Programme Specification

**A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study awarded by
The University of Sheffield**

1	**Programme Title**	English Language and Linguistics
2	**Programme Code**	ELLU03
3	**JACS Code**	Q310
4	**Level of Study**	Undergraduate
5	**Final Qualification**	BA
6	**Intermediate Qualification(s)**	Not applicable
7	**Teaching Institution** (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	**Faculty**	Arts and Humanities
9	**Home Department**	School of English
10	**Other Department(s) involved in teaching the programme**	None
11	**Mode(s) of Attendance**	Full-time
12	**Duration of the Programme**	3 years
13	**Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body**	Not applicable
14	**Date of production/revision**	December 2017

15. Background to the programme and subject area

Language is an all-pervasive medium through which human beings not only communicate with one another but arrive at an understanding of the world around them. The opportunity to study this medium intensively can transform students' understanding of their own experience in exciting and challenging ways. So it is not surprising that the study of language and linguistics is expanding at all levels from A-level through to post-graduate study.

The Sheffield BA in English Language and Linguistics is distinctive because it offers such a wide-ranging experience of language study, developing students' understanding of a broad array of linguistic issues – how language is structured; how it varies; how it changes; how it is used in spoken and written communication; how it is acquired; how it has been studied; and how it shapes and is shaped by other aspects of human societies and cultures.

The programme also enables students to apply this understanding to the study of the English language in its many varieties: spoken and written; contemporary and historical; 'standard' and 'non-standard'; regional, national, and international. It gives students an understanding of how researchers approach these issues both in the different branches of linguistics and in other disciplines that are concerned with language. We strongly believe that students should experience research-led teaching throughout their degree programme and the English Language and Linguistics Subject Area has research groups that feed into undergraduate teaching and learning in the areas of the history of the English language, language variation and change, language acquisition, literary linguistics, and the history of linguistic thought. Some of these groups operate across departmental boundaries.

The programme provides students with the practical and intellectual skills to explore a diverse range of linguistic issues for themselves and it encourages them to become progressively more autonomous throughout the programme. The opportunity to study abroad for a semester or a full year provides further opportunities to develop independence and initiative. Students leave the programme with a knowledge base that is highly relevant in any professional context where communication is important. They also have a broad range of skills, which gives them real adaptability: our graduates have experience in collecting and interpreting data, learning to apply technical methods of analysis, evaluating alternative forms of explanation, and situating problems in their social and cultural contexts. In particular, they have excellent communication skills and the ability to plan projects and see them through to completion, qualities that are at a premium in the contemporary employment market.

For further details, see the department website: http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/english.

16. Programme aims

The following aims of the BA in English Language and Linguistics are in line with the Mission Statement of the University of Sheffield.

1. to provide students with high quality opportunities for learning about a wide range of areas of language study including language structure, language variation and change, language acquisition, language in use, and interdisciplinary approaches to language and communication.

2. to equip students with the tools of analysis necessary for the investigation of language in general and English in particular at all levels from phonetics to discourse.

3. to provide an engaging and stimulating learning environment with a curriculum that is closely connected with the on-going research of those who teach it.

4. to encourage students to develop independence in their approach to linguistic issues in particular and to learning in general.

5. to equip students with a range of transferable skills that will prepare them for employment in a wide range of careers with particular emphasis on communication, problem-solving, self-reliance, flexibility, and creativity.

6. to develop students' intellectual curiosity and build confidence in their ability to learn and to resolve intellectual problems for themselves.

7. to provide a basis for the further study of English language and linguistics at all levels.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:	
K1	An understanding of the nature of linguistics as a scientific discipline and of what this means in terms of the handling of data and the evaluation of theory.
K2	An awareness of how the insights of linguistics interact with those of other approaches to language study in the formulation and execution of research.
K3	An understanding of language as an aspect of human behaviour that changes, interacts with context, and elicits attitudes and judgements from others.
K4	A comprehensive, detailed, and in-depth knowledge of the English language in its many varieties, a knowledge informed by an understanding of the nature of human language in general.
K5	A reflective understanding of the importance of language and communication in the context of one's own experience.

