Module Descriptor

Title	Capstone Project - the practitioner as action researcher		
Session	2026/27	**Status**	
Code	BAEL09009	**SCQF Level**	9
Credit Points	30	**ECTS (European Credit Transfer Scheme)**	15
School	**Education and Social Sciences** Education and Social Sciences		
Module Co-ordinator	S. Henderson -Bone		

Summary of Module

This capstone module provides students with the opportunity to focus in depth on a subject of personal and professional interest through the design and completion of a small-scale action research project. Building on knowledge and skills developed across the programme, students are guided and empowered to make new discoveries through practitioner-led enquiry within their own early learning and childcare contexts.

Students may further pursue interests arising from any module delivered on the programme, shaping a research focus that is meaningful to their professional practice. The module is designed to facilitate empirical enquiry while embedding lifelong research skills that support ongoing professional development and reflective practice in early learning and childcare.

Students will engage with the ethical principles underpinning practitioner research and will be supported to uphold appropriate ethical considerations throughout the research process. The module requires students to identify, locate, and synthesise relevant academic and policy literature related to their chosen topic, and to design an appropriate action research methodology for gathering data within their workplace setting. Students will analyse their data and critically reflect on what the findings reveal about their chosen area of practice.

The module culminates in students evaluating the implications of their research findings for future practice, professional learning, and the enhancement of early learning and childcare provision. Through this process, students develop confidence as reflective, research-informed practitioners capable of contributing to practice improvement.

Employability Skills

The content of this module allows students to develop the following UWS gradate attributes and Skilss Development Scotland Meta Skills: Integrity, Adapting, Initiative, Communication, Feeling, Collaboration, Leading, Curiosity, Creativity, Sense making, critical thinking, Digital intelligence

Contribution of UN Sustainability goals

SDG 4: Quality Education

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Module Delivery Method	**On-Campus**[1] ☐	**Hybrid**[2] ☒ Error! Bookmark not defined.	**Online**[3] ☐	**Work -Based Learning**[4] ☐
Campuses for Module Delivery	☐ Ayr ☐ Dumfries	☒ Lanarkshire ☐ London ☐ Paisley	☐ Online / Distance Learning ☐ Other (specify) **X** Mix of on campus and online	

Terms for Module Delivery	Term 1	☐	Term 2	☒	Term 3	☐
Long-thin Delivery over more than one Term	Term 1 – Term 2	☐	Term 2 – Term 3	☐	Term 3 – Term 1	☐

Learning Outcomes	
L1	Identify and justify a relevant and manageable action research focus that is grounded in professional practice within early learning and childcare.
L2	Locate, evaluate, and synthesise relevant academic, professional, and policy literature to inform the development of a research question or focus.
L3	Design and implement an ethically informed action research methodology appropriate to the workplace context.
L4	Collect and analyse qualitative data in a systematic manner, demonstrating critical engagement with the research process.
L5	Critically reflect on research findings and discuss what the analysis reveals about their chosen topic and professional practice. Evaluate the implications of the research for future practice, professional development, and the improvement of early learning and childcare provision.

Employability Skills and Personal Development Planning (PDP) Skills	
SCQF Headings	**During completion of this module, there will be an opportunity to achieve core skills in:**
Knowledge and Understanding (K and U)	**SCQF 9** Students will develop advanced knowledge and understanding of action research as a practitioner-led methodology within early learning and childcare contexts. This includes critical awareness of ethical

[1] Where contact hours are synchronous/ live and take place fully on campus. Campus-based learning is focused on providing an interactive learning experience supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[2] The module includes a combination of synchronous/ live on-campus and online learning events. These will be supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus and online contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[3] Where all learning is solely delivered by web-based or internet-based technologies and the participants can engage in all learning activities through these means. All required contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[4] Learning activities where the main location for the learning experience is in the workplace. All required contact hours, whether online or on campus, will be clearly articulated to students

	principles, research design, data collection, and analysis. Students will demonstrate understanding of how research-informed practice contributes to service improvement, professional learning, and sector policy priorities.
Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding	**SCQF 9** Students will apply theoretical and research knowledge to real-world professional practice through the design and implementation of a small-scale action research project within their workplace setting. This includes planning and conducting ethical research activity, collecting and analysing qualitative data, and translating findings into practical recommendations for service enhancement.
Generic Cognitive skills	**SCQF 9** Students will develop higher-order cognitive skills including critical analysis, evaluation, synthesis, and reflective judgement. They will interrogate literature, critically appraise evidence, analyse qualitative data, and evaluate the implications of research findings for professional practice and future development.
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	**SCQF 9** Students will develop advanced written communication skills through the production of a structured research report and associated academic writing. They will use digital tools to locate, manage, and reference academic literature, and to organise and analyse qualitative data. Students will communicate research findings clearly and professionally, appropriate to academic and workplace audiences.
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	**SCQF 9** Students will demonstrate a high level of autonomy and accountability in managing an independent research project within ethical and professional frameworks. They will engage constructively with academic supervision and workplace stakeholders, showing responsibility for decision-making, time management, and professional conduct throughout the research process.

