

## Programme Specification Definitive Document

### 1. Basic Information

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| <b>1.1 Awarding Institution:</b>                                       | Plymouth Marjon University   |
| <b>1.2 Teaching Institution:</b>                                       | Plymouth Marjon University   |
| <b>1.3 Locus of Delivery:</b>  | Plymouth Marjon University   |
| <b>1.4 Final Award Title:</b>  | Master of Arts (MA)  |
| <b>1.5 FHEQ Level:</b>   | 7  |
| <b>1.6 Programme Title:</b>  | Literature for Children and Young Adults   |
| <b>1.7 Mode and Duration of Study:</b>                                 | Full Time – one year Part Time – two years   |
| <b>1.8 School:</b>   | Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences   |
| <b>1.9 HECoS Code:</b>   | 100319   |
| <b>1.10 Collaborative Provision Arrangement:</b>                       | N/A  |
| <b>1.11 Admission Criteria:</b>  | Normal University entrance criteria apply (please refer to the website for further details). International students will be expected to meet the English language requirements of IELTS 6.5 or equivalent. |
| <b>1.12 Accrediting Professional Body/PSRB</b>                         | N/A  |
| <b>1.13 QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s):</b>                         | N/A  |
| <b>1.14 Other External Points of Reference:</b>                        | Master’s degree characteristics (2010)<br>FHEQ - Framework for Higher Education Qualifications<br>UK Professional Standards Framework  |
| <b>1.15 Language of Study (for learning, teaching and assessment):</b> | English  |
| <b>1.16 Work-Based Learning Arrangements:</b>                          | N/A  |
| <b>1.17 Arrangements for Distance Learning:</b>                        | N/A  |
| <b>1.18 Original Date of Production:</b>                               | January 2017   |
| <b>1.19 Date of Commencement:</b>                                      | September 2018   |
| <b>1.20 Review Date:</b>   | September 2024   |

### 2. Programme Outline

This distinctive programme is designed to accommodate the needs and interests of a growing number of professionals interested in the world of children’s literature. Reading for Pleasure is a government priority (NC. 2013, DfE 2012) and as an agenda is well supported by a range of professional institutions, research bodies, political parties, and children’s charities. Reading is known to be key to academic success and well-being (Sullivan and Brown 2013, Reading Agency 2013 National Literacy Forum 2014, Dombey et al 2010). There is a wealth of children’s literature

available, but research has indicated that many teachers and parents lack confidence in selecting literature for children (Cremin et al 2008).

Although a Master's in Children's and Young Adult literature will appeal to those working in education this programme would also offer a route for those interested in children's literature who wish to pursue a qualification at Master's level.

Students will be given an opportunity to study and appreciate the wide ranges of literature available both in Britain and internationally, and the University's core theme of global citizenship will be addressed through consideration of the international impact of children's English Literature now and in the past, and by the study of literature in translation. Through study of critical theory, research methodology and practical application, students will generate enquiry into discussions on constructions of childhood as portrayed through literature. Students will explore the relationships between reader, writer, illustrator, text and context considering responses and intentions. A distinctive feature of this programme is the opportunity to choose a module to develop an understanding and expertise in writing creatively for children. An annual book event will offer opportunities to engage with experts in the field of children's literature and also to present their own research interests.

The modules will be taught by a team of enthusiastic and experienced experts within the field of children's literature who have established links with local and national bodies. This qualification would enable students to embark on valid research and further their own career development in areas such as education, libraries or publishing. Students can progress through the Diploma and the 90-credit 'research core' with Plymouth Marjon University to achieve the full award of MA.

### **2.1 Integrating Sustainability into the Curriculum**

The MA focuses on a model of sustainability which informs individuals' and organisations' ability to develop critical practice and professional roles which will inform, and enhance organisational sustainability, including enhanced digital literacy – a University core theme. Environmental sustainability is also integrated in line with QAA Education for sustainability development, and issues of environmental and cultural sustainability will be addressed directly through ecocritical approaches to literature and creative writing production. All modules will broaden individual subject knowledge and will equip practitioners with reflective practice tools to enable them to critique literature thus being better placed to support children's enjoyment of reading. In terms of individual practice, specialist modules such as *Opening Stories: Genres and Themes in Literature for Children and Young Adults* and *Research Design* will help practitioners to discover and harness expertise and breadth of knowledge which will enhance their understanding of the importance of developing lifelong readers who in turn will be able to pass on a love of reading to future generations, thus supporting the university's social mobility agenda. By developing their own understanding and knowledge in this field, students will be in a better position to inspire a love of learning and literature.

