

E111 *Supporting learning in primary schools*

Frequently Asked Questions

September 2009

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This information is correct at the time of writing (September 2009) and replaces all previous versions

A. The focus of this course

1. What age range of children will I learn about?

This course is for those who work with primary school children (4 to 11 years of age).

B. What is involved in terms of study

2. How long do I need to be working in a primary school each week?

You **must** be working directly with primary school-aged children in classrooms, either on a paid or voluntary basis, in a primary school (or closely related setting like a pupil referral unit or hospital education unit) for at least one day a week or equivalent, in order to fulfil the practice based learning component of the course and in order to be able to complete the assignments. This means a **minimum** of 5 hours per week. (Also see point 3.)

3. How many months / hours work is the course?

You will study for 8 months with the end of course assessment (ECA) submission in the ninth month.

The expectation is that a 60 point course will involve approximately 600 hours of study. This will include reading the course materials and doing the associated activities, carrying out the 7 assessment items, and attending tutorials. These study pursuits give a total of approximately 450 hours of 'directed' study. In addition, you will engage in 150 hours of personal reading, reflection and enquiry. Each week, you can expect to be studying for about 14 hours.

4. What support will I need from colleagues in my school to enable me to study E111?

The course requires you to reflect on the work that you are doing in schools in an ongoing way, and also in a more specific way when you do the seven assessments. Activities and investigations are conceived so as to be easily integrated into your normal school duties with the minimum of disruption. You may be asked, for instance, to consult a policy document, to observe a child in the playground or classroom, to listen to a group of children talking, or to discuss and plan children's learning activities with a teacher. We hope that these course-related activities are closely related to what you are already doing in your role although experience tells us that school volunteers may need to make sure that they can do these things. These course activities should not impact greatly, in terms of time required, on your ongoing work.

The activities will, however, need to be considered, shared with teachers, and then accommodated in classroom or school life. The benefits for your school will be that you are involved in a process of in-service professional development whereby your understanding of how to support learning is extended and practice enhanced and made more effective.

We don't ask that someone in your school takes on the role of a mentor, although someone – perhaps a teacher or a senior teaching assistant - may take a particular interest in your course and perform this role in an informal way. It is important that the headteacher and the teachers with whom you most work are aware that you are following a course of study. It is also important that there is a willingness to help you when you feel the need by providing advice and entering into discussion about the course materials and requirements. You should discuss your intention to study E111 with your headteacher before registering for the course (see also points 5 and 6).

C. Prior experience necessary for studying this course

5. What is meant by a relevant setting for an E111 student?

Examples of relevant settings are primary schools, special schools that have primary aged children, hospital educational units catering for primary aged children, and pupil referral units where there are also primary aged children following the UK National Curriculum. This course is not designed for teaching assistants working in secondary schools. (See also point 8.)

6. Is there a minimum time that I must have worked in a primary school, to be ready to study E111?

It is important that you have experience of how UK primary schools function. This may have been acquired, for instance, through being a governor, lunch time supervisor, a volunteer helper, or parent of a child attending a primary school. It is desirable that you have experience of supporting primary-aged children with their school learning but this may have been acquired through being a parent and supporting your own child's school learning. Ideally you need to be working in a primary school (possibly as a volunteer) before you begin your studies as this will mean you will be able to enlist the support of school colleagues, know about curriculum documents and know the parents of the children you are working with.

Before enrolling, you should discuss your intention to study the course with your headteacher to seek agreement to integrate the requirements of the course into your on-going work. E111 has been written in such a way as to minimise any disruption to your normal school and classroom duties. However, we do ask you to, for instance, observe children and plan activities for them.

7. I have my own children. Can I study E111?

Your parenting experience will be very relevant to your studies but you will still need to be working in a primary school, or closely related setting, either as a paid employee or as a volunteer (see points 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6).

8. I work in a secondary school with pupils with special educational needs, where pupils are learning at an earlier 'primary' level. Will E111 be suitable for me to study?

Your work with secondary special school pupils is relevant to studying E111, as some children may be functioning academically at a level which is more associated with primary aged children. However, you will also need to be supporting children who are chronologically in their primary years (4-11 years) in a mainstream primary school or a primary special school (or department). If you are working with secondary aged children in a special school, we recommend, in order to successfully study E111, that you spend a day a week in the primary department and continue with your secondary support work for the rest of your working week. You will, of course, need to be able to carry out activities and assignments for assessment with primary aged pupils.

