



Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from
The University of Sheffield

1	Programme Title	Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language
2	Programme Code	EAST97
3	JACS Code (if applicable)	Not Applicable
4	Level of Study	Postgraduate
5a	Final Qualification	Masters (MA)
5b	QAA FHEQ Level	M
6a	Intermediate Qualification(s)	Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate
6b	QAA FHEQ Level	M
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Arts & Humanities
9	Department	East Asian Studies
10	Other Departments involved in teaching the programme	School of English
11	Mode(s) of Attendance	Full-time
12	Duration of the Programme	12 months
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
14	Date of production/revision	October 2009

15. Background to the programme and subject area

As China continues to grow and develop, there is increasing interest around the world in the country and its language. As a consequence, TCFL- the teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language- is a rapidly growing field.

The MA in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language is one of the first such programmes of its kind in the UK. It aims to equip students with a comprehensive theoretical grounding in second language acquisition, Chinese linguistics and TCFL theory and methodology, as well as practical TCFL skills such as course and lesson planning, selection and development of teaching materials, effective language teaching strategies, classroom management, assessment etc. The MA in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language provides an opportunity for students to maximise their potential in the discipline by offering a range of knowledge, understanding and skills that promote academic and teaching excellence.

Students who take the course have already completed two years of a three year MA programme at a Chinese partner university- either Nanjing University (NJU) or Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU). They come to Sheffield to complete the third year of their MA programme. On successful completion of the Sheffield programme, students receive a Masters degree from the University of Sheffield. In order to gain a Masters degree from the Chinese university at which they previously studied, students must also comply with assessment requirements laid down by either NJU or BLCU.

The year in Sheffield is taught and organised by staff at Sheffield's School of East Asian Studies (SEAS), with the support of other university departments, such as the School of English. SEAS has a strong team of staff, with research and teaching expertise in TCFL and Chinese linguistics, and a reputation, in the field of Chinese language teaching and Chinese studies generally, as one of the largest and most distinguished departments of its kind in the world. The School was rated 'excellent' in the most recent government-sponsored survey of teaching quality. Going forward, SEAS aims to be a leading force in the development of TCFL and to produce world-leading researchers and teachers in the discipline.

Teachers of TCFL are highly employable and the growing influence of China in the world means that there will continue to be strong demand for such individuals in the future. Graduates of the programme are amongst the most highly qualified TCFL teachers and researchers in the world, and are well-equipped to become leaders in this growing field.

16. Programme aims

The programme has the following core aims:

1. To provide high quality postgraduate teaching that is informed and invigorated by the research and scholarship of its staff and alert to the benefits of student-centred learning that fosters the development of highly proficient teachers and researchers in TCFL;
2. To provide for the acquisition of Chinese language teaching skills alongside awareness and understanding of the appropriate cultural context;
3. To sustain a culture of research and teaching that is able to foster the free pursuit of knowledge, and the acquisition of intercultural awareness.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:

K1	A sound knowledge and critical understanding of the theory and practice of TCFL.
K2	A sound knowledge and critical understanding of how second languages are acquired and learned.
K3	An effective grasp of methodologies used for the Teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language at all levels from beginner to advanced.
K4	Understanding of principles of development and selection of TCFL teaching materials.
K5	Understanding of principles of development and selection of TCFL teaching methodologies.

Students achieving the award of a **PG Certificate** or **PG Diploma** will have developed well-grounded knowledge and understanding defined by that combination of K1-K5 above matching the selection of modules successfully completed (to the value of 60 or 120 credits).

Skills and other attributes

S1	Competence in course and lesson preparation.
S2	Ability to effectively deliver set objectives of each lesson.
S3	Ability to design, select and prepare teaching materials.
S4	Ability to design, select and prepare exams and testing materials.
S5	Ability to assess students' learning outcomes.
S6	Ability to effectively manage the classroom.
S8	Skills in acquiring, using and critically evaluating information about TCFL for both teaching and research purposes.
S9	Further transferable skills, valuable for employment, including information gathering, the development of individual resourcefulness, analytical thinking, the ability to identify problems and ways of resolving them, the critical appreciation of TCFL source material, the ability to construct and sustain logical argument on the basis of such material, and the ability to present such argument clearly in both oral and written forms.

Masters students only:

S10	Familiarity with the latest research and methodological developments in the field of TCFL
S11	The ability to carry out individual study and research, and to keep on top of and contribute to developments in the field

Students achieving the award of a **PG Certificate** or **PG Diploma** will have developed to a high degree the skills and attributes defined by that combination of S1-S9 above matching the selection of modules successfully completed (to the value of 60 or 120 credits).

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

Formal Lectures: used throughout the programme to impart essential knowledge (K1- K5 above).

Seminars: both staff-led and student-led, will be an essential part of the learning/ teaching process on the programme. The ability to give a seminar presentation, using handouts and/ or overheads and/ or powerpoint, is an essential skill, particularly in an area such as TCFL. Seminars reinforce information imparted through lectures and also encourage students to think more deeply about material learned, and present new thoughts and ideas in their own way. They also provide an opportunity for debate and discussion. Seminars therefore contribute both to the acquisition of knowledge and understanding (K1-K5) and also to the development of many of the essential skills required for this programme (particularly S7-10).

Tutorials: arranged between tutors and individual students to provide necessary guidance and to discuss any problems either in learning or in teaching practice. Tutors will also play an important role in advising and guiding students in the writing of essays and dissertations. Tutorials will play a key part in knowledge acquisition and particularly understanding (K1-K5) as well as enhancing key skills (S1-S7, S9-S10).

