

# Programme Specification: Post Graduate Taught

## For students starting in Academic Year 2023/24

### 1. Course Summary

<b>Names of programme and award title(s)</b>	MA Child Care Law and Practice
<b>Award type</b>	Taught Masters
<b>Mode of study</b>	Full-time Modular Part-time
<b>Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award</b>	Level 7
<b>Normal length of the programme</b>	One year full time / two years part time/up to five years modular
<b>Maximum period of registration</b>	The normal length as specified above plus 3 years
<b>Location of study</b>	Keele Campus
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>	Not applicable
<b>Regulator</b>	Office for Students (OfS)
<b>Tuition Fees</b>	<p><b>UK students:</b></p> <p>Full-time fee for 2023/24 is £8,000</p> <p>Part-time fee for 2023/24 is £6,500 for Year 1 and £3,250 for Year 2*</p> <p><b>International students:</b></p> <p>Full-time fee for 2023/24 is £17,700</p>

**How this information might change:** Please read the important information at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>. This explains how and why we may need to make changes to the information provided in this document and to help you understand how we will communicate with you if this happens.

\* We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study by an inflationary amount. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions for full details. Further information on fees can be found at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/>

### 2. Overview of the Programme

The MA Child Care Law and Practice programme enables students to examine the law, policy and practice relating to childcare. It utilises a variety of theoretical perspectives in order to interrogate case law, statute and law reform processes, policy documents, work practices, guidance and research. It adopts the interdisciplinary focus of the Law School's other existing Masters' programmes.

### 3. Aims of the programme

The aims of this programme are to introduce key principles of interdisciplinary, socio-legal research methods and scholarship, facilitate the development of higher-level critical analysis, and develop the students' capacity for original thinking in relation to the complex issues arising in socio-legal scholarship. More specifically, the programme aims to:

The broad aims of the programme are to enable you to:

- Develop a practical and theoretical understanding of safeguarding children.
- Develop a critical awareness of the social and political contexts in which law and practice is located.
- Develop a critical perspective in the assessment and evaluation of research, law scholarship, policy and practice in respect of children.
- Develop critical and analytical skills to interrogate practical legal problems and to justify decisions.
- Develop the ability to work independently in a coherent, focused and productive way.
- Encourage inter-disciplinarily via the student experience (that is, inter professional student groups, learning and teaching provided by a range of academics, professionals and policy makers.)

The programme is structured in a way that allows students to maintain full-time employment while studying, with teaching for each module taking place over an intensive 3/4-day period. The programme, therefore, is designed to appeal to both the 'conventional' postgraduate student and those already engaged professionally in this area of activity, in social work, health, the legal profession or otherwise.

## **4. What you will learn**

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme), can be described under the following headings:

- Subject knowledge and understanding
- Subject specific skills
- Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

### **Subject knowledge and understanding**

Successful students will be able to:

- a systematic understanding of the relationship between legal institutions and society
- an ability to critically evaluate current research within the law and society paradigm and the law relating to children; and to understand the origins of scholarship in law, evaluate the range of methodologies used in such scholarship, and where appropriate propose new hypotheses
- original thinking about the complex issues related to interdisciplinary scholarship and an ability to communicate these ideas to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- self-direction in planning and carrying out research, tackling research problems and implementing research tasks
- an advanced level of knowledge in law and society research, evidence of developing research and analysis skills to a high level

### **Subject specific skills**

This programme will equip students for further study in the form of a postgraduate research programme, such as a PhD, by providing comprehensive research training and an introduction to key socio-legal thinkers and scholarship. It will also provide students who wish to practice in child care (whether as lawyers, social workers, health professionals or administrators) with a higher-level qualification, which it is anticipated will assist in gaining employment or furthering their career within those related occupations.

