaborative approach	Activities built upon the students experiences	Activities built upon the students experiences
	Collaborative enquiry - as a tool for creating new knowledge and transforming practice, by synthesizing literature, personal and professional reflection and practice.	
	Collaboration with students from other degrees Opportunities to collaborate with students from other degrees on joint workshops, projects and scholarly visits	Collaboration between students Share learning with their co-students
	Group/peer group work Group activity Group research Peer group analysis Peer supported learning	Group/peer group work Group seminars Group work/work in groups Group project work Group sessions Group presentations Working in groups to solve problems Group Tutorials Peer group learning (for example preparing and delivering presentations with your classmates)
	Reflection, discussion and critical appraisal Sustained discussion and critical appraisal	Peer Assessment/ Review Reflection and discussion surrounding students own practice and that of others

Practical relevance - Teaching and learning methods also highlighted their practical relevance, namely through in-service activities and evaluation, placements, visits and tasks/activities that particularly enhance the relation between course contents and practice (Table 31).

Table 31

Practical relevance

	SEN Groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3)	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses
Practical relevance	In-service activities and evaluation	In-service activities and evaluation
	In-service presentations	Critical and creative evaluation of students own services and practice
	Discussing topics relating to the module with colleagues and other professionals in the participants' workplace or other professional context	
	Collaborative working with employers and engagement with the CWDC and local Government authorities	

	SEN Groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3)	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses
	<p>Placements</p> <p>Assessed teaching placement</p> <p>15 day teaching placement in year 2</p> <p>Promoting opportunities to practice new training skills immediately or later on the job and of active learner engagement in the learning process.</p> <p>Undertake work placement at various stages of study - balance between theory developed at the College and practice in the workplace to ensure that readiness and confidence to progress to relevant employment.</p> <p>All learners are required to undertake a work placement that can be in a variety of settings ranging a specialist or main stream school, respite institution, care setting or community centre.</p>	<p>Placements</p> <p>Work-based experience is a key feature throughout the course, with one day per week spent in a placement, thus enabling students to experience a range of different settings. There is also a requirement to attend block placements for two weeks per year</p> <p>Professional supervision and mentoring in the workplace</p>
	<p>Visits</p> <p>School visits</p> <p>Observe different types of provision for children and young people with visual impairment (a minimum of 10 visits)</p> <p>watch other teachers teaching, visiting establishments to observe inclusion/social justice in practice;</p> <p>seek the views of local colleagues with expertise in various areas with the intention of learning from them how theory relates to practice in their specific context</p>	<p>Visits</p> <p>Day visits to centres of excellence</p> <p>Visits to a range of educational organizations</p>
	<p>Tasks/activities that particularly enhance the relation between course contents and practice</p> <p>Give experienced practitioners the time, opportunity and support to examine existing practice in the light of new knowledge and insights</p> <p>Use theory to critique, evaluate and understand practice</p> <p>Development of knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to participants' needs and those of the organisations they belong to.</p> <p>Transferable skills enable graduates to feel confident in creating a safe, stimulating and supportive environment in which to support those with a variety of specific needs (I.E. Special Educational Needs, Disability, Mental Health) in different contexts (Educational, Care and Community settings).</p>	<p>Tasks/activities that particularly enhance the relation between course contents and practice</p> <p>'Hands-on'/practical approach</p> <p>Explicit emphasis on making links between theory and practice Contribute to the aims of enhancing professionalism within the sector</p> <p>[All the team currently have links and/or have worked within the early year's sector prior to taking on teaching responsibilities. The passion and interest for the early years sector and links with current and recent working practices, is not only embedded within but at the forefront of the learning and teaching strategy of the programme]</p> <p>Work Based Learning - measured by higher level learning that takes place in the work place and its interrelationship with theoretical studies and the acquisition of transferable skills (...)Work-based Learning is proactive and involves reflective analysis of activity in the workplace.</p> <p>Enquiry based learning activities</p>

Research based teaching and learning process - teaching and learning methods in addition emphasize the importance of a **research** based approach (Table 32).

