

BA (HONOURS) IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Duration: Four Years Full-Time
CAO Points Guide:* 230

NFQ Level: Level 8
CAO Code: NC030



*For each course we have given a guideline based on our points over the past three years. This is a guide only, points vary each year.

About the Course

NCI's BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care provides a firm foundation in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) to practice in a range of early childhood settings. The four-year degree programme is fully aligned and recognised as a professional qualification by the Department of Education (DE) and by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Inclusion and Youth (DECDIY).

An essential and hugely beneficial key element of the programme is the strong emphasis placed on supervised professional practice placement in diverse Early Childhood settings. More than 1,000 hours are specially allocated to supervised placement-related activities. Among other skills, such as observations and ethical practice, application of strategies in learning environments, the placement includes planning and developing curriculum for young children. The final year provides an opportunity for students to combine their experiences and skills in a practice-based/led capstone project.

During the course you will cover a range of subjects to gain a deep understanding of the holistic learning and development of babies and children from birth to six years of age. A specialised Education Play Lab at NCI provides opportunities for 'hands on' student learning.

Who is the course for?

This course is ideally suited to those who would like to work with or for babies and young children and their families from birth to six in the ECEC sector. This course is also suitable if you would like to work as an early childhood inspector/evaluator, mentor, curriculum trainer for TUSLA (the child and family support agency), DE or Pobal.

Career Prospects

On completion, you will possess the skills to work as a room leader or supervisor, working directly with children, as a setting-based practitioner or manager, in advisory, mentorship, training and leadership roles such as Early Childhood Inspectors, Specialists in Better Start.



Government strategies have set out a vision for a graduate-led workforce in ECEC and the ECCE Scheme (free preschool years) over the next decade. These strategies include a new funding stream, Core Funding, which includes a graduate premium to be paid to services with graduate room leads for all ECEC age groups, including the ECCE room lead. These changes highlight the opportunities for graduates from this programme.

Course Structure and Award

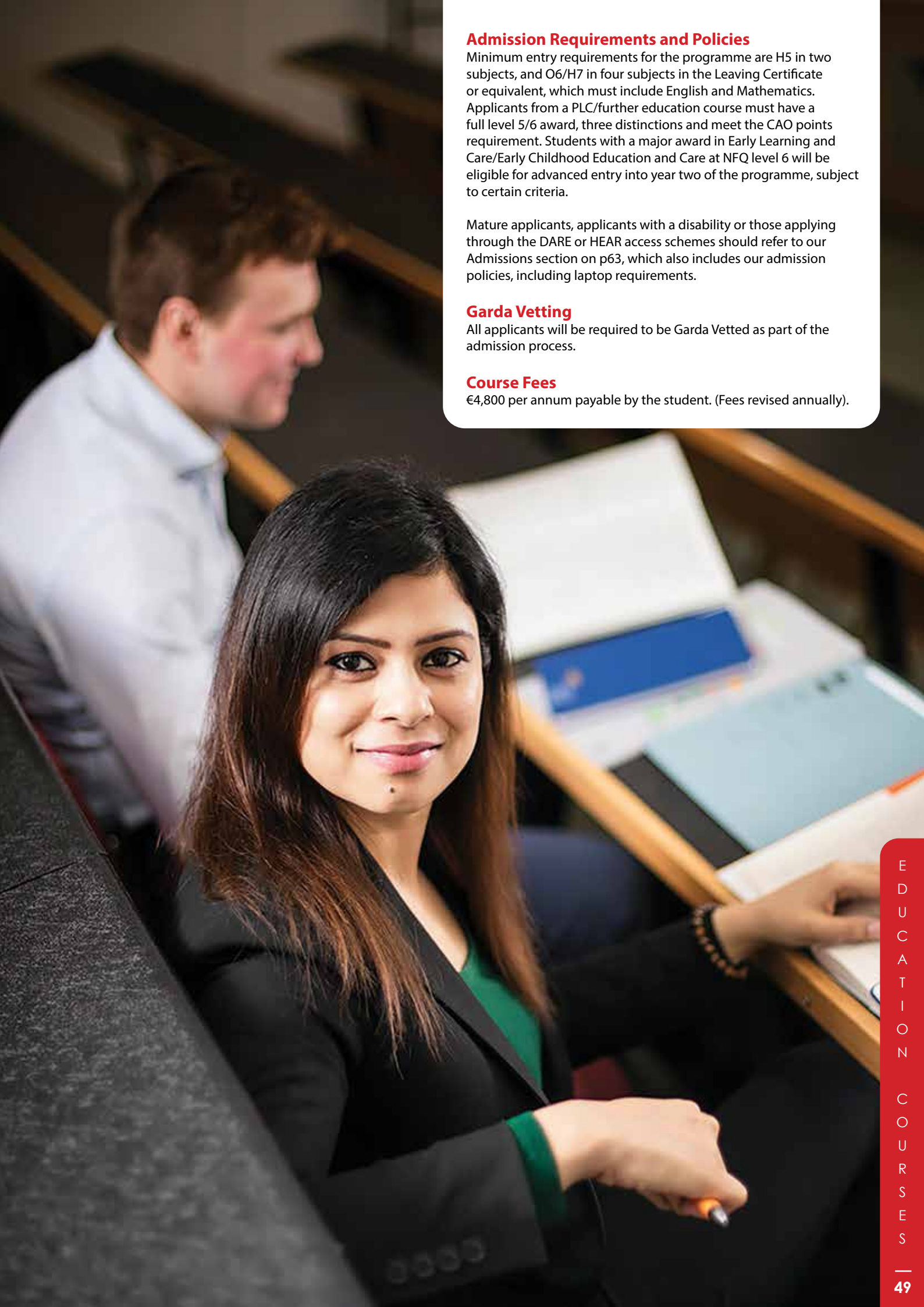
The Bachelor of Arts Honours in Early Childhood Education and Care is a four-year honours degree, awarded by QQI at level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, with exit awards. Each year has two semesters for a duration of twelve weeks of teaching per semester. Year 1 includes field visits to early childhood settings and from year 2 students will gain practical experience through supervised professional high quality practice placements.

