PROGRAMME STANDARDS: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

MALAYSIAN QUALIFICATIONS AGENCY

Malaysian Qualifications Agency
14th Floor, Block B, Menara PKNS-PJ
No 17, Jalan Yong Shook Lin
46050 Petaling Jaya
Selangor Darul Ehsan

Tel +603-7968 7002
Fax +603-7956 9496
Email akreditasi@mqa.gov.my
Website www.mqa.gov.my

© Malaysian Qualifications Agency 2014
ISBN:
All the Agency's publications are available on our web site: www.mqa.gov.my

Printed copies are available from:
The Standards Division
Malaysian Qualifications Agency

CONTENTS

FOREWORD		i
ABBREVIATIONS		iii
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	PROGRAMME AIMS	4
3.	LEARNING OUTCOMES	5
4.	CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DELIVERY	21
5.	ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING	35
6.	STUDENT SELECTION	41
7.	ACADEMIC STAFF	46
8.	EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES	50
9.	PROGRAMME MONITORING AND REVIEW	52
10.	LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION	53
11.	CONTINUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	55
REFERENCES		56
APPENDICES		
APPENDIX 1 : PANEL MEMBERS		57

APPENDIX 2 : BODY OF KNOWLEDGE – FIVE CORE AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE	58
APPENDIX 3 : CORE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES: AN EXAMPLE	71
GLOSSARY	75

FOREWORD

In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of early childhood care and education (ECCE) by parents, educationists, entrepreneurs and the government. This recognition is due to two main factors. Firstly, the researches of economists, especially those of Professor James Heckman, the Nobel Laureate for Economics, have revealed that investment in ECCE, in particular quality ECCE, yields very high rate of return due to cost savings from reduced school dropout rate, lower crime rate, lower expenditure on security and healthcare and higher employability. Secondly, the findings of neuro scientists disclose that experiences in the first five years are critical to the development of the brain. Inappropriate and stressful experiences can change the architecture of the brain which does not only affect cognitive and socio-emotional development but also the physical and mental health of the child. For children to experience quality ECCE, they need knowledgable and competent early childhood educators, who, in turn, need quality training programmes.

The demand for ECCE in Malaysia and for qualified early childhood educators has resulted in a phenomenal growth in the number of tertiary institutions offering programmes in early childhood education. The ECCE Council was set up in 2010 under the Economic Transformation Programme to professionalize the ECCE industry and to assure its quality.

The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) responded to the need for quality early childhood educators by providing the Programme Standards for Early Childhood Education (ECE). The Programme Standards: Early Childhood Education outlines the standard framework for different levels of qualification as specified by the Malaysian Qualification Framework (MQF): Level 3 (Certificate), Level 4 (Diploma), Level 6 (Bachelor's Degree), Level 7 (Master's Degree) and Level 8 (PhD & Ed.D). This document outlines the knowledge and competencies needed by professional early childhood educators to provide stimulating, responsive, healthy and safe environments for children to grow and develop.

The document also provides guidelines for programme structure, experiential learning and professional practice, delivery and assessment. In addition, the framework offers

guidelines for the different modes of study such as coursework, research and a combination of both. This Programme Standards is for the Certificate in ECE, Diploma in ECE, Bachelor's Degree in ECE, Master's Degree in ECE, PhD, Ed.D, Bachelor's Degree in Education (Early Childhood Education) and Masters Degree in Education (Early Childhood Education).

This document is the result of the significant contributions of panel members from diverse background. They comprise experts from the Ministry of Education, Higher Education Providers in the public and private sectors, the ECCE industry and the ECCE Council. The Malaysian Qualifications Agency would like to thank all panel members for their hard work, commitment and contributions to this noble effort.

Dato' Dr. Syed Ahmad Hussein
Chief Executive Officer
Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)
2014

ABBREVIATIONS

CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
COPIA	Code of Practice for Institutional Audit
COPPA	Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
Ed.D	Doctor in Education
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
GGP	Guidelines to Good Practices
GP	Grade Point
HEP	Higher Education Provider
HEPs	Higher Education Providers
MOE	Ministry of Education Malaysia
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PS	Programme Standards
SKM	*Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia*
STAM	*Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia*
SPM	*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia*
STPM	*Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia*
TASKA	*Taman Asuhan Kanak-kanak*
TADIKA	*Taman Didikan Kanak-kanak*
TOEFL	Test of English as A Foreign Language

1. INTRODUCTION

The period from birth to age of five years is a very critical period of a person's life because during these years, the foundations of the child's development are laid down. Psychologists coined the term, formative years, to signify that later development builds on the foundations laid down during the first five years of the child's life. In recent years, neuroscientists confirm this claim of the psychologists when their findings disclose that at birth there are 100 billion neurons that have to be wired to form neural pathways for the brain to develop. These synapses (connections) are formed through the child's interactions with people and with the environment, that is, the quality of brain development depends on early experiences. Hence the current worldwide trend is to provide children access to quality early child care, and education to ensure they have a fair and right start in life.

The scope of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Malaysia encompasses both formal and informal education and care of the child from birth to six years old. Quality early childhood care and education necessitates quality early childhood educators who, in turn, need to have quality training in early child care and education. For early childhood educators to be competent, they have to acquire certain fundamental knowledge and competencies. As the first five years are the formative years, Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor's and Master's degree, PhD and Ed.D in ECE have to have quality standards to be recognised as professional programmes.

Early child care and education is a relatively new field in academic studies. In 1997, the University of Malaya offered *Bachelor in Early Childhood Education*, the first of its kind in the country. Other institutions soon followed with programmes in early child care and education. For instance, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) offered *Bachelor of Education* specialising in ECE in 2002 and *Bachelor of Education in Preschool Education* in 2003 respectively. But, this does not imply that programmes on early childhood education had not been offered at all before 1997. In the early 90s, teacher training colleges, Ministry of Education Malaysia had been conducting short courses and *Certificate in Education* majoring in ECE. Programmes in early childhood care and education grew by leaps and bounds in recent years with public and private tertiary institutions offering Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree in Early

Childhood Education (ECE) or Bachelor's Degree in Education, specialising/majoring in ECE. Some of these institutions also offer Master's Degree and PhD in ECE.

Graduates with a Certificate, Diploma or Bachelor's degree in ECE may teach in preschools or child care centres. However, all preschools under the Ministry of Education Malaysia require their teachers to have a Bachelor's Degree in ECE as their minimum qualification to ensure quality and professionalism in early childhood education. Early childhood educators in the private sector are encouraged by the government to have a Diploma in ECE as a minimum academic qualification. Owing to competition, quality preschools and child care centres are increasingly employing graduates with Bachelor's degree in ECE.

With a few years of experience, graduate teachers may take on administrative responsibilities, and become supervisors or principals of early childhood centres, or set up their own centres. Graduates in ECE may work in related field or as researchers, lecturers or consultants in the setting up of preschools and child care centres or in enterprises pertaining to children's learning, growth and development.

The Programme Standards: Early Childhood Education (PS: ECE) is expected to produce competent, ethical, professionally qualified and global early childhood educators. PS: ECE will raise the professionalism of early childhood educators and bring Early Childhood Education to higher academic realm, thus contributing to the emergence of new fields of knowledge in early childhood education, and enhancing capacity of educational institutions and higher levels of abilities of professionals. All of these will lead to new milestones in the early childhood education landscape. Underpinning the PS: ECE is the fostering of the character and teacher attributes as articulated by the higher education providers (HEPs).

The purposes of the Programme Standards are to improve the professional development of early childhood educators and enhance the status of the ECE profession. Effective implementation of the Programme Standards will generate a critical mass of quality early childhood educators to provide leadership for the next generation of learners, and contribute towards building Malaysia as a centre of excellence for early childhood education.

To produce quality early childhood educators, the Programme Standards: Early Childhood Education has identified the core knowledge and competencies of professional, competent early childhood educators in **five core knowledge areas.** They are:

i. Child Development
ii. Curriculum and Learning Environment
iii. Administration and Management
iv. Families and the Community
v. Professional Development

This document provides guidelines to what should constitute the following levels of study; Certificate (MQF Level 3), Diploma (MQF Level 4), Bachelor's degree (MQF Level 6), Master's degree (MQF Level 7) and PhD/Ed.D (MQF Level 8).

For ECE programmes, essentially there are **two approaches**:

i. Stand Alone
   E.g. Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
ii. Specialisation
   E.g. Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education)

For details, please refer the *Guidelines to Good Practices: Curriculum Design and Delivery*, MQA, 2012.

This Programme Standards is provided as a guideline for Early Childhood Education programmes. Thus it is of paramount importance that this document be read with other quality assurance documents and policies by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency and related agencies. These include but are not limited to:

i. The Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF)
ii. The Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA)
iii. The Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA)
iv. Relevant Guidelines to Good Practices (GGP)
v. Relevant Standards

2. PROGRAMME AIMS

Aims are described in a broad and general statement of learning and teaching intention, encapsulating the general contents and direction of a programme.