Skills and other attributes:	
S1	The ability to use the tools provided by the discipline of linguistics for the analysis of language structure and use.
S2	The ability to use appropriate methods to gather, record, and analyse linguistic data from live informants, electronic resources, and primary texts.
S3	The ability to take a sensitive, critical approach to secondary sources.
S4	The ability to communicate effectively in speech and writing and to make appropriate judgements about the style of communication used.
S5	The ability to think analytically and independently, to develop a cogent line of argument, and to reflect critically upon one's own opinions.
S6	Increasing independence, self-direction, and self-management in formulating, investigating, and resolving intellectual problems.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

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

1. Seminars and Workshops: Teaching and learning take place in a range of different contexts but small-group work is at the heart of the undergraduate experience and within this context students develop their knowledge and skills through a wide range of different activities, all of which require their active participation and develop both their skills of oral communication and their ability to work co-operatively with others (S4):

- working through exercises in order to practise techniques of linguistic analysis (S1);
- responding to data sets provided by the tutor (S1);
- undergoing practical training in areas such as phonetics (S1);
- presenting primary data they have collected themselves (K1, S1, S2, S4);
- comparing and contrasting different theoretical positions (S3);
- reflecting upon the experience of undertaking research (S5, S6);
- analysing and interpreting primary texts (S1);
- using AV material as the basis of discussion (S1);
- giving presentations on research undertaken outside class (S4).

2. Lectures: Large-group lectures support seminar activities by providing students with the information and conceptual frameworks necessary for their successful completion. They also provide a context in which both the skills of the discipline and more general skills of argumentation and analysis can be modelled for students. (K1, K2, K3, K4, K5).

3. Independent Study: The programme requires students to undertake substantial amounts of independent study and again, much of this work is in preparation for seminar activities. Sometimes students may be required to engage in collaborative preparation, developing skills of negotiation and team-working. This emphasis on independent study is crucial to students' developing autonomy both in relation to the discipline itself and to learning in general (S6).

4. One-to-one Consultations: Students review completed activities and discuss their plans in one-to-one consultations with members of the teaching staff. Students can meet with their personal tutors in weekly office hours to review the work of the previous semester and discuss the feedback given by tutors of individual modules. This makes it possible for students to take a more holistic view of their work and review general problems arising across modules (S6).

5. Dissertation Seminars: Students who write a dissertation at level three also receive training in research skills in order to develop their independent study skills. They also receive training in the communication of research findings in speech and writing. This training is delivered in a fortnightly seminar, intervening weeks being left available for them to consult with their supervisors. They also participate in a one-day conference at which they present their work and listen to talks by other students (S4).

6. Study abroad: In the second year of the programme, students can opt to spend a semester or a full year studying in another country. This presents opportunities to learn about a new culture, to experience valuable new perspectives on the study of English, and to develop independence and self-reliance.

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

The wide-ranging nature of the programme is reflected in the diversity of our assessment methods. This diversity ensures that students have opportunities to develop and demonstrate a broad base of knowledge and skills.

1. Writing: Every module requires that students produce a written submission and in many cases this written work takes the form of a discursive essay produced over a number of weeks. However, some modules require students to produce other kinds of texts – project reports, learning journals, commentaries, posters, and reviews – and to use the conventions appropriate to these genres. In some modules they may also be asked to produce written work in the context of a formal examination or in response to a 'take-home' paper. The tasks that they tackle in their written work vary considerably depending upon the module and may include:

- writing up practical research projects involving the collection and interpretation of data (K1, S2);
- analysing contemporary or historical linguistic data (K1, S1);

- interpreting and commenting on primary texts;
- evaluating secondary sources (S3);
- comparing different theoretical positions (K1);
- reflecting upon their own practice (S5, S6).

2. Speaking: In some modules there is an oral component to the assessment. Frequently this takes this form of a presentation prepared either individually or in groups (S4), but in areas like phonetics it involves a test in the production and perception of speech sounds. (S2).