Table 32

Research based teaching and learning process

	SEN Groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3)	Group 4 - Early Childhood Education courses
Research based teaching and learning processes	<p>Strong focus on transformative professionalism - an enhanced and extended professionalism which has at its core the need for practitioners to take evidence-based action to generate professional knowledge and move practice forward.</p> <p>All sessions draw on recent research and emphasise the ways that this may inform policy and practice;</p> <p>Learning and teaching approaches structured around the principles of enquiry based learning [approaches to learning that are based on the investigation of questions, scenarios or problems - often assisted by a facilitator. Inquirers will identify and research issues and questions to develop their knowledge or solutions. Inquiry-based learning includes Problem-based learning, and is generally used in small scale investigations and projects, as well as research]</p> <p>Programme builds upon the available research and clinical evidence, whether in education and health or in the home, and offers you the opportunity to examine the models that are most appropriate for your context;</p> <p>Critical understanding of a range of theories associated with the areas explored and exercise autonomy and initiative in how they use them to inform and enhance their practice. Highlights the importance of evidence-based practice and helps develop a critical understanding of the principles of practitioner enquiry, and of a range of research methodologies that can enable participants to evaluate critically different practices, and to make informed decisions about what is relevant and appropriate for potential use in their professional context.</p>	<p>All sessions draw on recent research and emphasise the ways that this may inform policy and practice;</p> <p>Explore ways in which research can inform practice;</p> <p>Research exercises - episodes of interaction between ideas and practice in a field relevant to educational studies;</p> <p>Draw connections between value positions and research findings concerning children and professional practice and critically assess contemporary debates about children and their families in relation to support services. It will relate research findings to policy and practice concerning children and their families, and multi-agency practice.</p>

2.5 UniCs courses assessments

The analysed courses included different type of assessments; some were present in all groups and other just in some (Table 33):

Course assessments present in all Course Groups (SEN and ECE) (in alphabetical order):

- Coursework based assessments and assignments
- Dissertation
- Formative assessments
- Presentations
- Project and project proposals
- Reports, essays, seminar papers
- Summative assessments
- Workplace assignments and assessments (mainly Group 4)
- Written assignments

Course assessments present in three Course Groups:

- Examinations (Groups 1, 2 and 4)
- Portfolios (Groups 1, 2 and 4)

Course assessments present in two Course Groups (in alphabetical order):

- Case studies (Groups 1 and 3)
- Journals (Groups 3 and 4)
- Self-assessments (Groups 1 and 3)

Course assessments present in one Course Group (in alphabetical order):

- Critical incident analysis (Group 3)
- Literature review (Group 1)
- Reflective reports, action plans and logs (Group 1)

Table 33

Diverse types of assessment

Diverse types of assessment	Special Education and Inclusion Groups – Groups 1, 2 and 3 Early Childhood Education Group – Group 4
Alphabetical order	
Case studies	Case studies G1 and G3
Groups (G) 1 and 3	An examination based on a seen case study (G1_UniC10)

Diverse types of assessment	
Special Education and Inclusion Groups – Groups 1, 2 and 3 Early Childhood Education Group – Group 4	
Alphabetical order	
Coursework based assessments and assignments	Coursework-based assessments and examinations. (G1 and G2) Coursework assignments (G1, G2 and G4) Assessed coursework / assignments (G3 and G4)
Groups (G) 1, 2, 3 and 4	Coursework assignments (G4)
Critical incident analysis	Critical incident analysis (G3)
Group (G) 3	
Dissertation	Dissertation (G1, G2 and G4) Dissertation, under supervision - opportunity to investigate, in greater depth, an issue that is relevant to your professional development and teaching context (G1 and G3) The triple MEd dissertation module is assessed through a dissertation (G1)
Groups (G) 1, 2, 3 and 4	
Examinations	An examination based on a seen case study (G1) Coursework-based examinations (G2) Open-book written examination (G4) Written examination (G4)
Groups (G) 1, 2 and 4	
Journals	Professional development journal (G3) Reflective journal (G4)
Groups (G) 3 and 4	
Formative assessments	Formative assessment (G1, G2 and G3) Assessed formatively through reflective statements (G1) Formative assessment is a feature of all courses. Formative assessment is designed to arise naturally from the work. (G4)
Groups (G) 1, 2, 3 and 4	
Literature review	Critical analysis of current initiatives and appropriate literature Literature reviews
Group 1	
Portfolios	Reflective professional development portfolio (G1); Portfolio focusing on specific course content & aspects of the SENCO's role (e.g. analysing partnership & collaboration to support pupils with SEND families) to be submitted at the course midpoint. (G1) Portfolio related to developing the provision within the participant's school (G1) Portfolio which demonstrates mastery of the learning outcomes, grounded in everyday practice and build towards extending it (G1) Portfolios containing: evidence that the participants have met all the relevant Teaching Agency standards for the mandatory qualification in visual impairment; evidence that participants have achieved competence in Grade 2 British Braille; a critical analysis of the negotiated teaching placement during which they have demonstrated effective classroom management to a visiting assessor appointed by the University (G2) Portfolio building (G2) Professional Skills Portfolio (G2) Professional development portfolios (G4) Personal Development Planning portfolios (G4)
Groups (G) 1, 2 and 4	
Presentations	Presentations to small groups of fellow students (G1) Oral presentations (G1) Group and individual presentations (G1, G2 and G3) Individual and group presentations (G4) Assessed oral presentations (G4) Poster presentations (G4)
Groups (G) 1, 2, 3 and 4	