"A programme's stated aims reflect what it wants the learner to achieve. It is crucial for these aims to be expressed explicitly and be made known to learners and other stakeholders alike" (COPPA, 2008, pp.10).

CERTIFICATE (Malaysian Qualifications Framework, MQF Level 3)
The programme aim at the Certificate level is to provide students with the basic knowledge and skills for them to be employed in ECE settings.

DIPLOMA (MQF Level 4)
The programme aim at the Diploma level is to equip students with knowledge, skills and competencies for them to be professional and be employed in ECE settings.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE (MQF Level 6)
The programme aim at the Bachelor's degree level is to equip students with knowledge, skills and competencies to enable them to be professional early childhood educators so as to provide quality early child care and education.

MASTER'S DEGREE (MQF Level 7)
The programme aims at the Master's degree level are to equip students with knowledge and competencies for them to acquire leadership skills, the ability to analyse ECE curriculum and issues critically and the ability to communicate the findings to all stakeholders.

PhD/Ed.D (MQF Level 8)
The programme aims at the PhD/Ed.D level are to equip students with knowledge and competencies to enable them to review, analyse and conduct research, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge, competencies and ethics.

3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcomes are detailed statements described in explicit terms of learners' achievement and are achievable and assessable upon completion of a period of study.

"The quality of a programme is ultimately assessed by the ability of the learner to carry out their expected roles and responsibilities in society. This requires the programme to have a clear statement of the learning outcomes to be achieved by the learner" (COPPA, 2008, pp.11).

These learning outcomes should **cumulatively reflect the eight domains of learning outcomes**, which are significant for Malaysia (MQF, 2007, Para 15, pp. 4) and are related to the various levels of taxonomy accordingly, in line with national and global developments.

The eight domains of learning outcomes are:

i. knowledge;
ii. practical skills;
iii. social skills and responsibilities;
iv. values, attitudes and professionalism;
v. communication, leadership and team skills;
vi. problem solving and scientific skills;
vii. information management and lifelong learning skills; and
viii. managerial and entrepreneurial skills.

CERTIFICATE

Upon completion of the programme, graduates should be able to:

i. demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of the core knowledge areas;
ii. apply the basic knowledge to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children's development;
iii. provide and maintain a safe, healthy and nurturing environment where children learn and develop;
iv. comply with professional values, attitudes and ethics;

v. communicate with children, colleagues, families and the community;
vi. apply basic problem solving and scientific skills in the care and education of young children;
vii. select and apply information to enhance early learning and self-development; and
viii. exhibit basic operational skills in early childhood settings.

DIPLOMA

Upon completion of the programme, graduates should be able to:

i. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the core knowledge areas;
ii. apply knowledge and understanding to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children's development;
iii. create, provide and maintain a safe, healthy and nurturing environment where children learn and develop;
iv. demonstrate commitment to professionalism in values, attitudes and ethics;
v. communicate effectively with children, colleagues, families and the community;
vi. apply problem solving, self-reflection, scientific skills and creative thinking in the care and education of young children;
vii. resource, select and apply information to enhance early learning and self-development; and
viii. exhibit basic managerial and entrepreneurial skills in early childhood settings.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Upon completion of the programme, graduates should be able to:

i. demonstrate mastery of knowledge of the core knowledge areas;
ii. apply the knowledge and understanding to create and implement developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children's development;
iii. design, create, provide and maintain a safe, healthy and nurturing environment where children learn and develop;
iv. practise professional values, attitudes and ethics;
v. communicate effectively with children, colleagues, families and the community;
vi. engage families and communities in enhancing quality early childhood education;
vii. apply problem solving, self-reflection, scientific skills and creative thinking in the care and education of young children;

viii. resource, select, analyse and apply information to enhance early learning and self-development; and

ix. exhibit managerial and entrepreneurial skills as well as display responsiveness to the changing nature of early childhood education.

MASTER'S DEGREE

Upon completion of the programme, graduates should be able to:

i. demonstrate mastery of knowledge of the core knowledge areas and understanding of their relationships to related fields;

ii. critique, analyse and evaluate issues on core knowledge, current trends and research findings;

iii. demonstrate a mastery of developmentally appropriate practices to monitor and model;

iv. practise and conduct research in compliance with professional values, attitudes and ethics;

v. demonstrate effective leadership in advocating for quality early childhood education;

vi. apply problem solving and scientific skills, creative thinking and critical reflection for research and professional advancement;

vii. analyse, apply and/or disseminate information (including research findings) to enhance quality early childhood education; and

viii. apply evidenced good practices in administration, management and entrepreneurship in early childhood fields.

PhD/Ed.D

Upon completion of the programme, graduates should be able to:

i. demonstrate mastery of knowledge of the core knowledge areas and understanding of their relationships to related fields;

ii. contribute new knowledge to the field of early childhood education;

iii. critique, analyse and evaluate issues on core knowledge areas, current trends, new ideas and research findings in early childhood education;

iv. communicate effectively to peers, scholarly communities and society at large through publication and other media;

v. develop knowledge mastery to engage and discourse with academia and leaders in society;

vi. practise and conduct research in compliance with professional values, attitudes and ethics;

vii. develop knowledge and skills continuously, incrementally and cumulatively for professional development and contribute to the scholarly communities;

viii. analyse, apply and/or disseminate information (including research findings) to enhance quality early childhood education; and

ix. apply evidenced good practices, new ideas and current research findings in administration, management and entrepreneurship in early childhood settings and related fields.

THE MAPPING OF PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES TO THE EIGHT LEARNING OUTCOMES DOMAINS

CERTIFICATE

Programme Learning Outcomes / MQF Learning Outcome Domains		Knowledge	Practical Skills	Social Skills and Responsibilities	Values, Attitudes and Professionalism	Communication, Leadership and Team Skills	Problem Solving and Scientific Skills	Information Management and Lifelong Learning Skills	Managerial and Entrepreneurial Skills
LO1	demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of the core knowledge areas	✓							
LO2	apply the basic knowledge to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children's development		✓						
LO3	provide and maintain a safe, healthy and nurturing environment where children learn and develop		✓	✓					

Programme Learning Outcomes / MQF Learning Outcome Domains		Knowledge	Practical Skills	Social Skills and Responsibilities	Values, Attitudes and Professionalism	Communication, Leadership and Team Skills	Problem Solving and Scientific Skills	Information Management and Lifelong Learning Skills	Managerial and Entrepreneurial Skills
LO4	comply with professional values, attitudes and ethics								
LO5	communicate with children, colleagues, families and the community								
LO6	apply basic problem solving and scientific skills in the care and education of young children								
LO7	select and apply information to enhance early learning and self-development								
LO8	exhibit basic operational skills in early childhood settings								

DIPLOMA

Programme Learning Outcomes / MQF Learning Outcome Domains		Knowledge	Practical Skills	Social Skills and Responsibilities	Values, Attitudes and Professionalism	Communication, Leadership and Team Skills	Problem Solving and Scientific Skills	Information Management and Lifelong Learning Skills	Managerial and Entrepreneurial Skills
LO1	demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the core knowledge areas								
LO2	apply knowledge and understanding to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children's development								
LO3	create, provide and maintain a safe, healthy and nurturing environment where children learn and develop								
LO4	demonstrate commitment to professionalism in values, attitudes and ethics								

Programme Learning Outcomes / MQF Learning Outcome Domains		Knowledge	Practical Skills	Social Skills and Responsibilities	Values, Attitudes and Professionalism	Communication, Leadership and Team Skills	Problem Solving and Scientific Skills	Information Management and Lifelong Learning Skills	Managerial and Entrepreneurial Skills
LO5	communicate effectively with children, colleagues, families and the community								
LO6	apply problem solving, self-reflection, scientific skills and creative thinking in the care and education of young children								
LO7	resource, select and apply information to enhance early learning and self-development								
LO8	exhibit basic managerial and entrepreneurial skills in early childhood settings								

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Programme Learning Outcomes / MQF Learning Outcome Domains		Knowledge	Practical Skills	Social Skills and Responsibilities	Values, Attitudes and Professionalism	Communication, Leadership and Team Skills	Problem Solving and Scientific Skills	Information Management and Lifelong Learning Skills	Managerial and Entrepreneurial Skills
LO1	demonstrate mastery of knowledge of the core knowledge areas	✓							
LO2	apply the knowledge and understanding to create and implement developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children's development		✓						
LO3	design, create, provide and maintain a safe, healthy and nurturing environment where children learn and develop		✓	✓					
LO4	practise professional values, attitudes and ethics		✓		✓				

