

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



| | | |
|----------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Awarding Institution | Newcastle University |
| 2 | Teaching Institution | Newcastle University |
| 3 | Final Award | MA PGDip |
| 4 | Programme Title | MA Sociolinguistics (Research) PGDip Sociolinguistics (Research) |
| 5 | Programme Code | MA 4117F/P PGDip 3439F/P |
| 6 | Programme Accreditation | N/A |
| 7 | QAA Subject Benchmark(s) | N/A |
| 8 | FHEQ Level | 7 |
| 9 | Last updated | April 2014 |

10 Programme Aims

- 1 To provide an ESRC recognised Research Master's award benchmarked against ESRC Training Guidance
- 2 To provide foundational masters training in the subject to prepare students to take a PhD
- 3 To ensure students gain a thorough grounding in the theory, approaches and research methods of both the subject and social science more generally
- 4 To provide a programme which meets the requirements for a level 7 programme in the FHEQ and complies with 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.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1 have a thorough understanding of social science theory, approaches and research methods
- A2 have a thorough understanding of research methods in their discipline
- A3 have a sound understanding of advanced scholarship and practice in areas within the discipline as well as an awareness of cutting edge research across the social sciences

Teaching and Learning Methods

Lectures will be used, primarily, to impart information and provide an overall coherence for modules on the programme.

Seminars aim to enhance interpretation of approaches to sociolinguistics; improve oral presentation skills and build team-work.

A1 will be primarily delivered through the generic modules provided by the Faculty. A3 will be taught through SEL8365 and the optional modules in linguistics in relation to advanced scholarship within the discipline, whereas the generic research training modules will raise awareness of broader social science research. A2 will be developed through the dissertation module and the study of specialist linguistics modules.

Assessment Strategy

In order to meet the requirements of subsequent independent study and engagement in academia, a wide variety of assessment strategies will be involved on this programme including:

- Essays;
- Dissertation.

The research training modules will assess A1 and the generic aspects of A3, whilst A2 and the specialist aspects of A3 will be assessed through the dissertation and the specialist linguistics modules.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 collect, transcribe and analyse data, and evaluate different theoretical approaches to data in a wide variety of formats
- B2 evaluate literature in the discipline
- B3 solve problems in the discipline

Teaching and Learning Methods

Practicals and fieldwork will be used, primarily, to build skills in the collection and analysis of linguistic data relevant to sociolinguistics.

Seminars aim to enhance interpretation of approaches to sociolinguistics and promote problem-solving strategies.

B1 will be taught principally through the generic research training modules, but also the dissertation and the preparation for it. B2 will be supported by the generic research training modules but reinforced by specialist linguistics modules and the dissertation. B3 will be taught principally through the specialist modules and the dissertation.

Assessment Strategy

In order to meet the requirements of subsequent independent study and engagement in academia, a wide variety of assessment strategies will be involved on this programme including:

- Data Collection, Transcription and Analysis Tasks;
- B1 will be assessed through all modules, both generic and specialist, with opportunities to be assessed in key specialist skills available before undertaking the dissertation, where relevant skills will also be assessed. The specialist modules and the dissertation will assess students' evaluation of the literature in the discipline (B2) and ability to solve problems in the discipline (B3)

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1 undertake preparatory planning for a doctorate
- C2 carry out a literature search and review
- C3 use the information and study skills obtained to do a doctorate
- C4 undertake independent fieldwork
- C5 undertake sociolinguistic analysis using a variety of mathematical and computational tools.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Practicals and fieldwork will be used, primarily, to build skills in the collection and analysis of linguistic data relevant to sociolinguistics.

Poster and oral presentations will be used to build team-work and demonstrate abilities in IT as well as in practical aspects of sociolinguistics and understanding of relevant theoretical concepts.

The generic research training modules provide the basis for developing C1, C2, C3 and C4, but these will be further developed in the specialist modules and through undertaking the dissertation. C5 will be developed in the specialist modules and the dissertation only using practicals for analysis and fieldwork for data collection.

Assessment Strategy

In order to meet the requirements of subsequent independent study and engagement in academia, a wide variety of assessment strategies will be involved on this programme including:

- Data Collection, Transcription and Analysis Tasks;
- Poster Presentations;
- Oral Presentations;

These skills will be assessed in both the generic research training (principally C1-C4) and via the specialist modules and the dissertation (principally C4-C5), which will place the emphasis on specialist applications. Some of the assessment tasks, as outlined above, will assess important skills for linguists.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- D1 write in a suitable academic style
- D2 present ideas effectively orally in a variety of formats
- D3 manage their own workload effectively so as to meet deadlines
- D4 analyse theory, different approaches and quantitative and qualitative data effectively

Teaching and Learning Methods

Seminars aim to enhance interpretation of approaches to sociolinguistics; improve oral presentation skills and build team-work.

Poster and oral presentations will be used to build team-work and demonstrate abilities in IT as well as in practical aspects of sociolinguistics and understanding of relevant theoretical concepts.