Independent study: an essential element of this programme. Students are being taught to be not only TCFL teachers, but also researchers in the field of TCFL. The exact nature of the independent study will vary from student to student, depending on their interests and the optional modules they take. It will generally contribute both towards the assimilation and deeper understanding of material gleaned from lectures, seminars and tutorials, will be an essential part of the preparation of course and lesson plans, and will also, with guidance, begin the process of training candidates as researchers. It is especially important for the completion of the final 15,000 word dissertation. Self-study will be an essential part therefore of acquiring (and deepening) knowledge and understanding (K1-K5) as well as contributing to many of the required skills (S1-S10).

Classroom observation: The aim of this is not to learn how to teach, but how to critically assess and analyse the process of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Before they begin teaching observation, students first have to complete a form setting out their own clear aims and expectations from their observation of lessons, in the light of their own specific research interests. During teaching observation they keep a detailed observation diary. Once their teaching observation is completed, they learn, with the assistance of tutors, how to analyse the lessons they observed from the point of view of the theories they have been studying. This will be an essential part of developing many of the skills required by the programme (particularly S1-S6).

Teaching practice at levels from elementary to advanced, with feedback from tutors. With the guidance of tutors, students learn how to set objectives for individual lessons, plan courses, select and prepare materials, teach effectively to achieve the lesson aims, and assess students' language learning. Each student will teach six hours, to a range of levels depending on their own research and teaching interests. Two of these teaching hours will be observed and assessed by a tutor. This is an absolutely core element of the MA programme, in which students will develop many of the skills essential to a TCFL teacher (S1 – S7).

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

Classroom observation is assessed in three ways-

Observation Forms: Before they begin their classroom observation, students will complete a form setting out their aims and expectations of the classroom observation module. These forms will be assessed by course tutors, who will look for evidence that students set themselves clear aims and have clear expectations of what they hope to achieve.

Observation diary: Students will keep a detailed observation diary during classroom observation. This will be assessed by course tutors for evidence that students are able to analyse the lessons they have learned from the point of view of the theories they have been studying.

Observation essay: Using their observation diaries as data students will be expected to demonstrate that they can critically assess and analyse the process of teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

Teaching practice is assessed in four ways:

Teaching Plans: Assessed by tutors for evidence that students have set clear, achievable aims, that the methodology proposed is suitable to the aims, that the level of the language to be taught is appropriate to students, and that teaching plans are realistic in terms of timing etc.

Feedback/evaluation from pupils taught by student teachers: Language learners will be asked to rate each of the trainee teachers' six hours of classroom teaching in terms of whether they knew what they were supposed to be learning, whether they did learn and retain the target language, whether the lesson was interesting and engaging, whether they had the chance to ask questions, etc.

Tutor evaluation of teaching performance: Tutors will look for evidence that students are able to set objectives for individual lessons, plan courses, select and prepare materials, teach effectively to achieve the lesson aims, and assess students' language learning.

Teaching practice essays: Tutors who assess essays will look for evidence that students are able to use the theories they have learned to critically analyse and assess their own teaching.

Other assessment methods used across the range of modules offered on the course include:

Essays: Assessing knowledge and understanding of the theory and practice of TCFL, of second language acquisition, and of TCFL teaching methodologies.

Seminar presentations: Assessing knowledge and understanding of the theory and practice of TCFL, of second language acquisition, and of TCFL teaching methodologies; and also demonstration of essential skills S8-S10 and the ability to make a convincing, coherent presentation.

Dissertation: Final dissertations will be assessed for evidence of a thorough grasp of the theories and methodologies used for the Teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language, for the ability to think critically about how these can be best applied in the classroom, and for evidence of the ability to carry out further research in this area.

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Subject Benchmark Statements

<http://www.gaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx>

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2008)

<http://www.gaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx>

University Strategic Plan

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/strategicplan>

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2011-16)

http://www.shef.ac.uk/lets/strategy/lts11_16

The research interests of departmental staff and the research strategy of the School of East Asian Studies

20. Programme structure and regulations

The MA in TCFL provides an advanced programme for the study of TCFL. The degree provides general research and TCFL methodological training, and the opportunity both to conduct original research and to develop practical teaching skills. The student's study and research may be focussed on particular areas of interest that they may have in the field of TCFL.

More specifically, a student must take 180 credits in total to gain their Masters degree from the University of Sheffield, which is made up of:

- four compulsory courses offered at SEAS- 'Teaching Practice', 'Classroom Observation', 'Mandarin Chinese and Universal Grammar' and 'Mandarin Chinese and Second Language Acquisition' (60 credits);
- other approved modules (to the value of 60 credits) offered either through SEAS or the School of English;
- dissertation (60 credits).

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/govern/calendar/regs.html>.

21. Student development over the course of study

In **Semester 1**, the programme provides:

- (a) instruction in TCFL theory: second language acquisition, TCFL methodology, etc
- (b) classroom observation

This is designed to equip students with a thorough and critical understanding of TCFL theory and methodology before they are exposed to teaching practice. Classroom observation is introduced in the first semester to encourage students to begin to think critically about the application of TCFL methodology in the classroom

In **Semester 2** the programme provides:

- (a) further instruction in TCFL theory and methodology
- (b) teaching practice
- (c) final dissertation

Teaching practice is introduced in the second semester to allow students to put into practice and test the theory and methodology being learned. The final dissertation gives the student the opportunity to deepen their grasp of particular areas of research or methodology in which they are interested, and to demonstrate the ability to develop TCFL theory or methodology

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Eligible students are selected by NJU and BLCU, following successful completion of the first two years of study at each institution. Selected students must meet all the entry requirements for postgraduate study at SEAS and the University of Sheffield has the final decision regarding admission onto the programme. In addition, students must meet the minimum IELTS standards laid down by SEAS (currently, a score of 7 or above overall, with a minimum of 7 in writing).

23. Additional information

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid>.