Programme Learning Outcomes / MQF Learning Outcome Domains		Knowledge	Practical Skills	Social Skills and Responsibilities	Values, Attitudes and Professionalism	Communication, Leadership and Team Skills	Problem Solving and Scientific Skills	Information Management and Lifelong Learning Skills	Managerial and Entrepreneurial Skills
LO5	communicate effectively with children, colleagues, families and the community					✓			
LO6	engage families and communities in enhancing quality early childhood education					✓			
LO7	apply problem solving, self-reflection, scientific skills and creative thinking in the care and education of young children						✓		
LO8	resource, select, analyse and apply information to enhance early learning and self-development							✓	
LO9	exhibit managerial and entrepreneurial skills as well as display responsiveness to the								✓

Programme Learning Outcomes / MQF Learning Outcome Domains		Knowledge	Practical Skills	Social Skills and Responsibilities	Values, Attitudes and Professionalism	Communication, Leadership and Team Skills	Problem Solving and Scientific Skills	Information Management and Lifelong Learning Skills	Managerial and Entrepreneurial Skills
	changing nature of early childhood education								

MASTER'S DEGREE

Programme Learning Outcomes / MQF Learning Outcome Domains		Knowledge	Practical Skills	Social Skills and Responsibilities	Values, Attitudes and Professionalism	Communication, Leadership and Team Skills	Problem Solving and Scientific Skills	Information Management and Lifelong Learning Skills	Managerial and Entrepreneurial Skills
LO1	demonstrate mastery of knowledge of the core knowledge areas and understanding of their relationships to related fields								
LO2	critique, analyse and evaluate issues on core knowledge, current trends and research findings								
LO3	demonstrate a mastery of developmentally appropriate practices to monitor and model								
LO4	practise and conduct research in compliance with professional values, attitudes and ethics								

Programme Learning Outcomes / MQF Learning Outcome Domains		Knowledge	Practical Skills	Social Skills and Responsibilities	Values, Attitudes and Professionalism	Communication, Leadership and Team Skills	Problem Solving and Scientific Skills	Information Management and Lifelong Learning Skills	Managerial and Entrepreneurial Skills
LO5	demonstrate effective leadership in advocating for quality early childhood education								
LO6	apply problem solving and scientific skills, creative thinking and critical reflection for research and professional advancement								
LO7	analyse, apply and/or disseminate information (including research findings) to enhance quality early childhood education								
LO8	apply evidenced good practices in administration, management and entrepreneurship in early childhood fields								

PhD/Ed.D

Programme Learning Outcomes / MQF Learning Outcome Domains		Knowledge	Practical Skills	Social Skills and Responsibilities	Values, Attitudes and Professionalism	Communication, Leadership and Team Skills	Problem Solving and Scientific Skills	Information Management and Lifelong Learning Skills	Managerial and Entrepreneurial Skills
LO1	demonstrate mastery of knowledge of the core knowledge areas and understanding of their relationships to related fields								
LO2	contribute new knowledge to the field of early childhood education								
LO3	critique, analyse and evaluate issues on core knowledge areas, current trends, new ideas and research findings in early childhood education								
LO4	communicate effectively to peers, scholarly communities and society at large through publication and								

Programme Learning Outcomes / MQF Learning Outcome Domains		Knowledge	Practical Skills	Social Skills and Responsibilities	Values, Attitudes and Professionalism	Communication, Leadership and Team Skills	Problem Solving and Scientific Skills	Information Management and Lifelong Learning Skills	Managerial and Entrepreneurial Skills
	other media								
LO5	develop knowledge mastery to engage and discourse with academia and leaders in society								
LO6	practise and conduct research in compliance with professional values, attitudes and ethics								
LO7	develop knowledge and skills continuously, incrementally and cumulatively for professional development and contribute to the scholarly communities								
LO8	analyse, apply and/or disseminate information (including research findings) to enhance quality early								

Programme Learning Outcomes / MQF Learning Outcome Domains		Knowledge	Practical Skills	Social Skills and Responsibilities	Values, Attitudes and Professionalism	Communication, Leadership and Team Skills	Problem Solving and Scientific Skills	Information Management and Lifelong Learning Skills	Managerial and Entrepreneurial Skills
	childhood education								
LO9	apply evidenced good practices, new ideas and current research findings in administration, management and entrepreneurship in early childhood settings and related fields								

4. CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

The term 'curriculum design and delivery' is used interchangeably with the term 'programme design and delivery'. 'Programme' means an arrangement of courses that are structured for a specified duration and the learning volume to achieve the stated learning outcomes to lead to an award of a qualification" (COPPA, 2008, pp.12).

Higher Education Providers (HEPs) are encouraged to develop the programme to reflect current good practices and achieve higher standards. Professional practice is crucial in the development of students' maturity and experience. Hence, HEPs need to allocate a minimum number of units for this purpose according to the formula of 1 credit = 8 hours per day (including planning, preparation and self-reflection) for 2 weeks.

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

A key component of any professional development system is the creation of a body of core knowledge, which identifies a set of content areas that help define the knowledge of all practitioners working in all child care and education settings.

Core competencies are those competencies linked to the core knowledge areas that need to be mastered by early childhood educators to facilitate learning and development and partner with families and the community.

i. Core Knowledge Areas

All the core knowledge areas needed by early childhood educators can be grouped into five core knowledge areas. They are:

a. Child Development
b. Curriculum and Learning Environment
c. Administration and Management
d. Families and the Community
e. Professional Development

While adopting the above core knowledge areas is essential, the Programme Standards nonetheless recognises that there are other ways to conceptualise the

core body of knowledge in ECE. A brief introduction to the five core knowledge areas are as follows:

a. Child Development

Child development is the nucleus of early childhood education. Early childhood educators need a sound knowledge of child growth and development to plan and create safe, healthy and stimulating environments and experiences that are developmentally appropriate to promote growth, development and learning. They also need the knowledge and competencies to observe and assess the child's stage of development, progress, interests, behaviour and areas of concern to evaluate the effectiveness of their activities, programmes and interactions as well as to plan and implement follow-up activities for children with areas of concern. In addition, early childhood educators need to know positive strategies and techniques for them to guide children with social and emotional difficulties. Hence, under the core of child development, there are three subject areas which are:

- Child Growth and Development
- Observation and Assessment
- Guiding Young Children

b. Curriculum and Learning Environment

The curriculum and learning environment core encompasses a range of subject areas. Besides the theories and principles of early learning and the creation of physical and learning environments to promote safety and enhance learning, this core also includes language, communication and literacy, early mathematics, science and technology, social studies, creative arts, health, safety and nutrition, spiritual and moral values and special needs. Thus the subject areas in this core comprise:

- Early Learning and Early Environments
- Curriculum Planning and Development
- Language, Communication and Literacy
- Early Mathematics
- Early Science and Technology
- Social Studies

- Creative Arts (music, movements, arts and craft, and drama)
- Spiritual and Moral Values
- Health, Safety and Nutrition
- Special Needs (including the gifted)

c. Administration and Management

Good governance is crucial in any early childhood setting. A well-managed and administered childcare centre or preschool complies with regulations and has quality ECE programmes, proper operations and financial planning and good human resource management. In addition, successful management designs learning environment and organisational climate that is safe and developmentally appropriate. An understanding of entrepreneurship is desirable to ensure sustainability of the operation. This core consists of two subject areas, namely:

- Administration and Management
- Programme Planning and Development

d. Families and Community

Professional early childhood educators should know that parents are prime educators and that immediate family members play an important role in a child's development. Children develop within the context of their families and the community which vary in ethnicity, religious beliefs and culture. Societal values, culture, availability of services and the milieu of the community can affect children's development. Therefore early childhood educators should possess the knowledge and skills to engage families and the community in their early childhood care and education programme. This core consists of two subject areas, namely:

- Partnership with Families
- Partnership with Community

e. Professional Development

The professional development core provides opportunity for students to apply the core knowledge and competencies acquired into practice and help children build a strong foundation for their future growth and development. Early childhood educators must also demonstrate

professionalism in all their work which comprises a striving for continual professional growth and development, display of professional work habits and compliance with professional code of ethics. Code of Ethics is based on attitudes, beliefs, values and perspectives and adopted by an early childhood education professional organisation to assist its members to understand the difference between 'right' and 'wrong' and in applying it to make decisions. This core comprises two subject areas, namely:

- Professionalism
- Professional Practice

See **Appendix 2**.

ii. Core Competencies

Knowledge of concepts, principles, theories and so forth are important but knowledge by itself will not enable any person to become a competent and effective early childhood educator. They must have the capability to translate the knowledge into practice. Thus, the competencies for each topic at each level should be identified to enable students to translate into practice through experiential learning such as:

- practical work
- laboratory work
- simulation
- field experiences

See **Appendix 3**.

iii. Value

The early childhood profession, like any other professions, has a set of attitudes, beliefs, values and perspectives that distinguish its members as a group. Among them are:

- All children have capabilities.
- Professional, personal and work habits which include respect, confidentiality, valuing all children, nurturing their imagination, creativity and

play, sensitivity and responsiveness to diversity in ethnicity, culture, religious beliefs and values, which reflect personal beliefs and responsibilities.

