



## The journey to independent learning

### *Passport To Learning* and national certificates

A national *Passport To Learning* has been created, in which 7-14 year old children collect 'stamps' and hours of accredited learning (contributing to the award of a national certificate) to encourage them to access Children's University (CU) provision and a wide range of other worthwhile out-of-school-hours learning opportunities. This innovation has received widespread support from sponsors (e.g. JP Morgan, Garfield Weston Foundation, Sutton Trust, Nationwide Building Society) and partners (e.g. Higher and Further Education Institutions, Museums, Libraries and Archives, Natural England, Woodland Trust, Shakespeare 4 Kidz and the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Houses of Parliament and, internationally the Palazzo Strozzi in Florence, Italy).



*Passport To Learning*

The 'stamps' which children collect in their *Passport To Learning* will be issued by CU validated *Learning Destinations* and will represent that particular organisation's logo. The 'stamps' will in this way contribute to a child's record of achievement culminating in the presentation of the Children's University certificates for voluntary participation in high quality out-of-school-hours learning. These certificates are awarded at three levels: CU Undergraduate (where tangible outcomes of learning are expected, such as displays and publications) and CU Postgraduate (where children are expected to act as 'Leaders of Learning' for others). The hours are outlined below. Certificates are typically presented to children at 'graduation' ceremonies in or with the support of 'grown-ups' universities. Honorary certificates are also awarded for outstanding achievement and commitment.

#### *CU Undergraduate (30 to 400 hours)*



#### *CU Postgraduate (430 to 800 hours)*



#### *CU Doctorate (830 to 1000 hours)*



Outstanding  
commitment

Outstanding  
achievement

*Children's University certificates*

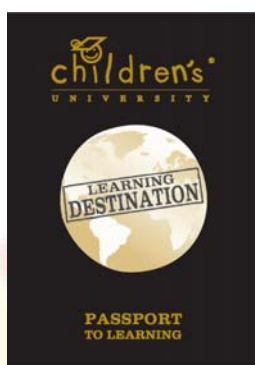
The value of the *Passport To Learning* is £2 per passport and its administration is locally managed through the Children's University. Each *Passport To Learning* is individually numbered which makes each child, as passport holder, an individual member of the national Children's University. Tracking development and progress as part of the evaluation of impact is in this way also possible which may be of particular interest to individual schools and local authorities as well as government agencies. An e-version of the passport is under development to assist in children's transition from the primary to secondary phase and act as evidence in schools' *Ofsted* self-evaluation.

### ***Learning Destinations***

*Learning Destinations* are places and organisations to which children can 'travel' with their *Passport To Learning*. They provide high quality learning activities and experiences with a 'wow' factor and have passed the Children's University's own quality assurance process (*Planning for Learning*). A *Learning Destination* can range from a museum to a farm or from an airport to a university as long as the learning activity connects with Children's University learning which is linked to actual university course provision as exemplified on [www.ucas.ac.uk/students/coursesearch/](http://www.ucas.ac.uk/students/coursesearch/)

The status as a CU validated *Learning Destination* will in principle last for 3 years and is as such a licence agreement between the national Children's University and the individual *Learning Destination*. As part of the local Children's University's monitoring and evaluation of learning activities additional local CU support may be available to individual *Learning Destinations*.

*Learning Destinations* display the CU's *Learning Destination* logo prominently in and outside their environment, clearly visible to children who may want to use their *Passport To Learning* there. *Learning Destinations* are also strongly encouraged to include the *Learning Destination* logo on literature, letter headed paper and to have a web link to the national CU website.



*Learning Destination*

*Learning Destinations* 'stamp' the child's *Passport To Learning* in correspondence with the time a child has been engaged in the validated learning activities within the *Learning Destination*. This thereby contributes to the child's record of achievements and CU certification.

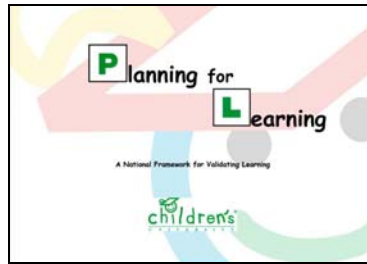
*Learning Destinations* ensure attendance and evaluation records related to CU activities can be available to the local and national Children's University to assist in developments, evaluation and research.

### ***Planning for Learning***

In the development of a national *Planning for Learning* process, a unique and innovative approach to the validation of learning opportunities in out-of-school-hours settings has been devised with the support of Professor John MacBeath of the University of Cambridge. The *Planning for Learning – A National Framework for Validating Learning*<sup>1</sup> document sets out a rigorous process of self-evaluation and planning to ensure that the highest quality of learning is provided in all Children's University learning activities and in all activities accredited by the CU.

