

19.0. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

19.1. INTRODUCTION

The Master of Arts in Child Development Programme consists of a core of required courses, specialization courses and electives. The required and specialization courses are designed to provide students with advanced preparation in Child Development, cultural diversity, Programme management, research methodology, counselling, professional development and integration of faith with learning. The culmination experience requirement for the Programme is the successful completion of a thesis. The Programme is designed to deepen theoretical knowledge, to promote professional growth, and to enhance the competencies of people who are already working with children as well as those who want to make a career in working with children in diverse situations.

The Programme curriculum incorporates theory, research, policy and practice to provide students a though grounding in child development. The programme is designed for students who wish to pursue advanced study in the field of child development.

The Programme is particularly appropriate for individuals who already possess entry – level credentials in Psychology or other disciplines that cover education such as Social Work, Community Development, education, law and who wish to develop greater expertise and deeper knowledge about children in order to advance in their careers or to prepare for new occupational options. This includes individuals such as professionals in Social Work, parent educators, child/youth advocates in social and legal arenas, child and family counselors, teachers in elementary, middle and secondary schools, pediatric nurses, and professionals in public and health care agencies among others.

The M.A. in Child Development has been developed on the background of a need to train a cadre of human resources that already work or plan to work with children and adolescents in Africa and beyond.

19.2. DEFINITION AND NATURE OF THE PROGRAM

This program seeks to train the student in the science and art of managing the physical, intellectual, social, and the spiritual growth and development of children and adolescents growing up under various circumstances.

19.3. RATIONALE

Sub-Saharan Africa is currently faced with an ever-increasing number of children and adolescents growing under difficult circumstances. Such children are the victims of a combination of several unwarrantable human situations that include poverty, civil wars, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

In the majority of cases, children born under any or some of these environmental situations in Africa are prone to suffering from one form of maladjustment, serious infection or some physical deprivation.

Faced with the enormity of such life threatening situations, many African governments as well as non-governmental organizations have set up intervention focused programmes to assist society in restoring the lives of many affected children from the state of hopelessness to normal human growth and development. Notwithstanding the good intentions of the established children's programmes, many of the organizations lack qualified professional personnel dealing with child development issues.

The proposed postgraduate curriculum in child development is designed for the purpose of equipping individuals who work or wish to work with children with the requisite professional qualifications in child development. In this respect, while some of the courses stipulated in this program may appear similar in content to those offered in teacher training programs, the clientele for this particular curriculum are professionals in Social Work, parent educators, child/youth advocates in social and legal arenas, child and family counselors, teachers in elementary, middle and secondary schools, pediatric nurses, and professionals in public and health care agencies.

19.4. PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The Master of Arts in Child Development programme is designed for students who wish to pursue advanced study in the field for the following professional/ or academic purposes:

1. To acquire academic background in the field for application in occupational settings that deal with issues involving children and their families.
2. To provide students with a thorough grounding in ways through which they can integrate Christian faith and work among children.
3. To provide a strong foundation for research in the area of Child Development.
4. To prepare students for postgraduate qualification in Child Development.

19.5. REGULATIONS

(a) Admission Requirements

To qualify for admission in the Master of Arts Child Development applicants must:

- i) Hold an undergraduate degree in Psychology or any other related discipline such as Social Work and Community Development from an accredited institution of higher learning, with a cumulative Grade Point Average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or a degree awarded with an upper second class honours or better.
- ii) Be born again Christians.