Foundation Degree in Education
at Ashton Sixth Form College
Awarded by Staffordshire University

Guidance & Information


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When are the deadlines?

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<td>Interviews held from June – July</td>
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Round One: (Subject to availability of places)

Round Two: (Late applications)

What is a Foundation Degree?

A Foundation Degree is a level 5 qualification made up of 240 credits, 120 of which are gained at level 4 study and a further 120 at level 5 study. These credits are gained by completing modules throughout the course. Although the Foundation Degree is a qualification in its own right, with further study it can be developed into a full Honours Degree through the acquisition of another 120 credits on a top up course. For further information on topping up to a full Honours Degree and progression routes, please see the Where can I progress to? Section on page 6.

Who is the course for?

This award is for anyone who is currently employed in a learning support situation, for example teaching assistants, bilingual support assistants, learning mentors, cover supervisors, PE and sports coaches, voluntary helpers and applicants who have achieved HLTA, in any phase of education from Early Years to Further Education.

What will the course cover?

This course has a very distinctive curriculum that aims to cater for a broad range of students from a variety of workplace situations. Work-based personal experiences form a significant part of the learning for this course; however the course also aims to extend your knowledge, skills and understanding of learning situations that might be different from your own immediate experience.

The modules have a wide and flexible content, adaptable to your needs, while providing an essential core of academic understanding. The programme will develop your subject knowledge; work-based knowledge; work-based skills; and study skills in a coherent package. In particular, the course aims to provide learning support assistants with specialist roles the opportunity to reflect on their own particular situation. This course is made up of the following eight modules:

Module One: Personal and Professional Development
This is the first of two reflective portfolio modules. Each of these modules will span the whole of its year in order to allow time for in-depth reflection.
The focus of this module (year 1, level 4) is to introduce learners to key education specific and transferable professional concepts and skills. This will then inform the second reflective portfolio (year 2, level 5) which focuses on the developing the learner’s employability for their career progression.

Both reflective portfolios will be completed electronically in order to develop learners’ professional IT skills.

**Module Two: Learning and Development**
This module identifies key principles and theories of learning and development which will underpin your understanding of education throughout the rest of the course.

You will research a range of learning theories and consider how these inform your personal role and responsibilities when supporting learning.

**Module Three: Behaviour for Learning**
This module aims to develop your ability to manage and develop positive behaviours in their learning environment. Topics to be covered include:

- Theories and principles of behaviour
- Characteristics of behaviour
- Behaviour Policies
- Behaviour management and enhancement
- Appropriate and effective communication
- Safeguarding (behaviour)
- The learning environment

**Module Four: Supporting Learning and Inclusion**
This module focuses on identifying learner needs and adapting resources in order to provide appropriate support. Learners will consider how approaches to learning may differ in alternative educational contexts:

- Developing learner support
- Education in alternative contexts
- e-learning
- Promoting inclusion
- Special Education Needs
- Differentiation, stretch and challenge
- Learning resources

**Module Five: Professionalism and Career Development**
This module follows on from the portfolio work in Module 1 enabling continuing reflection on your personal and professional development. The focus of this module is for you to consider your future career aspirations and development needs. You will have opportunity to demonstrate learning and reflection of personal continuing development, continuing workplace development and continuing workplace organisation understanding. Therefore the indicative content in this module will mostly be defined by your evaluation of your learner journey as a professional on this course. This module is about you taking responsibility for your personal development as an education professional.
Module Six: Developing Educational Practice
This module will incorporate the following:

- Key equality legislation
- Principles and purposes of assessment
- Strategies for identifying issues relating to equality
- Consideration of how equality and diversity can be advanced within personal professional practice and the whole organisation

Module Seven: Learning and the Inclusive Curriculum
This module will focus on key subjects, depending on the learner’s professional context. These are likely to be: Science, Technology, English and Mathematics.

Topics to be covered include:

- Key purposes and principles and models of curriculum design and practice
- Context, purpose and practice of embedding English and mathematics and/or Science technology English and Mathematics into the curriculum
- Promoting an inclusive curriculum

Module Eight: Assessment for Learning
During this module, you will design, participate and peer-review assessments to help develop your understanding of key assessment principles in practice.

Topics covered in this module include:

- Assessment of learning
- Assessment for learning
- Assessment-led learning
- Peer and self-assessment
What do I need to do the course?

- GCSE qualifications in English and maths or demonstration of a level 2 competence. *(A Key Skills qualification is not generally considered to be equivalent in content and level of demand, but if you hold this qualification your application may still be considered in combination with a consideration of the other entry criteria).*
- A minimum of an A level (grade C) or Level 3 equivalent.
- Proof of a current DBS disclosure or a Declaration of Criminal Convictions.
- Employment, either paid or voluntary, supporting learning in an educational setting for at least four hours per week, arranged prior to the commencement of the course.
- Must be aged 18 or over.
- Applicants for whom English is a second language and who do not possess a level 2 qualification require a current IELTS 6.0 score, with no single score lower than 5.5.
- Letter from employer in support of work based activities.

