### Programme Specification for Diploma in Teaching English Language in University Settings

1. Awarding institution/body: University of Oxford
2. Teaching institution: University of Oxford
3. Programme accredited by: n/a
4. Final award: Postgraduate Diploma
5. Programme: Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching English Language in University Settings (TELUS)
6. UCAS code: n/a
7. Relevant subject benchmark statement: n/a
8. Date of programme specification: June 2011

9. Educational aims of the programme:

- to provide students with the knowledge, understanding and skills critically to evaluate research in the area of English language teaching and learning, within the broader context of research in applied linguistics
- to develop in students a broad knowledge of theoretical and empirical work in the areas of English language learning, teaching, materials development and assessment, and to provide them with the means of pursuing in more depth those areas of the field which interest them
- to enable students critically to apply this knowledge and these skills to the different contexts of teaching at university level as described above
- to develop a solid basis for further study in the area at Master’s and doctoral levels
10. Programme outcomes

A. Students will develop a knowledge and understanding of:

- The key theoretical principles and issues in the field of the acquisition of English as a second or foreign language
- The current frameworks for relating language acquisition principles to the teaching of spoken and written English in university settings
- The English grammar, lexis and phonology typically required in university settings
- The major concepts and issues in the field of language assessment, both summative and formative
- The fundamental concepts, techniques, principles and theories of data collection and analysis in applied linguistics
- The ethical and philosophical issues associated with research into teachers and learners of second languages

Related teaching/learning methods and strategies

Teaching and learning will take place within the Weblearn virtual learning environment, and will consist of (a) a combination of written tutor input to frame the critical reading of assigned texts and to outline asynchronous individual and group tasks for tutor and group discussion, (b) a series of relevant readings supplied electronically (or in the case of very low-technology developing country students, in print) and/or podcasts for listening to or viewing online and/or downloading, (c) student online presentations for comment by peers, tutor and teaching assistant, (d) small-group synchronous online chats, (e) individual and group project work, (f) online synchronous and asynchronous tutorials.

In a typical week of term students will complete set readings (or equivalents, e.g. will listen to / watch podcasts or other audio/video-recorded materials) for each of the two modules in which they are enrolled, and they will work through a series of tasks, the products of which will be commented upon by the tutor and/or the teaching assistant, and sometimes by peers. Tasks will involve individual and group work and small projects. The course will aim to exploit the possibilities of contemporary educational technology while remaining accessible to students in countries with less advanced communications infrastructures. On the latter point, while there will be minimum technological requirements for following the course in terms of hardware, the structure will accommodate, for example, provision for students who will only have weekly access to the high-speed links necessary for accessing University library facilities.

These different methods of programme delivery will integrate four strands: knowledge and understanding of the English language, of second language acquisition, of methods in applied linguistics and of how these three can be applied to teaching in university settings. An additional week-long unassessed module will precede the first assessed module, and will be dedicated to establishing a basis for critical reading and writing in applied linguistics and to ensuring that students can benefit fully both from Weblearn and from the other virtual resources available from the Department and the University. A second additional week-long formatively assessed module at the beginning of the second year will concentrate on research methods in applied linguistics and will enable students to acquire a grounding in both how research is developed and carried out in applied linguistics and what is the range of designs and methodologies for data collection and analysis used in the field, including basic introductions to statistical and qualitative analysis; in pairs or small groups students will also carry out a very small research project during this module.

Additionally, permission will be sought from leaders of the departmental and many of the Applied Linguistics Research Area seminars which are held during the course of the year for video recording of these seminars to be made for dissemination to TELUS students, this in order to broaden the scope of their learning and further situate it in an educational context.
**Assessment**

Summative assessment at the end of each module will be based upon a written take-home examination and a reflective portfolio.

The take-home examination will assess students’ ability to discuss the issues in English language teaching and learning covered in the module using appropriate metalanguage; to analyse and criticise classroom practice; to analyse and criticise research articles both for their content and for the research methods therein; to make links between theory and practice; to solve problems; and to draw implications for teaching in their own context. The balance of these elements in the assessment of the examination may differ between modules, and will be specified in the module handbook.