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<sup>1</sup> *Planning for Learning – A National Framework for Validating Learning*, by John MacBeath, University of Cambridge and Ger Graus, Children's University



*Planning for Learning*

The approach to the *Planning for Learning* process is a positive one and will fit in with the ethos and focus at local Children's University level. Typically the validation process will take place between the *Learning Destination* designate and local CU representation as part of an exercise in collaboration to enhance the quality of children's learning.

Local Children's Universities may want to prioritise local provision to be validated to their local CU agenda and capacity and build their pool of *Learning Destinations* from there – the 'pebble-in-the-pond' approach. As far as their own learning provision is concerned, validation in existing local CUs can take place as and when learning activities occur; typically therefore all local CU provision should be validated within a 12 month period from becoming active.

Once the validation process has been completed and the outcomes agreed, the '*CU Learning Destination Summary*' (from the *Planning for Learning* document) will be completed and published on the national Children's University website ([www.childrensuniversity.co.uk](http://www.childrensuniversity.co.uk)). Children and parents can then access a national bank of public *Learning Destinations* to visit after school, during school holidays or weekends. By being able to exercise choice as to where to use the *Passport To Learning* the child will be developing in to a more independent learner. Schools and after-school clubs may also choose to become restricted *Learning Destinations* purely for their predetermined CU audience.

*Planning for Learning* validators will have been accredited by the national Children's University following their participation in a national CU training programme. The training has been designed with the support of Professor John MacBeath and his team from the University of Cambridge.

*Planning for Learning* validators will be issued with a national Children's University certificate which entitles them to validate learning provision locally on behalf of the national CU and award *Learning Destination* status. The certificates are linked to the national membership status of the local Children's University.



*Planning for Learning validation certificate*

A national register of *Planning for Learning* validators by local CU will be retained by the national Children's University for quality assurance purposes and to share resources and good practice.

### ***Planning for Excellence***

A *Planning for Excellence* process has been created, in partnership with Quality in Study Support (QiSS), to provide a rigorous approach to the accreditation of local CUs' organisational structure and development. *Planning for Excellence* is based on the national Study Support Code of Practice: *Extending Learning Opportunities: a framework for self-evaluation in study support*.

The *Planning for Excellence – Children’s University Handbook for Organisational Quality Assurance*<sup>2</sup> document focuses on the organisational and structural quality assurance and includes policy and adherence to statutory requirements such as safeguarding children.

*Planning for Excellence* is distinctly different from *Planning for Learning* in that it focuses on the organisation (and its systems and structures) that is the local Children’s University whilst *Planning for Learning* concerns itself with what children learn and how good it is i.e. the quality assurance of the learning (and its processes and outcomes). In the overall quality assurance framework the two complement each other.



*Planning for Excellence*

## National Evaluation

The independent evaluation<sup>3</sup> of the work of the CU has been undertaken by ‘Leadership for Learning – The Cambridge Network’, led by Professor John MacBeath of the University of Cambridge. The first two annual evaluation reports evidence the value of CU provision to children’s lives and pay tribute to the CU’s ‘propitious and encouraging beginning’. The formative approach to evaluation has been integral to developments of the CU, most particularly in Professor MacBeath’s contributions to the development of the CU’s quality assurance processes. The third evaluation, published in 2011 focuses on impact on individual children, in particular in relation to attainment, progress and attendance.

The national evaluation reports are available at <http://www.childrensuniversity.co.uk/about-us/>



## Local Children’s Universities

Where it matters and where it happens!! The local Children’s University is the hub of CU learning and the interface with the children – it provides the reality to the national framework.

Every Children’s University has a formal membership agreement with the national organisation. The Children’s University logo is a registered trade mark and the Children’s University™ name is a trade mark of CU Trust, a registered charity (no. 1118315).

Each local Children’s University has a CU manager who is responsible for leadership, management and quality of learning provision and acts as the local representative of the national Children’s University.

Details about the nearest Children’s University to you can be found at <http://www.childrensuniversity.co.uk/local-Childrens-Universities/>

<sup>2</sup> *Planning for Excellence – Children’s University Handbook for Organisational Quality Assurance*, by Ger Graus and Peter Eavers, Children’s University, and Joanne Moore, Quality in Study Support (QiSS)

<sup>3</sup> *Evaluation of the Children’s University – First Report*, November 2008, by John MacBeath and Joanne Waterhouse, University of Cambridge  
*Evaluation of the Children’s University – Second Report*, December 2009, by John MacBeath and Joanne Waterhouse, University of Cambridge  
*Evaluation of the Children’s University – Third Report*, December 2010, by John MacBeath, University of Cambridge