

Programme specification -- MA in TEFL

(Notes on how to complete this template are provide in Annexe 2)

1. Overview/ factual information

Programme/award title(s)	MA in TEFL
Teaching Institution	Arab Open University
Awarding Institution	The Open University (OU)
Date of first OU validation	October 2019
Date of latest OU (re)validation	NA
Next revalidation	
Credit points for the award	48 credit hours / 180 points
UCAS Code	
JACS Code	
Programme start date	September 2020
Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)	
Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes	<p>In designing the new MA Programme in TEFL, the FLS Council has been guided by the following General Points of Reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOU mission, objectives and strategies • QAA: Benchmarking (M) Level Programmes <input type="checkbox"/> QAA: Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education • FHEQ: Descriptor for a Qualification at Masters (M) Level: Master's Degree
Professional/statutory recognition	OU in October 2019 Local Ministries of Higher Education (Branches)
Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL, Mix of DL & Face-to-Face)	Mix of DL (independent learning) & Face-to-Face –FT, PT
Duration of the programme for each mode of study	FT 2 years – four semesters; PT up to 8 semesters
Dual accreditation (if applicable)	OU and Local Ministries of Higher Education (Branches)
Date of production/revision of this specification	February 2019

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 s/he 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 student module guide(s) and the students handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

2.1 Educational aims and objectives

The MA programme in Teaching English as a Foreign Language will:

- Train students to become effective classroom teachers by introducing them to the latest language teaching theories, methods and approaches.
- Provide students with the necessary skills that enable them to both construct and evaluate language-teaching programmes.
- Expose students to various methods of preparing teaching materials.
- Develop in the students the ability to conduct empirical research in the domain of EFL.
- Prepare students to combine theory and practice in the teaching-learning process.
- Train students to apply CALT techniques in their teaching.
- Familiarize students with the latest methods of assessment and evaluation.

The intended learning outcomes of this programme are described in four areas:

Area 1: Knowledge and understanding

On completion of the programme, students will have knowledge and understanding of:

- A1. The relationship between EFL research and the various kinds of educational practices to which it can relate;
- A2. Recent research and effective practice in TEFL;
- A3. Ethical frameworks and measures appropriate to educational contexts in TEFL; A4. Processes involved in carrying out a research enquiry in a relevant area of study within the identified themes of the programme.

Area 2: Cognitive skills

On completion of the programme, students will be able to:

- B1. Define and appropriately utilise key terms, concepts and theories in TEFL studies;
- B2. Apply and refine critical thinking skills in relation to teaching English as a Foreign Language;
- B3. Critically interpret, assess and deploy EFL research methodologies and their evidence;
- B4. Contribute in an informed way to current debates about teaching English as a foreign language.

Area 3: Practical and professional skills

On completion of the programme, students will be able to:

- C1. Read academic publications pertinent to TEFL topics proficiently and with confidence;
- C2. Appraise, review and critically and reflexively formulate arguments relevant to TEFL;
- C3. Critically reflect on own teaching practice;
- C4. Produce and present written texts employing a suitable writing style appropriate to a specific academic genre that uses and cites source materials correctly and appropriately.

Area 4: Key / transferable skills

On completion of the programme, students will be able to:

- D1. Work independently on projects or extended assignments involving the analysis and presentation of materials and issues;
- D2. Produce original texts to communicate ideas concisely and effectively in written work to show clear expression and coherent structure;
- D3. Take personal responsibility to complete a pertinent programme of learning which requires sustained and independent application;
- D4. Use information and communication technology appropriately for information retrieval and communication purposes.

The project is needed on several counts:

- It creates good job opportunities in English language teaching in the public and private sectors.
- Many BA graduates of English Language and Literature (ELL) in the Arab countries choose to become schoolteachers and increasingly, more educational institutions particularly high schools are opting to appoint teachers with special educational training, chiefly those holding an MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).
- MA-in-TEFL holders are also sought by English Language Centres at universities, which provide English for Specific Purposes (ESP) tuition for students of different specializations. Many of these Centres prefer tutors holding an MA rather than a PhD for, *inter alia*, salary-saving purposes.
- More and more public and private universities are being established in many Arab countries, and thus there is a great demand for qualified MA holders to teach language skills and introductory courses to first-year students.
- International and regional businesses, foreign missions, mass media, international organizations, publishers, and translation establishments require bilinguals who are proficient in both English and Arabic.
- This degree opens up opportunities for its holders to seek degrees in TEFL higher than the MA, especially doctoral degrees. Holders of such higher degrees are recruited by local, regional and international organizations such as ALECSO (Arab League Educational Cultural & Scientific Organization), and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

