

**LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
NEW GRADUATE PROGRAM:**

PHD IN EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1.0 BASIC INFORMATION | 2 |
| 1.1. Degree Name and Description | 2 |
| 1. 2. Overlap between, and/or integration with other existing or planned programs | 2 |
| 1.3. Program Details | 2 |
| 1.3.1. Alignment with University's Plans | 2 |
| 1.3.2. Proposed PhD Learning Outcomes and Graduate Degree Level Expectations | 3 |
| 1.4. Societal Need | 6 |
| 1.4.1. Labour market demand | 6 |
| 1.4.2. Student demand | 7 |
| 1.4.3. Comparison of the proposed program with the most similar programs in Ontario or beyond | 7 |
| 1.5. Admission requirements | 8 |
| 1.5.1. Admission requirements and Program Learning Outcomes | 8 |
| 1.6. Structure | 9 |
| 1.6.1. Narrative Describing Curriculum Structure | 9 |
| 1.6.2 Tabular Format | 11 |
| 1.6.3. Appropriateness of the program's structure and intended program learning outcomes and degree level expectations | 16 |
| 1.6.4. Program length | 16 |
| 1.7. Mode of delivery | 16 |
| 1.8. Resources | 16 |
| 1. 8. 1. Human, Physical and Financial Resources | 16 |
| 1.8. 2. Faculty | 17 |
| 1. 9. Schedule for the development of the program | 18 |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 19 |
| REFERENCES | 21 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Alignment of Graduate Degree Level Expectations and Program Outcomes | 4 |
| Table 2: Comparison of the proposed program with the most similar programs in Ontario or beyond | 8 |
| Table 3: Program Curriculum in Tabular Format | 11 |
| Table 4: PhD-ECS Elective Course Offerings | 11 |
| Table 5: PhD-ECS Elective Course Offerings from Other Ryerson Departments | 14 |

APPENDIX

1: PhD-ECS Curriculum Mapping

1.0 Basic information

1.1. Degree Name and Description

A PhD in Early Childhood Studies will be the first of its kind in North America. The School of Early Childhood Studies (ECS) will offer the program, building on an existing Master of Arts in Early Childhood Studies (MA-ECS) program as well as other Faculty of Community Services (FCS) graduate programs. The proposed PhD program will leverage the current strengths of the MA-ECS program developed over the past 13 years. The MA and proposed PhD programs will share a unique focus on equity, diversity and inclusion in early childhood. With a growing number of graduates holding a MA in early childhood studies degree, the School of ECS is ready to develop and implement a PhD program. The School's existing graduate program director will provide leadership and oversight of the PhD program with support from FCS and the Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS). The program director will regularly collaborate with the existing Graduate Program Council consisting of faculty members who teach and/or supervise in the School's graduate program.

An entry in the *Sage Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood Studies* (2020) explains that Childhood Studies is a multidisciplinary academic field focused on childhood and the everyday lives of children. The PhD program will provide an interdisciplinary focus on the study of early childhood with particular attention to the complexities of conducting research and producing knowledge about early childhood in diverse social, economic and political contexts. The proposed PhD program is a response to a dire lack of PhD qualified researchers and leaders in fields related to early childhood as evident in an environmental scan of comparator programs. The purpose of the PhD program will be to provide interdisciplinary learning opportunities that enable graduates to pursue careers in leadership positions in academia, government, and non-government organizations.

1.2. Overlap between, and/or integration with other existing or planned programs

With its focus on early childhood, the proposed PhD program is distinct from all other PhD programs at Ryerson University. However, building on existing arrangements in the MA-ECS program, there are opportunities for PhD ECS candidates to take relevant courses offered by other graduate programs. At the same time, courses in the proposed PhD program can be open to candidates from existing Ryerson PhD programs such as Policy Studies, Communication and Culture, Psychology, and Urban Health (commencing in January 2021).

1.3. Program Details

1.3.1. Alignment with University's Plans

1.3.1.a. Consistency of the Program with University's Mission and Academic Plan

A PhD in Early Childhood Studies will contribute to Ryerson University's Mission Statement (<https://www.ryerson.ca/about/accountability/mission/>) that relates to the "advancement of applied knowledge and research to address societal needs". UNICEF describes a great change coming over early childhood in advanced industrial countries such as Canada. A rising generation is the first in which a majority is spending a large part of early childhood in some form of out-of-home setting such as childcare, family support, early intervention programs, hospitals, and immigration and settlement services. In addition, the PhD program is consistent with Ryerson University's mandate to "provide a balance between theory and practice". Candidates in the proposed PhD program will be required to apply theoretical and

interdisciplinary approaches (e.g., disability studies, sociology, psychology, political science, health, and immigration and settlement) to the analysis of one or more issues related to fields concerned with early childhood. At the applied level, one choice for the PhD Comprehensive Exam will require candidates to develop a project, which addresses a question relevant to a community partner.

Ryerson University's Academic Plan, *Our Time to Lead* (2020-2025) prioritizes "community and urban partnerships [that] provide real opportunities for Ryerson students, faculty and staff to make a difference". A central aim of the proposed PhD program in Early Childhood Studies is for candidates to have frequent opportunities to link and translate research, policy and practice in creative ways that contribute to positive social change for children, families, professionals, and communities. Consistent with the University's Academic Plan priority to enable greater student engagement and success through exceptional experiences, the proposed PhD-ECS program will prioritize in its curriculum design explicit mentoring and development of students in the range of competencies and knowledges required for completing a doctoral dissertation.

Drawing on advanced knowledge and skills gained through the PhD program, graduates will assume leadership roles in academic, policy and practice contexts to improve the lived experiences of children, families, professionals and communities. Furthermore, the PhD program shares the Faculty of Community Services' focus on interdisciplinary education that prepares candidates to theorize across disciplinary boundaries and to work in inter-professional collaborations.

1.3.1.b. Appropriateness of degree nomenclature

The School of ECS' MA program in Early Childhood Studies is well known and well respected with a strong application rate. It is, therefore, important and appropriate to extend this name recognition to a PhD program in Early Childhood Studies.

