

## **MA in English Language Teaching**

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading
Faculty of Arts & Humanities	Programme length: 12 months
For students entering in 2003	Date of specification:01/10/03
Programme Director:	Mr Alan Tonkyn
Board of Studies:	MA in English Language Teaching

Accreditation: not appropriate

### **Summary of programme aims**

The MAELT programme is designed especially for those working in the field of English as a second / foreign language, and has courses in language description, and in pedagogy-and administration-related fields with this audience in mind. Students are given an up-to-date knowledge of principles and issues in areas of importance to language learning and assessment, and investigate their practical implications. They receive a thorough grounding that will help them to develop their career as a teacher, trainer, researcher or manager.

### **Transferable skills**

In addition to those skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme, it is envisaged that MAELT students will have developed or enhanced the following more specific transferable skills:

- analysing and categorising – and hence evaluating – language at different levels;
- designing curricula and syllabi on the basis of data provided;
- synthesising, analysing and evaluating information and theoretical claims in specialist literature;
- giving well-organised, clear oral presentations to a specialist or semi-specialist audience;
- producing well-structured and clearly-written academic and professional papers;
- collaborating with others in research, problem-solving and/or the development of plans and recommendations;
- designing and conducting a research project, including a clear statement of research aims, identifying and searching relevant bibliographical sources, conducting an empirical or library-based investigation, and analysing and interpreting results in relation to established theory and professional concerns;
- using time efficiently while carrying out reading, research and related writing activities.

### **Programme content**

The following profile states which modules must be taken (the compulsory part), together with lists of modules from which students must make a selection (the option modules).

The MAELT programme allows students some freedom to suit their own needs, but with a shared foundation of compulsory core modules. The latter combine with option modules which may be selected from a range of available subjects within the School. A special feature of the programme is that it has two tracks, with and without a dissertation (referred to respectively hereafter as the ‘dissertation track’ and the ‘taught track’). In addition, there is a distance study version of the programme permitting study entirely away from Reading, or a combination of distance and campus-based study. [A separate programme specification is available for the distance study programme.]

The **compulsory modules** are divided into three areas: English language description, language teaching/learning, and (for dissertation track only) research. The English language description modules run in the Autumn term, and language teaching and learning modules in the Autumn and Spring terms. The research area comprises a research design and basic statistical methods (taught in the Spring Term) and the dissertation, of 15,000 words, on a topic in the field of English Language Teaching, broadly defined. Research for, and the writing of, the dissertation take place in the Summer term and the Summer vacation.

The **option modules** cover a wide range of pure and applied areas (with an emphasis on the latter) and, together with the dissertation, provide flexibility and the opportunity for specialisation in the greater part of the programme.

The following profile states which modules must be taken (the compulsory part), together with lists of modules from which students must make a selection (the option modules). In consultation with their programme adviser, students must choose 3 option modules (each of 20 credits) if following the dissertation track, and 6 option modules (each of 20 credits) if following the taught track, to make a total of 180 credits when combined with the other programme modules and the dissertation (where relevant). The number of credits for each module is shown after its title.

<b>Masters Level (three terms)</b>		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
<i>Compulsory modules</i>			
<b>Autumn term</b>			
LSMPH1	<i>Foundation Phonetics &amp; Phonology</i>	10	M
LSMDGL	<i>Description of English Grammar and Lexis</i>	10	M
LSMDT	<i>Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers</i>	10	M
LSMSL	<i>Second Language Learning Principles</i>	20	M
<b>Spring term</b>			
LSMLC	<i>Language Curriculum Design</i>	10	M
<b>Spring and Summer term and Summer vacation</b>			
For Dissertation-track only			
LSMDIF	<i>Research Design and Dissertation (MAELT)</i>	60	M

### *Option modules*

Students select three (dissertation-track) or six (taught-track) options from the following.

#### **Autumn Term**

LSMAPL	<i>Introduction to Applied Linguistics</i>	20	M
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#### **Spring term**

LSMCR	<i>Classroom Language Research</i>	20	M
LSMTP	<i>Language Testing Principles</i>	20	M
LSMWL	<i>Written Language (Reading &amp; Writing)</i>	20	M
LSNCA	<i>Corpora in Applied Linguistics</i>	20	M
LSMES	<i>English for Specific Purposes</i>	20	M
LSMIC	<i>Intercultural Communication</i>	20	M

#### **Summer Term**

LSMSP	<i>Spoken Language (Listening &amp; Speaking)</i>	20	M
LSMYL	<i>Teaching Young Learners</i>	20	M
LSMIT	<i>Information Technology for Language Teaching</i>	20	M
LSMST	<i>Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature</i>	20	M

The assessment of those modules running entirely in the Autumn term will be by assignments to be completed over the Christmas vacation; assessment of those modules running entirely, or completing, in the Spring term, will be by assignments to be completed over the Easter vacation. Modules running entirely, or completing, in the Summer term will be assessed by assignments to be completed by the beginning of the third week of the summer vacation.