Successful students will be able to:

- Apply, with the use of independently gathered research, legal and non-legal knowledge to a range of complex problems relating to law and practice in childcare.
- Manipulate a range of sources, recognising their relative values.
- Recognise, assess and rank particular arguments and, where appropriate, provide a reasoned choice between a number of possible solutions or arguments.
- Work effectively in a group to solve problems or to advance a learning objective
- Negotiate a range of electronic information management tools
- Take responsibility for and manage general learning development. Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

### **Keele Graduate attributes**

Engagement with this programme will enable you to develop your intellectual, personal and professional capabilities. At Keele, we call these our ten Graduate Attributes and they include independent thinking, synthesizing information, creative problem solving, communicating clearly, and appreciating the social, environmental and global implications of your studies and activities. Our educational programme and learning

environment is designed to help you to become a well-rounded graduate who is capable of making a positive and valued contribution in a complex and rapidly changing world, whichever spheres of life you engage in after your studies are completed.

Further information about the Keele Graduate Attributes can be found here: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/journey/>

## 5. How is the programme taught?

Learning and teaching methods used on the programme vary according to the subject matter and level of the module.

All modules (save for the dissertation) are taught through 20 hours of contact time, delivered as an intensive three-day 'block' of teaching. Before they begin the taught modules, students will receive initial guidance on how to identify, locate and use materials available in libraries and elsewhere (including electronic sources). They will also be provided with an introduction to studying Law at Keele University via an online information pack and pre-course reading list. During each taught module, students will take part in lectures, tutor-led seminars and discussions, small group exercises, and case studies. Each module is accompanied by extensive independent study and throughout the course students are encouraged and required to undertake independent reading to both supplement and consolidate the classes and to broaden individual knowledge and understanding of the subject. Each elective module is assessed through written work.

Guidelines are provided for the production of coursework assignments and dissertations and these are reinforced by seminars and individual supervision, which focus specifically on essay planning and writing, and research methodology. Detailed written and, if requested, oral feedback is provided on all course work. There is also time set aside during each module and outside of the modules, if preferred, for students to consult individually with teaching staff and receive guidance and feedback on assessment and module performance. While away from Keele, between teaching blocks, students will benefit from directed reading, additional resources posted on the KLE together with a KLE based discussion page for 'virtual' interaction between students.

## 6. Teaching Staff

The programme is delivered on an inter-disciplinary basis by an international faculty, which has a diverse body of expertise and qualifications in a number of disciplinary areas of practice and research. The bulk of the teaching will be provided by members of the Law School with contributions from expert academic staff in other disciplines, including Social Work, Health, Ethics, Sociology, and Psychology. Individual staff biographies for staff in the School of Law can be found at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/law/staff/>.

The programme was developed by Professor Alison Brammer who has extensive experience of both legal practice and academic research in relation to social work generally and child care law in particular. Alison is the author of a standard textbook 'Social Work Law'; she continues to contribute to the programme.

The University will attempt to minimise changes to our core teaching teams, however, delivery of the programme depends on having a sufficient number of staff with the relevant expertise to ensure that the programme is taught to the appropriate academic standard.

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on students is limited if such changes occur.

## 7. What is the structure of the programme?

In order to achieve the MA qualification, students must first successfully complete four taught modules, each assessed by a 5,000 word essay, before undertaking research training and producing a dissertation of c. 15,000-20,000 words (20,000 words maximum). Each taught module is worth 30 credits, while the dissertation module, which includes research training, is worth 60 credits. To achieve an MA, 180 credits are required. Note that credits cannot be awarded for the dissertation module unless all taught modules have been passed successfully.

Whilst it is likely that most students will study part time over two years, students have the flexibility to choose whether to complete the entire programme in one year as a full-time student or to take one of our flexible modular pathways. If part-time, students usually complete all four taught modules in year 1, and the dissertation in year 2. If studying on a modular basis, students may choose any of the following options:

- Take two modules per year for two years and the dissertation in year three
- Take one module per year for four years and the dissertation in year five
- Take another combination of modules over any period of time up to four years, followed by the dissertation.

The compulsory modules, 'Foundations and Principles of Child Care Law and Practice' and 'Contemporary Issues,' set the scene for the programme by introducing students to the principles of law and practice surrounding children and inviting an examination of the theoretical basis for state intervention. These modules also introduce students to the research skills and critical analysis necessary for the successful completion of a Master's programme, with a particular focus on interdisciplinary socio-legal research methods.