1.3.2. Proposed PhD Learning Outcomes and Graduate Degree Level Expectations

There is an urgent need to prepare professionals across disciplines (e.g., early childhood, social work, policy studies, disability studies, sociology, and immigration studies) who have advanced knowledge, skills and habits of mind to address issues related to current societal changes in the lives of young children, their families and the professionals who work with them. Therefore, by the end of the program PhD candidates will be able to:

Knowledge:

1. Describe major theoretical frameworks and their critiques used in the study of early childhood, their epistemological and ontological foundations and potential applications to equity, diversity and inclusion issues and in various contexts.
2. Demonstrate a depth of thought and thorough knowledge in one or more areas in the study of early childhood.
3. Apply theoretical and interdisciplinary approaches (e.g. disability studies, sociology, political science, health, and immigration) to the analysis of one or more issues in the field of early childhood and related fields:
4. Analyze in what ways knowledge based on research and practice is created, verified and distributed and the political nature and limitations of this knowledge
5. Critically describe a range of research methodologies focused on early childhood.

6. Link and translate research, policy and practice in creative ways that contribute to positive social change.
7. Critically test and assess new theories in the discipline of early childhood studies.
8. Generate new knowledge particularly in underdeveloped areas in the field of early childhood studies such as policy, pedagogy and practice.

Skills

9. Conceptualize, design, implement and communicate novel research and advanced scholarship for the generation of new knowledge.
10. Apply knowledge of a range of research methodologies in choice of method for a major research project focused on early childhood.
11. Take a leadership role in academic, policy and practice contexts to improve the lived experiences of children, families, early childhood professionals and communities.
12. Prepare and submit grant proposals.
13. Maintain ethical approaches and address issues of social justice, equity and diversity in research and knowledge translation activities.
14. Produce scholarly publications and disseminate to a range of audiences and in a variety of ways that can include peer-reviewed publications, technical reports, policy bulletins, and creative performances.

Habits of the mind/attitudes

15. Apply an ethical orientation in research and knowledge translation activities.
16. Demonstrate civic and social responsibility as a member of various communities (e.g. government, non-profits, industry).
17. Recognize and analyze issues of social justice, equity and diversity in course and dissertation work.
18. Demonstrate intellectual independence and autonomy.
19. Present and communicate effectively to different audiences the complexity of knowledge.
20. Demonstrate perseverance in carrying a long-term research project.

Table I shows that the learning outcomes of the proposed PhD program appropriately align with Graduate Degree Level Expectations.

Table 1: Alignment of Graduate Degree Level Expectations and Program Outcomes

| Graduate Degree Level Expectations | Doctoral degree This degree extends the skills associated with the master's degree and is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following: | Proposed PhD-ECS program outcomes-alignment with expectations |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Depth and breadth of knowledge | A thorough understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of their academic discipline | 1, 2, 3, 12, 18 |

| Graduate Degree Level Expectations | Doctoral degree This degree extends the skills associated with the master's degree and is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following: | Proposed PhD-ECS program outcomes-alignment with expectations |
|---|---|--|
| 2. Research and scholarship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The ability to conceptualize, design, and implement research for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the research design or methodology in the light of unforeseen problems; b. The ability to make informed judgments on complex issues in specialist fields, sometimes requiring new methods; and c. The ability to produce original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, and to merit publication. | 5, 6, 7, 9, 12,16, 18 |
| 3. Level of application of knowledge | <p>The capacity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. undertake pure and/or applied research at an advanced level; and b. contribute to the development of academic or professional skills, techniques, tools, practices, ideas, theories, approaches, and/or materials. | 5, 6, 7, 8, 17,19 |
| 4. Professional capacity/autonomy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex situations; b. The intellectual independence to be academically and professionally engaged and current; c. The ethical behaviour consistent with academic integrity and the use of appropriate guidelines and procedures for responsible conduct of research; and d. The ability to evaluate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts. | 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17,18,19 |
| 5. Level of communications skills | The ability to communicate complex and/or ambiguous ideas, issues and conclusions clearly and effectively. | 5, 9, |
| 6. Awareness of limits of knowledge | An appreciation of the limitations of one's own work and discipline, of the complexity of knowledge, and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines. | 4,12, 14, 16,18,19 |

1.4. Societal Need

1.4.1. Labour market demand

UNICEF, an international organization helping children realize their full potential from early childhood through adolescence, describes a social revolution transforming early childhood in advanced industrial countries such as Canada. A rising generation is the first in which a majority is spending a large part of early childhood in some form of out-of-home setting such as childcare, family support, early intervention programs, hospitals, and immigration and settlement services. In Canada, this social change will affect over a half million children in the 0-4 age group. While data showing the number of professionals working with children in the early years is not available, in Ontario 52,000 early childhood educators are registered with their self-regulatory College. As UNICEF reports, this significant societal change confronts governments, early childhood services, and post-secondary institutions that prepare professionals to work in these contexts with an urgent question: In what ways will responses at all levels to this social change represent an advance or a setback for today's children, families, professionals and communities? Already, there are issues related to inconsistent policies, lack of access to services, poorly prepared and compensated professionals, and diminished experiences for children and families. In addition, there are increasing concerns about the mental health of young children and the growing number of children with special health care needs and disabilities. These issues contribute to the social exclusion of children, families, women particularly those from racialized communities in early childhood institutions that aim for the full participation of citizens (Ali, 2016; Berman, Daniel, Butler, MacNevin & Royer, 2017; Langford, Albanese, Bezanson, Prentice, Richardson & White, 2017; Underwood & Frankel, 2019). UNICEF calls on advanced industrial countries to consider and address issues of vision, policy, delivery, and practice that arise from social change. Other organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank echo this call. Unfortunately, Canada has made very little progress in meeting this challenge.