Diverse types of assessment		Special Education and Inclusion Groups – Groups 1, 2 and 3
Alphabetical order		Early Childhood Education Group – Group 4
Project and project proposals		Professional development project - presented as a brief 'research report' focusing on an aspect of professional development carried out by the SENCO in her/his school or setting. To be submitted at the end of course (G1)
Groups (G) 1, 2, 3 and 4		Project proposals (G1) Project module – piece of reflective practice (G2) Action research project (G3) Research proposal (G4) Research Projects (G4) Projects (G4)
Reflective reports, action plans and logs		Reflective reports and action plans Reflective logs Reflective learning log - kept throughout the course with a focus on 'What have I learnt?', 'What action will I take?', 'When & with whom?' submitted at the end of course
Group 1		
Reports, essays, seminar papers		Essays (addressing issues of practical and intellectual significance to the student) (G2) Essays (G4) Reports, essays (G2) Seminar papers (G1 and G3) Small-scale practical work or research (G1) Small-scale research project (G2)
Groups (G) 1, 2, 3 and 4		
Self-assessments		'self- assess' against the specified learning outcomes prior to starting the course, at the course mid-point & upon course completion with support from a local authority or school based mentor/critical friend (G1)
Groups (G) 1 and 3		Self-evaluation (G3)
Summative assessments		Summative assessment (G1, G2 and G3) Assessed summatively through reflective essay on a relevant topic (G1)
Groups (G) 1, 2, 3 and 4		Summative assessments are designed to arise naturally from the work. (G4)
Workplace assignments and assessments		Assignments directly focused on workplace applications (G1) Assignment linked to the SEN policy in the participant's schools (G1) Assessed teaching placement (G2)
Groups (G) 1, 2, 3 and 4 (mainly 4)		Assignments directly focused on workplace applications (G2) Workplace products (e.g. planning documents, tracking documentation) (G3) Work-based observations (G3) Assignments focus directly on workplace applications. (G4) Practical demonstrations (G4) Work-based study tasks (G4) Work Based learning activities and written reflections upon these (G4) Placement report (G4) Critical evaluation of teaching materials and approaches (G4)
Written assignments		Written assignments (G1, G2, G3 and G4)
Groups (G) 1, 2, 3 and 4		
Other assessments		Production of a good practice guides (G1)
Groups (G) 1, 2, 3 and 4		Assessments designed to arise naturally from course content and learning (G2) Formal and informal assessment methods (G3) Critique of a research article (G4) Assessment is on-going and against the Standards for QTS (Qualified Teacher Status-G4)

2.6 UniCs courses singularities

The studied courses presented various singularities that went beyond our previous analysis, namely aspects that distinguished each course, underlining the uniqueness of their training offer. We will now present these singularities grouped in two main categories:

- A. Singularities specifically connected to ECI principles, its recommended training and professional development practices;
- B. Singularities connected to other particular training and professional development practices.

A. Singularities specifically connected to ECI principles, its recommended training and professional development practices

SEN courses – Groups 1, 2 and 3

Motivates and welcomes Parents/Family members with additional needs to apply for the Courses

- In all sectors of work, you will come into contact with people who are disabled. Whether you're a support assistant within a school, care assistant within a workplace, a parent with a child or family member with an additional need; our course will help you understand disability issues and the context in which different professionals work with people who are disabled **(G1)**
- This programme is also suitable for parents with appropriate qualifications that wish to understand developmental disorders. **(G2)**
- Module 1: Special Educational Needs of Children with Autism

This module aims to increase the understanding of the autism spectrum for practitioners (eg teachers, psychologists, speech and language therapists, social workers, nurses and parents), who are currently working or living with children on the autism spectrum, in whatever setting. **(G2)**

Explicitly aims addressing educational needs in a systemic way

- The programme addresses special educational needs for a wide range of age groups, and covers issues such as policy, legislation, assessment and intervention, inter-agency working, partnerships with parents, and pupil participation. **(G1)**

Collaborates with Local Authorities – Co-teaching; co-tutoring

- This part-time programme is offered in two versions. The first of these is a partnership programme involving local authorities . . . and is taught on campus and in local authority venues (professional development centres). This version is co-tutored by University staff and special educational needs and disability professionals based in local authorities. **(G1)**

ECE courses – Group 4

Explicit connection between the Early Childhood Studies Course and Early Intervention

- **EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES (Foundation)**
Overview

This two year Foundation Degree programme . . . has been designed in response to major changes in the government's policies in working in the sector these include: Dame Claire Tickell's Review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (2010), Graham Allen's 'Early Intervention: The Next Steps' (2011) and Frank Field's 'The Foundation Years: Preventing Poor Children Becoming Poor Adults' (2010). The government is committed to developing a first class Early Years workforce and recognize the need for higher levels of training. The Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies addresses these training needs which are reflected in the learning outcomes for all the modules and is replicated in the commitment to work-based learning.