The dissertation will be submitted by 20<sup>th</sup> September.

#### **Part-time/Modular arrangements**

The programme is offered on a part-time basis, normally over a period of up to 24 months, and on a modular basis normally over a period of 3 to 4 years, but with a maximum of 6 years. These arrangements are normally as follows:

Part-time (24 months):

Year 1: 3 compulsory taught modules and 1-2 option modules (dissertation track) or 2-3 option modules (taught track);

Year 2: 4 compulsory taught modules (including Research Design) and 1-2 option modules + dissertation (dissertation track) or 3-4 option modules (taught track).

Modular (3-4 years)

Years 1-3: Dissertation track: 1-2 compulsory modules p.a., including Research Design in year 3, and 1 option module p.a.; Taught track: 1-2 compulsory modules p.a., and 1-2 option modules p.a.;

Year 4: Dissertation track: dissertation; Taught track: 1-2 option modules.

Note: students may switch from full-time to modular status at the end of the Spring term to complete the dissertation. They will then have one year to complete the dissertation, and any option modules not taken by that point.

## Progression Requirements

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
<u>Failing categories:</u>	
40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

### *For Masters Degrees*

To pass the degree of Master students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall, including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation in the case of dissertation-track, and have no mark below 40 in compulsory modules LSMPH1, LSMDGL, LSMDT, LSMSL, and LSMLC. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.\*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall, including a mark of 70 or more for the dissertation in the case of dissertation-track, and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

### *For Postgraduate Diplomas*

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more and have no mark below 40 in compulsory modules LSMPH1, LSMDGL, LSMDT, LSMSL, and LSMLC. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.\*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

### *For Postgraduate Certificate*

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more and have no mark below 40 in modules LSMPH1, LSMGL, LSMDT, LSMSL and LSMLC. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.\*

\*The provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate applied himself or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

### **Summary of teaching and assessment**

Modules are taught by lectures, seminars and small group practical work. The dissertation module additionally is supported by individual supervision. Most modules are assessed wholly by coursework, but there may also be assessment by examination: details are given in the module descriptions.

### **Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have

- a good first degree, preferably in a language- or language/education-related subject
- at least two years' full-time EFL/ESL teaching experience.

Non-graduates may exceptionally be admitted to the programme if they have

- a diploma level teaching qualification, or its equivalent in in-service teaching qualifications
- several years of teaching experience, with evidence of a high level of professional activity in areas such as conference attendance and presentations, the production of teaching materials and the writing of professional / academic papers.

All entrants to the programme will be required to meet the Faculty's English language proficiency standards. Where UK GCSE examinations in English (or their equivalent) have not been passed, these standards are normally represented by a minimum overall band of 7.0 on the IELTS test, with no sub-test band below 6.5, or an equivalent score on another standard test recognised by the University.

Admissions Tutor: Alan Tonkyn

### **Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories:

(1) Learning support includes resources provided by the IT Services Department, which has several hundred computers, and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, including 14,000 pure and applied linguistics titles, and subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, of which 60 are in pure and applied linguistics. These library facilities provide excellent coverage of the field of language and linguistics in the humanities, social sciences and education. The main University Library has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Further facilities that are campus-wide include the Statistics Advisory Service and the Statistical Computing Advisory Service.

(2) Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, Personal Tutors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

Within the School, there are considerable computing and technical facilities, including a large and well-equipped Speech Research Laboratory offering facilities for work in acoustic, articulatory and physiological aspects of speech, and supported by a range of computational and electronic hardware. In 2001, the School

set up a Language Acquisition Laboratory with the aid of a University grant. There is also a PC-based Corpus Facility, locally networked through Sun workstations and offering access to all well-known language corpora, e.g. the BNC, and databases such as the MRC Psycholinguistic Database, as well as a number of our own research databases; it also provides advanced computational techniques for stimulus presentation and response analysis. The School's computers host major statistical packages, such as Minitab and SPSS. Further PCs are located in the student common room for student use.

The School employs a full-time technical officer, who deals with the purchase and maintenance of computers, software and audio-visual equipment. There is also a School Library, which houses 10,000 titles in ELT and other applied linguistic areas and subscribes to 50 journals. It contains elements of the former British Council English Teaching Information Centre library collection, and it is probably the largest collection of its kind in the country.

Each student is provided with a course handbook which contains full details of the degree programme, the staff and facilities in the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, and a range of useful information including advice on preparation and presentation of written work, especially the dissertation, dates of terms and examinations, and assessment procedures and criteria. Each student is also provided with a Catalogue of core and option modules available to them, giving outlines and assessment details. The Programme Director and/or Personal Tutors will advise students on selection of modules, and on general matters related to learning and assessment. In addition, a series of Study Skills classes is provided in the Autumn Term to give guidance on note-taking and assignment preparation and writing. Module lecturers will advise students on preparation for their assignments or examinations.

