

**MA in Applied Linguistics (full-time)  
For students entering in 2015/6**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Arts, Humanities and Social Science Faculty
Programme length:	1 year
Date of specification:	21/Aug/2015
Programme Director:	
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	Applied Linguistics
Accreditation:	

**Summary of programme aims**

The MAAL is designed as a programme of continuing development for language professionals, especially those working in the field of language teaching. Core modules are offered in language description and analysis, language pedagogy and language learning, and students are given an up-to-date knowledge of principles and issues of importance within the broad field of study of language in use. Through a choice of options, students also have access to a further range of pedagogic and non-pedagogic-related areas of interest. They receive a thorough grounding that will help them to develop their career in a wide range of language related professions.

**Transferable skills**

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

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

**Programme content**

The MAAL programme allows students some freedom to suit their own needs, but with a shared foundation of compulsory core modules. The latter combine with option modules which may be selected from a range of available subjects.

The compulsory modules are divided into four areas: language description (with specific reference to English), sociolinguistics, language teaching and learning and research methods. The language description and language teaching and learning modules run in the Autumn term. The sociolinguistics and research methods modules run in the Spring term. This is then followed by the dissertation, of 15,000 words, on a topic in the field Applied Linguistics, broadly defined. Research for, and the writing of, the dissertation take place in the Summer term and the Summer vacation.

The option modules, which run across all terms, cover a wide range of linguistic and applied areas and, together with the dissertation, provide flexibility and the opportunity for specialisation.

The following list specifies the obligatory core (total 140 credits) and option modules (total 40 credits). In consultation with their programme director/personal tutor, students choose 2 option modules (each of 20 credits). A complete list of option modules is available from the Programme Director and is listed in the MA Student Handbook.

*Compulsory Core Modules*

Code	Title	Credits	Level
LSMSL	Second Language Learning Principles	20	7
LSMFLS	Foundations of Language Study	20	7

LSMSOC	Sociolinguistics	20	7
LSMRDM	Research Design Methods	20	7
LSMDIS	Dissertation	60	7

#### *Option modules*

*Please note that not all options are offered each year. Options with low numbers will not run.*

LSMCL	Child Language Development	20	7
LSMDA	Approaches to Discourse Analysis	20	7
LSMVO	The Teaching and Learning of Vocabulary	20	7
LSMCBL	Corpus-based Approaches to Language Description	20	7
LSMTP	Language Testing Principles	20	7
LSMWL	Written Language (Reading & Writing)	20	7
LSMES	English for Specific Purposes	20	7
LSMEW	English in the World	20	7
LSMSP	Spoken Language	20	7
LSMYL	Teaching Young Learners	20	7
LSMIT	Information Technology for Language Teaching	20	7
LSMLCL	Language Curriculum Design		

#### **Part-time or modular arrangements**

The programme is offered on a part-time basis, normally over a period of up to 24 months. The structure of these arrangements is as follows:

Part-time (24 months):

Year 1: 2 compulsory taught modules and 1-2 option modules;

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

#### **Progression requirements**

##### **For Masters Degrees (180 credits)**

To pass the degree of Master, students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more the dissertation and have no mark below 40 in compulsory modules LSMSL, LSMFLS, LSMSOC and LSMRD. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

##### **For Postgraduate Diplomas (120 credits)**

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

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

##### **For Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits)**

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate, students must gain an average mark of 50 or more on 60 credits (for any taught modules) with no credits below 40.

#### **Summary of Teaching and Assessment**

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

Mark Interpretation

70 - 100% Distinction

60 - 69% Merit

50 - 59% Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories

40 - 49% Work below threshold standard

0 - 39% Unsatisfactory Work

#### **Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have a good first degree, in a language - or language/education-related subject, and preferably some language teaching, or language-related experience.

All entrants to the programme will be required to meet the following English language proficiency standards. Where UK GCSE examinations in English (or their equivalent) have not been passed, these standards are normally represented by a minimum overall band of 6.5 on the IELTS test, with no sub-test band below 6, or TOEFL paper-based test: 580; computer-based test: 240; TWE: 4.5 but with the following conditions attached

a) Any applicant who achieves the minimum IELTS scores (or TOEFL equivalents) specified above will be strongly recommended to take at least 5 weeks of pre-session English instruction (although that will not be made a condition of acceptance).

b) Any applicant whose English score is at the minimum levels above on entry to the programme will be required to take a special dedicated in- sessional English course during the MA programme. Compliance with this would be a condition of remaining on the programme.

**Admissions Tutor:** Dr Parvaneh Tavakoli

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

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Careers, Placement and Experience Centre (CPEC), In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@il) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing, academic issues (eg problems with module selection) and exam related queries. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see [www.reading.ac.uk/student](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)

### **Career prospects**

Students graduating from this programme are equipped to take up senior teaching and administration posts within the field of language teaching and language-related studies. Depending on their specialism, they will also be equipped to take up positions in teacher training / education, curriculum planning, language testing, publishing and other language- related professions.

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

N/A

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

##### **A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

1. The production and description of the sound system of English.
2. The main features of the grammatical system of English as described from a functional perspective.
3. Theories of L2 acquisition relating to learning in general, to interlanguage, and to environmental and individual factors.
4. The concepts and approaches involved in the study of the relationship between language and society.
5. Different types of research, requirements of effective research, techniques of data-gathering,

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

- Lectures
- Seminars, with occasional student presentations
- Tutorials for assignment guidance
- Supervision tutorials

##### *Assessment*

Mainly by assignments requiring essays of different lengths.  
There are some exams. Dissertation

basic descriptive and inferential statistical methods, requirements of academic dissertations in the field.

Depending on choice of options:

6. Theory and pedagogical implications derived from within the broad areas of:

- language curriculum design,
- the four language skills,
- language use and learning in specific domains or circumstances
- language assessment
- information technology and computer-based language corpora

7. Theories of language acquisition and use, including psycholinguistics, child language development, intercultural communication and the role of English in the World.

8. Specialised studies and applications of linguistics in the areas of phonology and grammar.

9. The systems underlying the production of appropriate, coherent and cohesive English discourse, and the ways of describing these.

### **Skills and other attributes**

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

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

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

1. perceive the phonological features of spoken English and transcribe them using an IPA-based phonetic alphabet.
2. analyse and describe written English sentences at the levels of clause, phrase and word. In addition, depending on modules taken and/or research undertaken, students will be able to do some of the following:
3. analyse and describe samples of discourse, using one or more descriptive frameworks
4. design a syllabus for a group of language learners, on the basis of a needs analysis and assessment of resources and other contextual factors.
5. evaluate materials used in the teaching of

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

- Lectures
- Seminars, with occasional student presentations
- Tutorials/supervisions

#### *Assessment*

Mainly by assignments requiring essays of different lengths.

Dissertation

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

- Lectures
- Seminar, with occasional student presentations
- Tutorials/supervisions

#### *Assessment*

- Practical sections in assignments and examinations
- Relevant sections in the dissertation

English language skills.

6. design language test for a specified group of test-takers.
7. create, organise and analyse a computer-based language corpus.
8. design and administer a language-oriented survey, involving a questionnaire or interview.
9. carry out a statistical analysis of language or language-related data, using appropriate descriptive and/or inferential statistics.

**D. Transferable skills - able to:**

able to:

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

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

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

*Assessment*

Items 1, 5 and 6 are assessed under the organisation and presentation criteria for marking assignments and the dissertation.

Item 2 is assessed by research proposal and dissertation.

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

**Please note - This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**