- Relationships – whether with children, families, the community and colleagues – are central to early childhood education
- Developmentally appropriate, meaningful, relevant and integrated curriculum provides children the best means to learn, grow and develop.

iv. Delivery

Methods of delivery should be synchronised with the progress of semesters and level of study. HEPs must ensure that each proposed delivery method achieves the specified learning outcomes. The performance of the delivery method on each course is assessed to ensure its effectiveness in achieving the learning outcomes.

For early childhood educators/practitioners to be able to use the knowledge gained to provide developmentally appropriate experiences for children to develop, the courses have to provide sufficient practical or hands-on activities (that is, experiential learning) for students to practise the skills and acquire the essential competencies.

v. Assessment

Assessment should consist of formative and summative assessments.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY

This section of the Programme Standards contains statements pertaining to the structure and delivery of a programme within the field of Early Childhood Education. The matrices included in this section represent the minimum requirements for all levels of qualifications. Specific requirements as to the the details of the five core knowledge areas are provided in **Appendix 2**.

CERTIFICATE **Minimum Graduating Credits – 60**		
Components	**Percentage (%)**	**Credits**
Compulsory Modules (General* and HEP modules)	12 –15	7 – 9
Core Modules (Common and Discipline)	75 – 82	45 – 49
Professional Practice **	7 – 10	4 – 6
Total	100	60

*7 – 9 credits as prescribed by the Ministry of Education.

** Minimum of 2 credits to be allocated for TASKA (childcare centre) and 2 credits for TADIKA (preschool/kindergarten) which should not run consecutively to ensure time for self-reflection.

Recommended delivery methods:

i. Lecture
ii. Tutorial
iii. Demonstration
iv. Practical work
v. Simulation (e.g. role play, microteaching)
vi. Laboratory work
vii. Field experience
viii. Presentation
ix. Project / Group work

Recommended nomenclature:

i. Certificate in Early Childhood Education

DIPLOMA **Minimum Graduating Credits – 90**		
Components	**Percentage (%)**	**Credits**
Compulsory Modules (General* and HEP modules)	10 –17	9 – 15
Core Modules (Common and Discipline)	67 – 94	60 – 85
Elective Modules	0 – 7	0 – 6
Professional Practice**	7 – 9	6 – 8
Total	100	90

*9 – 11 credits as prescribed by the Ministry of Education.

** Minimum of 3 credits to be allocated for childcare centre (TASKA) and 3 credits for preschool/kindergarten (TADIKA) which should not run consecutively to ensure time for self-reflection.

Recommended delivery methods:

i. Lecture
ii. Tutorial
iii. Demonstration
iv. Practical work
v. Simulation (e.g. role play, microteaching)
vi. Laboratory work
vii. Field experience
viii. Presentation
ix. Project / Group work
x. Case study

Recommended nomenclature:

i. Diploma in Early Childhood Education

BACHELOR'S DEGREE Minimum Graduating Credits – 120		
Components	**Percentage (%)**	**Credits**
Compulsory Modules (General* and HEP modules)	10 – 15	12 – 18
Core Modules (Common & and Discipline)	64 – 90	77 – 108
Elective Modules	5 – 10	6 – 12
Professional Practice**	7 – 10	8 – 12
Total	100	120

*12 – 14 credits as prescribed by the Ministry of Education.

** Minimum of 4 credits to be allocated for childcare centre (TASKA) and 4 credits for preschool/kindergarten (TADIKA) which should not run consecutively to ensure time for self-reflection.

Note:

For Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education), minimum of 42 credits of the Core Modules must be allocated for the specialisation.

Recommended delivery methods:

i. Lecture
ii. Tutorial
iii. Demonstration
iv. Practical work
v. Simulation (e.g. role play, microteaching)
vi. Laboratory work
vii. Field experience
viii. Presentation
ix. Problem-based learning
x. Project / Group work
xi. Case study
xii. Audio/Video conference
xiii. Webinar

Recommended nomenclature:

i. Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
ii. Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education)

MASTER'S DEGREE BY COURSEWORK Minimum Graduating Credits – 40		
Components	**Percentage (%)**	**Credits**
Core Modules (Common and Discipline)	50 – 60	20 – 24
Elective Modules	15 – 45	6 – 18
Research Project	15 – 30	6 – 12
Total	100	40

Note:

i. Coursework component must include courses in theory and research methodology.
ii. The recommended length of project report should not exceed 15,000 words.

Recommended delivery methods:

i. Lecture
ii. Tutorial (where postgraduate students are auditing theory and research methodology classes)
iii. Seminar
iv. Practical class
v. Laboratory work
vi. Field visit
vii. Case study
viii. Problem-based learning
ix. Blended learning
x. Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

Recommended nomenclature:

i. Masters of Early Childhood Education
ii. Masters of Education (Early Childhood Education)

MASTER'S DEGREE BY MIXED MODE Minimum Graduating Credits – 40		
Components	**Percentage (%)**	**Credits**
Core Modules* (Common & Discipline)	40 – 50	16 – 20
Dissertation	50 – 60	20 – 24
Total	100	40

*include research methodology

Note:

i. Courses must include theories and research methodology.
ii. Ratio of coursework to dissertation is within the range of 50:50 and 40:60.
iii. The recommended lengths of dissertations are 20 000 and 30 000 words, based on the 50:50 and 40:60 ratios respectively.

Recommended delivery methods:

i. Lecture
ii. Seminar / Colloquium
iii. Laboratory work
iv. Case study
v. Field experience
vi. Presentation
vii. Problem-based learning
viii. Project / group work
ix. Audio/Video conference
x. Webinar

Recommended nomenclature:

i. Masters of Early Childhood Education
ii. Masters of Education (Early Childhood Education)

MASTER'S DEGREE BY RESEARCH		
Components	**Percentage (%)**	**Credits**
Dissertation	100	No given credit value

Note:

i. Candidates must have followed a research methodology course.

ii. The following requirements must be decided by the HEPs:

   a. Relevant prerequisite courses

   b. Maximum period of candidature

   c. Format of the dissertation

iii. The recommended length of dissertation should not exceed 60 000 words.

Recommended delivery methods:

i. Seminar / Colloquium

ii. Field experience

iii. Consultation / Supervision

iv. Webinar

Recommended nomenclature:

i. Masters of Early Childhood Education

ii. Masters of Education (Early Childhood Education)

PhD BY MIXED MODE Minimum Graduating Credits – 80		
Components	**Percentage (%)**	**Credits**
Core Modules* (Common & Discipline)	30 – 40	24 – 32
Thesis	60 – 70	48 – 56
Total	100	80

*include research methodology

Note:

i. Courses must include theories and research methodology.
ii. Ratio of coursework to thesis is within the range of 40:60 and 30:70.
iii. The recommended lengths of thesis are 60 000 and 70 000 words, based on the 40:60 and 30:70 ratios respectively.

Recommended delivery methods:

i. Lecture
ii. Seminar / Colloquium
iii. Laboratory work
iv. Case study
v. Field experience
vi. Presentation
vii. Problem-based learning
viii. Project / Group work
ix. Audio/Video conference
x. Webinar

Recommended nomenclature:

i. PhD

PhD BY RESEARCH		
Components	**Percentage (%)**	**Credits**
Thesis	100	No given credit value

Note:

i. Candidates must have followed a research methodology course.
ii. The following requirements must be decided by the HEPs:
    a. Relevant prerequisite courses
    b. Maximum period of candidature
    c. Format of the thesis
iii. The recommended length of thesis should not exceed 100 000 words.

Recommended delivery methods:

i. Seminar / Colloquium
ii. Field experience
iii. Consultation / Supervision
iv. Webinar

Recommended nomenclature:

i. PhD

Ed.D (EARLY CHILDHOOD) **Minimum Graduating Credits – 80**		
Components	**Percentage (%)**	**Credits**
Core Modules* (Common & Discipline)	40 – 50	32 – 40
Thesis	50 – 60	40 – 48
Total	100	80

*include research methodology

Note:

i. Courses must include theories and research methodology.
ii. Ratio of coursework to thesis is within the range of 50:50 and 40:60.
iii. The recommended lengths of thesis are 50 000 and 60 000 words, based on the 50:50 and 40:60 ratios respectively.

Recommended delivery methods:

i. Lecture
ii. Seminar / Colloquium
iii. Laboratory work
iv. Case study
v. Field experience
vi. Presentation
vii. Problem-based learning
viii. Project / Group work

ix. Audio/Video conference

x. Webinar

Recommended nomenclature:

i. Doctor of Education (Ed.D)

5. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

"Student assessment is a crucial aspect of quality assurance because it drives student learning and is one of the measures to show the achievement of learning outcomes. The achievement of learning outcomes stipulated for the programme is the basis in awarding qualifications. Hence, methods of student assessment have to be clear, consistent, effective, reliable and in line with current practices and must clearly support the achievement of learning outcomes" (COPPA, 2008, pp.15).