Students will be required to submit a signed declaration for each take-home examination paper that the work in the paper is their own and that they have respected academic conventions for citing of sources. In addition, all take-home examinations will be checked through the Turnitin© software.

The reflective portfolio will serve in part as a means of incentivising disciplined module participation and learning via reflection on past work. It will be assessed by the course tutor on a pass/fail basis depending on whether the submission corresponds to the technical requirements.

Formative assessment will be interwoven into the tutor's comments on tasks, and will in addition be provided for (a) a 1500-word assignment written during the induction module, set by the course tutor and commented upon by the course tutor or the teaching assistant; and (b) a report of a small research project carried out during Module 9 will likewise be formatively commented upon by the course tutor or the teaching assistant.

A draft of one of the assessed take-home examinations relating to the modules in a student's first term will also be commented on by the course tutor or the teaching assistant in terms of appropriate academic style, appropriate referencing and quality of academic English.

**B. Skills and other attributes**

**Students will have the opportunity to develop the following skills during the course:**

I. Intellectual and practical skills
   1. Critical analysis of both primary and secondary data
   2. Ability to apply a cycle of reflective practice to their current or future teaching
   3. Statistical analysis at a basic level
   4. Skills associated with techniques such as questionnaire design, semi-structured interview, task based self report
   5. Basic skills in planning, conducting and reporting a programme of original research
   6. Ability to develop and implement a syllabus for the university teaching of English
   7. Skill in evaluating English language teaching materials and in developing simple materials for English language teaching

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies:** See under A above

**Assessment:** See under A above
III. Transferable skills

By the end of the programme, students will be able to

1. Communicate effectively
2. Present information clearly in writing and in electronic communication
3. Use effectively the resources of a virtual learning environment
4. Make good use of information and communication technology for learning, teaching and communication
5. Work as a member of a team
6. Manage resources and time
7. Learn autonomously
8. Analyse critically print, audiovisual and multimedia texts

Teaching/learning methods and strategies: See under A above

Assessment: See under A above.

11. Programme Structures and Features

- This course is taught in Michaelmas and Hilary Terms each year, over a period of two years. Not having taught sessions in Trinity Term addresses the intensification of work that distance learning implies for students who are working full-time. Being required to participate actively on the course during only two terms out of three is likely to lessen the chances of students falling behind in their course work. It also corresponds to the pattern in other M-level courses in the Department, where class teaching only occurs in Michaelmas and Hilary Terms only. There will be an opportunity (but not an obligation) in Trinity Term of a student's first year for individual study on a chosen topic. The tutor will provide up to four email tutorials on the topic during that term.

- Each cohort will consist of 6 to 8 students.

- This structure implies that in the first academic year there will be a total of 6 to 8 students, and that there will be a total of 12 to 16 students in every year thereafter. This figure is well within agreed divisional totals.

- In any given year, only half the summatively assessed modules constituting the course is taught, and first- and second-year students will follow the same modules. Each year a formatively assessed residential module takes place before Michaelmas term. In a student’s first year, this is Module 0, the Induction module. In a student’s second year, this is Module 9, Research Methods. Joint seminars with local and invited speakers, combined with social occasions, will give the two cohorts the opportunity to work together as colleagues before they embark on online modules together.

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Cohort year</th>
<th>Modules</th>
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<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>Cohort A</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>0, 1, 2, 3, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>Cohort A</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>9, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohort B</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>0, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>Cohort B</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>9, 1, 2, 3, 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cohort C</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>0, 1, 2, 3, 4</td>
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... and so on. This will rationalise the teaching load and produce a group size conducive to productive online work.
While much of Oxford’s teaching provision is based on structured progression through a series of elements that build upon one another, the structure of free-standing modules proposed here is a feature of the successful MSc ALSLA course. As in the ALSLA course, it is proposed that in the TELUS Diploma thematic links between modules will be made explicit both in the course handbook and in the modules themselves. In addition, within a single year, modules will build upon one another, with themes continuing from one module to the next. The development of criticality and the induction into receptive and productive understanding of research methodologies will run throughout the modules. Provision will also be made for progression from Year 1 to Year 2, principally in that group work for individual module units will be a regular feature of the course design, and working groups will usually correspond to cohorts, so that second-year students will be able collectively to exploit their development in knowledge and skills from the previous year.