Advisory notes – at interview you will be asked to demonstrate that your current writing skills are at level 2. Although this does not form part of the entry criteria it may be used to identify further support needs to assist with your achievement on the course.

Although you may hold an English and maths qualification which isn’t a GCSE, we strongly advise that you have or are working towards a GCSE in English and maths, especially if you are interested in teacher training.

How is the course assessed?

Programme and module outcomes are formally assessed through a range of tasks and activities, such as creation of resources to support learning or reflection on organisational practice, which ask you to link learning in the workplace to the taught programme. For example, as an Education Practitioner, you will have the opportunity to be assessed against an individual action plan identifying your strengths and areas for development in relation to your skills, knowledge and understanding. You will also be assessed on your understanding of: learner motivation and rewards; emotional intelligence; and the effective learning environment.

For every module completed, students will gain 30 credits towards the course. To complete the Foundation degree, students need 240 credits. The credit system is a national system, devised to enable students to accumulate credits as they pass areas of study. It also allows for the transfer between institutions.

Provided that they are gaining suitable experiences and professional development in the workplace, students on the Foundation Degree should also find themselves in a strong position to apply for assessment for HLTS (Higher Level Teaching Assistant Standards), which is a set of professional standards that require separate assessment.
Guidance and Information Pack

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How long does the course take?

This is a fast track programme, which will take two extended years of part time study to complete (September to September), with College attendance of four hours per week and at least four hours per week in the relevant work place. You will also be expected to undertake self-directed study.

How much does the course cost?

The fees for this course are £4,200 per year, totalling £8,400.

Students accepted onto this programme are generally entitled to a tuition fee loan from Student Finance England. Further information on student finance can be found in the accompanying Student Finance Information booklet or at: www.gov.uk/studentfinance. Please note that it is your responsibility to apply for the loan.

Students might also ask their workplace for support in funding this course.

Where can I progress to?

On successful completion of your Foundation Degree, you can then top-up to a full BA (Hons) in Education or Early Childhood Studies by studying a further 120 credits at level 6 over one year. Other opportunities for progression may be available depending on your field of work, the phase of education that you work in and other qualifications.

For those who are interested in primary teaching, HE institutions now usually require at least a 2:1 degree classification for entry onto a post graduate programme. In addition to a good Honours degree, applicants to primary teacher training currently need to have English, Mathematics and Science at GCSE grade C or higher.

Information for Employers

The Foundation Degree in Education is a work-related higher education programme designed to increase participants’ knowledge and understanding of learning and teaching. Although it is a recognised qualification in its own right, those who complete successfully have the opportunity to progress onto a BA (Hons) in Education top up. This could lead to a variety of career opportunities, as well as the opportunity to study post graduate teacher training programmes.

This programme requires full support from the employer in partnership with Staffordshire University and Ashton Sixth Form College. The employer should be offering either paid or voluntary employment and may wish to allocate a designated mentor to ensure that our students can successfully complete the course. Assessments on the course rely on students having access to various elements of the curriculum, within the boundaries of their own role within the workplace. Students will be encouraged to reflect on their everyday
workplace experiences and to draw on specific activities, such as attendance to an in-service day or participation with the governing body. There is no specific requirement to work in another Key Stage, with a different age group or another school or college, although some students might benefit from the opportunity to do so.

**Employer Responsibilities:**

As students enrolled onto the Foundation Degree in Education are not placed by the College, they are the responsibility of their employer, not the College. It will therefore be your responsibility as an employer to ensure that students are in possession of a current and appropriate DBS check, prior to beginning the course. It is also the employer’s responsibility to inform the College of any change in circumstance relating to the candidate’s employment, for example where the student has ceased to work for you.

**The Mentor’s Role:**

A designated mentor within the workplace is not an essential requirement for students on the Foundation Degree in Education, however employers may wish to allocate one to assist the candidate with their personal and professional development within the workplace. The balance of the mentor’s responsibilities and the amount of time allocated to each depends on your situation, however the students would ideally have contact with the mentor on a weekly basis. The mentor would:

- Receive guidelines outlining the programme including a timetable of meetings.
- Arrange by negotiation to spend time with the student in the workplace and help to plan for work related experience linked to assessments.
- Support the student’s audit of professional development needs.
- Support assignment development by helping with access to teacher, learners, materials and relevant classroom based experiences. At the beginning of the programme, the main form of support that students need is encouragement to boost the morale. We do not expect mentors to engage in supporting the writing of assignments nor assessment; we will provide regular support during the taught sessions at the College.

In addition, the following support would also be helpful:

- Alerting the student to any Department for Education documentation that arrives at the school/college.
- Asking colleagues to share with the student journals, educational newspapers and texts, in addition to their valuable expertise.
- Regularly enquiring about student progress.
- Allowing students access to some aspects of the curriculum and school/college life in which they may not normally be involved, e.g. other subjects in the curriculum, such as science; whole school/college assessment issues; child protection; etc. Students will be actively encouraged to seek out new experiences to enhance their professional development in negotiation with you and in accordance with the needs of the school/college.
Notes