### **Career prospects**

Students graduating from this programme are equipped to take up senior teaching and administration posts within the field of English Language Teaching. They will also be equipped to take up positions in teacher training / education, curriculum planning, English language testing, and publishing.

### **Educational aims of the programme**

The MA programme in Teaching English as a Foreign Language aims to introduce participants to current ways of describing the grammatical, lexical, phonological and discursal systems of English; to examine the ways in which concepts from the disciplines of linguistics, education, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and psychology can contribute to our understanding of how languages are taught, learnt and used; to describe and critically evaluate current developments in the teaching of English as a Foreign/Second language, especially in course design and management, methodology, and assessment; and to develop expertise in undertaking and evaluating research into the use and learning of English as a Second/Foreign language.

More specifically, the aims of the programme are:

- to introduce participants to current ways of describing the grammatical, lexical, phonological and discursal systems of English;

- to examine the ways in which concepts from the disciplines of linguistics, education, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and psychology can contribute to our understanding of how languages are taught, learnt and used;
- to describe and critically evaluate current developments in the teaching of English as a Foreign/Second language, especially in course design and management, methodology, and assessment;
- to develop expertise in undertaking and evaluating research into the use and learning of English as a Second/Foreign language.

## Programme Outcomes

### *Knowledge and Understanding*

<p><b>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How the sounds of English are produced and described.</li> <li>2. The main features of the grammatical system of English as described in a modern reference grammar, together with implications for second/foreign language (L2) learning.</li> <li>3. The lexical systems of English, and implications for L2 learning.</li> <li>4. The systems underlying the production of appropriate, coherent and cohesive English text, and the ways of describing these.</li> <li>5. Theories of L2 acquisition relating to learning in general, to interlanguage, and to environmental and individual factors.</li> <li>6. The history of approaches to L2 curriculum design and their implications for pedagogy.</li> <li>7. Theory and pedagogical implications derived from at least three further sub-fields from within the broad areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-the four language skills,</li> <li>-language use and learning in specific domains or circumstances</li> <li>-socio-educational language policy,</li> <li>-language assessment</li> <li>-teacher education</li> <li>-information technology</li> <li>-programme management and evaluation</li> </ul> </li> <li>8. (Dissertation track only) Different types of research, requirements of effective research, techniques of data-gathering, basic descriptive and inferential statistical methods, requirements of academic dissertations in the field.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>Lectures Seminars, with occasional student presentations Tutorials for assignment guidance</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Mainly by assignments requiring essays of different lengths but also by examinations of different lengths in two cases.</p> <p>Dissertation</p>
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### *Skills and other attributes*

#### **B. Intellectual skills** – able to:

1. develop a coherent and logical discussion or argument in speech or writing
2. analyse and solve problems
3. operationalise abstract concepts for testing of hypotheses
4. assimilate rapidly-evolving concepts and models of language and language learning
5. synthesise and evaluate information from different sources
6. generalise knowledge and methods from one area of study to others
7. apply theoretical concepts and research-based information to the handling of pedagogical problems and issues.
8. plan, carry out and present an extended independent investigation of a research topic

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Lectures  
Seminars, with occasional student presentations  
Tutorials

#### *Assessment*

Mainly by assignments requiring essays of different lengths but also by examinations of different lengths in two cases.

Dissertation

#### **C. Practical skills** – able to:

1. perceive the phonological features of spoken English and transcribe them using an IPA-based phonetic alphabet.
2. analyse and describe written English sentences at the levels of clause, phrase and word.
3. analyse and describe samples of English discourse, using one or more descriptive frameworks.
4. design a syllabus for a group of language learners, on the basis of a needs analysis and assessment of resources and other contextual factors.

In addition, depending on modules taken and / or research undertaken, some students will be able to:

5. design a language test for a specified group of test-takers.
6. design and administer a language-oriented survey, involving a questionnaire or interview.
7. carry out a statistical analysis of language or language-related data, using appropriate descriptive and/or inferential statistics
8. derive information from electronic linguistic corpora

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Lectures, seminars and tutorials.

#### *Assessment*

Practical sections in assignments and examinations  
Relevant sections in the dissertation



**D. Transferable skills** – In addition to Intellectual skills in C above:

able to:

1. use IT (word processing, using standard and statistical software)
2. define a research topic and mount a principled investigation by means of hypothesis-formulation and testing
3. give oral presentations
4. work as part of a team
5. use library resources
6. manage time
7. formulate and implement career plans

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Lectures, seminars and tutorials, including special Study Skills classes.

*Assessment*

Items 1, 5 and 6 are assessed under the organisation and presentation criteria for marking assignments and the dissertation. Item 2 is assessed by research proposal and dissertation.

Item 4 is assessed in the work produced for an examination taken for one module.

*Please note:* This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in module and programme handbooks.