Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching English Language in University Settings (PG Dip TELUS) [http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/courses/pgdip-telus/]

Overview
The PG Dip TELUS is a part-time postgraduate diploma, at NQF Level 7, taught over two years and consisting of eight summatively assessed distance learning modules to be completed at the rate of two modules per term for two terms per year plus two formatively assessed residential modules to be completed in the summer break preceding each academic year of taught modules.

The course recruits worldwide among teachers of English as a second or foreign language in university settings, and among teachers who wish to teach in these settings (these teachers might, for example be teaching or aspiring to teach English for academic purposes in the increasing number of English-medium university-level institutions in non-English-speaking countries; or teaching / aspiring to teach service English for university departments in non-English-speaking countries). Some applicants will be teachers in those English for academic purposes courses which every UK university delivers for its students and potential students. However, this population tends to provide only a small percentage of the applicants for the course, with the majority of applicants coming from overseas.

Overall responsibility for the course lies with the Applied Linguistics Group in the Department of Education. The course sits alongside the MSc in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition, providing a distance alternative for experienced teachers of English who seek a more focused qualification in this area.

Dr Catherine Walter leads the course and provides appropriate supervision for the students pursuing the Diploma; she is aided by a Teaching Assistant with expertise in the area. Provision for sabbatical leave and for unanticipated absences will be met from within the Applied Linguistics Group or via a buyout of well-qualified external lecturers. The Applied Linguistics Group currently consists of Professor Ernesto Macaro, Dr
Victoria Murphy, Dr Catherine Walter, Dr Robert Woore and Dr Robert Vanderplank (Director of the Language Centre).

The aims of the course are

- 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

A formatively assessed residential module will occur each year before Michaelmas term. These are described in more detail below.

The remainder of the course will consist of eight summatively assessed distance learning modules. 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 take place in the WebLearn virtual learning environment, and 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, and there is a requirement to be able to access WebLearn on weekdays during term, 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. A knowledge and skills audit will be included in the induction module, and this module will allow for intensive individual work for students whose information technology literacy requires upgrading.

Each of the eight summatively assessed modules will be assessed by a combination of (a) an end-of-module written take-home examination and (b) a portfolio of work chosen from tasks completed during the module, accompanied by a brief reflection on the choice of work and its value in the learning process.

The content of each summatively assessed module will be free-standing rather than building upon content from other modules.

---

TELUS Summary, 2012/03/04  
NB: This is not an official document and is not to be taken as a precise statement of the Regulations for this course.
Student status
- Students will be registered as University of Oxford students and will have full access to Oxford electronic resources: they will have a virtual Oxford swipe card and be able to access all resources that other Department students can access.
- TELUS students do not have College affiliations (and this lowers the cost of the course).

Organisation of the course

Structure of the course
- The course will be taught in Michaelmas and Hilary Terms each year, over a period of two years. In the previous experience of the course tutor, this type of distance course and the intensification of work that it implies for students who are working full-time can lead to problems with completion of second year modules. Being required to participate actively on the course for only two terms out of three is likely to lessen the chances of these problems occurring. It will also correspond to the pattern in other M-level courses in the Department, where teaching 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 chosen topic during Trinity 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.
- In any given year, only half the summatively assessed modules constituting the course will be taught, and first- and second-year students will follow the same modules. Each year a formatively assessed residential module will take place before Michaelmas term. In a student’s first year, this will be Module 0, the Induction module. In a student’s second year, this will be 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Cohort year</th>
<th>Modules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>Cohort A</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>9, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohort B</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>0, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>Cohort B</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>9, 1, 2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohort C</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>0, 1, 2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>Cohort C</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>9, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohort D</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>0, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

... and so on. This produces a group size conducive to productive online work and rationalises the teaching load.

- While the vast majority 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, in the TELUS Diploma thematic links between
modules will be made explicit. 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 may often 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. In this module students will build a learning community that will continue as an online community, acquire skills in academic reading and writing, carry out a knowledge and skills audit, 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. 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.

6. 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.

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.

