

LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

Course Specification

MA Practice Based Play Therapy

2018-19 (MAPAC)

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Record of Enhancement

No.	Detail of modification (Provide a brief description of the modification and where the Course Specification has been updated)	Date Effective (Indicate the academic year of entry and course level(s) to which the modification will apply)

Version Control

Version Control	
Version number and date effective	
For completion by Quality Assurance Services only:	
Next Re-validation date	

School of Health & Community Studies

Award and programme title: MA PRACTICE BASED PLAY THERAPY
Validated for delivery by Academy of Play and Child Psychotherapy (APAC)

Level of qualification: 7

Contained awards available: N/A (top-up award)

Length and status of programme and mode of study

Part-time, 1 year, distance learning

More details regarding delivery of the programme can be found on the APAC website:

<http://www.playtherapy.org.uk/TrainingCourses/TrainCrseAPACMA1.htm>

Course Specification

Overview and Aims

The demand for the training of Play Therapists and related professionals, such as Practitioners in Therapeutic Play, at Masters level is dependent upon:

- The demand for the treatment of children with social, emotional, behaviour and psychological problems - 20% of UK children have special education needs
- The rate of adoption of play and creative arts therapies to alleviate these problems at various levels of severity – approximately 1500 primary schools out of a total of 22,000 have adopted.
- The availability of clinical supervisors and trainers in these specialities – much improved over the last 5 years
- The availability of research to confirm the efficacy of various approaches and techniques using scientific methods – PTUK's programme evaluation now has over 10,000 cases
- The capacity of existing training courses in related fields – APAC's current market share is 64% to 80%

The underlying need for play therapy continues to increase due to the following socio-cultural factors: high divorce rates; blended families (step children); socio-economic pressures requiring parents to work; the decline of the extended family; greater pressures for children to show academic proficiencies at younger ages; and peer pressure to indulge in anti-social behaviour coupled with easy access to alcohol, drugs, etc.

The target market for the MA stage are those who have become Certified Play Therapists and wish to enhance their credentials for employment, promotion and/or increased remuneration or have a passionate interest in a play therapy topic and wish to advance the evidence base.

The programme aims are:

- Further develop students' conceptual, theoretical and methodological models in the design and implementation of play therapy-related research at MA level.
- Refresh informed play therapy practice by extending the understanding of research methodology and differing approaches that have been learnt at PG Certificate and PG Diploma stages.
- To provide methodologies for Master's level research to answer a unique question(s) that will take the play therapy profession forward.
- To encourage students to debate the nature of play and creative arts therapies research, including therapeutic media, conditions, settings, systemic factors and related topics.
- To enhance students ability to appraise literature underpinning the evidence base for children's therapeutic interventions.
- To integrate and apply research principles to a play and creative arts therapies related topics.

Course Learning Outcomes

1	Develop students' conceptual, theoretical and methodological models in the design and implementation of play therapy-related research at MA level.
2	Contribute professionally and academically to the field of play therapy by answering a unique question(s) that will take the play therapy profession forward.
3	Integrate and apply research principles to a play and creative arts therapies related topic.
4	Select and justify an appropriate research design, sample population and data collection instruments.
5	Demonstrate and apply appropriate research skills to play therapy techniques and practices by summarising, analysing and interpreting data using suitable statistical tools where appropriate.

Course Structure

The programmes comprises three awards – the PG Certificate (3 modules), the PG Diploma (3 modules) and the MA (two modules, including the dissertation).

Research is a public activity and as such is at odds with the idea that working with troubled children is somehow 'intuitive' or based on 'common sense'. This course aims to develop research minded practitioners who seriously appraise their understanding of what appears to be 'normal' or a 'taken for granted' assumption. This course will examine the paradigm shifts that have occurred in psycho-social and therapeutic research where there has traditionally been a divide between research and practice which has resulted in practitioners not implementing research findings in their practice nor even reading relevant research findings.

The course will provide a springboard for students to understand and apply research methodology to a variety of play therapy related scenarios, and understand approaches to

evidence-based practice. For instance, how can research be used to inform policy & practice and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and programmes? As play therapy is an emerging profession, it is essential that practitioners enhance the establishment of the profession by developing high quality research capability to create new models of practice that serve to improve the quality of therapeutic interventions for some of the most marginalised and troubled children.

Students will explore the purposes and values of research by studying both positivist, qualitative and, above all, mixed methods techniques to analyse practice experiences. The course will provide the knowledge and skills for postgraduates to: produce a research proposal for ethical approval and research governance; design and implement a research programme to produce a play and creative arts therapy related dissertation.

Finally, much emphasis will be placed on the ethics of research. This is especially relevant as students may wish to conduct research involving children.