- An MA in TEFL at the Arab Open University (AOU) also provides a flexible *open learning* opportunity to students;
- Students admitted into the MA Programme in TEFL will avail themselves of excellent up-to-date teaching and support materials conducive to self-learning as it combines both face-to-face instruction (50%) and interactive open learning (50%);

The introduction of this MA programme reflects the AOU strategy to start postgraduate studies that serve the needs of its graduates, on the one hand, and meet national and regional socio-economic development requirements, on the other. The proposed programme is in high demand in all Arab countries, particularly in view of the following fact:

- Many Arab countries are beginning to teach English in grade 1 (age 6) instead of grade 4 (age 9) or grade 6 (age 11) as has been the case till very recently. This expansion in the teaching of English at school level will require teachers who are qualified both linguistically and professionally.

2.2 Relationship to other programmes and awards

(Where the award is part of a hierarchy of awards/programmes, this section describes the articulation between them, opportunities for progression upon completion of the programme, and arrangements for bridging modules or induction)

The programme is made up of the following 3 components:

1. Compulsory modules: (32 credit hours)

Code	Title	Credit Hours
EFL501	Theories of Foreign Language Learning	4
EFL502	Research Methods	4
EFL503	English Language Teaching Methods: Receptive Skills (I)	4
EFL504	English Language Teaching Methods: Productive Skills (II)	4
EFL505	Technology in the Classroom	4
EFL506	Classroom Management	4
EFL507	Foreign Language Testing	4
EFL508	Practicum	4

2. Elective Modules for non-thesis track: (8 credits)

Elective Modules		
Code	Module Title	Credit Hours
EFL511	English Linguistics and Applications	4
EFL512	Sociolinguistics	4
EFL513	Discourse Analysis	4
EFL514	Pedagogic Grammar	4
EFL515	Phonetics and Phonology	4

3. Thesis modules: 16 credits

Thesis track:

Thesis track		
Code	Module Title	Credit Hours
EFL529	Proposal Prep.	4
EFL 531	Thesis module	12

Non-thesis track:

Students who opt for this track will study four more modules, and take a comprehensive exam as follows:

I. The following two compulsory modules (8 credits):

EFL521	Semantics and Pragmatics	4
EFL522	Contrastive Linguistics and Error Analysis	4

II. Two modules selected from the following list of electives (8 credits):

EFL511	English Linguistics and Applications	4
EFL512	Sociolinguistics	4
EFL513	Discourse Analysis	4
EFL514	Pedagogic Grammar	4
EFL515	Phonetics and Phonology	4

III. Take a comprehensive exam (0 credit)

Exit Awards:

Students who are not able to complete their MA programme can request from OU a Certificate or a Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, as demonstrated below.

Postgraduate Exit Awards:

(i) **Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

On successful completion of the following four compulsory postgraduate modules from the MA Programme in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (16 credit hours), students will be able to claim from OU a **Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**.

Code	Title	Credit Hours
EFL501	Theories of Foreign Language Learning	4
EFL502	Research Methods	4
EFL503	English Language Teaching Methods: Receptive Skills (I)	4
EFL504	English Language Teaching Methods: Productive Skills (II)	4
Total		16

(ii) **Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

On successful completion of the eight compulsory modules of the MA programme in TEFL, students will be eligible to claim from OU for a **Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

Code	Title	Credit Hours
EFL501	Theories of Foreign Language Learning	4
EFL502	Research Methods	4
EFL503	English Language Teaching Methods: Receptive Skills (I)	4
EFL504	English Language Teaching Methods: Productive Skills (II)	4
EFL505	Technology in the Classroom	4
EFL506	Classroom Management	4
EFL507	Foreign Language Testing	4
EFL508	Practicum	4
Total		32

(iii) **Postgraduate MA Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

On successful completion of all the postgraduate courses from the MA Programme in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (48 credit hours), students will be able to claim a **Postgraduate MA Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**.