Thereafter, students will take two further elective modules, usually Children and Medicine, and Looked After Children, though students may substitute for one of these a module from another Master's programme offered by the Law School. Availability of these elective modules will depend on timetabling but may include:

- Equality, Discrimination, Minorities
- Human Rights in a Global Market
- Human Rights and Global Politics
- Emergence of Adult Safeguarding
- Safeguarding Adults: Intervention
- Mental Capacity
- Safeguarding and Carers
- International Refugee Protection
- Principles of Mental Health Law

Year	Compulsory	Optional		Electives	
		Min	Max	Min	Max
Level 7	120	60	60	0	0

## Module Lists

### Level 7

Compulsory modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Foundations and principles of child care	LAW-40001	30	Semester 1
Dissertation - Law (60 credits)	LAW-40015	60	Semester 1-2
Contemporary issues in child care	LAW-40002	30	Semester 2

Optional modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Children looked after	LAW-40003	30	Semester 1
Safeguarding Adults: Interventions	LAW-40032	30	Semester 1
The emergence of adult safeguarding	LAW-40033	30	Semester 1
Equality, Discrimination, Minorities	LAW-40047	15	Semester 1
Children and medicine	LAW-40004	30	Semester 2
Mental capacity	LAW-40029	30	Semester 2
Safeguarding and carers	LAW-40031	30	Semester 2
Human Rights and Global Politics	LAW-40046	15	Semester 2
Best Interests Assessor	LAW-40050	30	Semester 2
Principles of Mental Health Law	LAW-40072	30	Semester 2
International Refugee Protection	LAW-40074	30	Semester 2

### Dissertation module

The dissertation module runs through the whole of the final year. It is mainly comprised of personal study and research under the guidance of an individual supervisor. At the start of the year students will attend a one day

research training block which is designed to equip students with the necessary research skills to plan, research and write a dissertation. Students select their own topic, titles being approved by the course team and external examiner. Students submit a dissertation proposal for feedback and at a recall day partway through the year students give an oral presentation to the group on their progress.

If students do not wish to take the dissertation module, they may complete their studies after satisfactory completion of four taught modules (120 credits) with a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip), or after satisfactory completion of any two modules (60 credits) with a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert). Students who wish to finish after only one module may apply to have those credits applied to a different programme at a later date.

## Learning Outcomes

The table below sets out what students learn in the programme and the modules in which that learning takes place. Details of how learning outcomes are assessed through these modules can be found in module specifications.

### Level 7

<b>Subject Knowledge and Understanding</b>	
<b>Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Module in which this is delivered</b>
Appraise and evaluate the relationship between legal institutions and society	Foundations and principles of child care - LAW-40001 Contemporary issues in child care - LAW-40002
Critically evaluate current research within the law and society paradigm, particularly as it relates to child law; analyse the origins of scholarship in this area of law and, evaluate the range of methodologies used in such scholarship, where appropriate propose new hypotheses	All modules
Demonstrate original thinking about the complex issues related to interdisciplinary scholarship and communicate these ideas to specialist and non-specialist audiences	All modules
Demonstrate self-direction and judgement in planning and carrying out research, tackling research problems and implementing research tasks	Dissertation
Synthesise ideas and themes in law and society research, in an intellectually nuanced manner	All modules but particularly the dissertation

## 8. Final and intermediate awards

<b>MA Child Care Law and Practice</b>	180 credits
<b>Postgraduate Diploma in Child Care Law and Practice</b>	120 credits
<b>Postgraduate Certificate in Child Care Law and Practice</b>	60 credits

## 9. How is the Programme Assessed?

The wide variety of assessment methods used on this programme at Keele reflects the broad range of knowledge and skills that are developed as you progress through the degree programme. Teaching staff pay particular attention to specifying clear assessment criteria and providing timely, regular and constructive feedback that helps to clarify things you did not understand and helps you to improve your performance. The following list is representative of the variety of assessment methods used on your programme:

The programme is assessed through written work. The compulsory and elective 30 credit modules are all assessed by written work in the form of an essay of 5,000 words. These assessments test the students' ability to critically analyse current socio-legal scholarship and to apply that knowledge to legal examples or proposed law reform. Through the essays, students will also demonstrate their systemic understanding of the relationship between law and practice of child care and apply interdisciplinary socio-legal theory to critique this. These

assessments will also evaluate students' ability to demonstrate original thinking and high-level written communication skills.

