English Language Teaching (ELT) by distance learning

Final award	MA
Intermediate awards available	PG Certificate, PG Diploma
UCAS code	N/A
Details of professional body accreditation	N/A
Relevant QAA Benchmark statements	N/A
Date specification last up-dated	November 2005

Profile

The summary - programme advertising leaflet

Programme content

The programme aims to provide English language teachers and graduates with relevant teaching experience an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the field of English Language Teaching (hereafter ELT) at both the theoretical and the practical level.

Topics covered on the programme are language systems and language skills, ELT methodology, principles and practice of materials design and evaluation, second language acquisition theory, the global spread of English, the rise of new 'Englishes', the political and cultural dimensions of teaching English as an international language, curriculum and programme design, and testing.

In addition, the programme provides an overview of the theoretical, philosophical, and ethical principles which underpin educational research and introduces students to the theory and practice of action research.

MA ELT at UEL

The MA in ELT provides:

- A flexible credit based programme leading towards a higher degree with a strong focus on classroom practice
- A distance programme which allows working teachers the freedom to continue working while pursuing their studies
- An opportunity for teachers to become familiar with the principles and practice of action research
- An opportunity for teachers from a wide range of countries and varied educational contexts to meet and exchange ideas
- The option of interim awards at certificate and diploma level for students who are unable to complete the programme

Admission requirements

1. Application form and references
2. A first degree in the Social Sciences or Humanities (e.g. Languages, English, Education, Psychology, etc.)
3. Evidence of relevant classroom experience
4. An IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent in the case of international students (applicants should have a minimum score of 6 in the writing component)

Technical requirements

UELPlus (Campus edition 4.0) is the platform used by UEL in delivering the MA ELT. To participate in the programme you need:

1. A PC or Mac, with at least 10 hours unrestricted access per week
2. 56 K modem with Internet access
3. A supported Internet browser (see UELPlus's tune-up page at http://www.webct.com/tuneup/viewpage?name=tuneup_browser_tuneup_information)
4. Reliable email
5. Access to a printer

Access to English language classes are also essential in order to complete the programme

Programme structure

The MA ELT consists of four modules and a dissertation which includes research methods training. The programme has a strong action research focus which will enable students to carry out classroom-based research projects in their own educational contexts. In addition the role of materials is considered at all levels of theory and practice.

The programme is designed to be flexible and compatible with the lives of working teachers. For this reasons students may opt to begin the programme in September or February. The MA is part-time over two years, although some students may wish to take longer – in which case modules may be spread over six years in consultation with the programme leader.

Students who have accumulated 60 credits by completing two modules may be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate, and students who have accumulated 120 credits by completing four modules may be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma. The MA is awarded to students who have accumulated 180 credits by completing all four modules, the research methods training, and the dissertation.

Learning environment

The programme is delivered exclusively by distance mode so it is essential that students have easy and regular access to the Internet and reliable email. Each module consists of reading material and a series of self-check and interactive tasks in which students discuss the issues raised in each module in the light of their own teaching context and educational background. In addition to online discussions, which involve the module tutor on a weekly basis, students also have access to the module tutor via online tutorials.

Assessment

Due to the practical nature of the programme there are no examinations. Assessment is by dissertation and the written assignments for each module. All modules are assessed by assignment (either by two assignments each consisting of 2,500 words, or one assignment of 5,000 words). Assignments vary in form and may include essays, book/article reviews, creation and evaluation of pedagogic materials, and small scale action research projects.

The research methods training is an integral part of the dissertation and forms part of the overall assessment. This assessment takes the form of a draft dissertation proposal, which may be modified in consultation with the dissertation supervisor, and against which the final dissertation will be considered.

The dissertation is a major piece of work and consists of 20,000 words, excluding appendices and bibliography.

Relevance to work/profession

The programme is aimed at practising teachers and graduates with relevant teaching experience and has a strong practical focus. This is reflected in the way in which pedagogic materials are addressed in all modules at the level of theory and practice. In addition, the research methods training which supports the dissertation has a strong action research focus. Research for the dissertation is thus linked to classroom practice.

Thesis/Dissertation/project work

The final dissertation provides students with an opportunity to investigate a specific field of study in depth. Students are required to liaise closely with their supervisor in the design of their study and engage with the demands of independent research at the implementation and writing up stages.

Added value

The School of Education has an established range of undergraduate programmes in related areas – Applied Linguistics, English Language, and TESOL. The MA ELT will allow academic progression for those who meet the criteria and wish to advance their study in the area.

Students on the programme are encouraged to develop their own research interests and, where appropriate, to take these to doctoral level. All students are given support to publish their work in professional and academic journals, and to present their work at conferences.

