



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Yr Athrofa
Centre for Education
Addysg i Gymru | Education for Wales

Module Handbook

ECDE 7017

**Exploring Contemporary Issues in
Education: Policy Review and Critical
Analysis**

Doctorate in Education (EdD)

Level 7

Year 1 Term 1: 2026 - 2027

**Athrofa: Institute of Education and
Humanities**

Welcome to ECDE 7017

Exploring Contemporary Issues in Education 1: Policy Review and Critical Analysis

Module Team:

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We hope that you enjoy the module, and we are here to teach and support you.

You should aim to:

- ✓ Make good use of the University facilities and resources
- ✓ Attend, prepare and participate in all sessions
- ✓ Be self-directed and more independent learners
- ✓ Manage your time and work to meet assignment deadlines
- ✓ Directly engage with and comment on each other's presentations, and other contributions, during taught group sessions and other directed activities

Module Aims and Outcomes

This module, in Term 1, provides an introduction to the Doctorate in Education and establishes a framework for participants to explore a range of current issues facing educators and to develop personal and collective qualities, skills and experience in the exercise of educational leadership and policy development.

The module will reflect on a range of contemporary issues, both nationally and internationally, and consider the relative success and failure of associated policies in different contexts.

A solid foundation on which to build, Exploring Contemporary Issues in Education provides a framework that will enable participants to contribute to an overview of the key issues facing educators, and to explore one or more in depth.

The module will provide participants with the opportunity to focus in depth on an area of policy and practice that is at the forefront of their work and/or interests. The assessment activities will encourage participants to contribute directly to informed debates.

Aim(s)

- To develop the higher-level critical and analytical skills required to contribute meaningfully to the education debate, across a variety of platforms
- To critically evaluate contrasting approaches to one or more contemporary issues relating to education in international contexts, taking into consideration differing educational orthodoxies
- To critically evaluate the presentation of contemporary educational issues and proposals in legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance, through consultation documents and the representation of those issues and proposals in the press, social media and other channels
- To demonstrate a critical understanding of the development of education policy, its impact and its potential pitfalls; including its perception among policy makers, schools, teachers, parents, communities, and children and young people.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Assess the impact of differing approaches to the presentation of policy, proposals and educational outcomes for differing audiences
- Understand the evidence of impact that differing discourses have in promoting or mitigating the impact of educational change
- Explore critically the relationship- between education policy, implementation strategy and impact locally, nationally and internationally
- Articulate an understanding of the challenges and opportunities in leading educational change successfully

Organisation of the Sessions

This module has a total of 30 hours scheduled learning and 270 hours of independent learning. There are three full days in October and November, interspersed with 2-hour sessions scheduled between October and December. These are combined with a programme of:

- Directed activities on the module Moodle page
- Individual and group tutorials

This blend of learning is designed to provide the core of the scheduled learning for the module and to support your further self-directed learning as individuals and group/s of participants. There are a range of formative activities and summative assessments that are highlighted in the following course calendar.

ECDE 7017 Dates and Times:

Date	Time
September 29 th	9-4
October 6 th	9-4
October 13 th	9-1 Assessment Component 1 - presentation
October 20 th	9-1
November 2 nd	9-1 Submission of component 2 – academic poster
November 9 th	9-1
November 16 th	9-11
November 23 rd	Submission of Component 3 – policy report

Assessment Points:

Submission dates:	Assessment component
October 13 th 2026	Component 1: individual presentation
November 2 nd 2026	Component 2: academic poster
November 23 rd 2026	Component 3: policy report

Session overview/details

Session/Date/Time	Content	Location
Session 1: 29 th September 2026 9-4	Introduction to the module Developing a philosophy of education Developing a critical stance	IQ107
Session 2: 6 th October 2026 9-4	What is education policy? Introduction to assessment component 1: Individual presentation (20%) Identify a policy issue to explore in component 1.	IQ107
Session 3: 13 th October 2026 9-1	Assessment component 1: Individual Presentations Introduction to components 1 and 2 Planning and preparation for component 2: Designing an impactful academic poster.	IQ107
Session 4: 20 th October 2026 9-1	Reflection on Component 1. Further developing criticality and skills of analysis when exploring policy issues in education: The Great Education Debate	IQ107
Session 5: 2nd November 2026 9-1	Planning and preparation for component 2.	FF008
Session 6: 9 th November 2026 9-1	Exploring further issues in education Planning and preparation for component 3: Writing a policy report on a contemporary issue in education. Critical thinking, writing and policy analysis. Support in planning and drafting a policy report.	FF008
Session 7: 16 th November 2026 9-11	Individual Tutorials	IQ305