The course is delivered through blended learning methods and has course has two core modules:

- Module 7 Developing the Research Topic
- Module 8 Producing the Research Dissertation

Both modules continue to address the three main areas of learning skills:

- Study skills – for developing knowledge and understanding
- Personal skills – for learning and self-management
- Research skills – for creating knowledge

Course Structure			
Level 7			
One taught module and academic supervision (60 L7 credits in total).			
Produce a research based dissertation leading to the generation of original material that extends the play therapy knowledge base.			
Semester 1	Core (Y)	Semester 2	Core (Y)
Developing a Practice Based Play Therapy Research Proposal L7 (Module 7)	Y	Research Dissertation for Practice Based Play Therapy L7 (Module 8)	Y
Semester 3			
Research Dissertation for Practice Based Play Therapy L7 (Module 8) (cont)	Y		

Learning and Teaching

Learning and Teaching Approaches

This blended learning course has been developed from a previous version that used traditional teaching and learning methods in response to demand from students. It is provided through a series of on line 'sessions' which will deliver the core material, paralleling the former course.

Each session will be of indeterminate time as students will be able to work at their own pace but, in general, each session will have enough material requiring at least 5 hours of study. In addition, the course will be supported by a series of directed learning tasks to allow practical exploration of analysis and interpretation of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches to research. Additionally, there will be on line group work, including formative presentations of research papers and case study approaches to play and creative arts therapies interventions. Students will also have ready access to an on line tutor for regular discussions and supervision.

Students will be required to read around the topic before each session. Suggested texts will be given against the session breakdown. Formative assessments will be used to check their knowledge as a part of progressive monitoring.

On line learning is a well established technique and allows students the opportunity to work at their own pace but have regular contact with each other and their tutor. By using Blackboard work may be posted on a regular basis and tasks allocated. The virtual learning environment also allows group interaction. When undertaking learning over the internet students access and share information, and engage in synchronous and asynchronous discussions. Learning is synchronous when it occurs in real time, that is when all the students of a cohort are present on line simultaneously engaging in lectures and/or discussion usually within a chat room or virtual lecture room. Learning is asynchronous when it occurs in delayed time, when the students are all accessing lecture material and/or contributing to a debate but not necessarily simultaneously. In delayed time e-learning students and lecturers post messages and comments at different times, and return to the thread periodically to catch up and contribute to the debate.

Blended learning, which includes E-Learning can be described as an approach that offers a third medium for learning. Whilst e-learning and distance learning both involve education being offered to learners at a distance from the university campus, e-learning does not have to involve students working alone or at any distance from each other. Distance learning courses require students to work alone at home processing information that has been posted to them. Consequently the only interface is between the student and the material so consequently the material has to be of an especially robust standard. E-Learning, on the other hand, is more akin to the classroom experience because it involves students working together synchronously and asynchronously, learning and sharing experiences as part of an online community of learners. Although the technology exists via the use of web cams and conferencing for students to physically observe each other on line, e-learning students are not physically together but rather virtually together on line. In e-learning the lecture hall is

replaced by the virtual lecture hall, and physicality is replaced by virtuality. E-learning, therefore, is qualitatively different from distance learning or classroom based learning.

APAC is continuously developing high quality online resources, reusable learning objects and open educational resources. So far these have been produced for modules 7 and 8 but it is planned to introduce them to all modules.

There is regular consultation with the professional organisation PTUK upon the development and refinement of the research competencies embodied in the learning objectives and upon the research needs of commissioners of play therapy practice.

Learning and Teaching Activities

Unlike the learning methods used in modules 1 to 6 the ones for modules 7 and 8 do not include experiential work. The main activities are lectures and presentations delivered by E-learning methods, webinars enabling group discussion, signposted reading, directed exercises and one to one academic supervision.

Students develop their own cohort based network.

Use of the Virtual Learning Environment

The use of both the University's and APAC's VLE platforms is extensive. They are the basis of the whole course: Access to course materials and research papers; Bibliographic and referencing tools – Ref Works is the preferred tool; Detection of plagiarism – Turnitin; Scheduling of works.

Use of Blended-Learning

The basis of the course.

Assessment Strategy

The assessment policy and regulations are designed:

- To conform to the University's "Course Level Assessment Strategy" in the Postgraduate Course Development Principles document.
- Assess the competencies of the practitioner according to the PTUK competency framework

Formative and summative assessments are used. Each piece of assessed work on the programme has five purposes. To:

- Be an integral part of the learning process for students to add to and confirm their knowledge and practice
- Provide a summative measure of the extent to which students have achieved the module aims and the level of understanding appropriate to the level of the programme
- Facilitate, where relevant, the application of theory and research to professional practice

- Provide feedback to students on their work through a combination of formative assessment, self reflection, peer group feedback and tutor and Academic Supervisor feedback
- Provide clear information for Examination Boards

Summative Assessments

- *Module 7: Developing a Research Proposal:* A 4000 word research proposal. Working within the limits of what is viable within a nine month or year long, dissertation-based research project; the proposal will address a subject of the student’s own choosing, highlighting the philosophical, conceptual and strategic processes necessary to design and implement a robust and ethical research study.
- *Module 8: Research Dissertation (Empirical Study):* A dissertation of 12,000 words which is organised into discrete chapters to meet the learning outcomes.