3. Developing Independence: Students are given support and guidance on these various kinds of assessed activity. As the degree progresses they are given more opportunity to choose topics and formulate questions for their assessed work in consultation with the members of staff that teach them. This trend culminates in the opportunity to write a dissertation (10,000 words) in their final year.

The School of English also follows the statement endorsed by the University that, 'Not everything that is valuable can be separately tested, measured or quantified' and that 'one of the distinctive benefits of a university education is the development of qualities of personal organisation and time-management which follow from the attribution to students of considerable responsibility in directing their own learning. Independence and self-motivation can be fostered but not taught in academic departments. The depth or extent of such personal qualities cannot be directly examined, though successful acquisition of them is expected to show through in the application of other skills which are explicitly assessed. Difficulties such as these should not inhibit attempts to inculcate or formatively assess such skills as part of a degree programme.' (S1-6).

19. Reference points

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

Subject Benchmark Statements
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2008)
http://www.qaa.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 (2016-21)
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/staff/learning-teaching/our-approach/strategy2016-21

20. Programme structure and regulations

At UG level 1, students are required to take:
- five core modules: Sounds of English (10 credits), Structure of English (10 credits), History of English (20 credits), Varieties of English (20 credits), and Linguistic Theory (20 credits).
- unrestricted modules to the value of 40 credits.

This ensures that students obtain a solid foundation in the core areas of linguistics and English language research as well as skills necessary to pursue study at higher levels.

After the first year of study, students are given the opportunity to specialise in their preferred subject areas and are given a great deal of choice. Modules are available across the full breadth of language and linguistics and cover language structure, language variation and change, language acquisition, language in use, and interdisciplinary approaches to language and communication. At UG levels 2 and 3, students must obtain 100 credits in approved modules, and 20 credits in unrestricted modules.

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
www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/regs.

21. Student development over the course of study

By the end of UG level 1, students will have developed an appreciation of the variety and complexity of language, especially though not exclusively the English language. They will have been made aware of their subconscious knowledge of, and attitudes to, language. They will have an overview of the different areas of linguistics and the different levels of the grammar. They will have come to understand the characteristics of both local and supralocal varieties of English. They will have been introduced to various empirical methods in linguistics, and will have developed the skills necessary to apply these methods. They will also have had the opportunity to consider the status of different varieties of English, including historical varieties, and to learn about the application of tools of linguistic analysis to contemporary literature. Students who come from a wide variety of learning contexts and experiences will reach a common understanding of the teaching and learning methods appropriate to university-level work, and an appreciation of the techniques required to maximise learning outcomes from lectures, workshops, and seminars.

At UG level 2, students study topics introduced at level 1 in greater detail, and have an opportunity to specialise in a particular area of linguistics. Emphasis is placed on developing skills of formal analysis, consideration of the frameworks within which those skills are conceptualised, and learning about relatively self-contained domains within linguistics. Students will be expected to appreciate the problems of these approaches and areas at a practical level. By the end of level 2 students will be confident using the metalanguages current in various branches of linguistics and in some interdisciplinary areas in examining material to which they are directed by tutors.

At level 3, students are exposed to areas of linguistics that require integration of knowledge from several sub-disciplines. For example, 'Psychology of Language' provides scope for students to apply knowledge from earlier modules on phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics, and language acquisition; 'Conversation Analysis' draws on knowledge of phonetics and discourse; 'Language and Gender' draws upon sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and discourse analysis. Students are encouraged to become more independent by formulating their own independent research questions, for instance by deciding their own essay topics for assessment. They can also specialise to a greater extent, for instance by pursuing the option of undertaking independent research, either as Research Practice in one semester, or as a Dissertation over two semesters.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available in the University's On-Line Prospectus at www.shef.ac.uk/prospective/

23. Additional information

English Language and Linguistics is part of the School of English. Several research groups spread across departmental boundaries and this collaborative culture is reflected at undergraduate level in the fact that students regularly integrate modules offered in other parts of the School into their programmes of study. As with all Sheffield's modular degrees, students may also study in other departments for a limited proportion of their time and regularly take complementary modules in a range of other subjects, including journalism, languages, psychology, sociology, philosophy, human communication sciences, and history.

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 www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.