The methods of assessment depend on the specific requirements of each module. However, as a general guide, the following is recommended.

i. A combination of various methods of assessment to measure the achievement of the learning outcomes should be used.
ii. Formative and summative assessments should be used.
iii. Knowledge and understanding of the course content and practical skills should be assessed through written, oral or other suitable means.
iv. Soft skills are to be analysed through elements of style, personal identity, confidence and quality of innovation and creativity.
v. In relation to continuous and final assessments, candidates are required to attain a cumulative pass. A pass implies that the examiner must be satisfied that the candidate has met all the learning outcomes of the particular subject.

For Masters and PhD **by Research only**:

i. Formative assessment must include:
    a. Monitoring of research progress periodically (for example, through a progress report, or a proposal defence). The monitoring is for the supervisor to assess the candidates' progress in knowledge, critical thinking, practical, technical, professional, scientific and problem solving skills.

    b. Research Presentation / Colloquium / Seminar / Workshop. This will enhance candidate's communication skills, teamwork, leadership, organisational skills, lifelong learning and professionalism.

ii. Summative assessment is used to assess all learning outcomes of a master's programme, and must include:
    a. completion of prescribed courses;
    b. dissertation; and
    c. viva voce.

iii. Summative assessment is used to assess all learning outcomes of a PhD programme, and must include:
    a. completion of prescribed courses;
    b. thesis; and
    c. viva voce.

The types of assessment indicated below are **merely examples**. HEPs are encouraged to use a variety of methods and tools appropriate for measuring learning outcomes and competencies.

QUALIFICATIONS	MODULES		SUGGESTED FORMS OF ASSESSMENT
	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT (%)	SUMMATIVE (FINAL) ASSESSMENT (%)	
Certificate	70 – 80	20 – 30	• Written Assessment • Practical Assessment • Oral Assessment/Presentation • Portfolio (Digital and Non Digital) • Project • Performance-based
Diploma	40 – 70	30 – 60	• Written Assessment • Practical Assessment • Oral

QUALIFICATIONS	MODULES		SUGGESTED FORMS OF ASSESSMENT
	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT (%)	SUMMATIVE (FINAL) ASSESSMENT (%)	
			Assessment/Presentation • Portfolio (Digital and Non Digital) • Project • Performance-based
Bachelor's Degree	40 – 70	30 – 60	• Written Assessment • Practical Assessment • Oral Assessment/Presentation • Portfolio (Digital and Non Digital) • Project / Fieldwork / Community service • Performance-based
Master's Degree by Coursework	30 – 70	30 – 70	• Written Assessment • Seminar and Other Presentations • Project Paper • Portfolio (Digital and Non Digital) • Performance-based
Master's Degree by Mixed Mode	30 – 70	30 – 70	• Written Assessment • Seminar and Other Presentations

QUALIFICATIONS	MODULES		SUGGESTED FORMS OF ASSESSMENT
	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT (%)	SUMMATIVE (FINAL) ASSESSMENT (%)	
			• Dissertation • Viva Voce • Portfolio (Digital and Non Digital) • Performance-based
Master's Degree by Research	-	-	• Written Assessment • Seminar Presentation • Dissertation • Viva Voce • Portfolio (Digital and Non Digital)
PhD by Mixed Mode	70	30	• Written Assessment • Seminar and Other Presentations • Thesis • Viva Voce • Portfolio (Digital and Non Digital) • Performance-based
PhD by Research	-	-	• Seminar and Other Presentations / Colloquium • Thesis • Viva Voce

QUALIFICATIONS	MODULES		SUGGESTED FORMS OF ASSESSMENT
	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT (%)	SUMMATIVE (FINAL) ASSESSMENT (%)	
Ed.D	70	30	• Written Assessment • Seminar and Other Presentations • Thesis • Viva Voce • Portfolio (Digital and Non Digital) • Performance-based

Subjects offered in early childhood education can be categorised as skill based, theory based and a combination of both. For some skill based subjects, there may not be any final assessment (100% continuous assessment).

Note:
Compositions of dissertation / thesis examiners are as follows:

i. Master's Degree by Mixed Mode
The dissertation is to be examined by at least 2 examiners.

ii. Master's Degree by Research
The dissertation is to be examined by at least 2 examiners, 1 of whom is an external examiner.

iii. PhD by Mixed Mode / Ed.D (Early Childhood)
The thesis is to be examined by at least 2 examiners, 1 of whom is an external examiner.

iv. PhD by Research

The thesis is to be examined by at least 3 examiners, 2 of whom are external examiners.

6. STUDENT SELECTION

This section of the Programme Standards document concerns on the recruitment of students into the individual programme of study. In general, admission policies of the Programme need to comply with the prevailing policies of the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE).

"There are varying views on the best method of student selection. Whatever the method used, the Higher Education Provider (HEP) must be able to defend its consistency. The number of students to be admitted to the Programme is determined by the capacity of the HEP and the number of qualified applicants. HEP admission and retention policies must not be compromised for the sole purpose of maintaining a desired enrolment. If HEP operates geographically separated campuses or if the Programme is a collaborative one, the selection and assignment of all students must be consistent with national policies" (COPPA, 2008, pp.17).

The standards for the recruitment of students are formulated keeping in mind the generic national Higher Education policies pertaining to minimum student entry requirement. Higher Education Providers (HEPs) must take cognisance of any specific policies that may apply to their individual Institution.

The minimum standards are as follows:

CERTIFICATE

i. A pass in Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) with a minimum of 1 credit in any subject or its equivalent;
   OR
ii. A pass in Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia (SKM) level 2 and pass SPM.

DIPLOMA

i. A pass in SPM with a minimum of 3 credits in any subject or its equivalent;
   OR

ii. A pass in Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM) with a minimum of Grade C (GP 2.0) in any subject or its equivalent;
OR
iii. A pass in Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia (STAM) with a minimum grade of *Maqbul*;
OR
iv. A pass in SKM level 3 in Early Child Care/Preschool and pass SPM with a minimum of 1 credit in any subject;
OR
v. A Certificate in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or its equivalent;
OR
vi. A Certificate in any field or its equivalent.

For International students, Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 500 OR International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 5.0 OR its equivalent. If a student does not meet this requirement, HEPs must offer English proficiency courses to ensure that the student's proficiency is sufficient to meet the needs of the programme. The student's proficiency is determined through an assessment process.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

i. A pass in STPM with a minimum of Grade C (GP 2.0) in any two subjects or its equivalent;
OR
ii. A pass in STAM with a minimum grade of *Jayyid*;
OR
iii. A pass in Matriculation/Foundation or its equivalent;
OR
iv. A Diploma in ECE or its equivalent;
OR
v. A Diploma in any field or its equivalent.

For International students, Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 500 OR International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 5.0 OR its equivalent. If a student does not meet this requirement, HEPs must offer English proficiency courses to ensure that the student's proficiency is sufficient to meet the needs

of the programme. The student's proficiency is determined through an assessment process.

MASTER'S DEGREE BY COURSEWORK

i. A Bachelor's Degree in ECE with a minimum CGPA of 2.50 or its equivalent;
   OR
ii. A Bachelor's Degree in a relevant field with a minimum CGPA of 2.50 or its equivalent, as accepted by the HEP Senate AND 3 years working experience in early childhood fields;
   OR
iii. A Bachelor's Degree with a minimum CGPA of 2.50 or its equivalent, as accepted by the HEP Senate AND a Diploma in ECE/4 years working experience in early childhood fields;
   OR
iv. A Bachelor's Degree not meeting CGPA of 2.50 or its equivalent, as accepted by the HEP Senate can be accepted subject to a minimum of 5 years working experience in early childhood fields and rigorous internal assessment.

For International students, Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 600 OR International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 6.0 OR its equivalent. If a student does not meet this requirement, HEPs must offer English proficiency courses to ensure that the student's proficiency is sufficient to meet the needs of the programme. The student's proficiency is determined through an assessment process.

MASTER'S DEGREE BY MIXED MODE AND BY RESEARCH

i. A Bachelor's Degree in ECE with a minimum CGPA of 2.75 or its equivalent;
   OR
ii. A Bachelor's Degree in a relevant field with a minimum CGPA of 2.75 or its equivalent, as accepted by the HEP Senate AND a Diploma in ECE/3 years working experience in early childhood fields;
   OR
iii. A Bachelor's Degree with a minimum CGPA of 2.50 and not meeting CGPA of 2.75 or its equivalent, as accepted by the HEP Senate AND a Diploma in ECE/3

years working experience in early childhood fields can be accepted subject to rigorous internal assessment;

OR

iv. A Bachelor's Degree not meeting CGPA of 2.50 or its equivalent, as accepted by the HEP Senate AND a Diploma in ECE/7 years working experience in early childhood fields can be accepted subject to rigorous internal assessment.

For International students, Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 600 OR International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 6.0 OR its equivalent. If a student does not meet this requirement, HEPs must offer English proficiency courses to ensure that the student's proficiency is sufficient to meet the needs of the programme. The student's proficiency is determined through an assessment process.