Formative Assessments

These are provided by the Course Leader and Academic Supervisors upon the exercises leading up to and upon drafts of material to be included in the research proposal and dissertation.

Feedback on Assessed Coursework

One to one review of the student’s process diary (a written journal in which students examine their thoughts, feelings, growth and personal process throughout the programme).

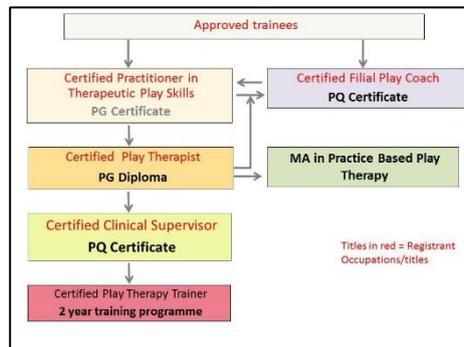
Course Director/Tutor review of each student’s progress with the Course Director, and if necessary the Programme Director if circumstances warrant.

Module Assessment Methods

Assessment Method Mapping			
Module Titles	Core (Y)	Research proposal	Dissertation
Developing a Practice Based Play Therapy Research Proposal L7 (Module 7)		100	
Research Dissertation for Practice Based Play Therapy L7 (Module 8)			100

Employability and Professional Context

Accreditation by Play Therapy UK provides career path opportunities:



MA award: Able to contribute to the knowledge base by carrying out original research.

Other post-qualifying courses accredited by PTUK include 'Certificate in Play and Creative Arts Supervision', 'Certificate in Filial Play Coaching', 'Therapeutic Sandplay Skills', and 'Working Therapeutically with Babies, Infants and Parents'. There is also a range of Play Therapy UK accredited short CPD courses.

Reference Points used in course design and delivery

All our courses leading to Leeds Beckett University awards have been designed and approved in accordance with UK and European quality standards. Our courses utilise the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and relevant subject benchmarks (where these are available) and professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements (for professionally accredited courses).

We review our courses annually and periodically, responding to student feedback and a range of information to enhance our courses. Our University is also subject to external review by the Quality Assurance Agency. Our latest report can be found on the QAA website at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports>

We appoint External Examiners to verify that our University sets and maintains standards for awards which adhere to relevant national subject benchmark statements and the FHEQ (UK), ensure standards and student achievements are comparable with other Higher Education Institutions in the UK, with which they are familiar, and ensure that assessments measure achievement of course and module learning outcomes and reach the required standard. External Examiners may also provide feedback on areas of good practice or potential enhancement.

Regulatory Exemptions details

The course will adhere to the Academic Principles and Regulations. The award is subject to the Fitness to Practise Policy & Procedure.

<http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/public-information/student-regulations/>

Award with merit and distinction

Students will be recommended for the award with merit or distinction, subject to their meeting with the level of achievement set out below.

The award of a merit may be made to those students who have demonstrated excellent performance against:

- the attainment of an average of 60% or more in assessments contributing to the final award
and
- the attainment of an average of 60% or more in assessments contributing to all three Play Therapy awards: the MA, the PG Dip and the PG Cert awards.

The award of a distinction may be made to those students who have demonstrated excellent performance against:

- the attainment of an average of 70% or higher in assessments contributing to the final award
and
- the attainment of an average of 70% or higher in assessments contributing to all three Play Therapy awards: the MA, the PG Dip and the PG Cert awards.

NB, As the 20 credit module is a pre-requisite for the dissertation module, all assessments must be passed to achieve the award.

Student Support Network

If you have a question or a problem relating to your course, your Course Administrator is there to help you. Course Administrators works closely with academic staff and can make referrals to teaching staff or to specialist professional services as appropriate. They can give you a confirmation of attendance letter, and a transcript. You may also like to contact your Course Rep or the Students' Union Advice team for additional support with course-related questions.

If you have any questions about life at our University in general, call into or contact the Student Hub on either campus to speak to our Student Experience Team. This team, consisting of recent graduates and permanent staff, are available to support you throughout your time here. They will make sure you have access to and are aware of the support, specialist services, and opportunities our University provides. There is a Student Hub on the ground floor of the Rose Bowl at City Campus and one in Campus Central at Headingley. You can also find the team in the Gateway in the Leslie Silver Building at City Campus. The telephone number is 0113 812 3000, and the e-mail address is StudentHub@leedsbeckett.ac.uk.

Within MyBeckett you will see two tabs (Support and Opportunities) where you can find online information and resources for yourselves. The **Support** tab gives you access to details of services available to give you academic and personal support. These include Library Services, the Students' Union, Money advice, Disability advice and support, Wellbeing, International Student Services and Accommodation. There is also an A-Z of Support Services, and access to online appointments/registration.

The **Opportunities** tab is the place to explore the options you have for jobs, work placements, volunteering, and a wide range of other opportunities. For example, you can find out here how to get help with your CV, prepare for an interview, get a part-time job or voluntary role, take part in an international project, or join societies closer to home.