

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



|   |                                 |                                  |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | <b>Awarding Institution</b>     | Newcastle University             |
| 2 | <b>Teaching Institution</b>     | Newcastle University             |
| 3 | <b>Final Award</b>              | MA                               |
| 4 | <b>Programme Title</b>          | English Language and Linguistics |
| 5 | <b>UCAS/Programme Code</b>      | 4064                             |
| 6 | <b>Programme Accreditation</b>  | N/A                              |
| 7 | <b>QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b> | N/A                              |
| 8 | <b>FHEQ Level</b>               | 7                                |
| 9 | <b>Date written/revised</b>     | 07/03/11                         |

### 10 Programme Aims

1 To produce postgraduate students holding a Master's degree who possess:

- (i) the research skills necessary to undertake independent study in linguistics and English language;
- (ii) the ability to undertake further postgraduate study;
- (iii) an advanced knowledge of a range of issues in the subject area;
- (iv) the ability to engage critically with current work in the subject area.

To provide a programme:

- (i) in which teaching is informed by research;
- (ii) which consistently attracts highly qualified applicants, including mature and overseas applicants;
- (iii) which enables students to conduct arguments effectively in discrete high-level essays;
- (iv) which enables students to work independently under supervision so as to produce a long piece of research (the dissertation);
- (v) which fully meets the requirements of the QAA's Framework for Higher Degree Qualifications at Masters level;
- (vi) which conforms to University policies and procedures.

### 11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the relevant benchmark statements.

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

- A1 Advanced understanding and specialized knowledge of selected areas of study in linguistics and/or English language, including core areas (e.g. syntax, phonology) and, if chosen, applied linguistics or language acquisition.
- A2 Understanding of the relationship between research in different areas of linguistics.
- A3 Knowledge of recent and current theoretical debates in linguistics.

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

A Knowledge and understanding

A1-A3 will be acquired through lectures, seminars, and tutorials in taught modules, and through the preparation and completion of submitted coursework; more advanced knowledge and understanding are developed through supervised independent study leading to the dissertation. In addition, SEL8500 provides a specific focus on A3

**Assessment Strategy**

A Knowledge and understanding

The taught modules deploy a variety of assessment strategies, including examination, written submitted work, oral presentation, and combinations thereof. This encourages students to develop both detailed knowledge of specialized areas (A1), and an integrated view of problems and issues in the discipline (A2 and A3).

**Intellectual Skills**

B Subject-specific/intellectual skills

- B1 Mastery of search and library skills, critical methodologies and theories, and tools for research in the humanities.
- B2 Ability to address linguistic questions and problems in terms of the theoretical debates currently at the forefront of academic work in linguistics and/or English language.
- B3 Mastery of the methods and skills required to obtain and interpret data relevant to research in linguistics and/or English language.

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

B Subject-specific/intellectual skills

B1, B2 and B4 are imparted through SEL8500 and, in specific areas, through the modules in Bands A to D. Students are introduced to the relevant concepts and skills through lectures and seminars and practise them in seminar presentations, practicals, and in submitted work. Students are encouraged to undertake independent study and research through reading suggestions from module leaders; the essays and dissertation further this opportunity for independent learning.

**Assessment Strategy**

B Subject-specific/intellectual skills

B1 and B3 are specially assessed through submitted work and the dissertation. B2 and B4 are tested through all forms of module evaluation and through the dissertation. The progression from module essays to dissertation provides an element of formative assessment.

**Practical Skills**

C Practical skills

- C1 Critical evaluation of arguments and theories
- C2 Problem solving
- C3 Data collection and analysis
- C4 Synthesis

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

C Practical skills  
C1 is illustrated in lectures and developed through discussion and exchange in seminars, and through the module leaders' feedback on submitted work. C2 and C3 developed through seminar and practical exercises, and through work on specific problems for essays and the dissertation. C4 is illustrated in lectures and specially developed through submitted work and the dissertation.

**Assessment Strategy**

C Practical skills  
C1 is evaluated in all forms of assessment. C3 to C4 are assessed through submitted work and, particularly, in the dissertation.

**Transferable/Key Skills**

D Key (transferable) skills  
Ability to:  
D1 demonstrate self-direction and originality in planning and completing tasks,  
D2 deploy information technology (word processing; the internet) appropriately,  
D3 present research findings in a clear and accessible way,  
D4 work to deadlines.

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

D Key (transferable) skills  
D1 is gradually developed through the progression from seminar and practical exercises to module submitted work, and finally to the dissertation. Students are introduced to D2 and D3 through SEL8500, and practise the relevant skills in seminar presentations, submitted work, and the dissertation. D4 is developed through the assessment process.

**Assessment Strategy**

D Key (transferable) skills  
D1 and D2 are assessed through submitted work and, particularly, through the dissertation. Presentation in written form (D3) is evaluated in the essays and dissertation; oral presentation may or may not be assessed, but in all cases students receive feedback on these. D4 is integral to the whole assessment process.

**12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features**

**Basic structure of the programme**

- (a) The programme consists of 180 credits. It is divided into modules with a value of 10, 20, or (in the case of the dissertation) 60 credits.
- (b) The programme is available for study in both full-time (one-year) and part-time (two-year) modes, subject to the definition of those modes in the University Progress Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes.