Professional Recognition

This degree is recognised by the Department of Education (DE) as Initial Professional Education (IPE), to practice as professional Early Childhood Educators in the Early Learning and Care sector in Ireland. This programme is also on the list of approved programmes by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) Early Years Recognised Qualifications for practice, meeting the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and DCEDIY Childcare Programme Contracts.

Further Study Options

Upon successful completion, students may progress to the Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Practice in Teaching for Further Education at NCI or the NCI Master of Arts in Educational Practice or other postgraduate programmes. Alternatively, they may progress their studies into specialised graduate study areas such as policy development, play therapy or childhood studies.



Admission Requirements and Policies

Minimum entry requirements for the programme are H5 in two subjects, and O6/H7 in four subjects in the Leaving Certificate or equivalent, which must include English and Mathematics. Applicants from a PLC/further education course must have a full level 5/6 award, three distinctions and meet the CAO points requirement. Students with a major award in Early Learning and Care/Early Childhood Education and Care at NFQ level 6 will be eligible for advanced entry into year two of the programme, subject to certain criteria.

Mature applicants, applicants with a disability or those applying through the DARE or HEAR access schemes should refer to our Admissions section on p63, which also includes our admission policies, including laptop requirements.

Garda Vetting

All applicants will be required to be Garda Vetted as part of the admission process.

Course Fees

€4,800 per annum payable by the student. (Fees revised annually).

COURSE CONTENT

Year 1

- Holistic Child Learning and Development*
- Foundations of Early Childhood Education and Care*
- Music, Movement, Art and Drama
- Academic Foundations and Scholarship
- Essential Legislation and Regulation in ECEC*
- Child Health Nutrition and Wellbeing*

*Field visits to diverse early childhood settings will be integrated within all or some of these modules

Year 2

- Core Pedagogies and Curriculum in ECEC
- Dispositions and Dynamics of Behaviour in Children
- Managing your Learning and Academic Practice
- Supervised Professional Practice Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice
- Play and Creativity in ECEC
- Diversity and Pluralism in Learning Language and Literacies

Year 3

- Quality Assurance in ECEC Environments
- Early Learning in a Digital World
- Inquiry Learning – Design and Evaluation of Curriculum in ECEC
- Supervised Professional Practice Placement: Application of Strategies in Learning Environments in ECEC Practice
- The Child Family and Society – Stakeholders in ECEC
- Leadership and Governance in ECEC Environments

Year 4

- ECEC Research Methods and Inquiry
- Social, Political and Cultural Contexts of ECEC
- Working in Multi Professional Contexts
- Personal and Professional Identity
- Capstone ECEC Practice-based Project