The final form of assessment is the dissertation, which is an extended (15,000-20,000 words) and in-depth piece of writing that brings together all the skills that students have learned throughout the programme. As part of the dissertation year students are also required to prepare a dissertation proposal and may give an oral presentation. Assessment of the proposal (and any) presentation is as a competency assessment.

## **Assessment procedures**

All essay assignments and dissertations will be marked by the relevant module leader, and second marked in accordance with university guidelines.

Senior members of academic staff from other universities are appointed to act as external examiners on the Programme, in compliance with the University's guidance and procedures.

Students are also supported through formative (non-mark-bearing) assessment throughout the programme. In addition to those noted above, this takes the form of feedback in group discussions, submission of essay plans to tutors for feedback ahead of essay submission, and feedback from dissertation supervisors on the choice of title, dissertation proposal and each chapter prior to final submission.

Marks are awarded for summative assessments designed to assess your achievement of learning outcomes. You will also be assessed formatively to enable you to monitor your own progress and to assist staff in identifying and addressing any specific learning needs. Feedback, including guidance on how you can improve the quality of your work, is also provided on all summative assessments within three working weeks of submission, unless there are compelling circumstances that make this impossible, and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

## **10. Accreditation**

This programme does not have accreditation from an external body.

## **11. University Regulations**

The University Regulations form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. Further information about the University Regulations can be found at:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>

If this programme has any exemptions, variations or additions to the University Regulations these will be detailed in an Annex at the end of this document titled 'Programme-specific regulations'.

## **12. What are the typical admission requirements for the Programme?**

See the relevant course page on the website for the admission requirements relevant to this programme:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/>

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is considered on a case-by-case basis and those interested should contact the Programme Director. The University's guidelines on this can be found here:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmesandmodules/recognitionofpriorlearning/>

## **13. How are students supported on the programme?**

Students are allocated an Academic Mentor, whose role is to support you through your students. Students will have personal meetings with their mentor during and if convenient to the student, between block attendance. Contact is also maintained via telephone, email, and MS Teams. The students' reflective diary provides a basis for discussion of learning aims. Further information here:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/academiclife/academicmentoring/>. The dissertation supervisor will offer direct advice and supervision in the production of the dissertation. The course director and the postgraduate director for the Law School are also available to assist students. The School of Law also has a Learning Development Support Tutor, whose role is to support students at both UG and PGT level with developing any aspect of their academic skills in law.

All students receive initial guidance on how to identify, locate and use materials available in libraries and elsewhere (including the internet). Guidelines are provided for the production of coursework assignments and dissertations and these are reinforced by seminars and individual supervision, which focus specifically on essay planning and writing and research methodology. Detailed written, and if requested, oral feedback is provided on all course work.

Each module is supported with a designated KLE page which will include materials for students, such as handouts and copies of lecture presentations, links to external resources, such as relevant websites and journal

articles. There will also be a monitored discussion forum.

Central university services available to all students include: the central Library together with a dedicated law librarian; an international office; a student counselling service; and a disability office. More information about these services is available at [keele.ac.uk/students/student-services/](https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/student-services/) (Student Services). Students may also join the Keele Postgraduate Association. Students whose first language is not English are offered language classes, facilities and services by the University's Language Centre. Following diagnostic English language assessment, students may be required or recommended to take English language classes offered by the Language Centre. In addition to modules on English for academic study, students have access to one-to-one tutorials for individual help and advice and to a wealth of resources for self-study and practice. Any student, international or otherwise, can request a 30 min 1-1 session if they need it. Students requiring English language support (on testing) will be allocated to one or two of the following modules:

- ENL-40001: Academic English for Postgraduate Students 1 -semester 1
- ENL-40004: Academic English for Postgraduate Students 1-B-semester 2
- ENL-40002: Academic English for Postgraduate Students 2 -semester 1 or 2

For students required to undertake these English Language modules, determination of progression to the dissertation module will include an evaluation of the student's engagement and performance on the respective English Language modules.