## **3. Distinctive Features**

The course is unique in that it offers an opportunity to critically explore literature written for both children and young adults. Another key distinctive feature is that students are offered the opportunity to undertake a module in writing creatively for children. Choice is an integral element to this programme and students will have the opportunity to generate 'bespoke' elements that meet their specific needs and interests. The programme would have vocational relevance as the prospective students would be those possibly in associated employment, seeking to advance their knowledge and understanding in the field of children's literature, or students who have completed a degree and wish to embark on Master's study to enhance their

employability. These students could be teachers in school, librarians, parents or publishers with a passion for children's literacy and raising standards in reading. Students wishing to undertake a full-time course will become further qualified before embarking on their choice of career. This degree would provide an extension route for a number of courses currently running at the university. There are a team of established University Tutors working at the university who will support students in their study and research. Each University Tutor is a specialist in their subject field. The team offers a wide variety of expertise based on their work with the National Literacy Trust, United Kingdom Literacy Association, Federation of Children's Book Groups, alongside acknowledged individual research. Tutors' input is augmented by VLE, additional on-line resources and, with respect to the Research Design module and other modules, lectures and seminars.

#### **4. Programme Aims**

- To enable students to develop enhanced critical understanding of literature for children and young adults.
- To enable students to critically relate to reader response theories and examine, through practical application, how children interact with text.
- To enable students to develop high level, subject-specialist knowledge, which is informed by critical reading and by a wider reading of children's literature.
- To enable students to develop high-level, analytic, reflective skills;
- To enable students to develop effective, critical and relevant approaches to research design.

#### **5. Programme Learning Outcomes**

##### **Knowledge & understanding:**

By the end of this programme students should be able to demonstrate:

1. Deep and systematic understanding of knowledge of the history of the publication of children's literature and genres in this field, developing a critical understanding of changes and trends over time.
2. The ability to work with theoretical /research-based knowledge to develop an understanding of current perceptions of childhood\* and the ways in which literature is used as a forum for transmitting and challenging dominant ideological constructions of society.
3. Comprehensive understanding of techniques/methodologies applicable to research in children's literature, including the studies into children's responses to reading.
4. Ability to identify and critically evaluate literature that is relevant to their specific research investigation.

##### **Intellectual skills:**

By the end of this programme students should be able to demonstrate:

1. The ability to undertake analysis of complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge of what is presented for children to read, considering the purposes of instruction or delight, and to communicate their findings effectively with critical awareness.
2. The ability to synthesise information in a manner that may be innovative, utilising knowledge or processes with critical awareness of how children engage with the texts that they read and, where appropriate, beginning to develop a specialist voice in the practical application of creative writing for children.

3. Original thought and initiative in problem –solving when examining the implications of ‘reader-response ‘theories.
4. A level of conceptual understanding that allows one to critically evaluate research, advanced scholarship and methodologies and argue alternative approaches in a chosen area of specialism within the field of children’s literature.

**Practical skills:**

By the end of this programme students should be able to demonstrate:

1. The ability to search for and locate relevant literature by generating enquiry into current perceptions of childhood as portrayed in literature, developing a critical evaluation of ideology within children’s literature, exploring themes of global citizenship
2. The ability to adapt skills and creativity to the creation of own texts by developing writing skills and knowledge within a practice-based discipline for creative writing for children
3. The technical ability to skilfully and effectively apply specialist knowledge in order to inspire children to read for pleasure.
4. The ability to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in professional practice in selecting genres of children’s literature for individual investigation.

**Transferable / key skills:**

By the end of this programme students should be able to demonstrate:

1. The ability to work effectively as a group leader or member, commenting critically and analytically on their own and on others writing for children.
2. Competence in undertaking research tasks in the field of children’s literature, requiring minimal guidance, demonstrating autonomy, self- motivation and criticality.
3. The ability to engage confidently in academic and professional communication with others in order to disseminate knowledge, understanding and effective practice techniques relevant to effectively engaging children with an appropriate range of literature.
4. Independent learning ability required for continuing professional study, making professional use of others where appropriate.

