Code of Practice for Quality Assurance (Research Students): Approval of New Research Programmes

MA/MPhil/PhD in Linguistics

* 1. **Award and Title**

MA/ MPhil/ PhD in Linguistics

**1.2 Length and Mode of Registration**

One year full time (MA); Two years full time (MPhil); Three years full time (PhD).

Two years part-time (MA);Three years part-time (MPhil); Five years part-time (PhD).

**1.3** **Entry Requirements**

A good Upper Second Class Honours Degree or First from a British University (or equivalent) in an appropriate subject and, for entry to MPhil or PhD, a good MA from a British University (or equivalent). Students registered for the MPhil in the first instance can apply to be upgraded to PhD candidate status in accordance with University regulations. Good command of English (IELT score of 7), preferably one other European language and the language on which research is being conducted.

**1.4** **Anticipated Total Student Registrations**

Three or more.

**1.5** **Programme Management**

The Head of English Language and Linguistics, the School of European Culture and Languages’ Graduate Studies Committee and the School Director of Graduate Studies.

**1.6** **Proposed Start Date**

From September 2010.

**1.7** **Opportunity and Need**

The success of the Kent undergraduate degrees in English Language Studies has led to a demand for postgraduate studies in Linguistics and further exposed the gap between undergraduate programmes and the research Centre for Language and Linguistic Studies. The Linguistics Section’s new research-led BA in English Language and Linguistics, available from September 2010, is expected to recruit healthy numbers of high-calibre students, some of whom will wish to pursue their studies to a higher level at Kent. Due to the requirement to begin research at Masters level, Linguistics offers a degree programme at MPhil covering applied linguistics, comparative linguistics, discourse analysis, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, dialectology, pragmatics, syntax, stylistics and translation studies that may lead to a PhD if the topic is viable and the student shows sufficient ability. Linguistics has research-active staff in all relevant areas. It therefore is natural to offer the option of an MPhil by research to complete the range of postgraduate offers in the section.

**1.8** **Aims and Objectives**

(cf. <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI08/default.asp#p4.4>)

**Masters degrees** are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

* a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
* a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
* originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
* conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  + to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
  + to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

* deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
* demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
* continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

Holders will have:

* the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring: the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility; decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

**Doctoral degrees** are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

* The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
* a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
* the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
* a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

* make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
* continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.

Holders will have:

* the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

**1.9 Programme Outline**

**1.9a** All students will receive initial guidance on how and where to identify and use material available in the library, archive centres (where appropriate), and online. Training of research students falls within the remit of the Kent Graduate School, which offers an integrated training programme on research and transferable skills that students must attend.

**1.9b** Students may also benefit from IT training, which will be available. There will be access to data gathering devices (e.g. video cameras and sound recorders) via AVS.

**1.9c** Students intending to progress to a PhD will be required to register for the MPhil (research) in the first instance. During the first year they will focus their research proposals in relation to their broader intellectual projects and begin drafting first chapters of their theses, while meeting regularly with their supervisor(s) to ensure they are making satisfactory progress. It is expected that full-time students will upgrade to PhD. In order to transfer from MPhil to PhD registration, students will be required to attend an ‘Upgrading Review’ which will normally take place by the end of their first year; for part-time students the normal period is 18 months. Upgrading must take place at least 6 months prior to the end of the student’s initial registration period. The upgrading panel will normally consist of the supervisor(s), the Director of Graduate Studies, and one other member of staff. Upgrading will involve the submission of a finished chapter of around 10,000 words, a chapter-by-chapter thesis plan, and an abstract of the candidate’s overall argument. Once the panel is satisfied that existing and proposed work is of PhD. standard, the decision is passed to the University’s Research Board.

**1.9d For the MA** students will produce an original piece of research of up to 40,000 words, written to a potentially publishable standard.

**For the MPhil** students will produce an original piece of research of up to 60,000 words, written to a potentially publishable standard.

**For the PhD** students will produce an original piece of research of up to 100,000 words, written to a potentially publishable standard in English.