PhD BY MIXED MODE, BY RESEARCH AND Ed.D

i. A Master's Degree in ECE or its equivalent;

OR

ii. A Master's Degree in a relevant field or its equivalent, as accepted by the HEP Senate AND a Diploma in ECE/3 years working experience in early childhood fields;

OR

iii. Other qualifications equivalent to a Master's Degree, as accepted by the HEP Senate AND a Diploma in ECE/5 years working experience in early childhood fields.

For International students, Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 600 OR International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 6.0 OR its equivalent. If a student does not meet this requirement, HEPs must offer English proficiency courses to ensure that the student's proficiency is sufficient to meet the needs of the programme. The student's proficiency is determined through an assessment process.

Note for PhD by Research:

i. There shall be no direct entry from Bachelor's Degree level to PhD level.

ii. However, candidates with Bachelor's Degree qualification, registered for Master's Degree programmes may apply to convert their candidacy to Doctoral Degree programmes.

iii. Application of conversion must be done within one year after candidate registers for Master's Degree programmes.

iv. Application approval is subjected to:

   a. having shown competency and capability in conducting research at PhD level;

   b. rigorous internal assessment by the HEP; and

   c. approval by the HEP Senate.

7. ACADEMIC STAFF

"The quality of the academic staff is one of the most important components in assuring the quality of Higher Education and thus every effort must be made to establish proper and effective recruitment, service, development and appraisal policies that are conducive to staff productivity" (COPPA, 2008, pp.21).

Owing to the importance of appropriate experience in the early formative years, it is essential for academic staff to have working experiences in early childhood setting.

CERTIFICATE

Academic staff qualification

i. A Bachelor's Degree in ECE or its equivalent with at least 1 year of work experience in early childhood field;
   OR
ii. A Diploma in ECE or its equivalent with a minimum of 2 years of work experience in early childhood fields (The programme should not employ more than 30% of the staff in this category);
   OR
iii. A Certificate in ECE or its equivalent with a minimum of 5 years of work experience in early childhood fields (Qualified to teach practical classes only and the programme should not employ more than 20% of the staff in this category).

Academic staff ratio

i. Full-time and part-time teaching faculty – at least 60% of the staff are full-time

Staff-student ratio

i. Overall staff-student ratio – 1:30

DIPLOMA

Academic staff qualification

i. A Bachelor's Degree in ECE or its equivalent with at least 1 year of work experience in early childhood field;
   OR

ii. A Bachelor's Degree in fields related to the ECE courses and at least 1 staff majoring in child development/educational psychology/psychology with at least 2 years of work experience in early childhood fields (The programme should not employ more than 20% of the staff in this category);
OR

iii. A Diploma in ECE or its equivalent with at least 5 years of work experience in early childhood fields (The programme should not employ more than 20% of the staff in this category).

Academic staff ratio

i. Full-time and part-time teaching faculty – at least 60% of the staff are full-time

Staff-student ratio

i. Overall staff-student ratio - 1:25

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Academic staff qualification

i. A Master's Degree in ECE or its equivalent with at least 1 year of work experience in early childhood field;
OR

ii. A Master's Degree in fields related to the ECE courses with at least 2 years of work experience in early childhood fields (At least 1 staff majoring in child development/educational sychology/psychology)
OR

iii. A Bachelor's Degree in ECE or its equivalent or related field with 5 years of work experience in early childhood fields.
(The programme should not employ more than 20% of the staff in this category)

Academic staff ratio

i. Full-time and part-time teaching faculty – at least 60% of the staff are full-time

Staff-student ratio

i. Overall staff-student ratio - 1:15

MASTER'S DEGREE

Academic staff/supervisor qualification

i. A PhD/Ed.D (specialising in ECE);
   OR
ii. A Master's degree in ECE with at least 5 years of teaching and research experience or as a co-supervisor;
iii. The additional criteria are subjected to the approval of the HEP Senate.

Supervisor requirement

i. When there is only one supervisor, the supervisor must be a full-time staff of the conferring HEP.
ii. When there is more than one supervisor, the principal supervisor must be a full-time staff of the conferring HEP.

Academic staff ratio

i. Full-time and part-time teaching faculty – at least 60% of the staff are full-time

Staff-student ratio

i. Overall staff-student ratio – 1:10

Supervisor-student ratio

i. Overall supervisor-student ratio – 1:10 (by coursework and mixed mode)
ii. Overall supervisor-student ratio – 1:7 (by research)

PhD/ Ed.D

Academic staff qualification

i. A PhD/Ed.D with at least 2 years of experience in teaching and research or as a co-supervisor.
ii. Where a staff does not fulfill the qualification, additional criteria including extensive experience in teaching, research and supervision are required and will be subjected to the approval of the HEP Senate.

Staff-student ratio

i. Overall staff-student ratio – 1:10

Supervisor-student ratio

i. Overall supervisor-student ratio – 1:5

Staff Development

Academic staff are vital to deliver a quality programme and to perform teaching effectively, as well as to produce graduates that are employable and accepted by the industry. As the industry is dynamic and globally influenced, academic staff need to continually update themselves with changes around the globe. Thus, HEPs must ensure that all academic staff are well-equipped with the latest knowledge and skills in their teaching and learning activities.

HEPs should provide the following Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes of at least 40 hours (equivalent to 7 days) of relevant training per year or participation or involvement in their respective field of expertise to cater for:

i. Professional development for full-time staff.
ii. Updated teaching and learning skills.
iii. Updated research and supervisory skills.
iv. Industry attachment (if required by the HEPs).
v. Research, consultation and community services involvement.

8. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

"Adequate educational resources are necessary to support the teaching-learning activities of the programme. These resources include finance, expertise, physical infrastructure, information and communication technology, and research facilities. The physical facilities of a programme are largely guided by the needs of the specific field of study" (COPPA, 2008, PP23).

For ECE programmes, HEPs are required to provide sufficient facilities to accommodate student-centered learning. The resources include:

i. Appropriate, safe and adequate physical facilities
   a. Lecture rooms
   b. Tutorial rooms
   c. Multipurpose workshop
   d. Computer laboratory/room
   e. Microteaching room
   f. Learning enclaves and other learning spaces
   g. Recreational and sports facilities

ii. Simulation rooms equipped with adequate and appropriate furniture (e.g. child-sized tables and chairs), materials and tools for students to imitate or practise real-life situations.

iii. Library with
   a. Adequate, relevant and up-to-date text and reference books
   b. Journals
   c. Online resources (e.g. books, e-journals, magazines and documents)
   d. Appropriate services including, but not limited to
      - Reference services
      - Inter-resource centre loan
      - Electronic reference services

iv. Resource Centre with teaching and learning aids.

v. Work area for postgraduate students.

vi. Access to student support services, such as

- Counselling services
- Induction/Orientation programmes
- Health and medical services

vii. The availability of **registered*** preschools/kindergartens or TADIKA and registered childcare centres or TASKA for experiential learning, practicum and internship.

*Must provide evidence of collaboration for practicum and internship between the registered preschools/kindergartens and the registered childcare centres with the HEPs.

9. PROGRAMME MONITORING AND REVIEW

"Quality enhancement calls for programmes to be regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated. This includes the monitoring, reviewing and evaluating of institutional structures and processes (administrative structure, leadership and governance, planning and review mechanisms), curriculum components (teaching methodologies, learning outcomes) as well as student progress, employability and performance" (COPPA, 2008, pp.27).

Quality enhancement of programmes requires feedback from multiple sources such as students, academic staff, external evaluators and other stakeholders.

Measures of student performance would include assessment scores, passing rate at examinations, success and dropout rates and students' report about their learning experiences. Student feedback through formal and informal means and representation in programme committees provide useful information for continual improvement of the programme.

Programme Evaluation and Review is conducted by the programme committees and external evaluators. The programme committees perform periodical review and evaluation of the curriculum, teaching-learning methods and assessment. The external evaluators of the programme evaluate programmes through students' performance, programme analysis, and student and staff interview.

Feedback from stakeholders such as alumni, employers, professional bodies, industry partners and parents assists in enhancing the quality of the programme. HEPs should engage stakeholders regularly and systematically to obtain feedback. They can initiate data analysis through tracer studies to increase graduates' employability.

10. LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

"There are many ways of administering an educational institution and the methods of management differ between Higher Education Providers (HEPs). Nevertheless, governance that reflects the leadership of an academic organisation must emphasise excellence and scholarship. At the departmental level, it is crucial that the leadership provides clear guidelines and direction, builds relationships amongst the different constituents based on collegiality and transparency, manages finances and other resources with accountability, forges partnership with significant stakeholders in educational delivery, research and consultancy and dedicates itself to academic and scholarly endeavours. Whilst formalised arrangements can protect these relationships, they are best developed by a culture of reciprocity, mutuality and open communication" (COPPA, 2008, pp.28).