Your future career

- The programme will allow teachers at primary or secondary level, teachers in adult education and graduates with relevant teaching experience to enhance their promotion prospects either within their local teaching context or beyond.
- The programme will also facilitate those teachers who are considering a move from one ELT context to another (e.g. from ESOL to EFL), or those who wish to move into ELT management or ELT publishing.

- The programme will also equip those who are interested in pursuing an academic career in the field of ELT or who wish eventually to embark on a PhD with essential research and analytical skills.

How we support you

Students are supported initially through an introductory tutorial on the uses of WEB CT two weeks before the programme begins. During this period they also receive an introduction to distance learning. This draws their attention effective management of time and the learning environment, the importance of peer support, and the use of distance learning materials. In addition, students are given the opportunity to sample materials and activities of the kind they will encounter on the MA ELT. They also participate in a series of ice-breaker and getting-to-know-you activities to help them become familiar with the nature of online interaction and to facilitate the development of a sense of community – essential to the success of any distance programme.

In addition, students are required to complete research methods training as part of their dissertation. This training introduces students to the theoretical, philosophical and ethical principles which underpin educational research, and, given the practical nature of the programme pays particular attention to action research as a tool which practising teachers can use to investigate their own classrooms.

The research methods training also looks at the way in which research is presented and written up. Students are provided with guidance on appropriate academic conventions, bibliography, and referencing.

Students also have access to the Student Handbook, the Study Skills Handbook, and Module Guides.

Students also receive online tutorial support and, for non-academic matters, can contact the programme administrator who will advise them accordingly.

Bonus factors

The programme brings together students/professional teachers from a wide range of countries and very different educational contexts. Such diversity of participation guarantees a rich learning environment in which practitioners can exchange ideas and contribute to their deepening knowledge of a complex and rapidly developing field.

Outcomes

Programme aims and learning outcomes

What is this programme designed to achieve?

This programme is designed to give you the opportunity to:

The overall aims of the programme are:

- To provide a comprehensive overview of the field ELT
- To encourage students to engage critically with current thinking about English language teaching and learning
- To provide students with the tools to plan and carry out a piece of advanced research in their own educational context

What will you learn?

The core characteristics of study at Masters level are summarized as:

- enhanced specialist knowledge
- critical analysis and synthesis of arguments
- advanced level critical reflection on the interrelationship between theory and practice
- self evaluation of skills of analysis, research and planning
- critical reflection on own learning

The learning outcomes are summarized as:

- comprehensive overview of existing and current developments in ELT
- high level performance and competence in specialist field
- critical evaluation of theory in ELT
- systematic gathering and use of research findings for structuring an argument
- taking and implementing decisions based on analysis and investigation
- enhanced interpersonal and collaborative skills
- facilitating own learning through independent study and research

Structure

The programme structure

Introduction

All programmes are credit-rated to help you to understand the amount and level of study that is needed.

One credit is equal to 10 hours of directed study time (this includes everything you do e.g. lecture, seminar and private study).

Credits are assigned to one of 5 levels: 478

- 0 - equivalent in standard to GCE 'A' level and is intended to prepare students for year one of an undergraduate degree programme
- 1 - equivalent in standard to the first year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- 2 - equivalent in standard to the second year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- 3 - equivalent in standard to the third year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- M - equivalent in standard to a Masters degree

Credit rating

Postgraduate Certificate

A programme leading to a Postgraduate Certificate consists of 60 credits at Level M

Postgraduate Diploma A programme leading to a Postgraduate Diploma consists of 120 credits at Level M

Masters

A programme leading to a Masters award consists of 180 credits at Level M and will include a 60 credit level M core module of advanced independent research.

Exceptionally, through programme validation, a maximum of one third of the credits for a postgraduate award may comprise credit for modules at level 3.

Exceptionally, through programme validation, the 60 credit level M core module of advanced independent research required for a Masters award may be replaced by a 30 credit level M core module of advanced independent research, provided that it can be demonstrated that sufficient advanced independent research is achieved in the remainder of the programme amounting to a further 30 level M credits.

Up to half the credits for an award may be achieved through accredited experiential learning, and up to two thirds of the credits for an award may be achieved through accredited certificated learning. (Where a combination of experiential and certificated learning is involved up to one half of the credits for the award may be achieved through accredited experiential learning with further credits being achieved through accredited certificated learning up to a maximum of two thirds of the credits for the award).

Typical duration

The programme is exclusively part-time. Participants have between two and six years to complete the full award of PG Diploma or MA. Participants have between two semesters and two years to complete the PG Certificate.

How the teaching year is divided

Each module is offered across a 15 week semester. Semester A runs from September to January and semester B runs from February to May. There is also a summer semester which runs from June to August during which students complete the research methods training.

What you will study when

All modules on the MA ELT are core. Students complete one 30 credit module per semester. The order in which students complete the programme will be determined by the point at which they enter the programme.

The research methods component can only be completed during the summer semester.

Students **must** complete successfully all four modules before they can begin writing their dissertation.