Code	Title	Credit Hours
EFL529	Proposal Prep.	4
EFL531	Thesis module	12
OR		
<u>Non-thesis Track: consisting of:</u>		
A: The following compulsory modules:		
EFL521	Semantics and Pragmatics	4
EFL522	Contrastive Linguistics and Error Analysis	4
B: Any two modules of the following electives:		
EFL511	English Linguistics and Applications	4
EFL512	Sociolinguistics	4
EFL513	Discourse Analysis	4
EFL514	Pedagogic Grammar	4
EFL515	Phonetics and Phonology	4
Total		16
C: A Comprehensive Exam:		
EFL525	Comprehensive Exam	0

2.3 For Foundation Degrees, please list where the 60 credit work-related learning takes place

NA

2.4 List of all exit awards

1. Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (16 credit hours).
2. Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (32 credit hours).

Programme Structure – LEVEL 7a*				
Compulsory modules	Credit hours	Credit points	Is module compensatable?	Semester it runs in
EFL501: Theories of Foreign Language Learning	4	15	NO	
EFL502: Research Methods	4	15	NO	
EFL503: English Teaching Language Methods: Receptive Skills (I)	4	15	NO	
EFL504: English Teaching Language Methods: Productive Skills (II)	4	15	NO	
Total	16	60		

**The modules taught at this level constitute the requirement for the first exit award, i.e., a Certificate in TEFL.*

Intended learning outcomes of the *Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language* are listed below:

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 7a	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/assessment methods
<p>When students have completed the Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, they will have knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>A1. The relationship between EFL research and the various kinds of educational practices to which it can relate;</p> <p>A2. Recent research and effective practice in TEFL;</p>	<p>The AOU learning/teaching strategy provides contact hours that are equal to 50% of what traditional universities require. Thus, AOU students enjoy the benefits of both the open and traditional university systems.</p> <p>The taught modules will be delivered through the AOU system which consists of two complementary modes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. face-to-face interactive tutorials, constituting 50% of course credit hours, and; 2. interactive distance learning delivered through specially designed teaching and support materials that are conducive for self-learning, constituting 50% of course contact hours. <p>The assessment strategy of each module offered is included in its respective “Module Specification” template.</p> <p>Learning outcomes are assessed primarily by means of written tutor marked assignments (TMAs), and Final Exams (FEs).</p>
3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/assessment methods

When students have completed this certificate, they will be able to B1. Define and appropriately utilise key terms, concepts and theories in TEFL studies;	Cognitive skills are developed and practised through study of the course materials, and students will also have the opportunity to learn and practise these through group or individual tutorial work. They are assessed in TMAs and Finals.
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3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
When students have completed this certificate, they will be able to C1. Read academic publications pertinent to TEFL topics proficiently and with confidence; C2. Appraise, review and critically and reflexively formulate arguments relevant to TEFL;	Practical and professional skills are taught cumulatively throughout the programme. EFL502 teaches basic postgraduate research skills. This module as well as EFL501 are designed to prepare students to write their TMAs critically and reflectively.

3D. Key/transerable skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/assessment methods
When students have completed this certificate, they will be able to D1. Take personal responsibility to complete a pertinent programme of learning which requires sustained and independent application.	Key skills are taught by a combination of published teaching materials, textbooks, detailed tutor feedback on written work, and participation in tutorials. Essay-type TMAs particularly assess students' ability to communicate effectively their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter of foundation and subject modules.

On successful completion of the above level (7a) modules (16 credits) from the MA Programme in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, students can claim a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from the OU/UK *only*. The AOU does not offer such a certificate; it provides students who do not complete the MA programme with a statement *only*.