In this programme, academic leadership focuses principally on suitable and qualified persons to carry out the necessary curriculum monitoring and review.

The leaders of the programme should demonstrate knowledge, professionalism and good ethical values in work practices.

The leadership requirement of this standard is complimentary to Area 8 in the COPPA document. Thus, the programme leadership positions (e.g., Head of Department, Head of Programme or Coordinator) offered at different levels in the institution must preferably fulfil the qualifications and experiences as follows:

CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA

A Bachelor's Degree in ECE or its equivalent with 3 years of working experience in the field of early childhood.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

A Master's Degree in ECE or its equivalent with 3 years of working experience in the field of early childhood.

MASTER'S DEGREE AND PhD / Ed.D

PhD or Ed.D specialising in ECE or its equivalent with 3 years of working experience in the field of early childhood.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF STUDY

HEPs must provide a credible Board of Study for the commencement and restructuring of the ECE programme. The Board of Study should comprise ECE academicians, student representatives and practitioners from the early childhood care and education industry.

11. CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

"Increasingly, society demands greater accountability from the Higher Education Providers (HEPs). Needs are constantly changing because of the advancements in science and technology, and the explosive growth in global knowledge, which are rapidly and widely disseminated. In facing these challenges, HEPs have little choice but to become dynamic learning organisations that need to continually and systematically review and monitor the various issues so as to meet the demands of the constantly changing environment" (COPPA, 2008, pp.30-31).

The HEPs are expected to provide evidence of their ability to keep up with changes in the field and with the requirements of stakeholders. These may be demonstrated by, but are not limited to:

i. a curriculum review conducted at least once every three years; except for Certificate level programmes which are to be reviewed every two years;
ii. quality assessment processes by external evaluators who are specialists in the relevant fields;
iii. linkages with related departments, agencies, professional bodies and industries;
iv. review of the appropriateness and effectiveness of training of staff and students provided by relevant departments, agencies, professional bodies and industries;
v. dialogue sessions with stakeholders at least once every two years;
vi. active participation of academic staff at relevant conferences, seminars, workshops and short courses;
vii. presentations by local or international speakers; and
viii. organisation of conferences, seminars and workshops.

REFERENCES

Centre for the Study of Child Care Employment, Institute for Research on Labour and Employment, University of California at Berkeley (2007). *Early Childhood Educator Competencies: A Literature Review of Current Best Practices*. Berkeley, California.

Council of Educational Research, Ministry of Education, New Zealand (2003). *Characteristics of Professional Development Linked to Enhanced Pedagogy and Children's Learning in Early Childhood Settings: Best Evidence Synthesis.* Wellington, New Zealand.

Malaysian Qualifications Agency (2007). *Malaysian Qualifications Framework – MQF*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

Malaysian Qualifications Agency (2008). *Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation – COPPA*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

Malaysian Qualifications Agency (2012). *Guidelines to Good Practices: Curriculum Design and Delivery – GGP: CDD*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (2009). *NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs.* Washington DC, United States.

Ohio Professional Development Network (2008). *Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies*. Columbus, Ohio.

Urban, Mathias (2011). *Competence Requirements for Early Childhood Education and Care – Final Report (A study for the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture).* http://www.academia.edu/967922/Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care CORE – Final Report

LIST OF PANEL MEMBERS

NO.	NAME	ORGANISATION
1.	Saedah Siraj (Prof. Dr.) -Chairperson	Universiti Malaya
2.	Bustam Kamri (Prof. Dr.)	Kolej Pengajian Islam Johor (MARSAH)
3.	Chiam Heng Keng (Datuk Dr.)	Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Council
4.	Irene Leow Kim Choo (Dr.)	Seri Mawar Child Care and Development Centre
5.	Nordin Mamat (Dr.)	Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE – Five Core Areas of Knowledge

The topics in the Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor's and Master's degree are the basic essentials that must be covered but are not limited to them. The HEPs are at liberty to add more topics or more knowledge and competencies under each topic.

The topics for Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor's and Master's degree, and PhD/Ed.D may be similar but the competencies for early childhood educators at different levels will differ. The upper levels encompass the knowledge and competencies of the previous levels but the concepts will be at progressively higher levels.

1) CHILD DEVELOPMENT

No	Subject Area	Topics

1	Child Growth and Development	• Principles, Growth and Development
		• Developmental Domains
		• Theories of Growth and Development
		• Factors Affecting Growth, Development and Learning such as:
		  ○ Biological and psycho-social
		  ○ Play
		  ○ Family
		  ○ Early childhood experiences

2	Observation and Assessment	• Definition, Concept and Importance of Observation • Methods of Observation • Concept of Assessment • Documentation and Compilation of Assessment/Information Data • Uses of Assessment Data

No	Subject Area	Topics
3	Guiding Young Children	• Fundamentals and Theories of Guiding Young Children • Strategies and Techniques to Promote Emotional and Social Wellness of Young Children • Guiding Challenging Behaviours

2) CURRICULUM AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

No.	Subject Area	Topics
1	Early Learning and Early Environments	• Principles and Theories of Early Learning • Infant and Toddler Care • Pedagogy/Teaching-learning Strategies in Early Childhood • Types of Learning Environments and their Impact on Growth, Development and Learning: o Physical environment o Indoor and outdoor o Socio-emotional environment • Principles, Theories and Techniques of Planning, Designing and Creating Conducive, Safe and Healthy Learning Environments • Principles and Techniques in Planning and Implementing Learning Activities including o Scheduling o Balance of various types of activities (e.g. indoor-outdoor, quiet-active and individual-group)

No.	Subject Area	Topics
		○ Routines and transitions ○ Transitions ○ Impact of emotional climate on learning • Resources: Tools, Equipment and Materials ○ Tools, equipment and materials that enhance learning, curiosity, exploration, creativity, thinking skills, and problem solving skills ○ Creative use of materials, especially junk/recycled materials to foster creativity, problem thinking and appreciation of the environment ○ ICT as a supporting tool ○ Principles of adapting tools, equipment and materials for special needs
2	Curriculum Planning and Development	• Key Principles and Models of Curriculum Planning and Development • Techniques in Developing Work Plans • National Preschool Curriculum Standards and PERMATA Early Child Care Courses and Other Contemporary Curriculum • Principles of Integration of Curriculum Areas, in particular Thematic Mapping • Techniques to Assess and Modify Curricular Activities to Meet Individual Needs

No.	Subject Area	Topics
3	Language, Communication and Literacy	• Language and Literate Behaviour in Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing • Principles and Theories Pertaining to Language, Communication and Literacy Learning • Theories on Integrated Curriculum for Language, Communication and Literacy • Approaches and Strategies to Language Learning, Communication and Literacy
4	Early Mathematics	• Prenumber and Fundamental Early Mathematical Concepts and Skills • Techniques and Strategies for Planning, Creating and Implementing Meaningful Learning of Mathematics , including Early Mathematics in Daily Routines/Life
5	Early Science and Technology	• Key Scientific Concepts and Skills (e.g. observing, comparing, predicting and recording) • Approaches and Methods for Teaching Science • Application of ICT in Early Childhood
6	Social Studies	• Key Concepts and Skills in Social Studies (Geography, Economics, History, Political Governance, Civics and Citizenship) • Importance of Social Study Area in Early Childhood

No.	Subject Area	Topics
		• Techniques and Strategies for Teaching Social Studies in Early Childhood Settings
7	Creative Arts (music, movements, arts and craft, and drama)	• Meaning and Scope of Creative Arts • Basic Concepts of Creativity, Aesthetics and Creative Expressions • Methods of Developing Creativity, Appreciation of Aesthetics and the Arts • Activities for Promoting Creativity and Appreciation of Creative Arts • Strategies for Implementing the Creative Arts Curriculum in Early Childhood • Assessment Techniques • Techniques in Modifying the Curriculum and Activities for Special Needs
8	Spiritual and Moral Values	• Key Concepts on Moral and Spiritual Education • Methods for Teaching and Learning Moral and Spiritual Values • Activities that are Developmentally Appropriate, Meaningful and Relevant to Daily Lives
9	Health, Safety and Nutrition	• Concept of Health, Policies, Regulations and Principles that Promote Good Health Practices o Health policies, acts & regulations and standard operation procedures (e.g. handling food, administrating medication)

No.	Subject Area	Topics
		○ Health practices ○ Principles for promoting good physical, mental and social health • Physical Health ○ Policies and procedures on physical health issues (such as handling fluids, e.g. blood) ○ Conducting routine physical check ○ Common childhood illnesses and communicable diseases ○ Techniques of preventing and controlling communicable diseases ○ Administration of medication ○ Health hazards in meals (e.g. allergies and choking) ○ Healthy lifestyle ○ Health crisis of children with special needs • Physical Development ○ Importance of gross and fine motor development and their impact on other domains of development ○ Planning and implementing a wide range of activities to promote physical development indoors and outdoors ○ Adapting physical development activities to special needs ○ Assessment of the effectiveness and appropriateness of physical development activities in meeting the special needs of individual children