**6. Learning and Teaching Methods**

Learning and Teaching methods will be varied and flexible meeting the needs of the course participants.

**6.1 Learning Enhancement**

| <b>Method</b>                | <b>Description</b>   |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Action learning sets:</b> | One student, or a small group of students, helps others with a particular issue. |
| <b>Active Learning:</b>      | Practically based tasks that can be undertaken in a workplace environment.       |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Critical reflection:</b>                     | Students engage in critical reflective practice and activities to highlight areas of academic, personal and professional strength and development.   |
| <b>Digital learning or Digital scholarship:</b> | Students are expected to critically engage with a wide range of resources available through the internet and other forms of electronic media.  |
| <b>Distance Learning:</b>                       | An approach which facilitates off-campus learning through digital scholarship, normally supported by a VLE and other electronic resources, utilising software such as Panopto and Audacity.    |
| <b>Event:</b>                                   | A conference or day of workshops with visiting speakers from the world of children's literature e.g. publishers, authors, illustrators, editors, critics, librarians etc.                      |
| <b>Group-work:</b>                              | Students work in small groups to achieve a goal or carry out a task. There is usually a feedback session, or a chance to disseminate the results within the module or wider student community. |
| <b>Independent Enquiry:</b>                     | Task undertaken independently away from sessions with the aim of answering a particular enquiry point.   |
| <b>Independent Learning:</b>                    | Reading and tasks undertaken away from sessions.   |
| <b>Lectures:</b>                                | Subject introduced and delivered in a specific time which transmits information.   |
| <b>Peer observation:</b>                        | Students observe peers'/colleagues' presentations in order to provide critical, constructive feedback.   |
| <b>Practical workshops:</b>                     | Students take part in practical studies within an outdoor and/or indoor environment in order to develop skills and knowledge.  |
| <b>Professional development planning:</b>       | Students take part in activities that contribute towards the creation of either an individual learning plan or study or research plan, depending on their stage in the MA.                     |
| <b>Reflective Writing:</b>                      | Own notes and observations reflecting on your personal experiences, ideas and influences.  |
| <b>Seminar:</b>                                 | A session or class in which a topic is discussed by a tutor and a small group of students.   |
| <b>Supported, independent study:</b>            | Activities where a student conducts research or another identified learning activity either on their own and/or with tutor support (face-to-face or otherwise).                                |
| <b>Taught sessions:</b>                         | Lectures led by a tutor.   |
| <b>Tutorials:</b>                               | Individual one to one tutorials with a nominated University Tutor.   |
| <b>VLE:</b>                                     | Marjon's own visual learning platform that enables students to have access to resources, library, and recorded lectures. Also provides platforms for messages and group activities.            |
| <b>Workshop:</b>                                | A group activity where student writing is shared by various means and feedback given, highlighting the writing's strengths and suggesting further possible improvements.                       |

## 6.2 e-Learning

Many students elect to form their own informal learning and support community through their workplaces and utilise social media such as Twitter to share research progress. As University Tutors continue to develop their own digital scholarship competence through training, students will have opportunities to engage with a range of sophisticated digital learning experiences, particularly through the Research Design module, e.g. Epigeum, etc.

## 7. Modes of Assessment

Assessment is undertaken through students submitting work for marking, moderation and external examination. In all modules, the titles and focus of assessments are approved through the student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP), which is re-visited after completion of 60 credits of study and then again after completion of 120 credits of study. There are a wide range of assessment opportunities throughout the programme designed to develop the students' abilities to be critically reflective and to engage in critical discourse. Where students indicate a preference or a need to submit work in a format other than written, for example, visual or spoken, this will be supported and confirmed through the ILP process and, if applicable, students will be referred to Student Support Services for additional learning support. In all cases, students will be required to demonstrate that the programme aims and programme learning outcomes for Level 7 can be achieved.

Written work will be produced, submitted and marked in accordance with the university's assessment requirements as specified in the Student Handbook.