One explanation for this lack of progress is that early childhood is an under-valued and under-studied field in Canada. The proposed PhD program will be the first of its kind in Canada to prioritize the advanced study of early childhood with a particular focus on equity, diversity and inclusion issues. In addition, Canada has not produced enough highly qualified researchers and professionals whose scope of study and practice focuses on early childhood. A PhD program in early childhood studies intends to fill this gap in the labour market in Canada as well as respond to an international demand for PhD qualified professionals in countries developing early childhood policies and programs. The proposed PhD program will produce academics, policy-makers, research directors and executive directors who take a complex and interdisciplinary approach to teaching, developing policies, conducting investigations, generating and using knowledge about early childhood in diverse social, economic and political contexts. Importantly, graduates of the proposed PhD program will be able to contribute to the ethics and social research methodologies of working with young children in Black, Indigenous, migrant and other equity seeking communities (Barnikis, MacNevin, & Berman 2019; Koller, 2011). Taken together, countries around the world need these PhD graduates to ensure that the great societal change coming over early childhood is an advance for today's children, families, professionals and communities. Building on its well-established and respected MA program, the proposed PhD program will be at the forefront and cutting edge in producing professionals who can be in positions that contribute to positive social change.

1.4.2. Student demand

Evidence of student demand for the proposed PhD program is strong. One prospective applicant pool are graduates from the School's MA in Early Childhood Studies program of which 15% have gone onto a range of PhD programs. For those graduates who wish to continue focusing on early childhood, the choices in appropriate PhD programs is very limited. Moreover, in these programs, dissertation supervisors with an expertise in early childhood are difficult to find. It is common for faculty in the School of ECS to serve on PhD committees at other universities because of this lack of expertise elsewhere. Our proposed PhD program in early childhood studies will be in high demand because it will offer candidates a community of scholars focused specifically on the study of early childhood. Another applicant pool are faculty members from Canadian colleges that are becoming universities with degree programs (e.g. Capilano University, Grant McEwan University) as well as faculty members from colleges that offer degree programs. In Ontario, six colleges now offer degree level bachelor programs in early childhood education. These programs require at least half of the faculty to have a terminal degree. We expect that our proposed PhD program with its specific focus on early childhood will attract university and college faculty who seek to teach in these new degree programs. In fact, some of these faculty members are graduates of our MA program and wish to pursue a PhD terminal degree. Finally, drawing on the current applicant profile of MA-ECS students, the PhD program expects to attract students with a graduate degree from other disciplines such sociology, policy studies, international development, and psychology. We expect a strong demand for the proposed PhD program because no other program of its kind exists.

1.4.3. Comparison of the proposed program with the most similar programs in Ontario or beyond

An environmental scan of university programs provincially, nationally, and internationally (i.e. United States, England, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand) was conducted to determine similarity in focus between the proposed PhD program and other programs. The scan paid particular attention to identifying the number of faculty members in these other programs who have expertise in early childhood. For example, Concordia University and the University of Alberta have one or two faculty members in a Faculty of Education/elementary education department, who specialize in early childhood education. In contrast, the proposed PhD-ECS program will have a full complement of faculty with a broad range of early childhood expertise in pedagogy and policy, child development, family studies, and the inclusion of marginalized groups and communities. Table 2 indicates that an interdisciplinary PhD program with a specific focus on *early* childhood does not exist.

Table 2 Comparison of the proposed program with the most similar programs in Ontario or beyond

| Institution | Name of Program | Focus |
|---|---|--|
| The Ontario Institute in Studies of Education/University of Toronto | Developmental Psychology and Education Program (DPE) | Developmental Psychology |
| The Ontario Institute in Studies of Education/University of Toronto | Doctor of Education (EdD) program in child study in education (beginning Fall 2020) | Education |
| Brock University | Child and Youth Studies | School-age children and youth |
| Western University | Faculty of Education | Elementary Education |
| Queen's University | Faculty of Education | Elementary Education |
| York University | Faculty of Education | Elementary Education |
| Concordia University | Faculty of Education | Elementary Education |
| University of Alberta | Faculty of Education | Elementary Education |
| University of Victoria | Child and Youth Studies | School-age children and youth |
| Florida State University | Faculty of Education | Early childhood education stream curriculum studies |
| Nova Southeastern University | Faculty of Education | Early childhood education stream curriculum studies |
| Portland University | Faculty of Education | Early childhood education stream curriculum studies |
| Rutgers University (US) | Childhood Studies | Interdisciplinary, school-age children and youth |
| National University of Ireland | Child and Youth Research | School-age children and youth |
| University of Sheffield England | Children, Schools and Family Studies | School-age children and their families |
| Monash University, Australia | Faculty of Education | Elementary Education |
| University of Melbourne Australia | Faculty of Education | Elementary education and teaching |
| University of Auckland, New Zealand | Faculty of Education | Elementary education, early childhood education stream |
| Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand | Faculty of Education | Elementary education, early childhood education stream |

1.5. Admission requirements

1.5.1. Admission requirements and Program Learning Outcomes

Applicants with a MA degree in early childhood studies or a related discipline such as child and youth care, education, social work, immigration and settlement studies, sociology, psychology, applied linguistics, and policy studies will be eligible to apply to the proposed PhD-ECS program. A minimum A- cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is required. This requirement has been established because all graduates of our MA program who have been accepted to PhD programs met a minimum (or beyond) A- GPA. Further there will be a wide pool of applicants

from a range of social sciences disciplines who, as in the MA-ECS program, will have this minimum requirement. In addition, applicants must demonstrate evidence of a Master's level research methods course and research potential in the form of a Masters level thesis or major research paper, publication in a refereed journal, and/or experience working in a research-intensive context as a research assistant or project manager. Applicants will submit a CV and clear letter of intent that includes statements about direct experiences with children and families and plans for future study and research, linked to professional goals. One academic reference and one professional reference will be submitted. If applicants have been continuously at university, then two academic references will be submitted. Applicants will be encouraged to apply for external funding to support their research in the PhD program. Assessment of applications will be based on three criteria, academic excellence, research potential and leadership potential.