Aim(s) - Contribute to a culture of responsive, early intervention which support the safeguarding and welfare of all stakeholders.

Early Childhood Education and SEN - *Exciting* parts of the courses include SEN

The exciting bits

Innovative aspects of the programme include SEN, the integrated curriculum, the involvement of . . . International Solidarity Centre, the creation of materials to use in schools, the teaching of all subjects, the partnership with schools, students being trained to being specialists and therefore very employable.

SEN is an optional module in several ECE courses

- Special Educational Needs: Pedagogy, Policy and Practice

This module has been designed to provide a brief overview of special educational needs (SEN) and inclusive education, addressing SEN issues related to pedagogy, policy and practice. We will review teaching practices and instructional approaches, and also explore the degree to which these are 'special', or rather practices based on sound, research-based evidence of effective teaching for all children.

Specifically, the aims of this module are to:

- provide knowledge and understanding with regard to areas of need such as specific learning difficulties (developmental dyslexia and dyspraxia), autistic-spectrum disorders; language difficulties, as well as the educational needs of gifted and talented children;
- explore the notion of 'working with parents and other professionals', as well as issues of inter-professional collaboration;
- understand the implications of educational research and the way it shapes policy and practice with regard to special educational needs;
- investigate, through readings of current research, the effectiveness of inclusive education programmes.

Special Educational Needs: Pedagogy, Policy and Practice is an optional module for the following courses:

Childhood in society; Educational Innovation; Educational leadership and management; Educational Studies (option from within the field)

Modules include specific references to Inclusion, SEN and Specific conditions in an articulated way

- The Professional Studies module looks at issues such as child development, managing behaviour, inclusion, assessment and planning
- **Children's Health and Wellbeing**

The course will explore theory, policy and practice in childhood education and health. It will specifically consider issues of health in educational contexts (e.g. tensions between social and medical models of child health). Students will be asked to analyse case studies that consider topics such as visual impairment, ADHD, mental health, health promotion projects (e.g. Childsmile, Health Promoting Schools, Health and Wellbeing in Schools etc). They will utilise a range of reading to develop an understanding of the connections between workplace practice and ideas concerning childhood, health and education. They will demonstrate knowledge of the connections between health and education policy and be able to consider the links between these contexts and issues of inequality in childhood.

B. Singularities connected to other specific training and professional development practices

All group courses – SEN and ECE (Groups 1, 2, 3 & 4)

Presents course background

- Presents the history of the course and its development since 1994 **(G1)**

Suggests pre-application introductory readings

- Lewis, A. and Norwich, B. (2005). *Special teaching for children?: pedagogies for inclusion*. England: McGraw-Hill International. **(G1 and G5)**

Shares testimonials

- What past students have said about the programme . . . **(G1)**
- **UniCs share testimonials of students and teachers regarding their courses (G4)**

What the trainees said about their mentors

What current students have said about the programme

What is Childhood Studies? (Teachers testimonials)

Student Profiles

SEI Courses explicitly offer a work placement

- One very special aspect of this programme is the opportunity to undertake a work placement at various stages of study. This balance between theory developed at the College and practice in the workplace ensures that by the time you graduate, you will be ready and confident to progress to relevant employment; All learners on the programme are required to undertake a work placement that can be in a variety of settings ranging a specialist or main stream school, respite institution, care setting or community centre. **(G1)**
- The 15 day assessed teaching placement usually takes place between September and July of year 2. We recommend that students, where possible, undertake their placement outside their own school/service (for which an additional one day pre-placement visit may be required). As part of the placement students are expected to demonstrate their ability to teach children or young people with visual impairment using both sighted and non-sighted methods. **(G2)**

Aims to understand impairment through life span, raising awareness of the importance of providing seamless transitions

- The Foundation Degree, addresses these training needs by raising your awareness of the importance of providing seamless transitions between child and adulthood through study of those individuals with additional needs from birth to old age. You won't just look at children with disabilities but impairment throughout the lifespan. **(G1)**

Investigation center connected to the course unites different fields with a motto/slogan

- "Through education, through research, and through access to appropriate resources, the barriers to learning and participation that may be experienced by people with visual impairment can be better understood and reduced"; The Centre is part of a broader Sensory Team and works directly with colleagues in the fields of Deafness and Hearing Impairment, and Deafblindness / Multi-sensory Impairment. **(G2)**

Offers unique qualifications

- Only programme leading to the GTC recognised Mandatory Qualification in Deafblindness/Multi-sensory Impairment **(G2)**