**MODULES**

0. **Induction (Formatively assessed residential module)**
   This module will precede a cohort’s first assessed module, and it will include an individualised knowledge and skills audit. In this module students will build a learning community that will continue as an online community, acquire skills in academic reading and writing, acquire the basics of quantitative & qualitative data analysis, develop skills in accessing the diverse electronic resources available to Oxford students and in managing their references, develop skills in using the VLE, and complete a formatively assessed assignment.

1. **Individual and group differences in language learning**
   Outcomes: students will develop an awareness of the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study of individual and group differences in second language learning; a broad knowledge of the empirical evidence for differences, and an ability critically to evaluate studies in the area. Differences explored will include aptitude, gender, personality, first language, culture, styles, strategies and motivation. Students will become aware of the basic concepts and methodology of needs analysis for course design, within the context of group differences.

2. **Listening to and reading English in university settings**
   Outcomes: students will develop an understanding of the mechanisms and processes involved in reading and listening to English as a second or foreign language; of how these modes of accessing meaning are similar, and how they are different; of the characteristics of a selection of genres of academic writing and speech that affect second language learners’ access to them; and of how English language teachers can facilitate learners’ abilities to listen to and read English, especially in university settings. Understanding of needs analysis based on informed analysis of spoken and written texts within the student’s context, and skill in the implementation of needs analysis, will be developed within the context of curriculum and materials design for reading and listening.

3. **Understanding and teaching the grammar of English**
   Outcomes: students will develop a clearer and more detailed knowledge of the grammar of English, of learners’ grammar acquisition sequences, and of the particular features of the grammar of those genres used in university settings; will equip themselves with the means of continuing to develop their knowledge in this area; and will develop skills in evaluating and designing materials for the teaching of grammar both at the micro level, and, in the context of needs analysis for their learners, at the level of curriculum design, based on informed analysis of grammar features in texts within the student’s context.

4. **Speaking and writing in university settings**
   Outcomes: students will develop an understanding of the mechanisms and processes involved in speaking and writing English as a second or foreign language; of how these modes of expression are similar, and how they are different; of the relationship between fluency, complexity and accuracy; of the characteristics of a selection of genres of academic speech and writing; and of how English language teachers can facilitate learners’ abilities to speak and write English, especially in university settings, with focus both on needs analysis for curriculum design, based on informed analysis of spoken and written texts within the student’s context, and on development of materials at lesson and unit level.
5. **Evaluating and designing English language teaching materials for university settings**
   Outcomes: students will develop an awareness of the critical literature in the field of materials evaluation and design; will focus on needs analysis as a prerequisite both of materials evaluation and of materials design; will develop criteria for evaluating English language teaching materials in general, and materials for university settings in particular, having regard both to print and to electronic materials; will acquire skills in evaluating materials at micro- and macro-levels, and in making strategic decisions about materials; will gain experience in designing materials for their students and in piloting and evaluating their own materials.

6. **Learning and teaching of vocabulary**
   Outcomes: students will develop an understanding of the major issues and concepts in the field of vocabulary learning and teaching; will understand what it means to know a word or a multi-word unit; will be aware of the empirical evidence for how second language words are learnt, stored and retrieved; will be able to judge what the lexical requirements are for efficient university study in a second language; will have a thorough understanding of word frequency and how this relates to the use of corpora in language teaching; and will develop skills in designing and implementing programmes of vocabulary teaching for their students based on needs analysis for groups of learners.