<u>Programme Structure – LEVEL 7b*</u>				
Compulsory modules	Credit hours	Credit points	Is module compensatable?	Semester it runs in
EFL505: Technology in the Classroom	4	15	NO	
EFL506: Classroom Management	4	15	NO	
EFL507: Foreign Language Testing	4	15	NO	
EFL508: Practicum	4	15	NO	
Total	16	60		

**The modules taught at this level together with the ones taught at level (7a) constitute the requirement for the second exit award, i.e., a Diploma in TEFL.*

Intended learning outcomes of the Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language are listed below:

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 7b

3A. Knowledge and understanding

Learning outcomes:

When students have completed the Diploma in teaching English as a Foreign Language, they will have knowledge and understanding of:

A1. The relationship between EFL research and the various kinds of educational practices to which it can relate;

A2. Recent research and effective practice in TEFL;

Learning and teaching strategy/assessment methods

The AOU learning/teaching strategy provides contact hours that are equal to 50% of what traditional universities require. Thus, AOU students enjoy the benefits of both the open and traditional university systems.

The TEFL MA programme will be delivered through the AOU system which consists of two complementary modes:

-Face-to-face interactive tutorials, constituting 50% of course credit hours, and;

-Interactive distance learning delivered through specially designed teaching and support materials that are conducive for self-learning, constituting 50% of course contact hours.

The assessment strategy of each module offered is included in its respective "Module Specification" template.

Learning outcomes are assessed primarily by means of written tutor marked assignments (TMAs), and Final Exams (FEs).

3B. Cognitive skills

Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/assessment methods
<p>When students have completed this Diploma, they will be able to</p> <p>B1. Define and appropriately utilise key terms, concepts and theories in TEFL studies;</p> <p>B2. Apply and refine critical thinking skills in relation to teaching English as a Foreign Language;</p> <p>B3. Contribute in an informed way to current debates about teaching English as a foreign language.</p>	<p>Cognitive skills are developed and practised through study of the course materials, and students will also have the opportunity to learn and practise these through group or individual tutorial work. They are assessed in TMAs and Finals.</p>

3C. Practical and professional skills

Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/assessment methods
<p>When students have completed this Diploma, they will be able to</p> <p>C1. Read academic publications pertinent to TEFL topics proficiently and with confidence;</p> <p>C2. Appraise, review and critically and reflexively formulate arguments relevant to TEFL;</p> <p>C3. Critically reflect on their own teaching practice;</p>	<p>Practical and professional skills are taught cumulatively throughout the programme. EFL505 overviews technology applications in the classroom. EFL506 is designed to prepare students for practical management of classrooms. EFL507 looks at aspects of criteria and test preparation; while EFL508 prepares students to conduct their practicum both critically and reflectively. All modules are assessed through portfolio (term papers) and final exam</p>

3D. Key/transferable skills

Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/assessment methods
When students have completed this Diploma, they will be able to: D1. Take personal responsibility to complete a pertinent programme of learning which requires sustained and independent application.	Key skills are taught by a combination of published teaching materials, textbooks, detailed tutor feedback on written work, and participation in tutorials. Essay-type TMAs particularly assess students' ability to communicate effectively their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter of foundation and subject modules.

On successful completion of the 4 modules in LEVEL (7b) in addition to the 4 modules in LEVEL (7a) from the MA Programme in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (32 credits), students can be eligible for a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from the OU/UK only. The AOU does not offer such a diploma; it provides students who do not complete the MA programme with a statement only.

Programme Structure - LEVEL 7c

Compulsory modules	Credit hours	Optional modules	Credit points	Is module compensable?	Semester it runs in
EFL529: Proposal Prep.	4		15	NO	
EFL531: Thesis	12		45	NO	

OR <u>Non-thesis Track: consisting of:</u>				NO	
A: The following compulsory modules					
EFL521: Semantics and Pragmatics	4		15	NO	
<u>Programme Structure - LEVEL 7c</u>					
EFL522: Contrastive Linguistics and Error Analysis	4		15	NO	
B: Any two modules of the following electives:					
EFL511 English Linguistics and Applications	4		15	NO	
EFL512 Sociolinguistics	4		15	NO	
EFL513 Discourse Analysis	4		15	NO	
EFL514 Pedagogic Grammar	4		15	NO	
EFL515 Phonetics and Phonology	4		15	NO	
Total	16		60		
C: A Comprehensive Exam:					
EFL525 Comprehensive Exam	0		0	NO	

Intended learning outcomes at Level 7c are listed below:

<u>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 7c</u>	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/assessment methods
<p>When students have completed the MA degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, they will have knowledge and understanding of:</p>	<p>The AOU learning/teaching strategy provides contact hours that are equal to 50% of what traditional universities require. Thus, AOU students enjoy the benefits of both the open and traditional university systems.</p>
<u>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 7c</u>	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
<p>A1. The relationship between EFL research and the various kinds of educational practices to which it can relate;</p> <p>A2. Recent research and effective practice in TEFL;</p> <p>A3. Ethical frameworks and measures appropriate to educational contexts in TEFL;</p> <p>A4. Processes involved in carrying out a research enquiry in a relevant area of study within the identified themes of the programme.</p>	<p>The TEFL MA programme will be delivered through the AOU system which consists of two complementary modes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. face-to-face interactive tutorials, constituting 50% of course credit hours, and; 2. Interactive distance learning delivered through specially designed teaching and support materials that are conducive to self-learning, constituting 50% of course contact hours. <p>The assessment strategy of each module offered is included in its respective “Module Specification” template.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding are gained and developed through the study of the course materials in all modules and the final dissertation or comprehensive exam. The taught modules include published</p>

	<p>teaching texts and set texts. Tutors also post support material to the students on AOU's LMS (Learning Management System). A further channel of instruction is tutors' office hours where students can have direct consultation with their tutors.</p> <p>Learning outcomes of the taught modules are assessed primarily by means of written tutor-marked assignments (TMAs), and Final Exams (FEs). For the dissertation, students will choose a topic within an area studied earlier in the programme and write up to 12,000-16,000 words. Tutors provide ungraded feedback on draft chapters.</p>
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3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p>When students have completed this degree, they will be able to</p> <p>B1. Define and appropriately utilise key terms, concepts and theories in TEFL studies;</p> <p>B2. Apply and refine critical thinking skills in relation to teaching English as a Foreign Language;</p> <p>B3. Critically interpret, assess and deploy EFL research methodologies and their evidence;</p> <p>B4. Contribute in an informed way to current debates about teaching English as a foreign language.</p>	<p>Cognitive skills are developed and practised through study of the course materials, and students will also have the opportunity to learn and practise these through group or individual tutorial work. They are assessed in TMAs and Finals.</p> <p>Their ability to recognise a potential area for research in teaching English as a foreign language is specifically assessed in the extensive pieces of writing they will be producing in the course, mainly in TMAs and dissertation.</p>

3C. Practical and professional skills

Learning outcomes:

When students have completed this degree, they will be able to

C1. Read academic publications pertinent to TEFL topics proficiently and with confidence;

C2. Appraise, review and critically and reflexively formulate arguments relevant to TEFL;

C3. Critically reflect on their own teaching practice.

C4. Produce and present written texts employing a suitable writing style appropriate to a specific academic genre that uses and cites source materials correctly and appropriately.

Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods

Practical and professional skills are taught cumulatively throughout the programme. The compulsory modules prepare students for aspects of teaching English as a foreign language, class management, testing, as well as researching and documentation. Assessment is conducted both at module level through portfolio (term paper) and final exam, as well as comprehensive exam or dissertation.

3D. Key/transferrable skills

Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p>When students have completed this degree, they will be able to</p> <p>D1. Work independently on projects or extended assignments involving the analysis and presentation of materials and issues;</p> <p>D2. Produce original texts to communicate ideas concisely and effectively in written work to show clear expression and coherent structure;</p> <p>D3. Take personal responsibility to complete a pertinent programme of learning which requires sustained and independent application.</p> <p>D4. Use information and communication technology appropriately for information retrieval and communication purposes.</p>	<p>Key skills are taught by a combination of published teaching materials, textbooks, detailed tutor feedback on written work, and participation in tutorials. This happens throughout the programme, although there is increasing emphasis on independent work towards the end. Essay-type TMAs particularly assess students' ability to communicate effectively their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter of foundation and subject modules. The full range of key skills is assessed in the dissertation module.</p>

On successful completion of the above modules in addition to Level (7a) and Level (7b) modules from the MA programme in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (48 credits), students will be eligible for the MA Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

4. Distinctive features of the programme structure

- Where applicable, this section provides details on distinctive features such as:
- where in the structure above a professional/placement year fits in and how it may affect progression
- any restrictions regarding the availability of elective modules where in the programme structure students must make a choice of pathway/route