The proposed PhD-ECS program's admission requirements appropriately link to program learning outcomes established for the completion of the program. Bringing a strong foundation in theory, research and practice, selected candidates will be able to acquire the knowledges, skills and habits of mind necessary for successful engagement with and completion of the program. Coming from different disciplines, selected candidates will be able to contribute to the interdisciplinary orientation of the PhD-ECS program. Application processes such as articulating research plans in a letter of intent will launch the development of skills and habits of the mind necessary for the comprehensive exams and the doctoral dissertation.

1.6. Structure

1.6.1. Narrative Describing Curriculum Structure

The proposed PhD-ECS curriculum is designed to promote completion in four calendar years (48 months) of full-time study. There will not be a part-time option in this program to ensure timely completion of the dissertation. Candidates will be required to successfully complete six one-term courses over the first three semesters of the program. These courses will enable candidates to identify potential research topics in early childhood studies for their comprehensive exams and dissertation work. Three of the courses will be required and for the PhD cohort only. The required courses will be new 9000-level courses that will provide candidates with formative content on theory and research methods that are unique in the study of early childhood. The content of the required courses will be at an advanced level and thus will be distinct from MA-ECS required courses. The three new required courses are:

Early Childhood Epistemologies

Students will critically compare and discuss current early childhood epistemologies or paradigms grounded in different ontologies and disciplines. Examples of epistemologies include developmentalism, post-developmentalism, and Indigenous ways of knowing. The aim of the course is for students to develop an advanced knowledge of key epistemologies relevant to theory, research, and practice in early childhood.

Advanced Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods I

Students will investigate and compare advanced quantitative and qualitative research methods linking them to epistemologies studied in term one. For example, methods from different disciplines might include non-participant observation, experimental research, arts-based approaches, phenomenology, Indigenous, and/or critical qualitative inquiry. Students will

examine issues that commonly arise in conducting ethical research in early childhood settings and explore strategies to address these issues.

Advanced Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis II

In this course, students will work directly with various forms of data, for example, interview transcripts, documents, published findings and/or survey results. They will engage with a range of advanced data analysis strategies, which may include statistical analyses, discourse analysis, grounded theory, and content analysis. Students will begin to consider potential research methods and related data analysis strategies for their dissertation research.

The three remaining courses will be one-term electives. The equal balance of required and elective courses has been chosen so that candidates develop an interdisciplinary focus and demonstrate depth and breadth in their knowledge and skills.

Students will select two out of the three elective courses from MA-ECS course offerings (Table 4). The third elective course will be selected from a list of courses offered by other graduate departments within Ryerson University who have already approved MA-ECS enrolment in their courses. (Table 5). Elective courses offered will expand students' theoretical, research and practical knowledge in specific areas (e.g., Children's Health, Indigenous Early Learning) as well as across disciplines (e.g. Social Work, Immigration and Settlement, Nursing).

The PhD-ECS curriculum proposes that candidates complete two pass/fail comprehensive exams that include:

1. In consultation with a faculty advisor, a choice of either
 - a. The candidate completes 40 to 50-page theoretical response to a question selected by a committee comprised of faculty members in the PhD program. The candidate has three months to prepare the response.

OR

- b. Over four months, the candidate develops or builds on a partnership with a community organization and creates a small-scale project that addresses a question relevant to the community partner. A committee of faculty members and a representative from the community partner will assess the benefits of the project and its knowledge translation strategies. A 20-page summary report on the project will be submitted.
2. The candidate submits and presents a dissertation proposal to a PhD dissertation committee. The committee will evaluate the candidate's ability to present and defend a research proposal in an oral defense, the feasibility of the dissertation proposal and the candidate's knowledge in the area of the proposed research.

Candidates will complete two comprehensive exams, each with a different focus, within six months. Evaluation committees will differ in their composition although there will be one consistent member (e.g. advisor or supervisor) across the two committees. In successfully completing the two exams, a candidate will demonstrate depth and breadth of knowledge in early childhood studies.

Beginning in Year 2 of the PhD program, a candidate will conduct an original research study, write a dissertation and defend it through a final PhD oral examination. Students will be encouraged and supported to submit aspects of their dissertation (e.g. innovative synthesis of the literature, unique methodological approach) for publication in a peer-reviewed journal while enrolled in the PhD program.

1.6.2 Tabular Format

Table 4: Program Curriculum in Tabular Format

| Year | Fall | Winter | Spring/Summer |
|------|---|--|---|
| 1 | Required Course, Early Childhood Epistemologies , for PhD cohort only AND Required Elective Course (from MA-ECS offerings) | Required Course, Advanced Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods I For (PhD cohort only) AND Required Elective Course (from MA-ECS offerings) AND Elective (from MA offerings across schools and departments) | Required Course Advanced Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis II (PhD cohort only) Work on Comprehensive Exam(s) |
| 2 | Work on Comprehensive Exam(s) | Comprehensive exam(s) completed Begin work on Dissertation | Work on Dissertation |
| 3 | Work on Dissertation | Work on Dissertation | Work on Dissertation |
| 4 | Work on Dissertation | Final Dissertation Exam | |