## 14. Learning Resources

The Library has many resources for your subject, both on campus and online. Further information about the library can be found at: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/library/>. You can access the various materials available on-line using the recommended username and password. Details on these are available from the Library website at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/library/support/access>.

### Computer facilities

For information about IT Services please consult the IT Services website: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/it/>. IT Services is located in the library building and is responsible for the computing infrastructure in the university and for the support of all staff and students undertaking academic computing tasks. There are a large number of 'open access' PCs available for students. All student PCs use a standard platform, which includes software such as Microsoft Office, web browsers, and other standard applications students may need. Printing facilities are available in the library building. Students must ensure that they have read form CC.03, which is the Conditions of use of the Computer Facilities. Opening Hours: in order to check if the computer facilities and the Help Desk are open, students should telephone: 01782 733636 or 733838. Further information can be found at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/it/>

## 15. Other Learning Opportunities

It is possible for students to register on a single module (modular programme of study) for Continuing Professional Development or other purposes. Students may choose to attend the module without completing the assessment but no credits would be awarded for this. Please contact the Law Office ([law.office@keele.ac.uk](mailto:law.office@keele.ac.uk)) for further information.

There is an active research community within the School of Law and postgraduate students are invited to participate in the wide range of seminars and other research activities, such as workshops and academic conferences held at Keele. A research seminar programme is organised each year, where members of staff present their latest work. There are also other lectures and research seminars organised in other Schools and Research Institutes within the University that may be of interest to you. You will be informed of these via your Keele email address.

Students may enrol for individual modules for CPD purposes only if they so wish. The programme is recognised by The Law Society of England and Wales for Continuing Professional Development purposes.

## 16. Additional Costs

As to be expected there will be additional costs for inter-library loans and potential overdue library fines, print and graduation. We do not anticipate any further costs for this programme.

## 17. Quality management and enhancement

The quality and standards of learning in this programme are subject to a continuous process of monitoring, review and enhancement.

- The School Education Committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring quality management and enhancement procedures and activities across the School.

- Individual modules and the programme as a whole are reviewed and enhanced every year in the annual programme review which takes place at the end of the academic year.
- The programmes are run in accordance with the University's Quality Assurance procedures and are subject to periodic reviews under the Revalidation process.

Student evaluation of, and feedback on, the quality of learning on every module takes place every year using a variety of different methods:

- The results of student evaluations of all modules are reported to module leaders and reviewed by the Programme Committee as part of annual programme review.
- Findings related to the programme from the annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), and from regular surveys of the student experience conducted by the University, are subjected to careful analysis and a planned response at programme and School level.
- Feedback received from representatives of students on the programme is considered and acted on at regular meetings of the Student Staff Voice Committee.

The University appoints senior members of academic staff from other universities to act as external examiners on all programmes. They are responsible for:

- Approving examination questions
- Confirming all marks which contribute to a student's degree
- Reviewing and giving advice on the structure and content of the programme and assessment procedures

Information about current external examiner(s) can be found here:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/ga/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/>

## 18. The principles of programme design

This programme was designed to complement the University's Learning and Teaching and Assessment strategies. In particular, the University's focus on interdisciplinary study in the undergraduate programme is expanded, through this programme, to postgraduate study. It is in keeping with the University's commitment to a flexible postgraduate curriculum and to developing innovative taught postgraduate programmes that draw on internationally recognised research expertise. It was also designed in a way that meets and closely reflects the requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

The programme described in this document has been drawn up with reference to, and in accordance with the guidance set out in, the following documents:

a. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

b. Keele University Regulations and Guidance for Students and Staff: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations>

## Version History

### This document

**Date Approved:** 30 January 2024

### What's Changed

Change of semester for LAW-40002 and LAW-40003

### Previous documents

Version No	Year	Owner	Date Approved	Summary of and rationale for changes
1	2023/24	LAURA PRITCHARD-JONES	18 April 2023	