7. **New technologies and language learning and teaching**
   Outcomes: students will develop an understanding of the theoretical and conceptual background to studies of learning with new technologies; will develop an awareness of how to take the affordances of new technologies into account in their teaching; will develop an ability to analyse critically the proposed facilitative potential of technology as claimed in empirical studies; will develop their abilities to evaluate, adapt and design materials for teaching with new technologies in the context of needs analysis within each student’s educational context.

8. **Assessing language learning**
   Outcomes: students will develop an understanding of the major concepts and issues in the field of language assessment; will become familiar with types of summative language assessment and their advantages and drawbacks; will be aware of issues such as validity, reliability, impact, washback effect, rating procedures and the social aspects of language testing and how these can be taken into consideration in both the development of summative assessment instruments and in preparation of students for standard tests, with regard to the needs of particular groups of students; will develop awareness of the theoretical underpinnings of formative feedback and knowledge of the ways in which it can be delivered.

9. **Research Methods (Formatively assessed residential module)**
   Research methods will be explored in an embedded fashion through analysis of the research methods used in the research literature and through the tasks that are set in relation to that literature (as in the MSc ALSLA). This formatively assessed residential module, to take place preceding the students’ second year of the course, will supplement that learning. It will explore in more depth the range of experimental designs and methodologies for data collection and analysis used in applied linguistics research. Students will also acquire practical experience of using software for data analysis. Pairs or triads of students will undertake a very small research project, which will be formatively assessed.

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**Learning Years 1 and 2**

**Subjects:** See above.

**Assessment:** See above.
12. Support for Students and their learning

- All required reading/listening/viewing resources will be provided via Weblearn (for reading resources, via links or digitised materials). Resources in addition to the required materials will also be provided on Weblearn, and links will be provided to relevant articles in the University library system by Education Library staff, in order to facilitate broader reading on the topics treated in the modules.

- A knowledge and skills audit will precede the induction module, and the induction module will allow for intensive individual work for students whose information technology literacy requires upgrading. The course designer has experience of delivery of distance modules within a range of low-resource contexts, and while innovations in developing-world use of technology cannot always be predicted (cf. the recent voicenet phenomenon in rural India), there will be a commitment to flexibility, and the course team will continue to consult with OUCS and TALL, and with Professor David Johnson of the Education Department, who has extensive experience of education in the developing world.

- In addition to the induction module, students will have full access to the online resources and facilities within the Department of Education and to the online courses and other resources provided by the University Computing Services. There will be a structured programme of support for online searching and downloading of materials from the University Library system, and one of the Teaching Assistant’s responsibilities will be to support students’ learning in the use of online resources.

- Permission will be sought to record and make available to TELUS students the Education Department public seminars and some of the Applied Linguistic Research Area seminars, in order to broaden the scope of the students’ learning.

- Consideration is being given in the design of both content and methods of communication to the needs of students with disabilities. The programme designer has solid and extensive experience of working with M-level students who have motor, visual, mental and unseen disabilities. All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate course participation with a range of disabilities, and principled adjustments will be made according to the disabilities of the students who enrol.

13. Criteria for Admission

Candidates for admission should normally have a good upper second class degree, or its equivalent, in a subject which contains a substantial element of English language learning and/or linguistics. Candidates who do not have substantial qualifications in English language or linguistics may be required to submit qualifying work to demonstrate to the course team that they are able usefully to pursue the course. Candidates for whom English is a second language are required to obtain the higher overall score of 7.5, with at least 7.0 in each component in IELTS, or an overall score of 630 in TOEFL (including a score of 5 in TWE); an overall score of 267 in the Computer-based TOEFL (including an essay writing score of 5); an overall score of 109 in the Internet-based TOEFL or Grade B in the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English. In addition, candidates will normally be expected to have two years’ experience of teaching of English as a second or foreign language, and to be practising teachers at the time of enrolment.

