Module Descriptor

Title	The Value and Assurance of Quality		
Session	2026/27	**Status**	
Code	BAEL 09010	**SCQF Level**	9
Credit Points	30	**ECTS (European Credit Transfer Scheme)**	15
School	**Education and Social Sciences** Education and Social Sciences		
Module Co-ordinator	L. Gilmour		

Summary of Module

The concept and pursuit of quality in the early years sector in Scotland is highly significant to key policy actors, including the OECD, the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), the Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland, and the Scottish Government. Quality is foregrounded across a wide range of Scottish Government guidance, frameworks, and regulatory processes, and operates as a central organising principle — a 'golden thread' — within key policy initiatives such as Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland.

This module introduces students to critical perspectives on quality and quality assurance within early years education and care. It explores how quality is constructed within policy, standards, frameworks, and inspection as something objective, measurable, and knowable. These constructions are examined in relation to neoliberal approaches to governance, accountability, and regulation within the sector.

Students will engage with how quality assurance processes shape early years practice and professional identity. The module provides opportunities for students to explore how their own understandings and values of quality compare with those embedded within policy and regulatory frameworks. Particular attention is paid to how standardised categories of quality can function as mechanisms of surveillance and power, potentially limiting professional agency and shaping everyday practice.

Through engagement with policy documents, academic literature, and reflective activities, students will develop a critical understanding of quality as a complex and contested concept and will be supported to consider the implications of quality assurance processes for practice in the Scottish early years context.

Employability

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

Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 4: Quality Education

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Module Delivery Method	**On-Campus**[1] ☐	**Hybrid**[2] ☒	**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	Describe and critically examine how quality and quality assurance are defined and operationalised within Scottish early years policy, frameworks, and inspection regimes.
L2	Identify and explain the role of key national and international policy actors in shaping understandings of quality in the Scottish early years sector.
L3	Demonstrate critical understanding of how neoliberal approaches influence quality assurance, accountability, and regulation in early years practice.
L4	Reflect on personal and professional values of quality in early years education and care, and consider how these values align with or differ from policy-driven definitions of quality.
L5	Analyse the impact of standardisation, inspection, and measurement on professional practice, identity, and agency within early years settings and apply critical perspectives to discuss potential strengths and limitations of current quality assurance approaches in supporting high-quality early years 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:**

[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

Knowledge and Understanding (K and U)	**SCQF 9** Students will develop a critical understanding of key concepts, theories, and frameworks relating to quality and quality assurance in early years education and care. This includes understanding how quality is constructed within Scottish and international policy, inspection regimes, and regulatory processes, and how these constructions are influenced by wider political and theoretical perspectives, including neoliberal approaches to governance and accountability.
Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding	**SCQF 9** Students will apply theoretical and policy-based knowledge to analyse real-world early years quality frameworks and inspection systems. Through assessment and learning activities, students will consider the implications of quality assurance processes for professional practice, enabling them to engage critically with policy expectations and regulatory demands within early years settings.
Generic Cognitive skills	**SCQF 9** Students will develop skills in critical analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of academic literature and policy documentation. They will be able to compare competing understandings of quality, assess the strengths and limitations of standardised approaches to quality assurance, and construct reasoned arguments supported by evidence.
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	**SCQF 9** Students will enhance written communication skills through the production of structured academic and reflective coursework. They will demonstrate the ability to locate, interpret, and appropriately reference academic and policy sources using digital technologies, and to communicate complex ideas clearly and coherently.
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	**SCQF 9** Students will develop reflective awareness of their professional values, responsibilities, and identity within the early years sector. They will exercise autonomy in learning and assessment tasks, demonstrate accountability for their academic work, and critically reflect on how quality assurance processes shape professional agency and decision-making in practice.

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)
Please select Contact Time	54
Please select Work Based Learning	198
Independent Study	48
n/a	
n/a	
TOTAL	300

Indicative Resources

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

Dahlberg, G., Moss P., and Pence A.R. (2013) Beyond quality in Early Childhood Education and Care: Languages of evaluation. Oxon: Routledge.

Moss, P. and Roberts-Holmes, G. (2022) Now is the time! Confronting neo-liberalism in Early Childhood. Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood. 23 (1) 96-99.

McNair, L. J., Blaisdell, C., Davis, J. M. and Addison, L. J. (2022) Posing unique and urgent challenges to understandings of quality: Elucidations through a Frobelian lens. Global Education Review. 9 (1) 24-37.

Vandenbroeck, M., Lehrer, J. and Mitchell, L. (2023) The decommodification of Early Childhood Education and Care: Resisting Neoliberalism. Routledge: Oxon

(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	Error! Bookmark not defined.
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	S. Henderson-Bone
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
An academic poster (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**
Academic poster	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	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, design on 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