Prerequisites	**Module Code**	**Module Title**
	Other	
Co-requisites	**Module Code**	**Module Title**

Learning and Teaching
In line with current learning and teaching principles, a 20-credit module includes 200 learning hours, normally including a minimum of 36 contact hours and maximum of 48 contact hours. In line with current UWS learning and teaching principles, a 30-credit module includes 300 learning hours, normally including 48–60 contact hours. Learning and teaching strategies are designed to develop expertise in the specialised filed of Early Learning and Childcare where students gain skills in the ability to ; advise and support others, make recommendations on managing complex processes or issues. plan and organise own work or that of a team of professional colleagues, work autonomously, using initiative within professional and ethical codes of practice, manage others and/or a range of resources, and collaborate with other specialists, apply and communicate knowledge of current issues, techniques, and developments in their sector to address both foreseen and unforeseen challenges, undertake

critical analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information and practices whilst also encouraged to keep abreast of developments in specialist areas and understand the boundaries and limitations of their professional role. All of the skills gained from teaching and learning in this module are consistent with SCQF Level 9 expectations.

Learning and teaching approaches will include:

- Lectures and critically dialogic seminars

- Case-based and problem-based learning focused on complex practice scenarios

- Workshops developing analytical and evaluative approaches to inclusive practice

- Critical engagement with practitioner narratives and policy texts

- Guided independent, collaborative and work-based learning.

Learning Activities During completion of this module, the learning activities undertaken to achieve the module learning outcomes are stated below:	**Student Learning Hours** (Note: Learning hours include both contact hours and hours spent on other learning activities)
Lecture / Core Content Delivery Contact time	54
Work-based Learning Work Based Learning	198
Independent Study	48
TOTAL	300

Indicative Resources

The following materials form essential underpinning for the module content and ultimately for the learning outcomes:

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2021). Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide. London: Sage.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2018). Research Methods in Education (8th ed.). London: Routledge.

Mukherji, P. & Albon, D. (2018). Research Methods in Early Childhood (3rd ed.). London: Sage.

(N.B. Although reading lists should include current publications, students are advised (particularly for material marked with an asterisk*) to wait until the start of session for confirmation of the most up-to-date material)

Attendance and Engagement Requirements

In line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure, Students are academically engaged if they are regularly attending and participating in timetabled on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time.

For the purposes of this module, academic engagement equates to the following:

The university is committed to providing a supportive learning environment that actively facilitates student success. In this module, there is a high degree of student-led flexibility. You are academically engaged if you are regularly engaged with scheduled live sessions on-

campus and online, including engaging with online learning activities in your own time, course-related learning resources, and with timely completion and submission of assessments.

Whilst we understand that there may be times when conflicting priorities make participation challenging, for you to gain the most from this module it is recommended that you participate in all scheduled live classes and complete your self-directed learning activities in a timely manner.

It may be difficult to pass the assessment associated with this module if you are not regularly engaging with the module work and live classes. We may reach out to check how things are going and offer support if we observe that you have not been attending sessions or completing online activities. The way the module is delivered—whether on campus, online, or in a blended format—will match how your programme is normally taught for your level of study. You will study Child Development and ELC in the same way that you are used to studying other level 9 modules on the BA Early Learning and Childcare Programme.

Equality and Diversity
The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code. This module aligns with the Equality Act (2010) and the UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code. Inclusive learning and teaching approaches are embedded throughout the module, with reasonable adjustments made where appropriate to support student learning
(N.B. Every effort will be made by the University to accommodate any equality and diversity issues brought to the attention of the School)

Supplemental Information

Divisional Programme Board	**Please select Education**
Overall Assessment Results	☒ **Graded**
Module Eligible for Compensation	☒ **Yes** ☐ **If this module is eligible for compensation, there may be cases where compensation is not permitted due to programme accreditation requirements. Please check the associated programme specification for details.**
School Assessment Board	Early Years
Moderator	L. Gilmour
External Examiner	M.McKenzie
Accreditation Details	
Module Appears in CPD catalogue	☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**
Changes / Version Number	

Assessment (also refer to Assessment Outcomes Grids below)
Assessment 1

Students will submit a full action research report presenting findings, critical reflection, and evaluation of implications for professional practice, future development, and improvement of early learning and childcare provision. The report will demonstrate synthesis of literature, data analysis, and reflective evaluation at SCQF Level 9 (100%)
Assessment 2
Assessment 3
(N.B. (i) Assessment Outcomes Grids for the module (one for each component) can be found below which clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the module will be assessed. (ii) An indicative schedule listing approximate times within the academic calendar when assessment is likely to feature will be provided within the Student Module Handbook.)

Component 1							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
Action Research Report	☒Error! Bookmark not defined.	☒	☒	☒	☒	100%	54

Component 2							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
n/a	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		

Component 3							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
n/a	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Combined total for all components						100%	54 hours

Change Control

What	**When**	**Who**
Creation of module overview, LO's and assessment	Feb 2026	N. Allan
Module Code, MC and Moderator added	17/6/26	L.Gilmour
Module specific info added to Learning and Teaching , Attendance and Engagement & Equality and Diversity sections	17/6/26	L.Gilmour

Timetabled and combined contact hours added to assessment section	17/6/26	L.Gilmour