This programme has a thesis or non-thesis option as the study plan below indicates:

Semester	Code	Module Title	Credit	Prerequisite
Sem. I	EFL501	Theories of Foreign Language Learning	4	None
	EFL502	Research Methods	4	None
	EFL503	English Language Teaching Methods: Receptive Skills (I)	4	None
Total			12	
Sem. II	EFL504	English Language Teaching Methods: Productive Skills (II)	4	EFL501 EFL502
	EFL505	Technology in the Classroom	4	EFL501 EFL502
	EFL506	Classroom Management	4	EFL501 EFL502
Total			12	
Sem. III	EFL507	Foreign Language Testing	4	EFL501 EFL502
	EFL508	Practicum	4	EFL503 EFL504 EFL505 EFL506
	EFL529	Proposal Prep	4	EFL501 EFL502
Total			12	
Sem. IV	EFL531	Thesis Module	12	EFL529
Total			12	
Total thesis track			48	

OR Non-thesis track -- Students will:				
A: take the following two compulsory modules:				
	EFL521	Semantics and Pragmatics	4	EFL501 EFL502
	EFL522	Contrastive Linguistics and Error Analysis	4	EFL501 EFL502
B: Choose any two modules from the list of electives below			8	
C: Sit for EFL525 Comprehensive Exam			0	
Total			16	

*Students should take EFL504 immediately after EFL503 since both address the theme of how receptive and productive skills are taught.

**Students take the comprehensive exam after finishing all modules.

Non-thesis track students choose two modules (8 credit hours) from the following list of electives:

Elective Modules			
Code	Module Title	Credit Hours	Prerequisite
EFL511	English Linguistics and Applications	4	None
EFL512	Sociolinguistics	4	None
EFL513	Discourse Analysis	4	None
EFL514	Pedagogic Grammar	4	None
EFL515	Phonetics and Phonology	4	None

5. Support for students and their learning

AOU students are guided and supported by the following resources:

1. Study materials with guides and audio-visual aids.
2. LMS Unified Course Content also embodies a lot of guidance and support materials such as: updated Course Guides, Study Calendars, TMAs, TMA cover form, as well as additional notes and information on courses
3. A two-hour weekly tutorial. Students meet their tutors on a weekly basis for two hours per class as part of the University's policy to adopt a system of blended learning.
4. Tutors hold weekly office hours. Students can have face-to-face contact with their tutors to seek their assistance, and ask them for clarifications. All part-time and full-time tutors are requested to hold two weekly office hours for each taught section.
5. Interaction with tutors through the LMS.
The LMS has become an integral part of teaching and learning in AOU. It is the main channel of communication between tutors and their students. Students

receive their assignments, their tutors' responses, and feedback through the LMS. The privacy of this channel allows students to discuss with their tutors some matters that they may be uncomfortable discussing publicly in the classroom. In coordination with the BCC, every tutor posts a substantial amount of support material for the course and the sections they are teaching.

6. Computer and e-library facilities: Both AOU students and staff are given access to e-library resources. Recently, AOU has updated its e-library subscriptions.
7. Educational Resource Centres. These centres provide the needed resources such as Internet and other facilities.
8. Writing Centres to offer student help and guidance on how to write proposals and dissertations.
9. Student Information System (SIS).

In addition to all the resources mentioned above, FLS does its best to ensure that students have the support they need for their learning in three major axes:

- (A) Designing a scheme for helping first-year students cope
- (B) Following up on External Examiner suggestions
- (C) Training second-year students in write up of their proposals & dissertations.

(A) Designing a scheme for helping first-year students cope:

Students who join the MA program naturally come from undergraduate programs whose environments differ remarkably from the postgraduate environment. In the latter, students are expected to read a lot of material. They are also expected to understand it in depth, think about it critically and express their educated opinions much more so than in undergraduate programs. This is especially true since in our face-to-face tutorials, the students are expected to play an active role in the discussions and deliberations, as there are no formal lectures per se in these tutorials. As serious scholars, they are also required to depend on themselves a great deal in planning and fulfilling the various tasks needed in order to be able to learn effectively on their own and do well.