### Glossary of Assessment Terms

| Method                             | Description  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Action research project:</b>    | <b>Specific description:</b> an individually conducted and practice-driven research project. <b>Generic description:</b> Detailed individual research or a sustained practical project, which is contextually grounded. All independent projects are negotiated with and supervised by an appropriate tutor. |
| <b>Creative Writing Portfolio:</b> | An assignment comprising the student's creative writing piece/s and a reflective essay.  |
| <b>Critical Review:</b>            | An analysis of chosen texts with critical comparison, synthesis of ideas and own reflective thoughts.  |
| <b>Collaborative portfolio:</b>    | Working with one or more colleagues to gather ideas and evidence of reflections and discussions.   |
| <b>Dissertation:</b>               | Extended, independent, tutor-supported research study.   |
| <b>Educational Activity:</b>       | Any activity identified by the student which meets the specific assessment needs of the module and which enhances the students' understanding of a specific topic.   |

## 8. Exemptions to University Regulations

N/A

## 9. Work-Based Learning/Placement Learning

N/A

## 10. Programme Structure

Full Time

Level 7

| Module Code            | Module Title  | Credits | Assessment      | Semester/<br>Term | Compulsory/<br>Optional | Condonable/<br>Non-<br>Condonable |
|------------------------|---|---------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <a href="#">CYLM01</a> | Turning the Page, an examination of the history of literature for children and young adults | 30      | 100% Coursework | Semester A        | Compulsory              | Condonable                        |
| <a href="#">CYLM05</a> | Research Design (Creative Writing)  | 30      | 100% Coursework | Semester A        | Optional                | Condonable                        |
| <a href="#">EDCM53</a> | Research Design   | 30      | 100% Coursework | Semester A        | Optional                | Condonable                        |
| <a href="#">CYLM03</a> | Opening Stories: Genres and themes in literature for children and young adults              | 30      | 100% Coursework | Semester B        | Compulsory              | Condonable                        |
| <a href="#">CYLM04</a> | Creative Writing for Children and Young Adults  | 30      | 100% Coursework | Semester B        | Compulsory              | Condonable                        |
| <a href="#">EDCM57</a> | Dissertation  | 60      | 100% Coursework | Semester C        | Optional**              | Condonable                        |
| <a href="#">CYLMD1</a> | Creative Writing Dissertation   | 60      | 100% Coursework | Semester C        | Optional**              | Condonable                        |

\*Students are required to select EDCM53 **OR** CYLM05

\*\*Students are required to select EDCM57 **OR** CYLMD1. Students who selected EDCM53 will choose EDCM57 and students who selected CYLM05 will select CYLMD1.

Part Time

Level 7-Year 1

| Module Code            | Module Title  | Credits | Assessment      | Semester/<br>Term | Compulsory/<br>Optional | Condonable/<br>Non-<br>Condonable |
|------------------------|---|---------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <a href="#">CYLM01</a> | Turning the Page, an examination of the history of literature for children and young adults | 30      | 100% Coursework | Semester A        | Compulsory              | Condonable                        |

|                        |  |    |                 |            |            |            |
|------------------------|--|----|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <a href="#">CYLM03</a> | Opening Stories: Genres and themes in literature for children and young adults | 30 | 100% Coursework | Semester B | Compulsory | Condonable |
| <a href="#">CYLM04</a> | Creative Writing for Children and Young Adults                                 | 30 | 100% Coursework | Semester B | Compulsory | Condonable |

### Level 7-Year 2

| Module Code            | Module Title                       | Credits | Assessment      | Semester/ Term | Compulsory/ Optional | Condonable/ Non-Condonable |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| <a href="#">CYLM05</a> | Research Design (Creative Writing) | 30      | 100% Coursework | Semester A     | Optional*            | Condonable                 |
| <a href="#">EDCM53</a> | Research Design                    | 30      | 100% Coursework | Semester A     | Optional*            | Condonable                 |
| <a href="#">EDCM57</a> | Dissertation                       | 60      | 100% Coursework | Semester C     | Optional**           | Condonable                 |
| <a href="#">CYLMD1</a> | Creative Writing Dissertation      | 60      | 100% Coursework | Semester C     | Optional**           | Condonable                 |

- A definitive module descriptor is required for each module

\*Students are required to select EDCM53 **OR** CYLM05

\*\*Students are required to select EDCM57 **OR** CYLMD1. Students who selected EDCM53 will choose EDCM57 and students who selected CYLM05 will select CYLMD1.

## Delivery Pattern

### Structure and Points of Progression

Exit awards are available as follows: -

Students who have successfully completed 60 credits at Level 7, but who do not wish to continue on the programme may be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Professional Development. Students who have successfully completed 120 credits at Level 7, but who do not wish to continue on the programme may be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in Professional Development.

