



**Australian Child Life Therapy  
Framework:  
Recommended  
Undergraduate Degrees for  
New Recruit Child Life  
Therapists  
Version 3, 2016**

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# ACLTA Child Life Therapy Recommended

## Undergraduate Degrees Framework

At ACLTA's Strategic Forum in June 2014, representatives agreed that in order to advance the professionalism of the Child Life Therapy discipline, all new recruits should have a relevant undergraduate degree at Australian Qualifications Framework Level 7. This aligns us with other allied health professions, such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy; and recognises that this role requires practitioners to have "broad and coherent knowledge and skills for professional work"<sup>1</sup> as they work alongside a multidisciplinary team in healthcare environments.

Many sites employing people in child life therapy roles across Australia have committed to a minimum of bachelor degree (primarily in education) for some time. However this requirement has not been consistent between all sites and states/territories.

In the absence of a specific Australian Child Life undergraduate degree, it was decided by Strategic Forum delegates that **adequate academic preparation for a new child life therapy professional should consist of a Bachelor degree, of which at least two years of study has a focus on child development.** In addition to child development units, studies in child wellbeing, family health, leisure, and disability may also contribute to the academic preparation of potential candidates. Australian Early Childhood undergraduate degrees clearly meet these criteria. Other courses (such as some Education and Health Science degrees) may meet the criteria dependent on electives chosen by the student. In these situations close attention should be given to academic transcripts. Academic courses for consideration are listed in the table below

This document has been created by surveying university degrees available in 2014, in the states/territories of NSW, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia and the ACT (where child life therapists are currently employed).

The recommended qualifications listed here are suggested by ACLTA for the purpose of those wishing to attain a Child Life therapy position; or those in the process of recruiting to a Child Life role. *In the case of an applicant presenting with an undergraduate degree not listed here, (specifically with an Education or Health Science specialty); those involved in recruitment are advised to look carefully at the applicant's university transcripts to determine whether two years of study in child development has been achieved (within a completed degree).* If in doubt, please contact the ACLTA Executive at [email@childlife.org.au](mailto:email@childlife.org.au) for guidance. We also encourage students to choose university practicums that expose them to a variety of services that cater for children and young people (including education and healthcare).

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from the summary for the Australian Qualifications Framework Level 7; available online at [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au)

Many child life therapists currently employed have rich and varied academic preparation that may differ significantly to the degrees listed here. Please note that ACLTA recommends the use of this document for new recruits to child life therapy from November 2014 onwards; those already in the profession are not affected by these recommendations but are encouraged to engage in professional development as appropriate to their circumstances.

We accept there may be variation in course content over time, including introduction of additional courses. We will endeavour to update this document as required.

ACLTA will also be working towards the establishment of a specific postgraduate qualification that caters to child life therapy in Australia – stay updated through our mailing list at [www.childlife.org.au](http://www.childlife.org.au). In addition, ACLTA encourage new recruits to engage in on-the-job training (as per the ACLTA Training Framework); seek mentorship from senior clinicians; and aim toward eventual Australian CLT Accreditation.

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**Courses that clearly meet the ACLTA criteria for preferred academic preparation**

\*NB There are some courses listed that are three years full time (all others are four years). Note that in some healthcare facilities/organisations, a four-year degree may be preferred.

State	University	Course	<b>Brief Course Outline [excerpt from university information, 2014]</b>
NSW	Macquarie University	Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education) (birth to 12)  4 years FT	<i>Early childhood teachers work with children, families and communities to provide quality educational experiences for young children, including consultancy and professional development work in the area of children's services. This degree equips you for teaching in long day care, preschool and primary school settings. As part of this degree you'll study how young children play, explore, learn and develop and grow into healthy children. You'll gain the skills to teach in long day care, preschool and primary school settings and develop foundational skills in managing and leading in educational environments.</i>  <a href="http://courses.mq.edu.au/undergraduate/degree/bachelor-of-education-(early-childhood-education)-(birth-to-12)">http://courses.mq.edu.au/undergraduate/degree/bachelor-of-education-(early-childhood-education)-(birth-to-12)</a>