Table 4: PhD-ECS Elective Course Offerings

| |
|---|
| CS8902 Pedagogy and Curriculum Students will grapple with theories and provocations for thinking with curriculum and pedagogy relevant to the political complexities of 21st century childhoods. They will activate pedagogy and curriculum-making as responses to contemporary inheritances and conditions, and as ethical commitments toward living well with children in precarious times. |
| CS8903 Children Families Communities Students will learn theories and strategies to recognize and challenge educational practices that disadvantage children and families because of cultural, language, race, religion, socio-economic class or other “differences”. |
| CS8922 Educational Change Educational change processes in the contexts of families, childcare, schools, communities, governments, and societies will be examined. The skills and roles of leaders who promote systemic changes will be discussed. |
| CS8923 Social Justice and Childhood In this course, students will explore theories of social justice and their implementation within Childhood and as social practice. The role of language, social movements and discourse in constructing inclusive or exclusive spaces for children will be explored. Through the lens of childhood studies, students will examine |

| |
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| <p>theories and ideologies to develop a critically informed knowledge base for the pursuit of social justice as an explicit and necessary social practice.</p> |
| <p>CS8924 Inclusion: Issues in Assessment This course will focus on authentic assessment of children with disabilities. Issues of eco-behavioural assessment, evidence-based pedagogies, adaptive instruction and assistive technologies will be discussed.</p> |
| <p>CS8926 Risk and Resilience: Children/Family The construct of resilience and factors that contribute to healthy outcomes for children in the face of risk and adversities will be examined. Students will consider societal, institutional, familial, and individual factors that pose risks for healthy childhood development, and identify points of invention. Theories of resilience will be examined with an emphasis on how diverse social and cultural experiences shape pathways to adulthood.</p> |
| <p>CS8928 Transformative Literacy Transformative literacy challenges mainstream practices of literacy and inequities in education through critical pedagogy. It empowers voice through expression of self in relation to the world and is inclusive of children and families from diverse backgrounds. This course introduces students to transformative literacy concepts and approaches including: holistic education, multi-literacies, multiple and multimodal literacies. This course will offer the opportunity to participate in transformative literacy initiatives.</p> |
| <p>CS8929 Minority-Language Children This course provides an overview of bilingual education for young minority-language children. The course explores educational and socio-political dimensions of bilingual education; minority-language education in Canada (immersion, Indigenous languages, sign languages, heritage languages); and case studies from around the world. Students will have the opportunity to investigate their own areas of interest in bilingual education for young minority-language children, draw on appropriate theories and research methods, and present their research in a final project.</p> |
| <p>CS8930 Social Research with Children Building on the core course in research methods, this course will focus on current debates and discussions regarding research that involves children. Methodological and ethical issues such as informed consent, children as collaborators in the research process, and power issues in social research with children will be considered.</p> |
| <p>CS8931 Children and Canadian Policies This course will critically examine a wide range of Canadian social policies that touch the lives of young children. Policies that impact children's health, care, education, family life, and future well-being will be evaluated. The course will include the assessment of public policies that specifically affect Aboriginal children and public policies that specifically affect the children of newcomers. The beliefs and values that form the foundation for present policies will be clarified. Options for future policy development will be discussed.</p> |
| <p>CS8932 Children and Play Children's play is primarily mediated by adult philosophical, ideological, social, pedagogical and cultural agendas, with children's own goals, interest and needs at the margins. This course explores the research and literature around the conceptualization and creation of tools and methods that foster child-initiated play, as a form of inquiry into physical and sensory phenomena</p> |
| <p>CS8933 Directed Studies in ECS This course is for Masters Students who wish to gain knowledge in a specific area for which no graduate level class is offered. It would involve a directed study for which the student would be given credit. Students wishing to take the class would be assigned an advisor most familiar with the specific area of interest. Students would be required to present the work of one term (not less than 90 hours in the form of directed research, tutorials and individual study), in an organized publication format.</p> |

CS8934 Special Topics in ECS This course provides students with the opportunity to pursue advanced studies on issues and themes of immediate and current significance in the fields of Early Childhood Studies. It allows students to access leading-edge research and to explore new and Graduate Calendar 2014/2015 emerging models of practice. The particular theme, topic and structure of the course will vary in response to changes and trends in the field, availability of specialists and student interest.

CS8935 Program Evaluation This applied social research course introduces the principles and methods of evidence-based practice (EBP) in human service programs. Topics to be addressed include research design, methods of data collection, interpretation of statistics and the use of requests for proposals as a component of program evaluation. The course includes discussions of studies from the current literature, including work from peer-reviewed journals as well as work by human service agencies, government ministries and NGOs.

CS8936 Children's Rights The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is examined. The convention is explored within the framework of human rights principles and citizenship. Policy and practice implications will be considered through the lens of a child rights approach. Consideration will be given to understanding children's development as citizens and children's participation in society.

CS8937 Queering Education This course uses queer theory to explore how bodies negotiate their identities in social, cultural, political, and institutional contexts through an intersection of queer theory and education. Essentialist readings of the body as fixed and stable are disrupted using various queer theories to engage critical discussions of the body as mobile and fluid. The vision of this course is to create new spaces to rethink curriculum, teaching, and learning in early childhood studies.

CS8938 Cross-cultural Development This course focuses on socio-cultural theories of child development. Students will critically examine cultural variations in the socialization of behavior, physical growth and development, language and cognition, personality and identity, sex and gender, families and other social relationships.

CS8939 Re-conceptualizing ECEC This course will introduce students to the theoretical frameworks used in the re-conceptualizing Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) movement in Canada and beyond. They will have the opportunity to examine taken-for-granted notions of children and childhood, teachers and teaching, and the purposes of ECEC.

CS8940 Indigenous Early learning Students will explore issues confronting Indigenous children and their families in Canada. Indigenous perspectives on the origins of these issues and the current environment are examined in the context of Indigenous self-determination. Course work focuses on issues from a national, provincial, and local perspective with discussions about world view, history, families, policy, and jurisdictional issues.

CS8941 Internship This course involves a minimum 120 hour internship at an organization focusing on policies, service delivery, or advocacy related to early childhood studies. Students taking this course will attend seminars, design and undertake a project under the joint direction of the instructor and internship supervisor, and write a report based on the project that involves reflection on student learning and skill development.

CS8942 Children's Health This course examines research and emerging issues associated with children's health and well-being. By adopting a holistic view of health, the impact of physical illness, mental health and social relationships are explored within the context of early childhood studies. A children's rights perspective that advocates for health promotion forms the conceptual framework upon which to explore notions of well-being. An examination of the

social determinants of health provides an opportunity to consider the evolution of paediatric care and current risks to children's well-being.