Participation in modules

Students will be required to attend the residential module at the beginning of each year in order to be able to progress to the summatively assessed modules for that year. However, account has been taken of the possibility of the exceptional case where, at the last moment, serious unforeseeable circumstances make it impossible for a student to attend Module 9. A set of online research methods resources is currently being developed in the Department of Education, and these are due to be completed well before summer 2012, which is the first date when these materials might be needed by a student in the proposed programme.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment at the end of each module will be based upon a written take-home examination and a reflective portfolio. The portfolio will serve as a means of incentivising disciplined module participation and learning via reflection on past work. 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 critique classroom practice; to analyse and critique 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 course 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

TELUS Summary, 2012/03/04 NB: This is not an official document and is not to be taken as a precise statement of the Regulations for this course.
Turnitin© software.

The take-home examinations will be 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. An Examination Board will be organised with the participation of at least three members of the Applied Linguistics team, and an appropriate External Examiner will be appointed. All reflective portfolios will be assessed by the course tutor on a pass/fail basis depending on whether the submission corresponds to the technical requirements. All take-home examinations will be subjected initially to blind double marking, and any disagreements will be moderated between the two examiners, or if the disagreement cannot be resolved, will be resolved by the External Examiner. Criteria for marking and rules for regulation of assessment will be those current in the Department of Education and in the University.

A choice of titles for the take-home examination for each module will be published in Week 8 of that module. Examinations will be submitted electronically by 12.00 midday on Monday of Week 1 of the following term.

In order for the Diploma in TELUS to be awarded, a candidate must submit a take-home examination for each of the eight summatively assessed modules; however, the overall mark for the Diploma will be the average of the seven highest-marked modules. Late submissions without prior or retrospective permission from Proctors will automatically incur a mark penalty of up to 20%, the percentage of penalty to be decided by the Examination Board.

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.

Formative assessment will be interwoven into the tutor’s comments on tasks, and will in addition be provided for 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 a report of a small research project carried out during the Research Methods module 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 upon by the course tutor in terms of appropriate academic style, appropriate referencing and quality of academic English.

Additional support for students’ learning

• All required reading/listening/viewing resources will be provided via Web learn (for reading resources, via links or digitised materials). Resources in addition to the required materials will also be provided on Web learn, 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.

• 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

TELUS Summary, 2012/03/04  NB: This is not an official document and is not to be taken as a precise statement of the Regulations for this course.
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 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 health 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.

**Library**

The Bodleian Education Library contains the bulk of the resources which will be needed for the course, and the Education Library staff are well accustomed to providing documents in electronic form for students. The students will have access to the e-journals and e-books facilities of the Bodleian Library.

**IT Skills**

Applicants will be required to be proficient in the use of email and word processing software. All other necessary IT skills will be taught in the induction week and throughout the course by the course tutor.

**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 (not necessarily in a university setting).

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.

**Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of learning and teaching**

- There is 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 takes place. A student representative is elected for each cohort, and students are 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.

**Financial consequences for students**

In addition to the course fees, students will have to pay their travel expenses for one trip to Oxford each year of the course. This may be a substantial sum for students who live, for example, in South America or the Pacific Rim. The proposal has attempted to alleviate the effect of this expense by not charging the students for the full cost of the residential courses. Once the course is established, efforts will be made to seek funding for scholarship for students in developing countries, and the option of charging full residential costs to students not in financial need will be explored, especially if recruitment is buoyant.
Progression to higher degrees at Oxford

Successful completion of the TELUS course at a high level will be seen as one requirement for progression to a Master’s Degree in Teaching English Language in University Settings. Admission to the MSc TELUS will also require the submission of a satisfactory proposal for a dissertation research project and registration for the MSc TELUS course. (Note that registration for the MSc will include membership of Linacre College, and students will be required, as for all Oxford degrees, to matriculate in person.)

Successful completion of the TELUS course at the highest level will be seen as one requirement for application to study for a DPhil with a member of the Applied Linguistics team in the Department of Education. Normally, ‘at the highest level’ will mean an overall average of 65 on the seven best module assessments out of the eight on the TELUS diploma. A TELUS candidate for the DPhil programme will not be required to re-submit evidence of English proficiency, as proficiency at the higher level will have been provided as a requirement of the TELUS course, and the candidate will have been working in English on the course for the two intervening years. However, TELUS candidates will be required to submit a research project proposal, as do all DPhil applicants in the Department: two to three pages (750 – 1000 words) consisting of (i) a proposed thesis title; (ii) an outline of their research focus and why they think it is an important area for investigation; (iii) their initial thinking about appropriate research methods.