NSW	Southern Cross University	Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Education (Primary/Early Childhood)  4 years FT	<p><i>With a child-centered philosophy, supported by up-to-date evidence on best practice, this combined degree produces teachers who understand the attributes of inclusive education, the development and learning of young people, and the importance of life-long learning. It focuses on the values, disposition, knowledge and practical teaching skills required to provide a high quality educational environment for children, and to make a difference in the lives and future of the next generation.</i></p> <p><i>Graduates are equipped to work with children throughout their formative years and will be qualified to become both an early childhood educator and a primary school teacher. Students will study child development, the role of play in learning, literacy and numeracy, teaching students with diverse needs, professional practice, and curriculum studies relating to the early childhood and primary years. Students will complete a number of practical teaching experiences throughout the degree in order to put theory into practice and to observe and reflect on the dynamics of the education environment.</i></p> <p><a href="http://courses.scu.edu.au/courses/bachelor-of-artsbachelor-of-education-primaryearly-childhood">http://courses.scu.edu.au/courses/bachelor-of-artsbachelor-of-education-primaryearly-childhood</a></p>
NSW	University of Notre Dame Australia	Bachelor of Education (Birth to Twelve)  4 years FT	<p><i>Recognized for producing 'job-ready' graduates, Notre Dame's Bachelor of Education (Birth to Twelve Years) provides the perfect pathway to teach in both Early Childhood settings and primary schools throughout New South Wales. Whether you're hoping to work in a government, an independent or Catholic school, The University of Notre Dame Australia is committed to supporting you in achieving your goal.</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.nd.edu.au/sydney/courses/boeearlychildhood.shtml">http://www.nd.edu.au/sydney/courses/boeearlychildhood.shtml</a></p>
NSW	University of Newcastle	Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood &	<i>Our B Teaching (Early Childhood &amp; Primary) (Honours) guarantees all graduates complete with an honours level qualification. Graduates have the advantage of being accredited to</i>

		<p>Primary) (Honours)</p> <p>4 years FT</p>	<p><i>teach both children in their early years (birth to 5) and within primary schools (K-6). This flexibility provides new teachers with broader job prospects and career options in multiple sectors.</i></p> <p><i>When you study a teaching degree at the University of Newcastle, we will support you in developing strategic and analytical skills fundamental to both problem solving and decision-making. Our research-based teaching provides graduate teachers with competitive, transferable skills integral to career progression. All of our teaching degrees produce inspirational teachers with confidence, professionalism and practical capabilities.</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/degrees/bachelor-of-teaching-early-childhood-and-primary-honours/why-study-with-us">http://www.newcastle.edu.au/degrees/bachelor-of-teaching-early-childhood-and-primary-honours/why-study-with-us</a></p>
NSW	University of Western Sydney	<p>Bachelor of Arts/Pathway to Master Teaching (Birth-12yrs)</p> <p>3 years FT (BArts) plus <b>1.5 years FT (MTeach)</b></p>	<p><i>This course provides students with the opportunity to complete an Arts degree with a Major in Education Studies and a Sub-major in Early Childhood Studies, as well as a Major in either Cultural and Social Analysis, English, History and Political Thought, Indigenous Australian Studies or Psychological Studies.</i></p> <p><i>Graduates of this degree have guaranteed entry into the Master of Teaching (Birth - 5 Years / Birth - 12 Years) which provides a teaching qualification for early childhood (Birth - 5 Years) or early childhood and primary teaching (Birth - 12 Years).</i></p> <p><a href="http://future.uws.edu.au/future_students_home/ug/arts/arts_birth_to_5_years_birth_to_12_years">http://future.uws.edu.au/future_students_home/ug/arts/arts_birth_to_5_years_birth_to_12_years</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.uws.edu.au/future-students/postgraduate/postgraduate/postgraduate_courses/teaching_and_education_courses/birth_to_five_years">http://www.uws.edu.au/future-students/postgraduate/postgraduate/postgraduate_courses/teaching_and_education_courses/birth_to_five_years</a></p>
NSW/ VIC	Charles Sturt University	<p>Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary)</p> <p>4 years FT</p>	<p><i>Teaching today requires graduates with an awareness of social, cultural and developmental issues. This course includes child development, sociology, Indigenous studies and research methods. Skills in interpersonal communication, leadership and special needs are developed in university-</i></p>