CS8943 Eco Curric Pedagogy and Research: This course explores the possibilities for curriculum, pedagogy, and research that is guided by ecological understandings of learning, knowing, acting, and being. Through engagement with theoretical texts and empirical works in ecologically informed curriculum, pedagogy, and research, the interconnectedness and complexity of systems that inform and guide theory and practice in the early years is critically analyzed.

Table 5: PhD-ECS Elective Course Offerings from Other Ryerson Departments

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| IS 8930 Race and Racialization (Immigration and Settlement Studies) This course is constructed on the premise that racism and ethnocentrism have been and continue to be prominent features of Canadian society, which have challenged the dominant institutions. The course will examine the historical roots, contemporary manifestations and continual reproduction of racism, starting at the point of first contact between European colonizers and Aboriginal peoples, and continuing to draw examples from the subsequent patterns of immigration including the most recent attention to racialized minority immigrants. |
| MN8936 Advanced Therapeutic Communication: An Inter-Professional Perspective (Nursing) Conceptualizations of advanced therapeutic communication with clients from an inter-professional perspective will be critically examined. The significant role of reflective practice processes necessary for collaborative therapeutic relationships with persons in our care, as well as the contextual factors that impact therapeutic communication, such as personal and cultural background, diversity and the role of the inter-professional professional team will be considered. |
| SK8212 Critical Perspectives on Mental Health (Social Work) This course explores ideas, texts, discourses and practices that have contributed to critical social work practice in mental health, introducing students to structural, feminist, aboriginal and post structural perspectives. Framed by anti-oppressive thought, the course centres voices, histories and approaches often marginalized by biomedical approaches to mental health and illness, using them to re-frame current issues in the field. |
| CY8001 Child and Youth Care Theory (Child and Youth Care) Theoretical foundations of CYC practice are explored, from its beginnings in allied disciplines to formation of field-specific theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Using classic texts that emerged from the life-space orientation of leaders such as Fritz Redl, Bruno Bettelheim, Al Treischman and Henry Maier, students engage contemporary core concepts including use of Daily Life Events, life-space intervention, relational practice, exploration of Self, Meaning Making and context of interaction. |
| IS8936 Migration and Identities (Immigration and Settlement) Theoretical approaches are introduced regarding the connections between migration policies and practices, and the people who engage in them. The main approaches are feminist, critical race, and queer theory, and theories of citizenship belonging. We will engage in critical analysis of transnational and intra-national movements of migration while attending to how identities are shaped in the process. We will explore identities and migration and their connection to the state, social institutions, and personal experience. |

CY8006 Supervision in CYC Practice (Child and Youth Care) This course provides a comprehensive understanding of life-space approaches to supervision consistent with relational practice, so that graduates can provide effective supervision to direct care practitioners in a range of settings. The course enhances students' knowledge of effective supervisory practice, emphasizes the use of momentary encounters to help practitioners develop skills needed within each working context and examines impact of culture, context and self on the supervisory process.

CY8007 Online Relational CYC Practice (Child and Youth Care) Incorporating ecological-cyber systems framework and a children's rights perspective, students examine the potential of cyberspace for intervention in the life-space of children, youth and families. Supervised online counselling simulations push students beyond the theoretical to develop cyber counselling and online relationship building skills. Strengths and limitations of electronic modalities and ethical issues like confidentiality, privacy, boundaries, and informed consent are investigated.

IS8921 Equity for Newcomers: Schools (Immigration and Settlement) Educational policies and practices routinely disadvantage migrants, and especially those without language skills in English or French. Educational equity in Canada will be explored in terms of: research and theory on social dominance; attempts by educational organizations to develop processes that are friendly to immigrant families; and research on the educational experiences of first and second generation immigrant children and their parents.

CY8004 CYC Management and Policy Development (Child and Youth Care) This course focuses on the roles and responsibilities of program management and leadership in child and youth serving contexts. An explicitly child and youth care-informed approach to management and innovation is explored, and ultimately integrated into social innovation strategies designed to respond to specific mental health, child protection or child and youth well-being contexts. The course explores policy frameworks central to the child and youth serving sector in Ontario and Canada.

CY8003 CYC Advanced Clinical Practice (Child and Youth Care) A trauma informed perspective focused on attachment, a systemic lens and a narrative approach to engagement forms the foundations of this course. Exposure to various models of clinical supervision including clinical reflecting teams, peer debriefing techniques, simulated "real-world" clinical scenarios and critical self-reflection through video clips and transcripts develops clinical skills to assess and deliver culturally and contextually informed interventions with children and their families.

SK8202 Critical Perspectives on Child Welfare (Social Work) This course critically explores the different aspects that have influenced the relationship between the State and the family through the child welfare systems in Canada. Particular attention will be placed into the overrepresentation of marginalized populations such as racialized, aboriginal, and single mothers within the child welfare system. Discourses of risk, motherhood, and other elements that are relevant to social work interventions will be discussed. Alternative child welfare practices will be also explored.

SK8103 Advanced Research for Social Change (Social Work) This course is focused on advanced research methods so that students are prepared to design and engage in original research. This course provides knowledge and skills to conduct research from a critical and interpretive perspective. Students will also have opportunities to understand the contributory

role of research in any anti-oppression response to marginalization and in the development of inclusive practices.

1.6.3. Appropriateness of the program's structure and intended program learning outcomes and degree level expectations

Appendix 1 shows the results of curriculum mapping the proposed PhD-ECS program. Each required course and non-course program element (e.g. comprehensive exam) are listed. For each, appropriate program learning outcomes are identified at either the foundational or proficient level. A cluster of three related electives courses (among many choices listed in section 1.6.3 Tables 3 and 4) is identified linked to appropriate learning outcomes.

1.6.4. Program length

The PhD-ECS program has been designed to ensure completion in four calendar years (48 months) of full-time study. The first year of study will entail advanced course work, positioned over three semesters whereby students begin with a lighter course load, increase their course load in the Winter semester and take one required course in the Spring. Candidates will have six months to complete two comprehensive exams, followed by two and a half years to carry out an original research project, write a dissertation and defend it through a final PhD oral examination.