### Full-time mode of study

| Year One (Term 1)              | Assessment point              | Total credits   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 x 30-credit module<br>CYLM01 | February/March<br>MAB and PAB |   |
| 1 x 30-credit module<br>CYLM04 | February/March<br>MAB and PAB | 60 credits (exit point with Postgraduate Certificate) |

| Year One (Term 2)    | Assessment point | Total credits |
|----------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1 x 30-credit module | July MAB and PAB |               |



|                       |                  |  |
|-----------------------|------------------|--|
| 1 x 30-credit modules | July MAB and PAB | 120 (exit point with Postgraduate Diploma) |
|-----------------------|------------------|--|

|                          |                         |  |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Year One (Term 3)</b> | <b>Assessment point</b> | <b>Total credits</b>                   |
| 1 x 60-credit module     | July MAB and PAB        | 180 (exit point with full award of MA) |

**Part-time mode of study – Year One**

| Year One (Term 1)                 | Year One (Term 2)                 | Year One (Term 3)    | Assessment point | Total credits                        |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 x 30-credit module (compulsory) | 1 x 30-credit module (compulsory) | 1 x 30 credit module | July MAB and PAB | 60 credits (exit point with PG Cert) |

**Part-time mode of study – Year Two**

| Year Two (Term 1)    | Year Two (Terms 2 and 3) | Assessment point | Total credits  |
|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--|
| 1 x 30 credit module | 1 x 60 credit module     | July MAB and PAB | 120 (exit point with Postgraduate Diploma)<br><br>180 credits (exit with full award of MA) |

**11. Accrediting Professional Body /Professional Regulatory and Statutory Body (PSRB)**

N/A

**12. Professional Advisory Group**

N/A

**13. Academic Progression Opportunities**

Holders of the MA in Literature for Children and Young Adults will be able to progress to doctoral study and/or other higher study.

**14. Employability and Career Progression Opportunities**

Graduate skills are embedded across the whole programme and developed within each individual module. Students will have opportunities to extend their knowledge and expertise, develop sophisticated skills of research, autonomous learning and self –motivation. The skills of independent research and collaborative working are transferable to all future career pathways. By developing partnerships with current and new stakeholders we can enhance employment opportunities. Contacts in schools, libraries and the world of children’s literature will be available to offer future career advice.

**Future Career Opportunities:**

- Teaching leadership roles

- Librarianship
- Publishing
- Children's media
- Writing texts for children
- Further academic study
- Youth and community work
- Arts management
- Marketing and analysing in world of children's literature, events, games etc.

## **15. Support for Students and for Student Learning**

Many students elect to form their own informal learning and support community through their workplaces and utilise social media such as Twitter to share research progress. As University Tutors continue to develop their own digital scholarship competence through training, students will have opportunities to engage with a range of sophisticated digital learning experiences, particularly through the Research Planning module.

The support and guidance of students is further promoted by the following services:

- Academic tutorial staff, including programme leaders, module leaders and external University Tutors;
- Extensive library and other learning resources, including the electronic library catalogue, e-journals and the virtual learning environment;
- Library and study skills guidance;
- Student Support Services: support with learning, counselling services, accommodation, welfare, finance, etc.
- Programme handbooks and module guides;
- The Chaplaincy Centre which is at the heart of the University and is used for social gatherings, quiet reflection and prayer;
- On-campus Nursery provision.

## **16. Student Feedback Mechanisms**

The programme team seek to develop positive relationships with participants through ongoing and continuous dialogue and regular communication.

Feedback at programme level will be achieved through programme and module evaluations, mid module evaluations, end of semester evaluations and the staff student liaison committee. In addition, students will be invited to participate in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES).

## **17. Other Stakeholder Feedback**

N/A

## **18. Quality and Enhancement Mechanisms**

The quality of the student experience and the standards of the awards are managed, and quality assured through the University's regulations policies and procedures. Student achievement and

progression is managed through the Module Assessment Boards (MABs) and the Progression and Award Boards (PABs). Programmes are reviewed annually through University annual monitoring processes, including external examiner contributions, and incorporate student feedback mechanisms at both modular and the programme level reported formally through the University's annual monitoring and reporting cycle.

From 2020/21 intake