Assessment Information

There are three summative assignments for this module. Your preparation for these is supported by a range of formative activities. The EdD marking criteria should help you to critically reflect how you will prepare for the assignments and serve as a self-assessment tool. If you require support or assistance in completing the assignments, please contact the module lead well in advance of the submission dates.

Assessment Component 1 – (20%), Tuesday 13th October 2026

Prepare a 10-minute presentation for a conference that critically evaluates a contemporary issue of your choice, including its representation in official statements, media treatment and your understanding of its treatment in an international context.

Assessment Component 2 – (20%), Monday 9th November 2026

Design an academic poster outlining your detailed planning and rationale for component 3 (a written assignment reporting on a contemporary policy issue in education). Relevant documents and notes may be included to support your ideas.

Your academic poster will focus on a key area of interest (of your choice) in education policy and seek to add depth to established arguments/current debate. Style, structure and presentation should reflect the medium and you will be marked on your ability to communicate in a different way, to a potentially different audience (than you might for a journal article, for example). Posters should be engaging and structured appropriately. You will need to prioritise key points in your planning and thinking and justify their context and inclusion. Ideas that you present should be supported by relevant reading, including e.g: official statements, media treatment, and policy documents.

Assessment Component 3 – (50%), Monday 23rd November 2026

Prepare a policy report on a contemporary issue in education of your choosing. Your report should be written for an academic or professional audience, taking into account an appropriate structure, formal register and written accuracy. You will critically evaluate a contemporary issue in education, its representation in academic papers, official statements, media treatment and your understanding of its treatment in an international context, as appropriate. You should seek to demonstrate a depth of understanding of your chosen area, drawing on a range of evidence, and seek to synthesise prominent debates/discussion into a series of judgements that are rooted in evidence. Your

work should build on what we know already and seek to move thinking forward, using your own interpretation and experience to add weight to your core argument(s). Your academic writing and presentation are important here and will contribute significantly to your overall mark.

ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

It is students' responsibility to read the University assessment rules and regulations which are available in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 of the University's Academic Quality Handbook a copy of which can be found on the Academic Office section of the website:

<http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/academic-quality-handbook/>

All written assignments must be submitted electronically via Turnitin to check for plagiarism. Feedback provided through Turnitin are in two areas: written feedback, and the marking rubric.

- Written feedback will comment on the overall work.
- The marking rubric will focus on how the piece of work meets the criteria listed in the relevant rubric. The marking rubric does not give a mathematically calculated result based on the sum of individual components, but it is used holistically to help determine the mark.

Written Feedback and the Marking Rubric can be found by clicking the buttons as shown when you view your submitted assignment in Turnitin.

Professional Doctorate in Education Marking Policy

Feedback to students using Grade Mark

1. In-text feedback:

- i. Feedback will be provided in the form of targeted comments that give the student clear indications for improvements – either through questions that ask the student to critically evaluate her/his work, or through suggestions;
- ii. The Quickmark function may be used within the body of the text to indicate recurrent issues that need addressing, such as incorrect referencing, spelling or grammatical errors.

2. Summary feedback:

- i. The summary paragraph should be targeted towards the specific piece of work, rather than generalised comment, and include clear indications for improvement;

ii. The summary should be organised according to the marking criteria, and reflect the language used in the statements for each of the criteria, so that the student can identify and address specific areas for improvement.

Grading the assignment:

Examiners will use the rubric function to indicate the mark assigned for each of the marking criteria. This will give the student specific detail around areas for improvement and allow the system to calculate the overall mark. It should also align with the written feedback against each criteria statement. The grading criteria can be found on the Moodle page under Module content.