For the transition from the undergraduate to the postgraduate environment to be smooth, students need considerable help. To this end, the Branches – in close coordination with the FLS Deanship – take several important measures to help the students cope and proceed well in their studies. The first is thorough academic advising upon admission. When the students are admitted, they are asked to come to an induction whose main aim is to explain to them in detail what is required of them as postgraduate students. The meeting is conducted by our PC, who is a main tutor in the program, and a GCC, as well as two other colleagues specializing in the area of teaching English as a foreign language. It is worth mentioning in this context that the majority of our colleagues who do the advising have had a long experience in teaching postgraduate programs at other universities before joining AOU, which significantly adds to and enriches their performance at AOU. It is also worth noting that the meeting does not aim simply to tell students what courses to take, where, with whom, etc. The main focus is on how to study for the courses, how to organize their time, who to see when they want to seek help, what the characteristics of the AOU system of learning are, where to find resources, etc. At the end of the meeting, the students are given the office hours and emails of the tutors who will be advising them throughout their studies. They are encouraged to meet with

their advisers throughout the year, and the advisers also call upon those students who seem to be having some difficulties in the tutorials to come and talk to them. At the end of the induction, a tour of AOU buildings is also arranged for new students so that they become familiar with the university's facilities. On many occasions, AOU students express appreciation of this ongoing communication with the tutors/advisers and the attention and care they get from them, which is what gives AOU the edge and which makes the program attract an increasing number of students.

On another important level, the Deanship has, of course, prepared a Student Handbook, which explains salient matters about studying in the program, from A to Z. The Handbook is placed on LMS Unified Course Content and the students are called upon to read it before they come to the first tutorial. The Deanship has also formed a Postgraduate Board, one of whose members is a specialized faculty member/adviser. The Board meets at least twice a semester to discuss, among other things, how the students are progressing. The progress report, which is delivered by the Branch adviser, is discussed by all members and feedback is conveyed to the PC in each case. Furthermore, the Deanship delegates one faculty member, who is a specialist in TEFL and who acts as a liaison officer between the Deanship and the Branch, to assist the Dean in following up on all matters pertaining to the MA program and in offering continued support to postgraduate students and staff at the respective branch.

(B) Follow-up on External Examiner suggestions:

FLS makes sure that all EE feedback is taken care of to improve the quality of FLS's existing programme and the students' learning process. We have a clear mechanism in place by which the External Examiners' reports are taken seriously and their suggestions and recommendations are implemented. There have been many important enhancements gained as a result of implementing EEs' suggestions. When FLS receives the EEs' reports, each module report is sent to its GCC to respond to the points raised by the EE regarding delivering and assessing the module. The EE's report and the GCC's response are discussed with the Dean. Then, the Dean drafts FLS response to the EE's report and highlights the issues that need action. The Dean agrees with the GCC on an action plan to implement the suggestions and recommendations of the EE. In the following CAC, the GCC reports to the EE on the steps and results of this implementation. This mechanism is working well for the FLS ELL BA programme and the MA in Literature, and it will work for the MA in TEFL. FLS will follow the same system in order to ensure that the TEFL programme is delivered and assessed to the best standards and expectations.

(C) Training second-year students in write up of their proposals &

Dissertations Students enrolled in the program who finish their first year start thinking about their proposals and dissertations. Our aim is to have them pay attention to this matter as early as possible so that when they start writing their proposals and then the dissertations, they are fully ready. FLS recognizes that all our students generally need all the help they can get in writing articles or dissertations in English. First, the vast majority of them are non-native speakers of the language; secondly, the teaching of writing in many schools is inadequate and students continue to manifest some negative habits in writing. Furthermore, there are some specific, technical requirements for the proposals and the dissertations which are necessary even for the more competent students to know: such as how to come up with a good topic; how to narrow it down; how to review the literature related to it; how to structure and present the argument, etc.