D1 will be taught in all the taught modules and reinforced in the dissertation. A variety of modules will involve oral presentations as well as more informal oral communication. Students will develop their skills in workload management (D3) throughout the programme, but principally through the dissertation. D4 is developed across the programme both at a generic level and in a specialised linguistics context.

Assessment Strategy

In order to meet the requirements of subsequent independent study and engagement in academia, a wide variety of assessment strategies will be involved on this programme including:

- Data Collection, Transcription and Analysis Tasks;
- Poster Presentations;
- Oral Presentations;
- Dissertation

D1 will be assessed in every single module and the dissertation. D2 will be assessed through presentations in a number of modules. D3 will not be directly assessed, although students will need to demonstrate it to be successful, in particular with their dissertation. D4 will be assessed as a generic skill through the generic research training modules and in a specialised linguistics context in the specialist modules and the dissertation.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

The programme consists of a mixture of generic research training modules offered by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Training Programme combined with more specialised modules based in the subject covering both research training and specialist knowledge.

The School research training module starts by considering the recent (20th-century) history of linguistics and the philosophy of linguistics to highlight tensions between different conceptions of language, of the goals and data of linguistic inquiry, and of how such issues impinge on questions of research methodology in linguistics as well as in Sociolinguistics and the Sociology of Language more specifically. The module provides an overview of the schools of thought in linguistics and language, including key thinkers and their research and aims to give students working knowledge of methodology and skills in quantitative and qualitative research in language and linguistic studies.

The dissertation, undertaken at the end of the programme, provides the capstone which pulls together the varying strands of the programme. Students on this module will be provided with a dissertation supervisor as soon as they have identified the area(s) of study of interest to them. They will be encouraged to meet with the supervisor regularly (beginning in semester 2) and joint supervision can be arranged across CRiLLLS where the student's topic warrants an interdisciplinary approach.

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

The programme is designed to equip students for PhD study in the discipline and to be part of an ESRC 1+3 award.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

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

13 Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications

At least a good 2:1

Admissions policy/selection tools

Application form with telephone or face to face interview where necessary

Non-standard Entry Requirements

N/A

Additional Requirements

Level of English Language capability

IELTS 7.0 (or equivalent)

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 and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Development Centre (further information is available from the Robinson Library).

Academic and Pastoral support

Each undergraduate and taught postgraduate student will be assigned a personal tutor.* A personal tutor is one part of a wider network of advice and guidance available to students to support their personal and general academic development. The module leader acts as the first point of contact for subject-specific academic advice. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Student-Staff Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies. Within the academic unit, students may also receive additional academic and pastoral advice from a range of other student-facing staff including degree programme directors, dissertation/project supervisors, and administrative support staff.

*Arrangements may vary for students taking special types of provision.

The University also offers a wide range of institutional services and support upon which students can call, such as the Writing Development Centre, Careers Service and Student Wellbeing Service. This includes one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. 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 Student Union 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 team 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 Board of Studies and/or the School Teaching and Learning Committee. Student opinion is sought at the Student-Staff Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. The FLTSEC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

External Examiner reports

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

Student evaluations

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Student-Staff Committee, and the Board of Studies. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

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

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

Every six years degree programmes in each subject area undergo periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a review visit by a review team (normally one day in duration) which includes an external subject specialist and a student representative. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

Accreditation reports

Additional mechanisms

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 and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. There are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions. Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40% is possible for candidates who commenced their programme in 2013/14 or earlier. For students starting their programme in 2014/15 or later, no compensation is possible.

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

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes

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

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes

| | |
|-------------|------|
| <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, following recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:

- i. See and approve assessment papers
- ii. Moderate examination and coursework marking
- iii. Attend the Board of Examiners
- iv. Report to the University on the standards of the programme

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

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

The School Brochure: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/marketing/services/print/publications/ordering/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

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

TO COMPLETE

| Intended Learning Outcome | Module codes (Compulsory in Bold) |
|---------------------------|---|
| A1 | SEL8328, SEL8501 , HSS8007 , HSS8002 , HSS8005 , HSS8004 |
| A2 | HSS8005 , HSS8004 |
| A3 | SEL8328, SEL8501 , HSS8007 |
| B1 | SEL8163 , SEL8361 , SEL8639 |
| B2 | SEL8163 , SEL8361 , SEL8164, SEL8166, SEL8639 |
| B3 | SEL8163 , SEL8361 , SEL8164, SEL8166, SEL8639 |
| C1 | SEL8501 , HSS8002 |
| C2 | SEL8328, SEL8501 , HSS8002 |
| C3 | SEL8328, SEL8501 , HSS8002 |
| C4 | SEL8163 , SEL8361 , SEL8211 |
| C5 | SEL8163 , SEL8361 , SEL8164, SEL8166, SEL8639, |
| D1 | SEL8501 , SEL8163 , SEL8361 , SEL8328, SEL8164, SEL8166, SEL8639, |
| D2 | SEL8163 , SEL8361 , SEL8164, SEL8166, SEL8639 |
| D3 | SEL8501 , SEL8163 , SEL8361 , SEL8328, SEL8164, SEL8166, SEL8639 |
| D4 | HSS8005 , HSS8004 |