			<p>based workshops and in workplaces that cater to the needs of children in communities across our region and in urban centres.</p> <p>Curriculum studies in this course meet the requirements for teaching children in all Key Learning Areas from Kindergarten to Year 6 in primary schools. The program equips students with the professional skills required to foster positive development and learning in children, whether they are in childcare services, preschools or in primary schools. The Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary) is grounded in the belief that graduates should continue to develop as scholars and teachers, and be practitioners who reflect on their own practice, and who are strong advocates for children and their families.</p> <p>Throughout the course, students use a range of technologies to communicate with children, teachers and other professional colleagues in this country and overseas. This technology includes email, the internet, video and digital cameras, CD/DVD and other forms of electronic information exchange. impact of media on learning.</p> <p><a href="http://www.csu.edu.au/courses/bachelor-of-education-early-childhood-and-primary">http://www.csu.edu.au/courses/bachelor-of-education-early-childhood-and-primary</a></p>
NSW/ VIC/ QLD	Australian Catholic University	Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary)  4 years FT	<p>NB: ACLTA recommends students elect to study inclusion and disability studies electives</p> <p><i>The Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary) prepare graduates to teach in both early childhood and primary school settings. The course will be of interest to individuals interested in pursuing a teaching career in which they can adapt their expertise to suit the learning needs of a broad age group (birth to 12 years).</i></p> <p>Course content focuses on three broad areas: Curriculum and pedagogy for birth to 12 years; Creating inclusive learning environments that nurture diversity; Transition to, and development of, a career in education.</p> <p>Students will study a range of curriculum with a particular focus on the key curriculum areas of literacy, mathematics and science... Our</p>

			<p>graduates will develop expertise to work with young children, their families and communities. They will develop skills to support the creation of learning environments that nurture and support children as they learn.</p> <p>To ensure we graduate profession ready teachers we have built into the course a number of units focusing on the individual development of a teacher. Units include: Curriculum Decision-making in the Early Years; Connections and Continuities; Early Childhood Leadership, Management and Advocacy; Transition into the Profession.</p> <p>High achieving students also have the opportunity to complete an additional sequence of units to graduate with the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary) (Honours).  <a href="http://www.acu.edu.au/courses/2015/undergraduate/education/teaching/bachelor_of_education_early_childhood_and_primary_pass_an_d_honours">http://www.acu.edu.au/courses/2015/undergraduate/education/teaching/bachelor_of_education_early_childhood_and_primary_pass_an_d_honours</a></p>
SA	University of South Australia	<p>Bachelor of Early Childhood Education</p> <p>4 years FT</p>	<p>Successful completion of this program provides a recognised academic qualification which will enable graduates to apply for teacher registration in South Australia, interstate and some overseas countries. Applicants should note there are other criteria determining eligibility for registration by the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia and other registration and regulatory authorities. Applicants are advised to check registration requirements as they are subject to change.</p> <p><a href="http://programs.unisa.edu.au/public/pcms/program.aspx?pageid=921&amp;sid=3177">http://programs.unisa.edu.au/public/pcms/program.aspx?pageid=921&amp;sid=3177</a></p>
SA	Flinders University	<p>Bachelor of Education (Primary R-7 /Special Education), Bachelor of Disability Studies</p> <p>4 years FT</p>	<p>The Bachelor of Education (Primary R-7 and Special Education)/Bachelor of Disability Studies double degree program is an initial teacher education program that prepares students from diverse backgrounds to combine in-depth study of the general primary curriculum with their studies in Special Education and Disability. The new course aims to support students to become effective teachers of students in the primary years (R-7)</p>

			<p>including those with disabilities, learning or Behavioral Difficulties. This degree also prepares students for a range of professional roles related to supporting children with disabilities and their families within the broader community.</p> <p><a href="http://www.flinders.edu.au/courses/undergrad/bedprbds/bedprbds_home.cfm">http://www.flinders.edu.au/courses/undergrad/bedprbds/bedprbds_home.cfm</a></p>
TAS	University of Tasmania	<p>Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)</p> <p>4 years FT</p>	<p>UTAS Faculty of Education pre-service teacher courses qualify students for a profession that is challenging and enormously fulfilling. Accredited by the Teachers Registration Board, Tasmania, the courses require students to reflect on and develop their own professional practice to the best advantage of the students they will one day be teaching.</p> <p>Birth – Grade 6</p> <p><a href="http://www.utas.edu.au/education/study-with-us/undergraduate-coursework/bachelor-of-education-early-childhood">http://www.utas.edu.au/education/study-with-us/undergraduate-coursework/bachelor-of-education-early-childhood</a></p>
VIC	RMIT	<p>Bachelor of Education (Primary and Early Childhood Education)</p> <p>4 years FT</p>	<p>The Bachelor of Education (Primary Education and Disability Studies) uses a variety of active learning and teaching approaches, including: face-to-face and online components, case studies, action research, reflective techniques, presentations, group-based learning, discussions, negotiated learning (such as work-based projects), and professional practice experiences in schools and relevant educational settings.</p> <p>Assessment will be used to provide you with feedback on your progress. The learning outcomes linked to courses can be effectively assessed by, (for example): written assignments, individual and group presentations, short answer question or multiple-choice tests, examinations, reflective journals where you will conduct an analysis of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) experiences, and reports on the design of individual programs for learners.</p> <p>Your capacity to perform as a pre-service teacher in schools will be assessed through written reports completed by your Professional Experience Mentors.</p>

