

# EDU344 Leadership and Advocacy in Early Learning

**School:** School of Education and Tertiary Access

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast

**BLENDED  
LEARNING**

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

*Please go to [usc.edu.au](http://usc.edu.au) for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.*

## 1. What is this course about?

### 1.1. Description

In this course you will examine concepts of leadership and advocacy in early childhood. You will examine your professional identity and the attributes of leaders who advocate for the rights of children, families and quality learning in early childhood. You will explore leadership approaches, professional ethics and respectful community partnerships. You will design an action research plan for an early years setting to understand how leadership capabilities can be developed through shared decision making and initiatives that facilitate positive outcomes in times of change.

### 1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
<b>BLENDED LEARNING</b>			
<b>Learning materials</b> – You are required to engage and interact with asynchronous materials and activities accessed through Canvas modules, course readings and required texts.	2hrs	Week 1	9 times
<b>Tutorial/Workshop 1</b> – The tutorial will be delivered in a face to face mode on campus.	2hrs	Week 1	10 times

### 1.3. Course Topics

- Understanding leadership in early childhood settings
- Sustaining high quality learning through effective leadership;
- Leadership, professional identity and reflective practice;
- Ethical responsibilities, policies and practices, resource management and management of change;
- Management and administration in early childhood settings
- Advocacy in early childhood
- Approaches to action research in early childhood settings; and
- Early childhood teachers as researchers.

## 2. What level is this course?

300 Level (Graduate)

Demonstrating coherence and breadth or depth of knowledge and skills. Independent application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts. Meeting professional requirements and AQF descriptors for the degree. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory or developing knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally undertaken in the third or fourth full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

## 3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

## 4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES MAPPING	PROFESSIONAL STANDARD MAPPING *
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
1 Articulate own learning and leadership styles in relation to research for young learners and early childhood contexts	Creative and critical thinker Empowered	6.1, 6.2
2 Apply the links between ethical practice and contemporary leadership theories, through relevant research literature, policies and professional organisations related to leadership in early childhood contexts	Knowledgeable Ethical	7.1, 7.2
3 Critically analyse and reflect on own practice using relevant research, professional learning and theoretical frameworks of leadership appropriate to early childhood contexts	Creative and critical thinker Empowered	6.1, 6.2, 6.3
4 Demonstrate futures thinking by identifying the role of external professionals and community members in advancing issues and trends as they relate to extending early childhood teachers professional knowledge, practice and leadership.	Empowered Sustainability-focused	7, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4

### \* Competencies by Professional Body

CODE	COMPETENCY
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	
6.1	Identify and plan professional learning needs: Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs.
6.2	Engage in professional learning and improve practice: Understand the relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning for teachers
6.3	Engage with colleagues and improve practice: Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices.
7	PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT: Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community
7.1	Meet professional ethics and responsibilities: Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession.
7.2	Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements: Understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage.

CODE	COMPETENCY
7.3	Engage with the parents/carers: Understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers.
7.4	Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities: Understand the role of external professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers' professional knowledge and practice.

## 5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

### 5.1. Pre-requisites

Enrolled in Program AE302, ED303

### 5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

### 5.3. Anti-requisites

EDU644

### 5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

## 6. How am I going to be assessed?

### 6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

### 6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

In Week 3 and 4 you will share your research question for investigating an action research project to your peers and tutor. You will receive feedback to further develop and support your response to Task 1b.

### 6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1a	Oral	Individual	15%	10 minutes	Refer to Format	In Class
All	1b	Written Piece	Individual	15%	750 word equivalent	Week 5	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	2	Literature Review (or component)	Individual	30%	1500 words	Week 7	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Plan	Individual	40%	2000 word equivalent	Week 10	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

**All - Assessment Task 1a:** Explanation of Research Question.

<b>GOAL:</b>	To develop a research question for investigating action research in an early learning context	
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Oral	
<b>FORMAT:</b>	As a leader in an early childhood setting, you will use your knowledge to develop a research question for investigating an action research project in your early learning context (birth - kindergarten). The aim of your research is to extend your professional knowledge, practice and improve an aspect of your context. In Task 1a you will explain the relevance of your research question to your peers. Presentations will occur in Week 3 and Week 4. The aim of Task 1a is to receive feedback to further develop and support your response to Task 1b. In Task 1b you will create a graphic organiser to demonstrate your thinking about the action research project. Your graphic organiser and your research question can be refined for Task 3 (but not the score you received for Task 1).	
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>
	1	Articulation of learning and ethical leadership in early learning context informed by current research, policy and professional organisations; 1 2
	2	Oral communication skills appropriate to the audience 1 4
	3	Reflection on own practice using relevant research and theoretical leadership frameworks. 3
<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>		

