

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Academic Positions

(In addition to the Position Classification Standards)

Position Title:	Professor and Head, Early Start	Level:	E
Faculty/Division:	Social Sciences	Department/Location:	School of Education

Primary Purpose of the Position:

The Professor and Head of Early Start will lead the academic agenda for the Early Start initiative through the development of an interdisciplinary platform that incorporates academic programs and research activities with a focus on young children, families and the community. This position will report to the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences through the Head of the School of Education and will collaborate closely with key stakeholders. A primary focus for the role will be the alignment of academic endeavours with the Early Start initiative including undergraduate and postgraduate course work, research located in the Higher Degree Research (HDR) area, and continuing professional development and outreach with the Engagement Centres and the broader community. In conjunction with the relevant Heads of School the successful candidate will have oversight of our academic and practice-based programs focusing on children and families as these are expanded to our regional campuses. The incumbent will also be a lead collaborator in progressing our innovative research agenda and HDR programs, securing external funding and mentoring postgraduate students through an interdisciplinary approach to enhancing the lives of young children and families. Through these activities, the Professor and Head of Early Start will make a significant contribution to the achievement of the University's strategic goals and, in particular, help realise the vision of the Early Start initiative.

Position Environment:

UOW is a leading Australian university with a history of outstanding achievements in teaching and learning, research and community engagement. It is fundamentally committed to providing our diverse body of students with an engaging world class and internationally oriented learning experience. The success of this commitment is demonstrated by enviable results in preparing students for the challenges of future study and workplace environments. The University has also established a strong research profile and an outstanding record of achievement in research performance and intensity over the last decade.

The Early Start Project, a \$44 million venture within the newly created Faculty of Social Sciences, provides opportunities for local, national and international collaboration aimed at enhancing social capital and addressing disadvantage in our most vulnerable communities. Scheduled to be fully operational in early 2015, Early Start is a strategic interdisciplinary teaching, research and community engagement initiative which will enable a new generation of graduates to work with young children, their families and communities. It involves three key elements: a state-of-the-art building currently under construction at the University's Wollongong campus; the Discovery Space housed within the main building and providing public access to children and families; and, a connected network of 38 early childhood education and care services in areas of disadvantage across NSW. The University aims to drive positive social change by enhancing the learning and development experiences of children, families and communities through the inter-connectedness of these facilities.

Connections from the University to these 38 services, as well as other community agencies in regional, rural and remote areas, will extend the reach of higher education beyond current boundaries. These connections will ground teaching, research and community engagement activities in real life settings, providing authentic learning opportunities for students and researchers across many disciplines, whilst providing communities with strong links to experts in fields such as Early Childhood Education, Developmental Psychology, Social Work and Health.

The Faculty of Social Sciences incorporates the School of Education, School of Psychology and School of Health and Society, the latter incorporating the Department of Geography and Sustainable Communities, providing a sophisticated interdisciplinary environment with which to capitalise on opportunities provided by the Early Start initiative. With connections from the main building in Wollongong to services in regional, rural and remote areas across NSW, and partners in national and international institutions, Early Start promises to create a landscape for teaching, learning and research that is markedly different to the image we traditionally associate with higher education.

Major Accountabilities/Responsibilities:

Responsibilities		Outcome	Office Use Only
1.	Provide effective leadership in the overall direction and integration of academic activities aligned with the Early Start vision.	Ensure alignment of academic programs, CPD, research and outreach activities.	
2.	In collaboration with ESRI, participate in developing an innovative interdisciplinary research agenda with a focus on the early years.	Enhance UOW's profile in early childhood and family research both nationally and internationally.	
3.	Seek external funding to support and promote research endeavours aligned with the Early Start agenda.	Secure funding that will support interdisciplinary research activities relevant to the Early Start initiative.	
4.	Promote an HDR agenda and supervision model that ensures enrolment of research students in programs aligned with the study of young children and families and, where appropriate, facilitate an interdisciplinary approach to the supervision of these students.	Successful experiences for research students in the field of early childhood and related fields with high completion rates.	
5.	Work collaboratively with key stakeholders in the development of interdisciplinary approaches to academic programs with a focus on young children, families and the community, integrating the research agenda into these programs.	Optimise the use of Early Start and its resources in developing innovative academic programs that produce graduates equipped to tackle future challenges in Psychology, Education, Social Work and applied social sciences.	
6.	Establish a continuing professional development program aligned with the Early Start initiative to educators and other professionals in the Early Start Engagement Centre network.	Build capacity of those working in the Early Start Engagement Centres and related communities.	
7.	Liaise with professional bodies and government agencies associated with early childhood, young people, human and community services at state, national and international levels.	Foster relationships at a professional level that will enhance UOW's standing in the early childhood sector.	
8.	Assume a supervisory role, as required, to support and mentor academic staff and postgraduate students across disciplines who contribute to the Early Start initiative.	Effective oversight of career development, capacity building and performance planning.	
9.	Observe principles and practices of Equal Employment Opportunity	Ensure fair treatment in the workplace.	Ongoing
10.	Have OH&S responsibilities, accountabilities and authorities as outlined in the http://staff.uow.edu.au/ohs/commitment/responsibilities/document .	Ensure a safe working environment for self & others.	Ongoing

