

1	Awarding institution	University of Newcastle upon Tyne
2	Teaching institution	as above
3	Final award	MSc
4	Programme title	Human Communication Sciences
5	Programme accredited by:	--
6	UCAS Code	n/a
7	QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	None
8	Date of production/revision	April 2004

9 Programme Aims:

The overall aims of the course are:

- i) To give graduates in speech and language pathology, psychology, medical studies, linguistics and modern languages a grounding in research methods and statistics as related to human communication and its disorders and to prepare people for independent and collaborative research in the fields of speech-language development and breakdown across the lifespan, whether in academic, clinical or school settings.
- ii) To allow specialisation within given areas of human communication science, but at the same time offer a flexibility in module choice which can create new links between fields, respond to professional training needs and satisfy individual learning goals.
- iii) To develop reasoning, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and problem solving
- iv) To develop subject-specific clinical and laboratory skills

10(a) Programme Intended Learning Outcomes:

A Knowledge and understanding

- 1 Theories in speech, language and communication
- 2 Theories in speech, language and communication disorders
- 3 Theories supporting intervention for speech, language and communication disorders

B Subject-specific/professional skills

- 1 experimental design
- 2 qualitative research methods
- 3 specific analysis methods (e.g. phonetic or linguistic analysis) where appropriate
- 4 ability to use SPSS or Excel for statistical evaluation

C Cognitive skills

- 1 reasoning
- 2 finding and evaluating evidence
- 3 synthesis across domains
- 4 problem solving

D Key (transferable) skills

1	Presentation of reasoned argument based on evidence
2	The ability to acquire empirical data to provide evidence
3	Oral presentation
4	Problem solving

10 (b)	Intended learning outcomes	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
A	<p><i>Knowledge and understanding</i></p> <p>1 Theories in speech, language and communication</p> <p>2 Theories in speech, language and communication disorders</p> <p>3 Theories supporting intervention for speech, language and communication disorders</p>	<p>Knowledge and understanding is addressed in a large variety of optional modules that address different theoretical domains. Students choose between these modules to develop their own interests and understanding of theory.</p> <p>Many of the modules are based around lectures that students are expected to supplement with extensive further reading.</p> <p>Some courses use a problem-based learning approach, requiring students to develop skills in thinking about and addressing problems and finding information to address the problems.</p> <p>Several of the optional modules adopt a seminar-based approach, where students are expected to present theories and issues based on directed reading and library research.</p> <p>Four further modules involve small-group seminar teaching, in which students are expected to address in-depth theoretical issues on the basis of extensive reading.</p> <p>The dissertation requires the students to develop a critical and in-depth appreciation of theories in the selected domain.</p>
B	<p><i>Subject-specific/professional skills</i></p> <p>1 experimental design</p> <p>2 qualitative research methods</p> <p>3 specific analysis methods (e.g. phonetic or linguistic analysis) where appropriate</p> <p>4 ability to use SPSS or Excel for statistical evaluation</p>	<p>Experimental design (B1) and statistics (B4) together with qualitative research methods (B2) are the target domains of the compulsory research methods and statistics module (SPE801).</p> <p>Experimental design (B1) is addressed in a series of weekly small group seminars/workshops. Statistical methods are taught in a series of lectures interleaved with practical workshops using SPSS and Excel to do statistical analysis. A series of lectures and workshops address qualitative research methods (B4).</p> <p>The practical application of all these methods is developed in the dissertation in which the student, supported by their supervisor, does a novel empirical research project.</p> <p>Other, specific, analysis methods (B3) are addressed in optional modules in which students develop practical skills in workshops that often involve using the appropriate computer-based software.</p>
C	<i>Cognitive skills</i>	The development of these cognitive skills is central

	1 reasoning 2 finding and evaluating evidence 3 synthesis across domains 4 problem solving	to all aspects of the programme. They are addressed using workshops (C1, C2) in many modules, in requiring students to present seminar sessions (C1, C2, C3) , in engaging in problem- based or case-based learning sessions (C1-4). Critically, the dissertation requires the student to develop and demonstrate all these skills, that are developed in conjunction with their supervisor in 1:1 supervisory sessions
D	<i>Key (transferable) skills</i> 1 Presentation of reasoned argument based on evidence 2 The ability to acquire empirical data to provide evidence 3 Oral presentation 4 Problem solving	The dissertation addresses D1, D2 and D4. Oral presentations (D3) are required in all the modules involving seminars, workshops and problem-based learning. Skills D1 and D2 are developed in almost all of the modules. All of the lecture-based modules emphasise how theories can only be based on defensible evidence. All of the modules require/encourage students to both acquire and evaluate evidence. The evaluation of evidence is specifically targeted in critical analysis of papers in the research methods module.