			<a href="http://www.rmit.edu.au/programs/bp046">http://www.rmit.edu.au/programs/bp046</a>
VIC	Victoria University	<p>Bachelor of Education – Early Childhood/ Primary</p> <p>4 years FT</p>	<p><i>Graduates of this course will be able to integrate theoretical and practical knowledge that includes: the diversity of human growth and development, the likely impact of culture, family, genetic inheritance and life experiences on children's learning and development; young children as capable, confident citizens with rights and responsibilities; the changing nature of society (technological, economic, environmental and cultural) and its implications for education, with particular emphasis on the global knowledge economy and society; social justice and democratic participation in education through partnership-based teacher education; children's rights and an ethics of care. ...</i></p> <p><i>Graduates of this course will have: cognitive skills to review, critically, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge relating to learning and teaching in early childhood and primary school contexts; cognitive and practical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of knowledge with depth in regards to responsive curriculum, effective teaching, organisation of learning spaces; and of current and innovative teaching and learning strategies to engage young children in both children's services and primary schools; skills necessary to be reflective and reflexive practitioners, to think critically, understand the ethical dimensions of practice and to teach children in diverse contexts; communication skills to present a clear, coherent and independent exposition of knowledge and ideas in relation to reciprocal, respectful and responsive partnerships with children, families, colleagues and the wider community, to maximize the learning potential of each child.</i></p> <p><i>Graduates of this course will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills by: being mindful, respectful and critical of the professional standards; critically applying theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and dispositions of learning and teaching in early childhood and primary schools settings; responding in ethical ways to diverse and changing learning and teaching contexts; acting on and in accordance with democratic</i></p>

			<p><i>principles; developing dialogic and reflective practice in order to become lifelong learners.</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.vu.edu.au/courses/bachelor-of-education-early-childhood-primary-abec">http://www.vu.edu.au/courses/bachelor-of-education-early-childhood-primary-abec</a></p>
WA	Murdoch University	<p>Bachelor of Early Childhood and Primary Teaching</p> <p>4 years FT</p>	<p><i>Help inspire the next generation with an Early Childhood and Primary Education degree</i></p> <p><i>The early years of learning are critical if children are to achieve their potential.</i></p> <p><i>As a teacher you can make a real difference to students' lives during their most formative years - helping prepare them for their future.</i></p> <p><i>Our experienced and professional staff will help you develop the practical teaching and knowledge you'll need to help guide your own students. They will introduce you to the key learning areas across all year groups, from Kindergarten to year seven and provide opportunities for you to explore a wide range of teaching strategies that promote student learning. This will give you flexibility and variety within your role as a teacher, enabling you to work with students throughout different stages of their development.</i></p> <p><i>Our course is designed to give you as much practical preparation as possible. This means that throughout your degree you will participate in a variety of school experiences in early childhood and primary classrooms that will develop your practical teaching skills as you progress through your degree. Graduates are recognised by the Western Australian College of Teaching (WACOT) as well as the respective State, Catholic and Independent school departments, organisations and associations.</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.murdoch.edu.au/Courses/Early-Childhood-and-Primary-Education/">http://www.murdoch.edu.au/Courses/Early-Childhood-and-Primary-Education/</a></p>

We acknowledge that some courses not listed here provide components of academic preparation for working in the field of Child Life Therapy, such as Bachelor of Health Sciences and Bachelor of Occupational Therapy. Potential candidates may choose to supplement their learning with additional tertiary level units to fully meet the criteria of two years child development study.