

**Quality Assurance**
**Masters, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate in Child Care Law and Practice**
**Programme Specification: Postgraduate**

*Information for students: the programme specification is the definitive document summarising the structure and content of your degree programme. It is reviewed and updated every year as part of Keele's Curriculum Annual Review and Development process. The document aims to clarify to potential and current students what you can expect from the study of the subject over the course of your programme.*

This programme specification applies to students starting the programme from September 2017 onwards.

<b>Names of programme(s) and award title(s)</b>	MA in Child Care Law and Practice PGDip in Child Care Law and Practice PGCert in Child Care Law and Practice
<b>Mode of study</b>	Full time / part time/modular
<b>Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award</b>	Level 7
<b>Duration:</b>	One year full time / two years part time/up to five years modular

Details of professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) (If appropriate):

Recognised by The Law Society of England and Wales for Continuing Professional Development purposes only.

See: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/professionalstatutoryregulatorybodies/>

External Examiner(s) names, see: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/>

### 1. What is the philosophy of the Programme?

The MA in 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.

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:

- 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-disciplinarity 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.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme are for students to be able to demonstrate:

- 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

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.

The programme will provide subject specific skills, including the ability 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.

#### *d. Keele Graduate Attributes*

Engagement with this programme will enable you to further 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. Whilst you will undoubtedly have already developed these skills and abilities to varying degrees, such existing capabilities can always be deepened and enriched. Our educational programme and learning environment is designed to help you to develop further as a well-rounded postgraduate who is capable of making a positive and valued contribution in a complex and rapidly changing world, whichever spheres of life you engage in during and after your studies at Keele. Please refer to the programme webpages for a statement of how you can achieve the Keele Graduate Attributes through full engagement in the programme and other educational opportunities at Keele. Further information about the Keele Graduate Attributes can be found here: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/journey/>

## **2. How is the Programme taught?**

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.

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 and Social Work Schools with contributions from expert academic staff in other disciplines, including Health, Ethics and Sociology. Individual staff biographies can be found at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/law/staff/>. Similarly, members of the Social Work School may be engaged in the programme and their individual biographies can be found here: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/socialwork/people/>.

The programme leader is Kelvin Johnstone who has both professional legal and academic experience in Child Law. The programme was developed by 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.

### 3. 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 5000 word essay, before undertaking a course in 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 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 part time pathways. If part-time, students may choose any of the following options:

- Take all four taught modules in year one and the dissertation in year two
- 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 core 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, from, Children and Medicine, Youth Justice, Looked After Children, and Education, though students may substitute for **one** of these a module from another M level 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
- Introduction to Moral and Legal Concepts (in Medical Ethics and Law)
- Autonomy and Paternalism (in Medical Ethics and Law)
- Life and Death
- Public Health

Students who successfully complete this module will be able to:

Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered	Principal forms of assessment (of the Learning Outcome) used
Appraise and evaluate the relationship between legal institutions and society	Foundations and Principles Contemporary Issues	Essay.
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	Essay for the modules and subsequently Dissertation.
Demonstrate original thinking about the complex issues related to interdisciplinary scholarship and communicate these ideas to specialist and non-specialist audiences	All modules	Essays
Demonstrate self-direction and judgement in planning and carrying out research, tackling research problems and implementing research tasks	Dissertation	Dissertation.

Synthesise ideas and themes in law and society research, in an intellectually nuanced manner	All modules but particularly the dissertation	Essays, case study, Dissertation
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### 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.

#### Summary schedule of modules – core or option

Module	Core or Option	Credits
Foundations and Principles	Core	30
Contemporary Issues	Core	30
Youth Justice or Children and Medicine	Option	30
Looked After Children or Education	Option	30
Dissertation	Core	60

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.

#### 4. How is the Programme assessed?

The programme is assessed through written work. The core and elective 30 credit modules are all assessed by written work in the form of an essay of 5000 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.

#### 5. What are the typical admission requirements for the programme?

The MA Child Care Law and Practice programme is open to graduates with a first or second class honours degree in Law, Health Practice or Social Work or in a related discipline (such as sociology, criminology or politics), or any other person (with or without a degree in another discipline) who can demonstrate appropriate professional qualifications and/or experience. Applications are encouraged from a broad range of interests, expertise and professional backgrounds. Candidates who do not meet the usual criteria will be considered.

Applicants for whom English is not a first language must provide evidence of a qualification in English language. The minimum score for entry to the MA is academic IELTS 6.5 or equivalent. Students who have taken one of the English language qualifications but did not achieve the required grade may be admitted to the programme provided that they study on a pre-session English Language course before they start their degree studies.

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

Students are allocated a personal tutor, whose role is to assist students with personal or academic problems, to advise on pastoral issues, and to provide individual supervision and feedback on written assignments. Students will have personal meetings with their tutor during and if convenient to the student, between block attendance. Contact is also maintained via telephone and email. The students' reflective diary provides a basis for discussion of learning aims. 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.

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 in the university prospectus and at <https://www.keele.ac.uk/ssds/> (Student Support and Development Services). Students may also join the Keele Postgraduate Association [www.keele.ac.uk/socs/kpa](http://www.keele.ac.uk/socs/kpa)

The Law School also offers a small library and a postgraduate study room available to students on this programme. 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.

## **7. Learning Resources**

The Library has many resources for your subject, both on campus and online. Further information about the library can be found at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/li/>. 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/>

## **8. 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 postgraduate administrator ([law.postgrad@keele.ac.uk](mailto:law.postgrad@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.

### 9. Quality management and enhancement

The programme is managed by the course review committee, chaired by the course director and consisting of module leaders and tutors. The committee meets annually to review feedback from students, assessment results, external examiners' reports and other relevant information to monitor the course. This committee reports to the Director of Postgraduate Studies and the Postgraduate Committee, which monitor all programmes to review any common issues arising across the programmes or other areas of note that have not been addressed elsewhere.

The programme is reviewed at regular intervals through a combination of module evaluation forms, which are completed by students to give feedback on each module; meetings of the Staff-Student Liaison Committee, a forum for students to raise any ongoing issues that need to be brought to the course director's attention; and informal feedback resulting from conversations between students and module leaders. Each of these forums feed into ongoing reviews of the programme by the teaching team. All tutors in the Law School also participate in regular peer observation of teaching, which is used to identify teaching strengths and areas of development.

### 10. 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 has also been designed with reference to, and in accordance with, the guidance set out in the following documents.

- Programme Specification Template Keele University, 2016-17.
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, 2015, Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, including Chapter A2 (Reference Points for Academic Standards) and Chapter A3 (Setting Academic Standards and an Outcome-based approach to Academic Standards).
- Keele University Learning and Teaching Strategy 2015-2020.

### 11. Programme Version History

Version History	Date	CHANGES / NOTES
Date first created	July 2012	
Revision history	25 Nov 2016	For 17/18: Minor update of relevant information in line with the new Programme Specification and inclusion of the Language Centre English language support provision.
	15 June 2017	Altered Learning Outcomes to comply with approved terminology.
Date approved	15 June 2017	SLTC
	31 Jan 2017	FLTC
	27 June 2017	FLTC