Applications will normally be considered in the light of a candidate’s ability to meet the following criteria:

1. The applicant has provided appropriate indications of proven and potential academic excellence. Appropriate indicators may include two or more highly positive references, academic transcripts or their equivalent showing excellent achievement, samples of work produced by the student showing high levels of academic or scholarly ability, and good performance at face-to-face or electronically mediated interview.

2. The applicant has provided sufficient evidence, in the view of the assessors, to suggest that they have the academic ability and commitment to pursue the chosen course to a successful conclusion within the required time limits.

3. The course is well suited to the academic interests and abilities to which they have drawn attention in their application.

Applicants will be required to be proficient in the use of email and word processing software and to have
daily access at least during the working week to a computer with an internet connection, the required specifications of the computer and the connection to be determined in consultation with the Oxford University Computing Services.

### 14. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of learning

- The initial proposal for this programme has received a favourable set of comments from an external expert (Professor Ken Hyland of the University of Hong Kong), and modifications have been made to the proposal in those few areas where Professor Hyland made constructive suggestions.

- There will be an annual evaluation of the course and the performance of students in assessments by the Board of Examiners, according to the usual procedures in the Department, the Division and the University. Any changes to the programme agreed by the Department will be reviewed and approved in the usual way. Annual staff appraisal will take place. A student representative will be elected for each cohort, and students will be provided with a private forum which the tutor will not access and where they can discuss any issues that arise. Students will be requested to provide feedback in the form of a written evaluation of each module, and these will be taken into account in future modules.

- There is no subject benchmark statement for Applied Linguistics or Linguistics disciplines at M-level, where the proposed course is situated. However, the subject benchmark statement for Linguistics (including Applied Linguistics) at H-level has been taken into consideration, and the proposed course meets or exceeds corresponding M-level standards for subject knowledge and understanding; intellectual skills; subject-specific key skills and generic/transferable skills; and teaching/learning/assessment practices.

### 15. Regulation of assessment

The examinations are under the supervision of the Departmental Board of the Department of Education, which, with the concurrence of the Social Sciences Board, is responsible for approving examining conventions. A Nominating Committee proposes the names of examiners for approval by the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors. It is the examiners’ responsibility to appoint appropriate assessors for any component of the examination requiring specialist expertise outwith that of the examiners.

The reflective portfolio is subject, on a pass/fail basis, to the judgment of the course tutor as to whether it conforms to the technical requirements.

All take-home examinations are subject initially to blind double marking. Examiners and assessors then compare their respective marks and the written reports and come to an agreed mark for each assignment and dissertation. When a disagreement between the two examiners cannot be resolved, it is the responsibility of the external examiner to act as a third marker to resolve the differences. The examiners may award a distinction for excellence in the whole examination. The eight assessed modules have equal weight, and assignments are marked using the University’s standard numerical scale. For the course mark, only the seven highest marks of the assessed modules is taken into account.

Internal and external examiners will be required to produce reports after the examinations for consideration by the Departmental Board, the Social Sciences Board, and the Education Committee.

External examiners act as moderators, providing informed comment on two major issues:

1. to verify that standards are appropriate to the award, in part by comparison with the standards of comparable institutions, and to ensure that the assessment procedures and the regulations governing them are fair and otherwise appropriate.

2. To ensure that the conduct of the examination and the determination of awards have been fairly conducted, and that individual student performance has been judged in accordance with the regulations and conventions of the Examining Board.

External examiners are expected to report to the Vice-Chancellor in each year in which they act. Their reports are expected to cover the following points:

- the standards demonstrated by the students
- the extent to which standards are appropriate for the award
• the design, structure, and marking of assignments
• the procedures for assessment
• whether or not external examiners have had sufficient access to, and the power to call upon, any material necessary to make the required judgments
• students’ performance in relation to their peers in comparable courses
• the coherence of the policies and procedures relating to external examiners and their consonance with the explicit roles required of them
• the basis an rationale for any comparisons made
• the strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort
• the quality of teaching and learning which may be indicated by student performance

The report is addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, and will be considered by the Social Sciences Board and the Education Committee of the University. The report will also be scrutinised by the Departmental Board of the Department of Education, by the Board of Examiners, and more widely within the department.

