

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

MA Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

Awarding Institution: Institute of Education, University of London

Teaching Institutions: Institute of Education, University of London

Name of final awards

Master of Arts (MA)

Postgraduate Diploma

Postgraduate Certificate

Programme title

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

Language of study

The Institute of Education teaches and assesses participants through the medium of the English language. Competence in English language is required of all applicants. Programme regulations may indicate the level of competence required of each applicant and may make its achievement a condition of admission.

Participants

The programme is designed for practicing teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages from both overseas and the UK who wish to enhance their professional qualifications and gain a thorough grounding in current research, theory and practice in the area of teaching English to speakers of other languages.

Educational aims of the programme

The aims of the programme are to enable practising TESOL teachers to develop:

- independence of thought;
- understanding of key concepts and ideas that are dealt with in the professional and academic literature relevant to teaching languages in foreign and second language contexts around the world;
- insight into a wider range of perspectives on the theory, policy and practice of teaching languages in foreign and second language contexts around the world
- the capacity to analyse, synthesise and evaluate primary and secondary sources;
- insight into how to plan and implement a small-scale research project;
- the capacity for sustained and independent argument;
- the capacity for critical self-reflection.
- the capacity to understand their present professional activity and to envisage new possibilities for action

Learning Outcomes

The MA in TESOL is designed to engage students in critical analysis of contemporary discussion and debate of issues related to the teaching of languages in foreign and second language contexts around the world. All modules are designed to facilitate an exploration of the interface between theory and practice. Taught sessions encourage

students to reflect on their professional activities in the light of current theory and research in the teaching and learning of languages. This reflection in turn allows students to understand their present professional activity, and more importantly, to envisage new possibilities for action.

By the end of this programme, participants should have:

- knowledge and understanding – of important concepts, ideas and research findings in language teaching and applied linguistics;
- independent critical thinking – the ability to construct arguments and contribute to current debates in TESOL;
- reflective practice – the ability to make links between theory and practice in TESOL, and to reflect critically on professional experience in the light of theory;
- research skills – the ability to identify and use appropriate methods for gathering, analysing and evaluating information, including competence in designing small-scale research;
- academic literacy – the ability to communicate arguments and information, in speech and writing, according to the established conventions of scholarship in TESOL.

Criteria for admission

Candidates should hold a good degree, either second class honours or its equivalent in the case of international students. Candidates normally also have a teaching qualification, either a PGCE or a Certificate in ELT and at least two years' full time relevant teaching experience or part-time equivalent. Candidates with less teaching experience are also considered, provided they have an outstanding academic record and can demonstrate insight into language learning and teaching.

Students whose qualifications do not meet our minimum entry requirements may be asked to write qualifying work to ensure they can meet the demands of the course and can benefit from it. Interviews are not a requirement, but applicants are encouraged to contact the programme leader if they have any questions.

As with all IOE master's courses, candidates will also have to fulfil the minimum English language proficiency requirement.

The Institute of Education is committed to admitting and supporting participants with disabilities and welcomes applications from them. Participants do not need to be “registered disabled” to draw on these services, though in order to provide services in the long-term we will need to ask for medical or other evidence, as appropriate.

Disabilities Support can also support people who have a temporary mobility / dexterity impairment / other difficulty as a result of an accident, injury, illness or surgery.

We aim to treat every person as an individual, with needs which may differ from those of other people with a superficially similar disability. We do not therefore have

standard procedures for participants with dyslexia, nor standard procedures for visually impaired participants: each person's needs are considered individually.

Mode of study

The MA TESOL can be studied full-time over one year or part-time over two to four years. In addition, it is offered by Distance Learning, which requires no attendance and is taken over two to four years. Each distance module lasts 10 weeks, with weekly units corresponding to weekly sessions on the face-to-face course, and students are expected to spend between 10-15 hours studying each week.

Programme structures and requirements, levels, modules, credits and awards

The programme is divided into modules. Each of the taught modules carries 30 credits; the report carries 30 credits and the dissertation carries 60 credits. The taught modules provide 30 contact hours each, divided into 10 three-hour sessions. Additional individual work is required. For a Master's degree to be awarded, successful completion of a minimum of 180 credits is required. (The Institute of Education uses the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), as a guide to support periods of study undertaken abroad and to assist student mobility. Currently it is assumed that two UK credits equate to one ECTS. Therefore a module of 30 credits would typically equate to 15 ECTS credits).

Students are required to take two core modules, *Describing and Analysing Language* and *Language Learning and Teaching*, both of which are taught in the Autumn term. In the spring and summer term, students take optional modules, chosen from the optional modules on offer: *Discourse, Society and Culture*; *English in Diverse World Contexts*; *Issues in Language Teacher Development*; *Materials Development for Language Teaching*; *Discourse, Society and Culture, The Second Language Learning Experience*; *Technology in Language Teaching and Learning*; *English for Academic Purposes*; *Multilingual and Multicultural London and Language, Culture and Identity*. The number and selection of optional modules may change from year to year; modules can only be run if sufficient number of students enrol. Students also take a series of non-credit bearing sessions on research, Introduction to Research Skills. These sessions prepare them for academic reading and writing within a discipline specific framework, and in the longer term for writing their report or dissertation.