9. I work outside a primary school setting but with primary-aged children. Can I study E111?

Unless this is a hospital unit or a pupil referral unit you will need to be based in a primary school.

10. I would like to study E111 in order to achieve a qualification to increase my opportunities of being employed as a teaching assistant. I am currently in full-time employment in a different field. Will E111 be suitable for me to study?

It is important that you have some experience of primary schools to draw on before you register on the course. It is vital you are in a primary school for the equivalent of at least one day per week for the duration of the course to enable you to carry out the work place activities and to have access to children in order to complete the assessment components of the course. (See points 2, 4 and 6).

D. How this course relates to other courses and qualifications

11. Will studying E111 entitle me to Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status?

a) E111 will not give you HLTA status. This status is achieved on submission of documentary evidence related to the 33 HLTA professional standards, and school-based assessment by an accredited assessor against the standards. The standards are available to download from www.hlta.gov.uk

b) A Higher Education (HE) certificate course like E111 can, however, help you to be in stronger position to compile a portfolio of evidence and thus demonstrate through an assessment route that you have reached the standards.

c) E111 has course learning outcomes that are closely associated with many of the 33 HLTA standards. In addition, through E111's seven assignments you will be involved in a great deal of practice, theorising and writing that will support your ability to submit evidence for HLTA assessment after successful completion of the course.

d) Following the successful completion of E111 you may wish to put yourself forward for the HLTA assessment route. This will involve three days of briefing and training provided by an accredited HLTA trainer and the preparation of a portfolio of evidence which an assessor will consider and discuss with you during a school visit. HLTA status can only be attained after this process of further formal assessment.

12. Is there national recognition of the Certificate in supporting learning in primary schools qualification?

Yes. The Certificate in supporting learning in primary schools is approved by the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) as a level 4 qualification (Revised NQF Level 4) in the National Qualifications framework. C60 is also a Higher Education level 1 Certificate.

13. How does C60, as a 'Certificate in supporting learning in primary schools', compare with other nationally recognised qualifications for teaching assistants?

From February 2006, C60 replaced E660/EYC660 (the Specialist Teacher Assistant Certificate) (STAC). STAC is a Higher Education level 1 Certificate. This is also the case for C60 which is approved by the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) as a level 4 qualification (Revised NQF Level 4) in the National Qualifications framework.

14. I have an NVQ 3 is it worth me studying E111, will it challenge me?

This depends to some extent on the content of your NVQ 3 studies. However, as a Higher Education level 1 Certificate E111 will engage you in substantial academic learning as well as practice-related learning, the latter being the main focus of an NVQ. Even if E111 covers some of the same educational themes that were addressed by your NVQ studies/course, it is very likely that your academic skills and theoretical knowledge will be challenged and extended.

15. I've heard there is an OU Foundation Degree in Primary Teaching and Learning; can I have more information about it?

E111 is the first course in the Foundation Degree in Primary Teaching and Learning (also available as the Diploma of Higher Education in Primary Teaching and Learning for students living in Scotland.) The second compulsory level 1 work-based learning course will be available from October 2010.

Further information regarding the Foundation Degree is available from:

<http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/qualification/g02.htm>

16. Can I use E111 towards gaining qualified teacher status (QTS)?

E111 is a 60 credit point level 1 course which can be counted towards most degrees at bachelor's level, where it is equally appropriate to a BA or a BSc.

A typical BA or BSc with honours at the OU would look like this:

| | | |
|--------------------|----|--------------------|
| Level 1 60 points | OR | Level 1 120 points |
| Level 2 180 points | | Level 2 120 points |
| Level 3 120 points | | Level 3 120 points |
| Total 360 points | | Total 360 points |

To pursue QTS you can:

1. study for a named Honours degree in Childhood and Youth Studies Please note: to achieve the Childhood and Youth Studies degree you must successfully complete U212 Childhood.
2. achieve Qualified teacher status (QTS) via a number of routes:
 - Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) route
 - Registered or Graduate teacher route

Up to date information can also be obtained from the Training and Development Agency (TDA) website: <http://www.tda.gov.uk/Recruit.aspx>

We would also advise students who eventually want to pursue Teacher Training to seek advice from their Local (Education) Authority about what routes are available locally and then plan their studies in accordance with the guidance they receive.

The OU is unable to provide PGCE courses for primary or early years teachers.