Reporting Relationships:

Position Reports to:	Head of School (Education)
The position supervises the following positions:	Academic staff in Early Years program
Other Key Contacts:	PVC Inclusion and Outreach Director ESRI, Faculty of Social Sciences Associate Director, Early Start, Faculty of Social Sciences Chief Operating Officer, Early Start Facility, Faculty of Social Sciences Associate Deans, Faculty of Social Sciences Heads of Schools, Faculty of Social Sciences Faculty Executive Manager, Faculty of Social Sciences International Researchers formally associated with Early Start

Key Relationships:

Contact/Organisation:

Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)
Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
Council of Australian Governments (COAG)
Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS)
Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)

Purpose & Frequency of contact

Peak non-government organisation for public health
National body guiding NQF implementation
Peak intergovernmental forum
Peak body - community services and welfare
Key research body for family wellbeing

Key Challenges:

1. Enriching an interdisciplinary research agenda within the context of the Early Start initiative to address issues in early childhood and related areas that have the potential to contribute to the advancement of the field in practice, academic research and policy recommendations.
2. Building effective working relationships with academic leaders across the University to ensure an interdisciplinary approach within the Early Start initiative to teaching and learning, research and community engagement.
3. Developing effective community engagement strategies that will further academic, research and practical approaches to programs with a focus on young children, families and communities.

SELECTION CRITERIA - Knowledge & Skills:

Essential:

- Expert knowledge and understanding of young children and their development including contemporary approaches to early childhood intervention and care. Evidence of the application of this knowledge to the early childhood context is important. Appropriately aligned disciplines may include education and early childhood development, child health and wellbeing (including pediatrics, physical, social and emotional wellbeing), psychology (developmental, educational and applied with a focus on children, family and society) and social sciences (Indigeneity or policy - children, family and society).
- Evidence of a strong commitment to contemporary interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, research and community engagement.
- Good interpersonal skills, including the ability to develop and promote effective relationships with colleagues and the ability to relate confidently and credibly to a wide range of external agencies including research, government, industry and local communities and constituents.
- Well-developed skills in preparing grant applications and leading significant research projects.
- Evidence of a strong research record and of leadership skills in pursuing research activities related to young children, in particular, those aged 0 to 5 years.
- Demonstrated skills in HDR supervision with a good record of completions.
- Demonstrated leadership skills including the ability to implement change.
- Demonstrated skills in planning and project management

SELECTION CRITERIA - Education & Experience:

Essential:

- PhD qualification
- Research experience with a focus on the development of young children or in a discipline aligned with young children, families and the community.
- Extensive experience and track record of scholarly activities, including publications in national / international peer reviewed journals.
- Experience in preparing successful research grant applications.
- Experience in development and mentoring of academic staff and researchers.
- Evidence of successful interactions with relevant policy and professional organisations.

Personal Attributes:

- A strong personal commitment to working with young children, families and communities and to the education of students in related fields.
- A commitment to collegiality and to developing opportunities for working within a collaborative environment.
- The ability to influence others and bring about change in a complex collegial environment enhancing research capacity.

Special Job Requirements:

This position has been classified as “child-related employment”. In accordance with relevant legislation, prohibited persons are not permitted to apply for positions that are classified as “child-related employment”. Accordingly, candidates will be required to undertake a Working with Children Check as part of the recruitment process.

Organisational Chart:

Organisational chart coming soon

Approval:

Approved by Head of Unit: _____

Date: _____

Approved by Human Resources: _____

Date: _____