Support for Deaf Students

- Support is provided for students who are deaf or who have a hearing impairment. Once a student has been accepted onto the programme, a Learning Support Agreement is drawn up with the student and identified support needs are met. This could be the provision of BSL/ISL interpreters and/or note takers.
Also, each student is expected to obtain the services of a local qualified teacher of the deaf who will act as a 'mentor' and assist them throughout the course. Mentors are asked to support the student in a number of ways, for example, setting ideas presented in the course materials within a local context, helping with the arrangements for visits, and facilitating access to equipment. **(G2)**

One module relates to different courses

- **Theories of Childhood and Children's Rights**

This module will introduce participants to the range of current theories about childhood and to the practical issues of promoting children's rights. The module will explore the social construction of childhood and the implications this has for professional practice with children. Participants will develop an understanding of the sociological, socio-legal and political theories and concepts of childhood and children's rights, including the recognition of the varied childhood experiences in the Minority and Majority worlds. This will include a knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of people concerned with the care, education, health, welfare advocacy or control of children and young people. Participants will develop an awareness of the importance of listening to and including children's own views and interests when planning and providing for them.

Related Programmes: Sociology of Childhood and Children's Rights MA; Education (Citizenship / History / Religious Education) MA; Social Pedagogy: Working with Children and Families; Early Years Education MA Education, Gender and International Development MA; Education and International Development MA Education, Health Promotion and International Development MA; Educational Planning, Economics and International Development MA; Policy Studies in Education MA; Primary Education (Policy and Practice) MA; Psychosocial Studies and Education MA; Social Justice and Education MA **(G4)**

Students have the option to choose between different modules

Option modules

Students may select two option modules. An indicative list of the type of modules that may be on offer is available on the University International Programmes website . The modules are listed under one of three blocks (headings). Students select two option modules. Each of the modules chosen must be from a different block. **(G4)**

Explicit connection between the course contents and learning outcomes

- **Each course has a programme specification including intended learning outcomes:**

Knowledge and Understanding – 14 learning outcomes

Critical-thinking/intellectual skills – 7 learning outcomes

Subject Specific Skills – 12 learning outcomes

Key Transferable Skills – 13 learning outcomes **(G4)**

Explicit references to Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education - Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQR) (G4)

One Master with five possible routes (Including Early Years Practice and Inclusive Education)

MEd Early Years Practice/Inclusive Education/Leadership & Management/Teaching/Practitioner Research

Depending on the route taken, content in the first part of the course will focus on your development and an initial examination of your work context. Modules include Personal Development Planning and a choice between Contemporary Issues in Education, Work-based Learning or Theories and Principles for Enabling Learning.

You will then focus on modules related to your particular Master's qualification choosing at least two from: Leadership and Management in Education, Current Developments in Primary Education, Practitioner Research, Best Practice Practitioner, Inclusive Education, Assessment for Learning, Curriculum Design for Inclusive Practice, Play, Learning and Creativity, Debates in Early childhood, ICT and e-learning, Philosophy, Education and Curriculum or Independent Study.

You will also study a Research Methods Module that will enable you to explore the principles of research. For those wishing to achieve a Master's degree this module will prepare you for the final stage of writing a dissertation in a subject related to your Master's qualification. **(G4)**

One PGCE with two routes – Primary PGCE (G4)

- **Early Years (3-7 years) specialism X121**

The Early Years pathway gives trainees the experience, the opportunity and the knowledge to work in both Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) settings and Infant/Primary school settings. We are particular proud of the number of Early Years trained tutors who are at the cutting edge of knowledge. The EYFS is a unique and special phase of education which involves learning through play and first hand experiences both inside and out. This phase leads into Key Stage 1 when children really start to grapple with learning to read, applying their mathematical knowledge and making sense of how the world works. Choose this pathway if you are interested in the younger child and to be involved with shaping the child from the beginning. Do not choose

this pathway if you think it is the easiest of the three! Helping to shape a learner and access the whole curriculum is far harder the younger the child. By choosing this pathway you will be fortunate to experience both the EYFS and KS1 phases and therefore be highly skilled in two curricula. We are keen to encourage more people onto the 3-7 years pathway and have found that a large number of students who opted for the Primary pathway wished they had indeed opted for the Early Years pathway. If you are interested in becoming an Early Years expert teacher do choose this pathway.

- **Other Primary and Early Years articulation**

Trainees on the Early Years PGCE participate in a course of professional studies lectures, conferences and visits that is shared with Primary trainees. This ensures a comprehensive and cohesive understanding of the broader context of primary education.