1.7. Mode of delivery

The anticipated enrolment goal is 5-6 PhD candidates in the first year of registration with 5-6 candidates each year thereafter for a total enrolment in year four of 20-24 PhD students followed by a steady-state enrollment of 20-24 from year five, onward. Program courses will be predominantly classroom based. The three required courses for the PhD cohort only will have a strong emphasis on candidates choosing particular epistemologies and research methods to investigate and discuss in depth with a course professor and other students. The PhD-ECS curriculum map (Appendix 1) shows which Learning Outcomes these courses will meet. In the three elective courses, of which a few are delivered in an on-line or hybrid format, PhD-ECS candidates will have opportunities to engage with other students from various disciplines and with different academic interests. A cluster of these courses will meet Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 13. With each comprehensive exam, a committee with particular expertise in the topic will mentor and supervise the PhD candidate. The comprehensive exam which involves a community project focuses on Learning Outcomes (3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 13, 14 and 16) which emphasize an ethical orientation to engagement with communities and degree level expectations of application, professional capacity and autonomy and communication skills. The committee established for the dissertation proposal (the third comprehensive exam) will continue to support and supervise dissertation processes culminating in the oral defence examination.

1.8. Resources

1.8.1. Human, Physical and Financial Resources

We have two requests. Administrative support for the MA-ECS program is currently 0.5 FTE. With a combined MA and a PhD program, it is proposed that administrative support increase from 0.5 FTE to 1.0 FTE. Additionally, the PhD program will be better positioned to support a steady state enrollment of 20-24 doctoral students with an additional RFA hire. In terms of physical resources, the School of ECS currently has a dedicated graduate lounge with desk space, two computers and two printers, a small fridge, and couches that will be a welcome space for

PhD candidates. The School also has dedicated research assistant space with five workstations, computers and desks that has room to expand. We do not anticipate any need for renovations.

Financial Resources for Students

Internal funding for PhD-ECS candidates will come from a combination of employment contracts, scholarships, and awards. PhD candidates can be employed as a graduate assistant (GA), a research assistant (RA) funded via Ryerson or via faculty-member provided stipends from research grants and/or with appropriate qualifications as a contract-lecturer in the School of ECS' undergraduate program. In addition, candidates may also receive Ontario graduate and Ryerson graduate funding upon entrance into the PhD program. For example, we are aware that PhD students at Ryerson will be funded for 4 years and the program would receive funding for eligible PhD FTEs (domestic years 1-4) at a rate of \$7,000 per FTE. Candidates may also apply to competitive internal awards such as Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) and the Ryerson Graduate Scholarship (RGS). PhD candidates will be encouraged and supported in applying to a range of external funding opportunities such as a SSHRC Impact Award, a Trudeau Foundation Scholarship, and a Canada Excellence Research Chair Award (focus on migration).

1.8.2. Faculty

The School of Early Childhood Studies has a complement of 18 full-time faculty with PhDs as terminal degrees, a complement which will be strengthened by an additional RFA hire. Faculty have well-established, well-funded and active research programs. Therefore, faculty have the necessary expertise to mentor graduate students and teach the three advanced level required courses focusing on early childhood epistemologies and research methods. Of these faculty members, four are ranked as full professors. A new Indigenous faculty member, shared with the School of Child and Youth Care will focus Indigenous knowledges in early childhood.

School of ECS faculty are internationally known and respected for their theoretical and practice contributions in the following areas: inclusion of children with disabilities and special health care needs (Drs. Koller, Moola, Snoddon, Underwood, & Valeo); early childhood equitable policies and practice (Drs. Berman, Bernhard, Ineese-Nash, Patel, & Underwood); social determinants of children's educational success and well-being (Dr. Patel); integration of immigrant children (Dr.s Ali & Bernhard); multi- literacies and languages (Drs. Binder, Peets, & Snoddon); early childhood pedagogies (Drs. Di Santo, Jagger, Land, Nolan & Ryan); and social research methods with young children (Drs. Berman, Binder, Di Santo, Jagger, & Koller). Faculty members have a strong record of externally funded research projects (SSHRC, CIHR, and other) focusing on equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as a consistent record of knowledge translation of research findings. Several faculty members have international collaborations and have developed strong partnerships with international and local governments and communities. The CERC in Migration and Integration at Ryerson University will also provide ECS faculty members and PhD students opportunities for research collaborations.

Eighty percent of School faculty have taught graduate level courses and engaged in graduate level supervision of MA-ECS students who complete a major research paper (MRP) and participate in an oral exam based on an original research project. The MA-ECS program involves collaboration across other departments, with faculty supervisors from Sociology, Disability Studies, and Nursing supervising MA-ECS students' MRPs and/or serving on MRP committees.

Moreover, fifty percent of School of ECS faculty members have supervised PhD students from other departments internal and external to Ryerson, served on PhD dissertation committees, and/or as an external PhD examiner. Building on these experiences, School and affiliated faculty, therefore, have the required capacity to support and supervise PhD students through the rigorous processes of completing a doctoral dissertation

1.9. Schedule for the development of the program

The anticipated program implementation date is September 2022. The tentative timeline for the development of the PhD-ECS program is:

1. October 2019: Endorsement of LOI by School of ECS council
2. November 2019-Letter of Intent submitted to FCS Dean
3. Revised LOI submitted June 2020 to YSGS
4. September 2020 YSGS forwards Letter of Intent to University Planning Office (UPO)
5. April 2021 Revised LOI submitted to UPO and then to the Provost and Vice President Academic for public posting.
6. June 2021 Letter of Intent available for review by Ryerson community
7. September-December 2022-Drafting of full proposal
8. January 2022-Presentation of full proposal to Graduate Program Council, School of ECS Council and Program Advisory Committee
9. March 2022-Proposal endorsed by Faculty Dean and sent to Vice-Provost and Dean YSGS
10. April 2022-Obtain feedback from Program and Planning Committee of YSGS Council. Revise based on feedback received
11. September 2022-Site visit and peer review. Revise based on reviewers' feedback from site visit
12. October 2022-Submission of final proposal to YSGS-Vice Provost and Dean; approval by YSGS council
13. November 2023-Ryerson Senate Approval, Quality Council Approval
14. Winter 2023-Marketing and recruitment of first PhD-ECS cohort
15. September 2023-First cohort commences.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Letter of Intent, required under Ryerson Senate Policy 112, provides a description and overview of the emerging societal needs and the support for the viability of a proposed full time PhD in Early Childhood Studies. The proposed PhD program will leverage the current strengths of the Master of Arts-Early Childhood Studies (ECS) with its unique focus on equity, diversity and inclusion developed over the past 13 years. This program will be housed and administered by the School of Early Childhood Studies with the support of the Faculty of Community Services (FCS) and is targeted to commence in Fall 2022.