10 (c)	Intended learning outcomes	Assessment Strategy and Methods
A	<i>Knowledge and understanding</i> 1 Theories in speech, language and communication 2 Theories in speech, language and communication disorders 3 Theories supporting intervention for speech, language and communication disorders	Knowledge and understanding is assessed in a variety of optional modules by essays. These require the students to acquire in-depth understanding of theory in the relevant domain, evaluate these theories on the basis of the existing (published) evidence (which they will need to seek out), and present the results of this evaluation. The dissertation requires these same skills, although in much greater depth
B	<i>Subject-specific/professional skills</i> 1 experimental design 2 qualitative research methods 3 specific analysis methods (e.g. phonetic or linguistic analysis) where appropriate 4 ability to use SPSS or Excel for statistical	Statistical understanding (B1, B4) is assessed in a computer-based data analysis test in the (compulsory) research, methods, design and statistics module. Understanding of experimental design and qualitative research methods (B1, B2) is assessed in the critical evaluation of a research paper test in the (compulsory) research, methods, design and statistics module. Modules involving other analysis methods (B3) are evaluated using a variety of methods in the relevant

	evaluation	(optional) modules. The dissertation provides a searching evaluation of all these skills.
C	<i>Cognitive skills</i> 1 reasoning 2 finding and evaluating evidence 3 synthesis across domains 4 problem solving	Essays, used as assessment methods in almost all of the optional modules, assess all of these skills. All are also assessed in the dissertation. Reasoning evidence evaluation, and problem-solving (C1, C2, C4) are also assessed in the research methods course evaluations
D	<i>Key (transferable) skills</i> 1 Presentation of reasoned argument based on evidence 2 The ability to acquire empirical data to provide evidence 3 Oral presentation 4 Problem solving	D1, D2 and D4 are addressed in the dissertation. D1 and D2 are required for essays, and other assessments for the optional modules.

11 Programme Curriculum, Structure, and Features:

The course is one year full-time or two years part-time.

There is one stage.

180 CUs are required.

There are two compulsory modules: Research methods and Statistics (CU=20) and the Dissertation (CU= 60 (80)). The remaining CUs are chosen from c40 further optional modules (CUs 5-20).

12 Criteria for Admission:

GCSEs required: N/A

A-Level Subjects and Grades: N/A

Alternative entry qualifications: First degree usually in linguistics, psychology, medicine, speech sciences or speech and language pathology. Students with other University-level qualifications are also considered when it appears that the course is appropriate to their needs

Admissions policy: The course seeks applicants with real interest in studying the subject, with an appropriate first degree, supplemented, where relevant, by professional experience.

Arrangements for non-standard entrants: are *ad hoc*.

Any Additional Requirements: None

13 Support for Students and their Learning:

Induction: There is a comprehensive induction programme, covering the library, computer facilities, student support, course requirements etc.

Study skills support: Induction provides an introduction to library and computer skills. Further study skills are developed in formative feedback in essays and other assessments, and in formative feedback from seminar presentations.

Academic support: All academic staff in the section are available for support and advice. All module leaders are committed to providing informal support to their teaching.

Pastoral support: All students have a personal tutor who is open to consultation, advice and support on academic and personal issues. Where appropriate the tutor refers to other agencies.

Support for Special Needs: is provided as appropriate and necessary. The student's needs are identified in consultation with the Disability Unit.

Learning resources: The University provides library and computer resources. The School provides in addition a large test library, specialised laboratories for linguistic and phonetic analysis and psycholinguistic experimental facilities. There is an equipment loan library with video and audio recorders, laptop computers for running experiments, supported by a technician who can help in programming.

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning:

Module reviews: Are conducted by module leaders and discussed at the Board of studies. They are informed by written feedback from students on all modules, as well as feedback through the staff-student committee.

Programme reviews: Are the responsibility of the Board of Studies, and are also considered by the Curriculum Review Committee that actively monitors all aspects of the course.

External examiner reports: Are considered by the Board of Studies, and responded to by the DPD in conjunction with the Curriculum Review Committee.

Accreditation reports: N/A

Student evaluations: Are collected by written questionnaire for all modules. The evaluations are responded to by module leaders and the resulting reports considered by the Board of studies and Curriculum Review Committee.

Feedback Mechanisms: Feedback is via module evaluations, and the staff-student committee (see above).

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms: The course is subject to regular review at School, Faculty and University level.

15 Regulation of Assessment

Pass Marks: The pass mark is 50% on the University Common Marking Scale. A distinction is awarded to candidates with an overall mark on this scale of 70%.

Course Requirements: Completion of modules to the value of 180 credits. This includes a compulsory research methods module (20 credits) and dissertation (60/80 credits) and optional modules for a further 80/100 credits.

Weighting of Stages: n/a

Common Marking Scheme: the University Common Marking Scheme is used. All assessments are blind double marked, with markers reconciling their scores by discussion. Assessments with discrepant scores are further considered by the external examiner. There is a set of written standards of the quality of work expected to reach specific levels in assessment.

Role of the External Examiner: The external examiner is sent a range of work from each semester and from the dissertations, together with any work where there was disagreement on grades between internal markers. The role of the external examiner here is monitoring of marking and scholarship standards, suggesting modification of marks deemed too low or too high, and adjudication in cases of internal disagreement.

The external examiner is encouraged to comment on the assessment process and the schemes for marking and classification. His/her advice is sought on all aspects of programme design, teaching and marking.

16 Indicators of Quality and Standards:

Professional Accreditation Reports: N/A

Internal Review Reports: have been satisfactory.

Previous QAA Reports: The programme was assessed by the QAA in May 2000, together with other programmes in the then Department of Speech. The programmes received a rating of 24/24 and no significant weaknesses were identified.

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.

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

The University Prospectus

The Departmental Prospectus

The University and Degree Programme Regulations

The Degree Programme Handbook

QAA Subject Review Report