The specialism aims to provide participants with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to implement high quality and contextually appropriate early childhood education. Specifically, the specialism will help participants acquire scientifically-based knowledge about early childhood development and education, develop a deeper understanding of contextual influences on children's development and learning, and further develop their professional competence in planning, implementing and evaluating programmes of early childhood education and care. Participants will also be encouraged to access to the most recent international knowledge in the field.

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.

Mode of study:
The specialism is available in part-time and full-time modes (for 2-year (up to 4-year) part-time study or 1-year full-time study).

Outline of the four Specialist Courses:

Course 1: Promoting child development in early childhood education (6 credits)

This module will consider approaches to understanding and facilitating various aspects of development, which include physical, cognitive, language and social and emotional development of young children. It will consider influences on early childhood development and examine the applications of child and human development theories in early childhood education programmes. This module will also cover various topics in early childhood development and education: (a) observation and assessment in the early years; (b) school readiness; (c) optimal child development; and (d) home-school cooperation.

Course 2: Learning and teaching in early childhood education (6 credits)

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 (1) curriculum design, planning, implementation and evaluation; and (2) the influence of recent research and the educational reforms on learning and teaching.

Course 3: Planning, management, evaluation and leadership in early childhood education (6 credits)

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.

**Course 4: Contemporary issues in early childhood education (6 credits)**

This course considers the critical issues in early childhood education across a broad range of contexts, using multiple methodologies and perspectives including postmodernism and ecological system theories. Most of the contemporary issues in the field, locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally, will be critically evaluated. The course will cover (1) developing, implementing and assessing the early childhood education policies; (2) reconceptionalisation of early childhood development and education; and (3) innovations and developmental trends in early childhood education.

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 (6 credits each).