According to UNICEF and the OECD, a social revolution is transforming early childhood in advanced industrial countries. A rising generation is the first in which a majority is spending a large part of early childhood in some form of out-of-home setting such as childcare, family support, early intervention programs, hospitals, and immigration and settlement services. In Canada, this social change will affect over a half million children in the 0-4 age group. While data showing the number of professionals working with children in the early years is not available, in Ontario 52,000 early childhood educators are registered with their self-regulatory College. Already, there are issues related to inconsistent policies, lack of access to services, poorly prepared and compensated professionals, and diminished experiences for children and families. These issues contribute to the social exclusion of children, families, women and those from racialized communities in early childhood institutions that aim for the full participation of citizens (Ali, 2016; Langford, Albanese, Bezanson, Prentice Richardson, & White, 2017; Underwood & Frankel, 2019). There is, therefore, an urgent need to address the issues that arise from these societal changes in early childhood. Building on its highly respected Masters in Arts program, the School of Early Childhood Studies is well positioned to produce PhD level researchers, directors of non-government organizations and academics who can assess and guide these great changes in early childhood so that they advance services for today's children, families, professionals and communities.

An entry in the *Sage Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood Studies* (2020) explains that Childhood Studies is a multidisciplinary academic field focused on childhood and the everyday lives of children. A PhD in *Early Childhood Studies* will be the first of its kind in North America. Given the variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary expertise of faculty in the School, our PhD program will provide an interdisciplinary focus on the study of early childhood with particular attention to the complexities of conducting research and producing knowledge about early childhood in diverse social, economic and political contexts. The proposed PhD program will be at the forefront and cutting edge in producing professionals who can be in positions that contribute to positive change.

The proposed PhD-ECS curriculum is designed to promote completion in four calendar years (48 months) of full-time study. Candidates will be required to successfully complete six one-term courses over the first three semesters of the program. Three of the courses will be required and designed at an advanced level for the PhD cohort only. The required courses will be new 9000-level courses that will provide candidates with formative content on theory and research methods that are unique in the study of early childhood and take an interdisciplinary orientation. The three remaining courses will be one-term electives. The equal balance of required and elective courses has been chosen so that candidates develop an interdisciplinary focus and demonstrate depth and

breadth in their knowledge and skills. Students will select two out of the three elective courses from MA-ECS course offerings. The third elective course will be selected from a list of courses offered by other graduate departments within Ryerson University who have already approved MA-ECS enrolment in their courses. The elective courses offered will expand students' theoretical, research and practical knowledge in specific areas (e.g., Children's Health, Indigenous Early Learning) as well as across disciplines (e.g. Social Work, Immigration and Settlement, Nursing). The PhD-ECS curriculum proposes that candidates complete two pass/fail comprehensive exams that include 1) a theoretical paper or a project that addresses a question relevant to a community partner and 2) a dissertation proposal. Beginning in Year two, a candidate will conduct an original research study, write a dissertation and defend it through a final PhD oral examination.

Ryerson University's Academic Plan, *Our Time to Lead* (2020-2025) prioritizes "community and urban partnerships [that] provide real opportunities for Ryerson students, faculty and staff to make a difference. For everyone in the partnership, they put knowledge-sharing and learning exchange into everyday practice". A central aim of the proposed PhD program in Early Childhood Studies is for candidates to have frequent opportunities to link and translate research, policy and practice in creative ways that contribute to positive social change for children, families, professionals, and communities. Consistent with the University's Academic Plan priority "to equip all students with the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to flourish and contribute to our ever-changing world", the proposed PhD-ECS program will ensure in program design and supervision explicit mentoring and development of students required for completing a doctoral dissertation.

With a growing number of graduates holding an MA degree with an early childhood focus, the School of ECS is ready to progress in developing and implementing a PhD program. The School of Early Childhood Studies has 18 full-time faculty with well-established and well-funded research programs (through SSHRC and CHIR) and the necessary expertise to teach the three PhD level required courses. Of these faculty members, four are ranked as full professors. A new Indigenous faculty member shared with the School of Child and Youth Care will focus Indigenous knowledges in early childhood. School of ECS faculty are internationally known and respected for their theoretical and practice contributions in the areas of inclusion of children with disabilities, early childhood equitable policies and practice, community practices and changes, integration of immigrant children and families; multi-literacies and languages, pedagogies, and social research methods with young children. Faculty members have a strong record of scholarly publications focusing on equity, diversity and inclusion issues. Several faculty members work internationally, which involve strong partnerships with governments and local communities.

Eighty percent of the School's faculty members have taught graduate courses and supervised at some point MA-ECS students who complete a major research paper (MRP) based on an original research project. In addition, some faculty from other departments including Sociology, Disability Studies, Nursing, and Midwifery have supervised MA students' MRPs and/or served on MRP committees. Moreover, 50% of School of ECS faculty have supervised PhD students from other departments internal and external to Ryerson, served on PhD dissertation committees, and/or as an external PhD examiner. Building on these experiences, the School and affiliated faculty, therefore, have the capacity to support and supervise PhD students through the rigorous processes of completing a doctoral dissertation.

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