**All - Assessment Task 1b:** Research question and graphic organiser

<b>GOAL:</b>	Goal: To develop a research question for investigating action research in an early learning context	
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Written Piece	
<b>FORMAT:</b>	As a leader in an early childhood setting, you will use your knowledge to develop a research question for investigating an action research project in your early learning context (birth - kindergarten). The aim of your research is to engage in professional learning that extends your professional knowledge, practice and improves an aspect of your early learning context. In Task 1a you will explain the relevance of your research question to your peers. The aim of Task 1a is to receive feedback to further develop and support your response to Task 1b. In Task 1b you will create a graphic organiser to demonstrate your thinking about the action research project. Your graphic organiser and your research question can be refined for Task 3 (but not the score you received for Task 1).	
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>
	1	Demonstration of key concepts of leadership and advocacy as professional and ethical responsibilities; 2
	2	Consideration of early learning contexts and opportunities for sustaining high quality learning, knowledgeable practice, professional organisations and community partnerships 4
	3	Articulation of leadership styles as a graphic organiser that is well structured with relevant headings that supports investigation of the research question 1
	4	Written communication skills and academic literacies including English expression and grammar, spelling, punctuation, APA referencing conventions 1
	5	Self-reflection and consideration of feedback provided for Task 1a and articulates the actions taken to develop Task 1b. 1 3
<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>		

**All - Assessment Task 2:** Journal articles with summaries

<b>GOAL:</b>	To extend your knowledge of research in leadership and leadership practice.	
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Literature Review (or component)	
<b>FORMAT:</b>	You will engage in information literacy to identify and source journal articles that relate to your research question. Using the knowledge gained from reading the journal articles, you will select three journal articles that are informative and relevant to your research question. You will produce a journal summary for each of the three journal articles. The knowledge gained from reading the journal articles may require you to update your research question.	
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>
	1	Critical analysis and reflection on practice using relevant research, professional learning and theoretical frameworks of leadership in early childhood contexts <b>3</b>
	2	Explanation of the links between ethical practice and contemporary leadership theories with well structured article summaries <b>2</b>
	3	Written communication skills and academic literacies including English expression and grammar, spelling, punctuation, APA referencing conventions <b>1</b>
<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>		

**All - Assessment Task 3:** Action research plan

<b>GOAL:</b>	To design a research plan for investigating knowledge and practice in early learning contexts	
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Plan	
<b>FORMAT:</b>	Using your research question, graphic organiser and journal article summaries, you will design an action research plan for investigating your research question. The information in your action research plan will consider challenges faced by you in your leadership role and the strategies, practices and changes you facilitate to encourage effective leadership, community partnerships and advocacy for high quality learning outcomes for children in your care.	
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>
	1	Action research plan that outlines central themes of leadership, advocacy and change <b>1</b>
	2	Establishment of links to current research in early childhood <b>2</b>
	3	Action research plan that reflects the vision and purpose of leadership in early childhood education through collaboration with external professional organisations and community members <b>3 4</b>
	4	Written communication skills and academic literacies including English expression and grammar, spelling, punctuation, APA referencing conventions <b>1</b>
<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>		

**7. Directed study hours**

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

## 7.1. Schedule

PERIOD AND TOPIC	ACTIVITIES
Module 1 Defining Leadership  Leadership Frameworks  Organisational Leadership	Policy & practical contexts in which participants operate Theoretical frameworks with which to explore own personal learning styles, life experiences and professional knowledge Understanding of leadership, organisational structures and change management in early learning settings Models for strategic planning, visioning, cultural change and team development Knowledge of the National Quality Framework, emerging technologies and ACARA curriculum Introducing yourself and beliefs about leaders
Module 2 Leadership Characteristics.  Leadership Styles and Qualities .  Reflection on practice.  Professional judgement and professional autonomy.  Essential tools for intentional leadership.	Qualities of a learning leader able to assist others to navigate through multiple life-pathways in their professional futures Self-identification of characteristics as learning leaders Identifying personal styles Culture and leadership – consider how leadership is viewed in Indigenous culture/ leadership in the Indigenous community Leading with technology to effect change and build community connections Gender in leadership Management and leadership Communication for leadership Communication with community The ethical responsibilities of leadership
Module 3 Ethical organisational planning and development.  Building Organisational Capacity.  Contemporary Issues and Trends.  Policy to Practice.	Community capacity building through leadership in early learning settings Models for building organisational capacity within the broader agenda of developing social capital Supporting staff development Team development Action research models Contemporary issues and trends – policy to practice Technology for documentation, communication and learning and teaching Initiating change Ethics and the rights of children Democracy in early childhood contexts and implementing change Research connections with early years practice
Module 4 Action Research. Information Literacy. Scholarly Conversations.	Connections between knowledge and practice Enacting leadership qualities and values Developing leadership capabilities through professional engagement.

## 8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

### 8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

### 8.2. Specific requirements

Not applicable

## 9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

## 10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

### 10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

### 10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

#### Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%

The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

You have not failed an assessment task in the course due to academic misconduct

### 10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

Less than 15 minutes: No penalty

From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty

More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

### 10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email [safe@usc.edu.au](mailto:safe@usc.edu.au).

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email [studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au).

### 10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or [studentcentral@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentcentral@usc.edu.au).

### 10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email [studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au) or call 07 5430 1226.

## 10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email [AccessAbility@usc.edu.au](mailto:AccessAbility@usc.edu.au) or call 07 5430 2890.

## 10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

## 10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

## 10.10. General Enquiries

### In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

**Tel:** +61 7 5430 2890

**Email:** [studentcentral@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentcentral@usc.edu.au)