Those students who take longer than two years to complete the programme will agree a timescale with the programme leader.

For students who hope to complete the MA in two years the timetable is as follows:

Semesters	Timetable for students starting in Semester A	Timetable for students starting in Semester B
Year 1	-	-
Semester A	Language Systems and Language Skills	-
Semester B	Second Language Acquisition and ELT	Second Language Acquisition and ELT
Summer semester	Research Methods	-
Year 2	-	-
Semester A	ELT and its Contexts	ELT and its Contexts
Semester B	Methodology and Materials in ELT	Methodology and Materials in ELT
Summer semester	Dissertation	Research Methods
Year 3	-	-
Semester A	-	Language Systems and Language Skills
Semester B	-	Dissertation

Requirements for gaining an award

In order to gain a Postgraduate Certificate, you will need to obtain 60 credits at Level M.

In order to gain a Postgraduate Diploma, you will need to obtain 120 credits at Level M

In order to obtain a Masters, you will need to obtain 180 credits at Level M. These credits will include a 60 credit level M core module of advanced independent research.

Masters Award Classification

Where a student is eligible for a Masters award then the award classification is determined by calculating the arithmetic mean of all marks and applying the mark obtained as a percentage, with all decimal points rounded up to the nearest whole number, to the following classification

70% - 100% Distinction
60% - 69%   Merit
50% - 59%   Pass

0% - 49%   Not Passed

Assessment

Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning

Each module will be taught over one semester. All teaching is by distance learning mode – supported by online group discussion and independent study. Students will be expected to demonstrate enhanced specialist knowledge of the field, provide evidence of independent thinking, and reflect on their learning in each module. Participants will be expected to read a wide range of set and recommended texts and to critically engage with these.

Distance learning material for discussion will be closely related to participants' own practice and experience. Group work and the sharing of experience are a fundamental part of the programme. Participants may be required to carry out classroom-based tasks to support assignment work and to feed back in online discussions. All participants will be required to undertake private study and to prepare an assignment/assignments for each module – all of which contribute towards the final assessment.

Assessment

Assessment will be formative and summative and will be based on the variety of assignment types submitted for each module and the dissertation. Each module has a written requirement of 5,000 words (which in some cases may take the form of two assignments each of 2,500 words), and the dissertation has a written requirement of 20,000 words. The assessment components of each award are outlined below.

Programme / award	Requirements for credit	Credits
Postgraduate Certificate in ELT	• Any two modules • All assignments for two modules	60
Postgraduate Diploma in ELT	• Four modules • All assignments for four modules	120
MA in ELT	• Four modules • All assignments for four modules • Research methods component • Dissertation	180

Quality

How we assure the quality of this programme

Before this programme started

The quality of this programme is monitored each year through evaluating:

- external examiner reports (considering quality and standards);
- statistical information (considering issues such as the pass rate);
- student feedback.

Drawing on this and other information programme teams undertake the annual Review and Enhancement Process which is co-ordinated at School level and includes student participation. The process is monitored by the UEL's Quality Standing Committee.

Once every six years UEL undertakes an in-depth review of the whole field. This is undertaken by a panel that includes at least two external subject specialists. The panel considers documents, looks at student work, speaks to current and former students and speaks to staff before drawing its conclusions. The result is a report highlighting good practice and identifying areas where action is needed.

How we monitor the quality of this programme

The role of the programme committee

This programme has a programme committee comprising all relevant teaching staff, student representatives and others who make a contribution towards the effective operation of the programme (e.g. library/technician staff). The committee has responsibilities for the quality of the programme. It provides input into the operation of the Review and Enhancement Process and proposes changes to improve quality. The programme committee plays a critical role in the University's quality assurance procedures.

The role of external examiners

The standard of this programme is monitored by at least one external examiner. External examiners have two primary responsibilities:

- To ensure the standard of the programme
- To ensure that justice is done to individual students

External examiners fulfil these responsibilities in a variety of ways including:

- Approving exam papers/assignments
- Attending assessment boards
- Reviewing samples of student work and moderating marks
- Ensuring that regulations are followed
- Providing feedback to UEL through an annual report that enables us to make improvements for the future

Listening to the views of students

The following methods for gaining student feedback are used on this programme:

- Mid and end of module evaluations
- Student representation on programme committees

Students are notified of the action taken through:

- Circulating the minutes of the programme committee
- Providing details on the online noticeboard

Listening to the views of others

The following methods are to be used for gaining the views of other interested parties:

- Questionnaires to former students

Further Information

Where you can find further information

Further information about this programme is available from:

- The UEL web site
- The student handbook
- Module guides
- UEL Manual of Regulations and Policies http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/
- UEL Quality Manual http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/
- School web pages http://www.uel.ac.uk/education/index.htm
- Regulations for the Academic Framework http://www.uel.ac.uk/academicframework/