17. How do I ensure that once I have passed the course I am awarded the Certificate in Supporting Learning in Primary Schools

In order to be awarded the Certificate on successful completion of the course, you should ensure you are linked to the Certificate Award (C60) via your StudentHome page as the course will not automatically be counted towards the Certificate. If you have not already indicated that you wish to link to this award in this way or on your registration agreement then you can still do so at any time until the qualification is awarded by contacting your Regional Centre or writing to the Awards and Ceremonies Centre. If you are still unsure of the procedure, we suggest you contact the Awards and Ceremonies Centre on (01908) 653003 for further advice.

18. How much overlap is there between E111 and the courses E123 'Working with children in the early years' and E124 'Supporting children's learning in the early years' and also E100 'The early years: developing practice'.

E111 is specifically aimed at adults working in a primary school or similar setting with primary aged children 4-11. (See description of E111 on the courses and qualifications website at: <http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/course/e111.htm>). E123 and E124 and E100 are aimed at Early Years practitioners working with children from birth to 8 years (with a specific focus on birth to 6 years).

Although there are many shared educational themes between the courses – e.g. assessment, play, and parental collaboration - the content of E123 and E124 and E100 is aimed at those working with children at the earliest stages of their development and learning in a range of child care and education settings. E111 focuses on the support of children's learning in primary schools.

It should be noted that E111 is **not** a course that is included as part of the Foundation degree in Early Years. It may not be substituted for any course in the FDEY.

19. How many qualifications can I count E111 towards?

E111 is approved as a compulsory Level 1 course for the Foundation Degree (Primary Teaching and Learning) and also an optional Level 1 course in the BA (Hons) Childhood and Youth Studies degree (providing you have successfully completed U212 Childhood). Students wishing to count E111 towards other awards or degrees should check with the Awards and Ceremonies Centre on (01908) 653003 for further advice.

E. Where you live

20. I will be spending periods in the USA, can I study the course?

Unfortunately no, the course has been written for students based in a UK (or British Forces) primary school following UK educational policies and practices.

21. I live in Europe, can I study the course?

Yes, this course is appropriate for students working in English medium primary schools in Europe, and British Forces schools.

22. I work in an international school in Europe which does not follow the UK National Curriculum. Will E111 be suitable for me to study?

Unfortunately no. The theories and practices covered in E111 are linked closely to learning in primary schools that follow the curriculum, policies and practices in the UK.

F. Preparing to study this course

23. Is there any work to do before the course?

There is no essential preparatory work before the course starts. However it is suggested that you become familiar with some or all of the policy documents for your school. You could also look at the educational supplements of daily newspapers like *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, occasionally browse through the *Times Educational Supplement*, and perhaps look at magazines for teaching assistants primary teachers such as *Junior Education Plus* or *Child Education Plus*. Many primary school staff rooms will contain such publications. This will help you to become acquainted with current issues in primary education.

You may like to develop your study skills by working through *The Good Study Guide* by Andrew Northedge. (ISBN 0-7492-0044-8), which is available from book shops or perhaps your local library. The chapters called 'Getting started', 'Reading and note-taking' and 'What is good writing?' are especially useful, so you may like to focus on these.

24. Do I need clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau?

Yes. If you work in a primary school you will need to meet the 'fit person' criteria for doing so, including obtaining the necessary clearance for the school/setting and country in which you are working. It is the responsibility of you and your employer (or the school/setting if you are volunteering) to ensure you meet these requirements, rather than The OU. You should contact the relevant agency in your country for more information if you are in doubt about your eligibility or to find out more. For who to contact in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales visit: <http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/qualification/g02.htm>.

G. Policy and other resources that you need for this course

25. Which school policy documents will I need to refer to whilst studying E111?

It is assumed that you will have access to all school policy documents. However, in particular, we refer to policies for health and safety, behaviour and bullying, inclusion, mathematics, science, language and literacy, creativity and parental involvement,

26. Do I need to have access to a computer?

Yes. It is important that you have regular access to a computer for the duration of the course which is preferably in your home. You will be required to word process all your assignments. The course materials are supplemented by 2 CD-Roms showing examples of practice which you will be required to view at certain times during your study of the course. Also, one of the learning outcomes of E111 refers to the ability to use ICT to support learning (your own and children's) so, as part of achieving this outcome, it is important that you have easy computer access. Additionally, there will be a website with links to other useful web pages and news items relevant to the course. There will be electronic conferencing which provides another way to contact tutors and other students. Whilst this conferencing element of the course is not compulsory, we hope you will access the site and find it useful in providing extra support for your studies. A home computer with good connectivity to the internet is therefore important.

H. Getting your course results

27. When will the results be available?

Results will be sent out during the early part of August each year.