External Examiner Comments are shared (G4)

External Examiner comment, 2011: *I am aware of many other childhood studies courses at other universities. This course is now one of the best of its kind in the country.*

Teaching processes are particularly explicit

- **How will I be taught?**

While a student . . . you will encounter a wide range of different teaching and learning styles. These might include:

- **Lectures** provide you with the basics, upon which you will build your knowledge with your own research and reading. As many of your lecturers will be working at the forefront of their fields, their lectures enable you to engage with the very latest ideas and debates.
- **Seminars and classes** are where lecturers explore a particular topic with groups of students, are less formal than lectures. You are expected to contribute actively to the discussions.
- **Supervisions** are one of the unique advantages of teaching at Cambridge. Supervisions are teaching sessions for pairs or small groups of students. You hand in written work in advance and then have the opportunity to discuss it with the supervisor and other students and to explore the subject further with them. This allows you to explore new approaches and discuss both the set topic and other aspects of the course in depth.
- **Subject specific teaching** might occur in your chosen subject studies, it could be anything from practical work in laboratories to drama studios, fieldwork or language classes.
- **Classroom experience** is vitally important if you do wish to become a teacher. You should plan to make arrangements to spend some of your vacation time in schools or working with children and young people and you should choose to base your research project in a school. **(G4)**

Staff is valued and appraised

- **Internationally and nationally recognised Staff**

We are fortunate to have a number of internationally and nationally recognised figures teaching on the course who are at the cutting edge of their research. . . Our Partnership schools are innovative and vibrant and their teachers come in to work with trainees. **(G4)**

- **Role models**

We are keen to be good role models and so from the beginning will be using techniques which trainees can then use in the classroom. **(G4)**

- **Team as a key feature of the course**

Our team draws on **expertise** across the social and human sciences to develop students' skills in asking questions, finding answers and making arguments about early childhood contexts.

Our team has a strong commitment to **research** at local, national and global levels and our enthusiasm and expertise is reflected across our curriculum.

The team is at the forefront of **teaching and learning** in this exciting area. **(G4)**

- **What's unique about our course?**

The degree will bring you into close contact with a group of world class academics who have summarised their values and mission as follows:

We share your ambition for children, for their happiness and well-being.

We are working hard in our research to understand and to question the world that children are growing into.

We try to bring theory and practice together to make the adult world more responsive to children's concerns.

We believe that we provide a rich environment for you to develop your thought and practice both as a contributing member of our programme and as an individual. **(G4)**

All the team currently have links and/or have worked within the early years sector prior to taking on teaching responsibilities (...). The passion and interest for the early years sector and links with current and recent working practices, is not only embedded within but at the forefront of the learning and teaching strategy of the programme.

All members of the team are able to relate to and support sessions with practical experiences which not only encourages students to make links between theory and practice, but supports them in being independent autonomous individuals who can interact formally and informally across the sector within collaborative partnerships.

This transfer of learning theories & concepts, sector specific outcomes and vocational skills to the workplace remains a key characteristic of the pedagogical approaches used across all levels of the programme.

The humanistic and ecological approach of the team ensures that individual student needs are recognised and supported by the teaching, learning and assessment strategies of the programme. **(G4)**

Education is concerned with real life practices and processes. The tutors in the School of Education are experienced specialists and Professors teach both lectures and seminars at all levels of study. Our teaching and assessment strategy reflect this concern with the real world. **(G4)**

Input from the Faculty's internationally recognised experts in Early Years educational research provides incomparable insights into key and emerging issues. **(G4)**

Our course brings together world-leading experts in sociology, education and psychology so you can become a well-qualified childhood specialist with the wealth of knowledge needed to work with children and their families across a range of professions. **(G4)**

Support for students and their learning is explicit

The programme team recognise that support for students is essential to enhance and encourage individuals on their academic journey. Over the past years support has been high on the agenda for the team and they have worked hard to track and keep records of all students' abilities throughout their journey with us. This begins when students first come for an interview with us and continues to the end of their study whether this is at level five, six or after any other programmes of study (such as for example PGCE) they might partake in following graduation from the BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies programme. **(G4)**

Open Door Policy

The team operate an open door policy for all students, encouraging them to meet with a member of the team at any time when they are in the centre. **(G4)**

Peer and Buddy Systems

The team have incorporated a buddy system over the past few years. This has proved to be extremely positive and students who have attended the centre not knowing anyone have soon settled in using this system. **(G4)**

Diagnostic assessment is available for learners who do not attend this centre prior to starting the BA. This is in place so that tutors are able to learn what point their learners are at and are able to plan accordingly to meet their individual needs. This is also a tool for students to monitor their own progress in a developmental sense through identifying their strengths and further focusing on the areas to be developed. Learners who have already been studying with ourselves will have already done this assessment but can have the option to do it again if they so wish to. **(G4)**

Student Advisory systems and Higher Education Learning Mentors (G4)

Supportive environment

While encouraging you to become a self-motivated learner, our supportive team of staff will guide you through your studies, helping you to develop the skills you need to become an independent critical thinker and part of the University of Leeds learning community. **(G4)**

As our school only runs two undergraduate courses, you have the benefit of being one of a relatively small number of undergraduate students within the school, yet also part of the large University of Leeds cohort. Many of our students say this is incredibly beneficial to their university experience: the school feels like "a family", yet they still have access to all the benefits of studying at a large institution. **(G4)**

3. Discussion and final considerations

University and College training for professionals who work with young children, birth through five years of age, who have or are at-risk for developmental delays or disabilities, demand "a focus that is different that the preparation of individuals serving older children (...)" In

particular, the content and practices of early intervention service are vastly different than those of school age, or even preschool-age services. Many of these differences are the direct result of the developmental needs of infants and toddlers (...)" (Bruder & Dunst, 2005, p.25⁶).

