The University of Hong Kong
Faculty of Education

Master of Education programme (MEd)

Early Childhood Education

Dr Hui LI Course Coordinator
Telephone: 22415283
Email: huili@hku.hk

This specialism aims to help participants to acquire scientifically-based knowledge about early childhood development and education, to develop a deeper understanding of contextual influences on children’s development and learning, and to further develop their professional competence in planning, implementing and evaluating programmes of early childhood education and care. Topics include social, cognitive and language development during early childhood; curriculum models in early childhood education; child assessment; evaluation of early childhood programmes; and administration and management of early childhood programmes.

Who would benefit from this specialism?
This specialism is designed for educators and key personnel in the field of Early Childhood Education. It will attract those with experience in child care and kindergarten settings and who plan to work or are working in early childhood settings, tertiary institutions and governments. A full-time option is included to attract applicants from the PRC and further afar.

Mode of study:
To be available on full-time (1-year study) and/or part-time (2-year study) mode.

Outline of four Specialist Courses:

Course 1: Promoting child development in early childhood education programmes
This course will consider approaches to understanding and facilitating physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development in young children. It will consider influences on social development in early childhood and examine the applications of theories of cognitive and language development in early childhood education. The course will also focus on ways to promote (i) social competence, self-esteem and self-control in the preschool environment; (ii) cognitive development; (iii) the acquisition of pre-reading, writing and mathematical skills; and (iv) second language acquisition. Assessment: 100% coursework.

Course 2: Learning and teaching in early childhood education
This course considers how theoretical approaches and sociocontextual factors have shaped approaches to early childhood education. Curriculum models adopted in early childhood programmes in different countries will be critically evaluated. The course will also consider (i) curriculum design, planning, implementation and evaluation; and (ii) the influence of recent research and the educational reforms on learning and teaching.
Assessment: 100% coursework.

Course 3: Planning, management, evaluation and leadership in early childhood education
This course provides an overview of how to plan, implement and evaluate early childhood programmes. Specific topics include: the development and review of programmes; financial management; staff development and appraisal; leadership, the development of effective communication strategies for working with other adults; and advocacy for children. Case studies based on the local context will be used throughout the course and the impact of the educational reform on the administration and management of early childhood programmes will also be considered.
Assessment: 100% coursework.

Course 4: Contemporary issues in early childhood education
This course considers critical issues in early childhood education from local, regional and international standpoints. It considers (i) the influences of multiple perspectives including postmodern and ecological system theories on early childhood policies and programmes; (ii) reasons for changes and the “reconceptualization” of early childhood pedagogy; (iii) how information and communication technology have changed the form of early childhood education in some contexts; (iv) innovations and trends in early childhood education; and (v) controversial issues in early childhood education.
Assessment: 100% coursework.

In addition to four specialist courses, students will also have to complete:
- a research methods course “Methods of Research and Enquiry” (12 credits);
- plus
- either an option of one elective course and a DISSERTATION (18 credits), or an option of three elective courses and a PROJECT by Independent Study (6 credits each).