**Full-time:**

Semester 1: 70 credits (SEL8116; SEL8117; SEL8500a; 40 credits from option modules)

Semester 2: 50 credits (SEL8500b; 40 credits from option modules)

Summer: 60 credits (SEL8147 dissertation)

**Part-time:**

Semester 1, yr 1: 50 credits (SEL8116; SEL8117; SEL8500a)

Semester 2, yr 1: 30 credits (SEL8500b; 20 credits from option modules)

Semester 1, yr 2: 40 credits (option modules)

Semester 2, yr 2: 60 credits (SEL8147 dissertation)

All students take the 20-credit research training module:  
SEL8500 'Research Methods in Language and Linguistics'

All students take SEL8147, the 60 credit dissertation.

In addition, all students must take 20 credits of Syntax, 20 credits of Phonology, 40 credits of English Language and any 20 credits from the list of modules available. A list of optional modules may be found in the regulations.

Students may substitute one stage 2/3 undergraduate module noted in the regulations for a postgraduate module (20 credits) and (apart from the three SML modules which are connected to the cross-School MA in Linguistics and Language Acquisition) students may take modules to the value of 20 credits per year from Schools in which modules relevant to their Degree Programme are taught (in particular, ECLS and SML).

**Co- and pre-requisite modules**

For those modules that involve a progression over two semesters, students on this Degree Programme need to make sure that when registering for a Semester 2 module, they meet the pre-requisites by taking the relevant Semester 1 module.

**Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)**

The programme is characterized by its extraordinary flexibility and range of options. These features are designed to appeal to students with a wide range of interests, including theoretical and general linguistics, descriptive linguistics (whether focusing on English or on other languages), applied linguistics, and combinations thereof.

Generic and specific training in research methods is compulsory under regulation (c): SEL8500 provides specific research training in linguistics and English language. Regulation (h) above caters for highly qualified students whose interests (e.g. sociolinguistics, corpus analysis) call for training in advanced quantitative, statistical, or experimental methods.

The dissertation, taken at the end of the programme, provides students with the opportunity of consolidating, developing, and refining their knowledge and skills through a substantial piece of research into a specialist linguistic topic.

**Programme regulations (link to on-line version)**

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>

### **13 Criteria for admission**

#### *Entry qualifications for 2010-11*

#### *Admissions policy/selection tools*

Applicants are required to possess a first degree of Class 2:1 or above (or the equivalent). The degree must include some study of linguistics, English language, or an appropriate related discipline (e.g. a language other than English, philosophy, anthropology, psychology, cognitive science, computer science, mathematics, etc.). Overseas students whose first language is not English must reach a minimum IELTS score of 7.0 and may be required to attend a pre-sessional or in-sessional course at the University Language Centre.

#### *Non-standard Entry Requirements*

Applicants without the standard qualifications would be asked to submit work and to come for interview.

#### *Additional Requirements*

None

#### *Level of English Language capability*

See above.

### **14 Support for Student Learning**

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

#### *Induction*

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

#### *Study skills support*

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid.

Help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre.

#### *Academic support*

The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

#### *Pastoral support*

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. In addition the University offers a range of support services, including one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions/workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues eg. Stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Union Society operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

*Support for students with disabilities*

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

*Learning resources*

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

**15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

*Module reviews*

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the School Teaching and Learning Committee and at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

*Programme reviews*

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

*External Examiner reports*

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

*Student evaluations*

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking the students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching in their HEIs. With reference to the outcomes of the NSS and institutional student satisfaction surveys actions are taken at all appropriate levels by the institution.

*Mechanisms for gaining student feedback*

Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

*Faculty and University Review Mechanisms*

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process. Every five years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a two-day review visit by a review team which includes an external subject specialist in addition to University and Faculty representatives. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Teaching and Learning Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further five year period.

*Accreditation reports*

Not relevant

*Additional mechanisms*

## **16 Regulation of assessment**

*Pass mark*

The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)

*Course requirements*

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40 is possible and there are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

*Weighting of stages*

The marks from both semesters and the dissertation contribute to the final classification of the degree

*Common Marking Scheme*

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions, namely:

**Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes**

**Summary description applicable to postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes**

|             |                       |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| <50         | Fail                  |
| 50-59       | Pass                  |
| 60-69       | Pass with Merit       |
| 70 or above | Pass with Distinction |

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| <50         | Fail |
| 50 or above | Pass |

*Role of the External Examiner*

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies.

The External Examiner is expected to:

See and approve examination papers

Moderate examination and coursework marking

Attend the Board of Examiners

Report to the University on the standards of the programme

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/>)

The School Brochure (contact [es@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:es@ncl.ac.uk))

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>)

The Degree Programme Handbook (see [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ell/postgrad/taught/language/ma\\_langling.htm](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ell/postgrad/taught/language/ma_langling.htm))

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.



## Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Either

| Intended Learning Outcome | Module codes (Compulsory in Bold) |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A1                        | <b>ABC1001</b> , XYZ2002          |
| A2                        |                                   |
| A3                        |                                   |
| A4                        |                                   |
| B1                        |                                   |
| B2                        |                                   |
| B3                        |                                   |
| B4                        |                                   |
| C1                        |                                   |
| C2                        |                                   |
| C3                        |                                   |
| C4                        |                                   |
| D1                        |                                   |
| D2                        |                                   |
| D3                        |                                   |
| D4                        |                                   |

Or

| Module  | Type       | Intended Learning Outcomes |         |   |      |
|---------|------------|----------------------------|---------|---|------|
|         |            | A                          | B       | C | D    |
| XYZ1001 | Compulsory | 1                          | 1, 2, 3 | 4 | 2, 3 |
|         |            |                            |         |   |      |
|         |            |                            |         |   |      |
|         |            |                            |         |   |      |