In 2014, the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), revised the Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education⁷, with the purpose of helping to "bridge the gap between research and practice by highlighting those practices that have been shown to result in better outcomes for young children with disabilities, their families, and the personnel who serve them" (DEC, 2014, p.1), and the aim of supporting children's access and participation in inclusive settings and natural environments addressing cultural, linguistic, and ability diversity. They also recognise crucial leadership responsibilities linked with these practices implementation.

In addition, CEC/DEC Initial and Advanced Standards in Special Education Professionals in Early Childhood Special Education/Early Intervention underline the need for specific knowledge and skills to work in Early Childhood Intervention, namely founded on a family-centered orientation based on a collaborative team process, held in inclusive, natural learning environments (Bruder, 2010⁸).

With the aim of studying Early Childhood Intervention training in UK's Universities and Colleges (UniCs), a course search was completed but no specific courses were found in this domain. However, multiple UniCs were identified offering courses in the connected areas of special education, inclusion, disability, and additional support - involving training offers working across the age range, including infants and young children - and in Early Childhood Education (ECE) where courses are aimed specifically at professionals working with children 0 to 5.

We will now discuss the results in terms of their specific contribution to Early Childhood Intervention domain and reflect about the need for specific training aims and contents in this area, namely considering the new Children and Family Bill (2014) and the new Code of Practice (2015) where SEN in the early years is highlighted as a privileged intervention area in England.

UniCs courses overview

⁶ Bruder, M. B., & Dunst, C. J. (2005). Personnel preparation in recommended early intervention practices: Degree of emphasis across disciplines. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 25*, 25-33.

⁷ Division for Early Childhood. (2014). *DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education 2014*. Retrieved from <http://www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices>

⁸ Bruder, M.B. (2010). Early childhood intervention: A promise to the future of children and families. *Exceptional Children, 76*(3): 339-355.

Courses awards (undergraduate and postgraduate), study options (full time, part time, both) and course types (taught, on-line, blended) include different offers and possibilities, which give potential students an extensive range of choices in SEN and ECE domains. Nevertheless, results show that there are no courses specifically related to Early Childhood Intervention.

In a comprehensive perspective, results show that although there are more postgraduate courses in SEN groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3), and undergraduate courses are more frequent in the ECE group (Group 4), both type of awards are present in all course groups.

In SEN groups this is particularly relevant since the different training offers in the fields of inclusion, special needs, disability, specific conditions and learning support, suggest the need for a clarification of these professionals' role, and of what initial/advanced knowledge and skills should be considered to achieve it, in view of the trainings impact on their ability to meet children's and family needs.

In the ECE group (Group 4) seven ECE courses indicate as career options 'SEN teaching' but only one mentions Early Childhood Intervention, explicitly connecting it to ECE.

UniCs courses aims

In the SEN group (Groups 1, 2 and 3), courses aims are well connected to their more comprehensive or specific designations, in a continuum that ranges from comprehensive Educational and Equity aims, to progressively more focused Inclusion, SEN, Learning Support and Specific Conditions aims. Unlike Group 2 – Specific Conditions – that relates all aims to the particular conditions they address, Group 3 – Learning Support courses – presents an approach that integrates specific conditions within a global inclusive perspective. In these groups, no particular aims were found considering infants, young children who have or are at-risk for developmental delays or disabilities, and their families.

In ECE group (Group 4), results show that six of the 15 UniCs courses aims explicitly address themes regarding Inclusion, SEN and Specific conditions in Early Childhood Education, with one UniC in particular addressing aims concerning Early Childhood Intervention. All 15 UniCs had course aims implicitly connected with Inclusion principles, namely regarding to participation, diversity, children's rights, equality, prevention (child protection), quality of Early Years practice and meeting the individual needs of children, parents, families and other professionals (engaging with multidisciplinary services).

Concerning the connections between Early Childhood Intervention fundamental principles and the aims of the 80 analysed courses, results showed that Learning Support and Early Childhood

Education Courses had the higher number of aims connected to family centered orientation, collaborative team process and natural learning environments. Specific conditions courses showed a few number of aims connected to family centred orientation and natural learning environments. Only one ECE course had specific references to Early Childhood Intervention policy documents, explicitly connecting it to ECE.