No.	Subject Area	Topics

		• Mental Health
		  ○ Concept of mental health and common mental health problems in children
		  ○ Effect of mental health (including stress) on children's growth, development and learning
		  ○ Signs and symptoms
		  ○ Techniques in managing children with mental health problems
		  ○ Ways to promote mental health and wellbeing
		  ○ Local resources to help children with mental health problems and their families
		• Safety
		  ○ Concept, principles, policies and legislation
		  ○ Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) for safety and SOP for emergencies (including injuries)
		  ○ Food safety and health hazards in meals (e.g. allergies and choking)
		  ○ Emergency plan, preparedness & response
		  ○ National policy on protection of children
		  ○ Signs and symptoms of physical and sexual abuse
		  ○ Safety measures
		• Nutritional Needs of Young Children
		  ○ Policies, legislation and guidelines
		  ○ Preparation/serving of meals and

No.	Subject Area	Topics
		snacks that reflect a nutritionally balanced diet based on plans provided by professionals ○ Meals for children with special dietary requirements ○ Healthy eating habits ○ Nutritional health assessment ○ Physical indication of poor nutrition ○ Learning experiences that teach children good nutrition
10	Special Needs (including the gifted)	• Foundations of Special Education • Detection • Early Intervention and Support • Planning and Instructional Strategies ○ Rights of children with special needs ○ Basic principles for modifying activities for children with special needs ○ Strategies for inclusion with special needs ○ Individualized education plan • Accommodation and Adaptation of Learning Environments ○ Learning needs of children with special needs ○ Concept of least restrictive environments for children with special needs • Modifying and Adapting Activities

3) ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

No.	Subject Area	Topics

1	Administration and Management	• Regulatory Standards such as
		  ○ Child Care Centre Act 1984 (Act 308)
		  ○ Education Act 1996 (Act 550)
		  ○ Child Act 2001
		  ○ Food Act 2011
		• Guidelines such as
		  ○ Guidelines for Setting Up TASKA and TADIKA
		  ○ Malaysian Dietary Guidelines
		• Operations
		  ○ Types of record and recording systems
		  ○ Standard Operation Procedures
		  ○ Maintenance of organization's facilities
		• Financial Planning and Management
		  ○ Business concept of ECCE
		  ○ Principles of budget planning
		  ○ Bookkeeping
		  ○ Marketing strategies and techniques
		  ○ Risk management
		• Entrepreneurship
		• Staff Management
		  ○ Human resource management
		  ○ Professional development

No.	Subject Area	Topics

2	Programme Planning and Development	• Principles and Models for Programme Planning and Development
		• Legislation and Regulations Pertaining to Early Childhood Care and Education, including National Preschool Curriculum Standards and Permata Early Child Care Courses and relevant contemporary curriculum
		• Quality ECCE Programmes
		  ○ Philosophy of early childhood care, education and development
		  ○ Approaches to childhood care and education (ECCE)
		  ○ Evidence-based good practices
		  ○ Quality standards for childcare centres and preschools
		• Principles of Scheduling for Classroom & Playground and Principles of staff scheduling and task delegation
		• Need Analysis and Evaluation for Continuous Programme Improvement

4) FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

No.	Subject Area	Topics

1	Partnering with Families	• Knowing and Respecting Parents
		• Effective Communication
		  ○ Types of communication (verbal and non-verbal)
		  ○ Listening skills
		  ○ Strategies & techniques for (i) obtaining information on the child and (ii) reporting child's progress and development
		  ○ Reciprocal exchange of information
		  ○ Negotiation and persuasion techniques for difficult situations
		  ○ Sensitivity to cultural, religious, and socio-conomic diversity
		• Strategies and Techniques for Initiating and Sustaining Family Involvement

2	Partnering with Community	• Models of Smart Partnership
		• Strategies and techniques for effective collaboration
		• Resources in the Community
		  ○ Self and families
		  ○ Utilization to extend and enrich children's learning

5) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

No	Subject Area	Topics

1	Professionalism	• Concept of Professionalism in Early Childhood Care and Education which Includes:
		  ○ Professional image and attitudes
		  ○ Professional work habits

No	Subject Area	Topics
		○ Membership in professional organization related to early childhood care and education • Professional Growth and Development which includes: ○ Evolving knowledge and competencies ○ Short- and long-term goals or mission ○ Career pathway planning • Professional Integrity and Code of Ethics of Professional Early Childhood Educators • Advocacy ○ Various forms of advocacy ○ Commitment to early childcare and preschool education ○ Participation in advocacy (e.g., for access to quality early childcare and preschool education, recognition of ECE as a profession, and policies and legislation on ECE)

No	Subject Area	Topics

2	Professional Practice	• Effective and Competent Early Childhood Educators
		  ○ Knowledge and competencies
		  ○ Translation of knowledge into behaviour and practice
		  ○ Reflective practice and supervision which encompass active listening, referring questions and concerns to supervisors/appropriate staff, and using supervisors' feedback to improve practice
		• Preparation including lesson plans, organization of activities and learning environments
		• Professional Practices
		• Working with Peers, Supervisors and Staff in Training Centres

CORE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES: An Example

Subject Area – Child Growth and Development

Topic	Knowledge/ Competency	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Diploma in Early Childhood Education	Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education	Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education
Theories of Growth and Development	Knowledge	i. Fundamentals of the following theories: • Piaget • Vygotsky • Erikson • Maslow • Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory	i. Theories fundamental to ECE: • Piaget • Vygotsky • Erikson • Maslow • Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory	i. Major theories in the following categories: • Psychoanalytic • Cognitive • Behavioural and Social Cognitive • Ethological • Ecological • Eclectic Theoretical Orientation	i. Strengths and limitations of the major theories of growth and development ii. Research findings on theories on growth and development.

Topic	Knowledge/ Competency	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Diploma in Early Childhood Education	Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education	Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education
				ii. Eastern theories of child growth and development.	
	Competency	i. Describe the main features of each of these five theories. ii. Apply knowledge of these five theories to understand children, and plan and conduct experiences/ activities to facilitate children's, growth, development and learning.	i. Explain the importance of these theories in guiding teachers in planning and conducting experiences/ activities, creating safe and conducive environments and interacting with children to facilitate children's growth, development and	i. Describe the salient features of each of these theories to the care, growth and development of young children. ii. Select and employ appropriate theories as basis for planning, decision making and implementing practices.	i. Analyse the strengths and limitations of the major theories of child's growth and development and their applications for understandin g children

Topic	Knowledge/ Competency	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Diploma in Early Childhood Education	Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education	Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education
			learning. ii. Apply knowledge of these theories in planning and conducting experiences and in interacting with children to foster wholesome emotional development and socially acceptable behaviour.	iii. Appraise the various theories for their applicability for fostering wholesome emotional development and socially acceptable behaviour. iv. Apply knowledge obtained from this appraisal to interact with children to promote socio-emotional development.	and for planning and conducting experiences of young children. ii. Implement practices that are based upon a sound understanding of the theories of growth and development and a

Topic	Knowledge/ Competency	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Diploma in Early Childhood Education	Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education	Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education
					thorough knowledge of research in these areas.

GLOSSARY

1)	Case study	A descriptive exploratory or explanatory analysis of a person, group, institution or event and is used to explore causation in order to find underlying principles.
2)	Childcare provider	A person employed/appointed by operator to provide care for a child at a childcare centre.
3)	Early environments	Physical, social and emotional environments in which children interact with people, materials and equipment in all settings including the home and community.
4)	Early learning	A complex and dynamic process whereby children below 6 years of age gain knowledge and competencies through interactions with people and the environment.
5)	Experiential learning	A process of learning through observations and interactions that lead to experimenting with knowledge, making sense of the materials and environment, finding meaning and making discoveries.
6)	Field experience	Visit to a specific place/programme to obtain real-life/practical experiences to enhance students' understanding of the academic studies and in preparation for their career as an early childhood educator.
7)	Laboratory	Room/space where practical experiences are gained through observation of children, construction of materials/equipment,

		conducting science experiments, trying out ideas, etc.
8)	Practical work	Encompasses all types of hands-on activities for students to obtain experiences, perceive relationships, apply their knowledge, etc.
9)	Professional practice	A period of time within the programme when students are required to be placed in registered TASKA (child care centres) and registered TADIKA (preschools/kindergartens) to experience the real working environment. Terms such as practicum or industrial training can be used.
10)	Simulation	The imitation of an action/situation in the real-world.
11)	TADIKA (Preschool /Kindergarten)	A place (in institution, workplace or community) that provides children of ages 4-6 years with early experiences for their growth, development and learning.
12)	TASKA (Childcare Centre)	A place (in institution, workplace or community) where children below 4 years of age receive alternative care provided by childcare providers.
13)	Webinar	An interactive web conference that allows a presenter and audience communicate through text chat or audio and illustrated via online slides and/or electronic whiteboard.