**Final Examination Course and examination requirements**

Every candidate will be required to pass seven of the eight module take-home examinations. Procedures for submission of essays and dissertations, including the time and place, will be included in the Course Handbook.

One electronic copy of each module take-home examination (using a programme available in the Department) must be delivered to the MSc examiners, c/o Examination Schools, no later than the deadline set by the Course Team. Candidates wishing to submit examinations later than this date must obtain the approval of the Departmental Board at least two weeks in advance of the deadline. Such approval will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

### The following marks will be used for take-home examinations:

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<th>Minimal pass criteria</th>
<th>Indicators of higher achievement</th>
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| i) Addresses topic set, covering appropriate range of core issues and areas of debate relevant to topic title. | • Demonstrates in-depth knowledge of relevant principles, theory and concepts.  
• Originality in discussion of topic/response to question.  
• Explores and evaluates a range of perspectives. |
| ii) Demonstrates awareness of relevant theoretical perspectives. |                                  |
| 2.                    |                                  |
| i) Writes in a clear, coherent and readable style. | • Engaging and pleasing writing style.  
• Expresses personal interest in and commitment to the argument presented.  
• Achieves and demonstrates cohesion across the essay as a whole. |
| ii) Structures essay in a comprehensible and scholarly manner |                                  |
| iii) Makes underlying argument clear to reader. |                                  |
| 3.                    |                                  |
| i) Refers to literature and relevant research studies as appropriate, including primary sources. | • Evidence of critical analysis.  
• Exploration of range of primary sources.  
• Originality in choice of sources cited.  
• In-depth discussion of sources cited. |
| ii) Unambiguously distinguishes the work of others from own work at all times. |                                  |
### Notes

A candidate will be awarded a fail mark for the take-home examination if the candidate’s work with regard to any criterion in any of the 4 sections is considered unsatisfactory (indicated by selection of a mark band below 50%).

Distinction level marks of 70 or above will be awarded to candidates who show good evidence of higher achievement throughout, and in relation to the criteria for Section 1 especially.

The final marks will be awarded at a Board of Examiners Meeting. In computing the overall mark for the Diploma, a simple average of the seven highest-marked take-home examinations out of the eight will be used.

An External Examiner will read take-home examinations with provisional failing marks. Oral Examinations (viva voce, either face-to-face or electronically mediated) on the written Papers will be held in cases where candidates have been awarded overall failure marks.

Over-length examinations may have the initial mark awarded reduced by up to 5 marks.

The University rules concerning arrangements in cases of illness, disability etc. as detailed in Examination Regulations 2007, p. 32, 11.1 to p. 34, 11.11, and to the arrangements for permission for candidates whose first language is not English to use a dictionary in the written examinations as detailed in Examination Regulations 2007, p. 39, 13.7. All students should note that they are required to submit work by the deadline specified. An extension can only be granted if written permission has been obtained. Unauthorized late submission will result in an automatic deduction of 20% to the overall grade of the assessed work.

**Award of Distinction**

Candidates who pass all take-home examinations and have an average of 70 or more for the highest-marked seven modules will be granted a distinction.

**Re-sits**

In the case of failure of a student to reach an average passing mark over the seven highest-marked modules, a re-sit of all module take-home examinations will be permitted, and the re-sit examinations must be submitted electronically by 12.00 midday on Monday of Week 1 of Trinity term of the year following the student’s final year of taught modules. This is an exception to Divisional regulations, which is justified on the grounds that any module will only be taught every other academic year, and a wait of two years to submit at the next submission date for a module would substantially increase the total length of the course.

### 16. Indicators of quality and standards

The course is offered under the aegis of the Department of Education, which achieved a rating of 5 in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise and the top rating in the 2008 Research Assessment exercise. The department also has ESRC postgraduate training (1+3) recognition for both full-time and part-time modes, and its teacher training was considered ‘very good with several outstanding features’ in the report of OfSTED in 2001.