\* The final assessment of the PhD will include a Viva Voce examination, during which the candidate will be expected to expound upon the new knowledge that their contribution to scholarship contains.

**1.9e** Specialist Language tuition may also be available to suit specific student research needs.

**1.10 Approved Supervisors**

There is a critical mass of research-active staff in Linguistics to supervise MA/MPhil and PhD candidates across the fields of modern Linguistics. All supervisors have appropriate credentials (higher degrees and scholarly publications) and expertise in the following areas: applied linguistics, discourse analysis, first language acquisition, syntax, sociolinguistics and stylistics. The following are approved supervisory chairs: Dr David Hornsby, Dr John Partridge.

**1.11** **Research Environment**

The School of European Culture and Languages has thriving Centres, in this case primarily the Centre for Language and Linguistic Studies, in which many research-active faculty and postgraduate students participate. The School of European Culture and Languages offers a wide range of research events, including regular conferences, lectures, and research seminars. Given the rich diversity of the School, these events are often interdisciplinary in nature, and bring together researchers from Kent with scholars from other academic institutions in the United Kingdom and abroad. These events allow postgraduate students to test their own research against that of experienced academics and fellow postgraduates and to acquire rhetorical and other skills, first through their attendance and then by delivering their own papers. Research students may be particularly interested in the following:

* A fortnightly Languages and Literatures Board Research Seminar, which includes internal and external speakers, presenting their work across the fields of literary, critical, and creative studies, addresses concerns of most timely import in the discipline broadly defined, and keeps abreast of new work and new movements.
* A fortnightly well-attended School of European Culture and Languages Popular and Distinguished lecture series, which showcases current research in the School making it available to a wider audience and brings experts from around the world.
* The Linguistics section has close contacts with the School of Anthropology and Conservation and is involved in supervision and examining of research students on its Endangered Languages project.
* Colloquia, additional lectures, occasional reading series, weekly theory reading groups, and conferences are organized by the School’s Research Centres assuring specialist knowledge is up to date.
* Postgraduates are encouraged to audit modules in the proposed taught MA programme, which range across the field of linguistic studies.
* The School supports ongoing postgraduate reading and study groups with occasional visiting speakers.
* The Templeman Library has a broad range of holdings, including special collections, electronic journal and database resources, and carrels for postgraduates. Linguistics is supported by a designated professional liaison librarian providing a one-to-one service to academic staff and research students.
* Research students have their own dedicated space with desks, computers and printing facilities.
* The School’s Graduate Studies Committee administers a postgraduate fund to support conference attendance and research trips and to cover other research expenses (currently up to £150 p.a., with more available on a case-by-case basis).
* The Faculty of Humanities has established an individual training fund of £500 to support attendance at conferences, research trips or specialist training not available at the University. The Faculty of Humanities has also a substantial budget to support interdisciplinary and collaborative staff and postgraduate research projects.
* All members of staff in the School, including new postdoctoral staff, are actively involved in research, and well equipped to advise new postgraduates.
* A number of staff are actively involved in applying for research grants designed to include postgraduate funding beyond existing departmental and university studentships.

**1.12** **Student Support and Guidance**

Each student is allocated a primary and a secondary supervisor or two co-supervisors. Supervisors are expected to offer guidance to students with regard to services offered by the School of European Culture and Languages as well as central University resources available to all students. Students are monitored annually via a progress report sent to both students and supervisors. These reports outline progress made and expected, and indicate potential difficulties. They are scrutinized by the Director of Graduate Studies, who also advises postgraduates at their request, and provides continuity in the event of departure of staff or breakdown in supervisory relationships. Research students are entitled to make full use of the support and guidance: facilities provided by the Kent Graduate School.

* 1. **Departmental Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

Students are able to give feedback via their progress reports and by contacting the Director of Graduate Studies. Postgraduate students in the School also elect a representative to attend School and Faculty committee meetings. Standard procedures for student complaints are followed. Staff and students are encouraged to attend training sessions at which their skills can be enhanced.

**1.14** **Departmental Resource Implications**

There are no new resource implications.

**1.15 Professional Accreditation**

Not applicable