

Frequently asked questions

1. Are there exams?
 - a. No, all assessments are based on observations of practice, student led discussions and written assignments.
2. Do I need to work in a Therapeutic environment?
 - a. No, but you do need to be working alongside children or young people. In addition you must have the support of your organisation's management who need to be able to commit to developing therapeutic practice and opportunities for your engagement in reflective thinking.
3. Does the course qualify me to work in the childcare sector?
 - a. We regard the course as an equivalent to, and exceeding the requirements set out in, the Level-3 Diplomas in Health and Social Care. This has been accepted by OFSTED and the DfE.
4. What support will I get?
 - a. Students receive tutor and peer support. Tutor support can be face to face, via SKYPE, phone or through email. Group tutorials allow the group of students to share concerns and support the development of each other's practice.
5. I've never studied before, is that a problem?
 - a. Lots of our students have not studied since their GCSE's and many have not previously enjoyed their educational experiences. Comprehensive support is available for all students, regardless of their previous experience of education, to support them to meet the requirements of the course.
6. How will I access the library and other facilities?
 - a. Many of the books are available online and tutors make all papers and articles available through the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) BlackBoard. There may be opportunities through inter-university agreements to use more local library facilities.
7. What are the entry requirements?
 - a. You need to demonstrate an ability to study and write English at an academic level. For those students without English GCSE we will request a piece of written work as evidence of their ability and you need access to a computer / internet.
 - b. Current employment working alongside children or young people for at least 18 hours per week and your employer will need to confirm how observations will be undertaken. These need to be undertaken by someone with experience/qualification in observing practice.
 - c. Your employer must show their commitment to support your study with access to documents and learning experiences. Your employer will be asked to sign a Learning Agreement.
8. What time commitment is required for the course?
 - a. In addition to the taught monthly sessions, and assignments, you should engage in wider reading around the topics - a range of papers will be made available by teaching staff. The time required for this reading varies from student to student.
9. How do I apply?
 - a. The application form for the course can be found on the Mulberry Bush website - (Please do not try to apply via UCAS)
 - b. Shortlisted students will be invited for an interview at the Mulberry Bush, to be held at the end of June. The interview process will include a group exercise and one-to-one interview with tutors.

What else do I need to know?

Cost: The course costs £3250 per student per year.

Fees are payable directly to the Mulberry Bush Organisation and termly payments can be arranged if required.

If you have any further questions about the course please contact:
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Course Information Booklet

The University of the West of England (UWE) in collaboration with the Mulberry Bush Organisation Foundation Degree (FdA) in Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People.

What is a Foundation Degree (FdA)?

It is the equivalent of two thirds of a full honours degree and is a fully flexible qualification allowing students to study part-time or full-time to fit their lifestyle. Foundation degrees are aimed at practitioners who are in employment but wanting to professionally develop through study. It brings together the practical knowledge and skills of experienced practitioners with up-to-date research and academic study.

By completing both years of this Foundation Degree students will be awarded with a Level-5 qualification. The course has been carefully designed to incorporate the content and requirements of the mandatory Level-3 Diploma in Health and Social Care.

Students have an opportunity to progress and take a third year to top-up to either a BA Hons Degree or Postgraduate qualification through the University of the West of England, or potentially other universities. Please note top-up years are not taught by the Mulberry Bush itself.

What does this course involve?

The foundation degree in Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People has been specially designed for practitioners in the childcare sector. The course is suitable for those working in education, both mainstream and special, residential care, or health settings working with children or young people who have experienced trauma or mental health difficulties. The course is also suitable for foster carers.

The course was sector endorsed by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and is currently recognised by the Department for Education as an equivalent

qualification to the Level-3 Diploma in Health and Social Care. In 2012 the course was awarded the National Training Award for a course run by a medium sized employer. The course has also been accredited by APPCIOS (The Association for Psychodynamic Practice in Counselling in Organisational Settings) and students who successfully complete it can apply to become APPCIOS members.

How is the program delivered?

The course is a work-based learning model and requires all students to be working alongside children or young people for at least 18 hours per week; this can be in a paid or voluntary capacity. The taught part of the programme is delivered through monthly study days held at the Mulberry Bush in West Oxfordshire over two academic years. Each year students will study four modules, each building on the knowledge developed in the previous module.

How will I be assessed?

Each module consists of a direct observation of practice as well as a written piece of assessment. Written assessments link theory to practice and primarily draw on the students' experiences and require the students to show an ability to be self-reflective.

Year One - Certificate in Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People (120 credits at level I)

Module 1 - Foundation to therapeutic work with children and young people

This provides an introduction to many of the concepts and themes of the FdA in Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People. It will focus on the development of

the students' general professional skills (as defined by the relevant National Occupation Standards), their familiarity with all required policies and procedures.

Module 2 - Children with complex needs

This provides an introduction to the theoretical basis of therapeutic work with children and young people. Students will be introduced to key psychodynamic concepts, models of child development (including attachment theory) and will consider how these impact on children who have experienced early years trauma, loss or abuse.

Module 3 - Context of professional practice

This introduces students to the context in which professional practice takes place. This includes external contexts such as statutory and legal frameworks, ethics, values and principles, and will also explore the internal contexts such as organisational policy and principles, looking at how these impact on the direct work with children and young people. Students will also learn about group processes, reflecting on conscious and unconscious dynamics in groups and organisations.

Module 4 - Developing reflective skills in therapeutic work with children and young people

This module increases the practitioner's ability to reflect on what happens in the interactions between themselves and others, including children and young people and how each are affected by the other. It provides a focus for the way practitioners relate to the children and young people with whom they work. In addition it provides a focus on the practitioner's role as part of a wider team and how he or she relates to the team.

Year Two - Foundation Degree in Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People (120 credit points at level 2)

Module 5 - Developing professional practice

This builds on lessons learned in the first year focusing on the development of the practitioners' general professional skills, the ability to apply these to working with groups of children and young people and in the context of working as part of a wider team.

Module 6 - Application of psychodynamic theory to professional practice

This follows directly from the theory module in the first year but with a more specific focus on literature relating theory to practice, including group and systems theory. Students will be expected to show a greater degree of familiarity with theoretical concepts and models and their relationship to practice, as well as a greater ability to articulate and analyse the relationship between the two.

Module 7 - Clinical practice

This complements the professional practice and theory modules but with a particular focus on work undertaken with individual children or young people. Students are required to use a set model to present an area of their work for discussion and reflection by the group.

It will focus on the development of the practitioner's ability to reflect on and process the ways that he or she relates to and supports the children in the clinical task.

Module 8 - Professional issues in therapeutic provision for children and young people

This brings together the learning from across the course allowing students to work independently to focus on a specific area of their work. Students are encouraged to think about how their overall learning can contribute to the development of practice in their workplace. Students are required to use relevant literature to provide a critical analysis of this chosen area and should identify some recommendations for practice.