Considering other emergent categories, aims linked to research in SEN, learning and teaching strategies and approaches, and becoming a professional, had several references in all groups, with some groups being more expressive in one category than on others. For instance, Specific conditions courses (Group 2) had more concrete aims related to research and to specific learning and teaching strategies. Group 1 – special needs and inclusion courses – had a particular emphasis on professional development and competencies. Aims linked to Child development were particularly present in ECE courses (Group 4), with some references in Groups 2 and 3 related to specific conditions and none in Group 1.

UniCs courses contents

Only seven of the fifteen analyzed UniCs gave complete information about the courses modules, which included programme specification and details. Most UniCs gave information about the offered modules being optional or core modules.

There is a clear and coherent connection between courses aims and contents, except for Group 1 where aims don't mention specific conditions, but contents do in optional modules (38 optional modules).

UniCs teaching, learning processes and assessments

Teaching and learning processes are diverse and offer multiple learning opportunities, from class to on-line training and from individual to collaborative teaching approaches, with an emphasis on contents practical relevance. These varied teaching and learning processes offers are clear in most UniCs courses websites, and are presented with detail.

The analysed courses also included different type of assessments - some were present in all course groups (e.g. reports, essays, seminar papers) and other just in some (e.g. portfolios). Assessments showed a combination of summative approaches (e.g. examinations, written assignments) with more formative options, namely including several reflective development proposals (e.g., portfolios, reflective journals). Work based assessments were mainly present in ECE courses (Group 4).

UniCs courses singularities

While analyzing the courses offer, various singularities - aspects that distinguished each course from others, underlining the uniqueness of their training offer – emerged.

Results highlighted these singularities in two main categories: aspects specifically connected to ECI principles, its recommended training and professional development practices, namely process practices and content standards from the Division of Early Childhood; and the second, singularities linked to other particular training and professional development offers.

In the first group, singularities include references to: specific courses that motivate and welcome parents/family members with additional needs to apply; aims that address educational needs in a systemic, inclusive way; collaboration between SEN and disability professionals in local authorities and the specific connection between Early Childhood Studies and Early Childhood Intervention.

Other courses include, among other singularities: suggestion of pre-application introductory readings about inclusion and SEN; students and teachers testimonials; inclusion and SEN courses that offer a work placement; aims that highlight the importance of understanding impairment trough life span, raising awareness of the importance of providing seamless transitions; an investigation center that connects course units from different fields with a single motto/slogan; a course that offers support for deaf students; one crucial module about children's rights that is offered in different courses; references to Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education - Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQER); different possible master and post-graduation routes (Including Early Years Practice and Inclusive Education); staff appraisal; explicit support for students and their learning (e.g. peer and buddy systems; student advisory systems and higher education learning mentors).

Several of these singularities are particularly connected to process practices and content standards for Early Childhood Intervention proposed by the Division of Early Childhood.

Analysing the results obtained from 80 courses in the chosen 15 UniCs, results show that although some Early Childhood Intervention current recommendations were present in the courses analyzed, its main principles regarding a family-centered approach, and collaborative work performed in natural and inclusive environments, were only partly included in the UniCs' training offers.

Questions emerge concerning the need to have specific Early Childhood Intervention courses in UK UniCs, or to adjust existing courses including these contemporary fundamental principles, in view of the positive impact this might have on professionals intervention and, consequently, on children's development and families' well-being:

- What should be the profile for Early Childhood Intervention professionals, namely when Early Years is a privileged area in the new Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice 2015?
- What concrete knowledge and skills should professionals have in the field of Early Childhood Intervention, based on best evidence and practice?
- What is the role of UniCs in training professionals for Early Childhood Intervention, namely considering best evidence and practice?
- How is the need met for all professionals working in Early Childhood Intervention to have a foundational knowledge of developmentally appropriate early childhood practices and a basic understanding of relevant professional, legal, and regulatory guidelines for serving every child?
- How does training (knowledge, skills and training process) support practices specifically known to promote the outcomes of infants and young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays/disabilities and to support their families (e.g. training contents including: biological and environmental factors that affect pre-, peri-, and postnatal development and learning; the process of developing Individualized Family Service Plans; learning about roles and responsibilities of personnel in the development and implementation of team-based early childhood special education and early intervention services, etc.)
- What specific training for SEN Coordinators in early years provision?

It is our aspiration that this report can contribute for a renewed reflection around questions that emerge from the achieved results; the fact that no UniCs in the UK have Early Childhood Intervention training courses, contrasting with the US or other countries in Europe such as Portugal (with 17 post-graduations and masters offered in this concrete field), is, on its own, a question to debate. In view of the numerous UK training offers in the domains of inclusion, SEN, disability, specific conditions, learning support and ECE, the possibility of having a specific course offer in Early Childhood Intervention is worth considering, namely since best evidence and practice stress training as a critical element for a successful Early Childhood Intervention.

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