

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MSc
4	Programme Title	Human Communication Sciences
5	UCAS/Programme Code	5103
6	Programme Accreditation	
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	None
8	FHEQ Level	Masters
9	Date written/revised	2 July 2007

10 Programme Aims

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. To develop reasoning, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and problem solving
4. To develop subject- specific clinical and laboratory skills

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.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- 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

Teaching and Learning Methods

A1-3 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.

Many of the modules are based around lectures that students are expected to supplement with extensive further reading.

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.

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.

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.

The dissertation requires the students to develop a critical and in-depth appreciation of

theories in the selected domain.
Assessment Strategy
A1 -3 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
Intellectual Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to:
<i>B</i> <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 evaluation
Teaching and Learning Methods
B1-4 Experimental design (B1) and statistics (B4) together with qualitative research methods (B2) are the target domains of the compulsory research methods and statistics module (SPE8001). 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). 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. 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.
Assessment Strategy
B1 – 4 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 (optional) modules. The dissertation provides a searching evaluation of all these skills.
Practical Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to:
<i>C</i> <i>Cognitive skills</i> 1 reasoning 2 finding and evaluating evidence 3 synthesis across domains 4 problem solving
Teaching and Learning Methods
C1-4 The development of these cognitive skills is central 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
Assessment Strategy
C1 – 4 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
Transferable/Key Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to:
<i>D</i> <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
Teaching and Learning Methods
D1 -4 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.
Assessment Strategy
D1, D2 and D4 are addressed in the dissertation. D1 and D2 are required for essays, and other assessments for the optional modules.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features						
Basic structure of the programme						
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). The remaining CUs (100) are chosen from three groups of modules:						
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%;">(i)</td> <td>18 modules on speech, language and their disorders (minimum of 40CUs from this group)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(ii)</td> <td>8 modules on theoretical and applied linguistics (maximum of 30CUs from this group)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(iii)</td> <td>8 modules on speech and language sciences (maximum of 30CUs from this group)</td> </tr> </table>	(i)	18 modules on speech, language and their disorders (minimum of 40CUs from this group)	(ii)	8 modules on theoretical and applied linguistics (maximum of 30CUs from this group)	(iii)	8 modules on speech and language sciences (maximum of 30CUs from this group)
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(iii)	8 modules on speech and language sciences (maximum of 30CUs from this group)					
Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)						
Programme regulations (link to on-line version)						
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2007-2008/programme/5103.php						

13 Criteria for admission
<i>GCSEs required: N/A</i>
<i>A-Level Subjects and Grades: N/A</i>
<i>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</i>

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

14 Support for Student Learning

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 (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/coming_to_newcastle/orientation.phtml)

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.

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. Details of the personal tutor system can be found at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/tutor.phtml>
In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/welfare.phtml>

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. For further details see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/disability-support/>

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, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/acfacilities.phtml>

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language test in the Language Centre. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The Language Centre houses a range of resources for learning other languages which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange. See <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/facilities/langcen.phtml>

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 Curriculum Review Committee and 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, the Curriculum Review Committee and the Board of Studies.

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, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php

Accreditation reports N/A

Additional mechanisms

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.

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 50

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdepr.pdf>) and Examination

Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees

(<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdeprexamconv.pdf>). 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.

In summary, students must pass 180 CUs. There are resit opportunities, for failed modules.

Weighting of stages

N/A

Common Marking Scheme

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

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

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 enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/>)

The Degree Programme Handbook

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 (Comp/Core in Bold)
A1	ABC1001 , 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	Comp	1	1, 2, 3	4	2, 3