All MA TESOL students are required to submit a Dissertation or Report at the end of their final year. A dissertation is a piece of work of up to 20,000 words, which counts for 60 credits. A report is up to 10,000 words long and counts for 30 credits.

Core modules and optional modules on the programme are normally offered during the daytime and in the evening in alternate years. This structure enables part-time students who are working during the day to take all modules in the evening. Students may also take other optional modules from the Institute's offer. Students who have successfully completed the Cambridge ESOL Diploma in English Language Teaching (DELTA) within the past five years, are eligible to apply for exemption from one 30-credit optional module.

For students following the programme by Distance Learning, specially written module study guides and module readers are produced; normally these are posted on-line. The

course makes use of computer-mediated communication, using Moodle. Students are required to engage in a series of tasks, the answers to which they post and discuss in Moodle. Students taking the course by distance take *Describing and Analysing Language* in the Autumn term of their first year, followed by *Language Learning and Teaching* in the Spring term. They then choose from the optional modules available, normally *Materials Development*, *Language Teacher Development*, *English in Diverse World Contexts*, and *Discourse, Society and Culture*.

Participants who for academic or personal reasons are unable to successfully complete the 180 credits required for the masters award may exit with the completion of 60 or 120 credits respectively (achieved through taught elements) and be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma in the subject area.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated

Teaching combines various forms, such as lectures, workshops, projects, student presentations, and student led discussions. Within tutor led sessions, students often engage in individual, pair and group tasks which are then fed back to the plenary.

Assessment is by coursework, and a variety of course work types is used, as appropriate to the module. On the core module *Describing and Analysing Language*, a number of short pieces of coursework are required, ranging from analysis of linguistic data provided by the tutor to engagement with data collected by the student themselves. On the core module *Language Learning and Teaching*, campus based students are assessed via an oral presentation and a critical review; Distance learning students are assessed via portfolio. On other modules, one longer essay type assignment, usually of 5000 words, is required, and students might be asked to undertake some form of restricted research project or produce classroom materials which they then describe and analyse. Some modules require additional work as well: On the *Materials Development* (face-to-face) module, students are required to lead an online discussion about one of the required readings for the module, and produce a unit of language learning materials, in addition to the longer essay. The final piece of assessment is a report or a dissertation in which the students engage with a topic of particular interest or relevance to their own development.

Information about assessment regulations

Participants must successfully complete all elements of the programme, to achieve the minimum credits required for the award. All coursework is assessed according to the grade-related criteria for the programme level, found in the programme handbook.

All assignments are independently marked by two staff members, who meet to discuss and reconcile the marks and comments for each individual. Assignments are graded from A to D, with D being a failing grade. Participants are permitted to represent a failed assignment on one further occasion, within 12 months of the original submission.

An external examiner is appointed by Senate and plays an important role in monitoring the quality of the programme and evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and support provided for the programme participants and the reliability of the judgements made in assessing them.

Further details about assessment regulations can be found at http://www.ioe.ac.uk/studentInformation/documents/Study_Home/Regulations_f_or_the_Assessment_of_Students.pdf

Support for learning

Support strategies for students on the programme include:

- A programme handbook that gives detailed information about the programme and advice on study skills and assessment.
- An induction programme including introduction to the Institute library, Blackboard, IT and other facilities provided by the Institute.
- On the distance programme, fully elaborated study guides with specific weekly tasks that are discussed online, using Moodle.
- On the face-to-face programme, a formative assessment procedure that offers each individual an opportunity to get both written feedback and have a tutorial session with their personal tutor on a 1000 word assignment, given in the first two weeks of term. Students with academic writing problems are counselled to enrol for Academic Writing Centre (AWC) sessions and small writing groups are set up when necessary by the AWC.
- Support and supervision by a personal tutor. The tutor may offer guidance and support in assignment writing and study support skills in cases where this is required. Equivalent support is provided by email and by skype to distance learners.
- Peer support and networking is facilitated in the group by the use of Blackboard and collaborative tasks on the face-to-face programme,
- On the face-to-face programme a series of research seminars presented by the course staff as well as external speakers.
- Access to the full range of welfare and union facilities afforded to all Institute trainees

Methods for evaluating and improving the course

Methods for evaluating and improving the programme include:

- Annual course review prepared by course leaders
- Periodic course review and revalidation involving external panel member
- Staff appraisal
- Peer observation of teaching
- Visiting (external) examiner reports
- Learning and Teaching Quality Committee
- Equal Opportunities Committee
- Board of Examiners
- Student representation on course meetings

- Course and module evaluation by students
- Annual student satisfaction survey

Indicators of quality and standards

- Promotion: many of the graduates of this programme have gone on to senior positions in their place of work; others have found new openings for their careers in fields such as materials writing or teacher training; others have moved from EFL into academic teaching positions.
- Publications: Graduates of this course have published their work in various professional and academic publications.
- Course team: The course team includes figures of national and international significance

Date of completion/amendment of specification December 2011