While some of these matters will be covered in some of the modules that the students take in the program, we still feel that they need more induction and more assistance. Towards this end, the Deanship will follow up closely with the PCs and the tutors in the branches where the programme is offered to ensure that such hands-on assistance is always available to students as part of the courses they take, during office hours, and in some periodic meetings/mini-workshops specifically held for this purpose. FLS has writing centres operating in all branches, and these centres will shoulder some of this responsibility to help students with their dissertations. We are fully confident that our students, who choose the dissertation track, will proceed with writing their proposals and dissertations with ease and effectiveness in the same way as their peers in the MA in Literature programme are coping with their projects.

6. Criteria for admission

Admission requirements

To be admitted to the programme, students need to:

A. Have a BA degree in English Language and Literature, or a related specialization from the Arab Open University or another recognized university with a graduation rating of *GOOD* or higher in light of local accreditation requirements in the branch countries.

B. Achieve Band 6 or higher in the **Academic Version** of the '*International English Language Testing System*' (IELTS) test, OR
Achieve a score of 550 or more in the 'Test of English as a Foreign Language' (TOEFL) (**Paper-Based Test**) or the equivalent score in the Computer-Based Test.

The tests above will indicate that the students admitted should be able to:

- ✓ write clear, concise, grammatically correct and accurately spelt prose;
- ✓ read large quantities of text quickly, accurately and critically;
- ✓ classify evidence precisely and assess its value and reliability;
- ✓ argue logically, consistently and sceptically;
- ✓ marshal various sorts of evidence to support a logical argument.

The proposed programme of study is aimed at the following target audience:

- New BA graduates in English Language and Literature from the AOU and other Arab and international universities,

- Postgraduate students currently enrolled in traditional universities who may want to avail themselves of the facilities of a flexible open education system,
- Instructors engaged in teaching English in high schools, community colleges, and universities.

7. Language of study

English

8. Information about non-OU standard assessment regulations (including PSRB requirements)

AOU's assessment strategy incorporates general principles and procedures aiming to regulate and monitor examinations in all its branches. AOU regulations include: anonymous and group marking, validation (pre-assessment moderation) of examination questions and answer keys by external examiners, monitoring tutors' marking, postassessment moderation; and formation of different examination committees.

Below is a brief summary of major assessment principles, policies, and procedures adhered to by FLS which are congruent with the general precepts defined in Section 6 of the QAA Code of Practice.

1. General principles

AOU has explicit procedures for ensuring that student performance is properly judged and for evaluating how academic standards are maintained through assessment practice. The following are some of the procedures which FLS implements:

- Final examination questions and their answer keys are approved by external examiners. Similarly, all TMAs and their answer keys are approved by external examiners.
- All final examination scripts and TMA samples are sent to AOU HQ from the University's branches for review by external examiners.
- Cross branch marking (CBM) VCs are held to ensure fair marking between branches.

2. Contribution to student learning

The FLS encourages assessment practice that promotes effective learning. For example, in preparing TMAs and examination questions, course chairs are asked to identify the learning outcomes which each question/task is designed to test.

3. Assessment committees

The AOU and the FLS implement effective, clear and consistent policies for forming assessment/examination committees/councils and for defining their roles and responsibilities. The structure, roles and powers of the following AOU assessment committees are clearly spelled out in the FLS *Assessment Booklet*.

Course Assessment Committee (CAC)
Faculty Examination Committee (FEC)
Central Examination Committee (CEC)
Branch Examination Committees (BEC)

4. Preparation and administration of examinations

AOU ensures that assessment is conducted with rigour and fairness and with due regard to security:

- a. To guarantee the security of examinations and safeguard against possible leakage, the FLS Dean takes full responsibility for receiving and delivering examination questions through the various stages of production;
- b. Branch directors and branch programme coordinators supervise the administration of the examinations;
- c. All stages of test administration, the marking of scripts, and the recording of marks are regulated by explicit written instructions and monitored by concerned bodies (programme coordinators, course coordinators, examination committees);
- d. To guarantee objectivity in marking, students' names and registration numbers do not appear on final examination scripts. Furthermore, in courses taught by more than one tutor, the principle of 'group marking' is applied in the marking of all scripts;
- e. Tutors' marking of TMAs and finals is monitored by Branch Course Coordinators and reports, together with samples, are sent to the FLS Dean every semester;
- f. All final examination scripts are reviewed by external examiners;
- g. The final results for each course are reviewed by the course assessment committee (CAC), then by the faculty examinations committee (FEC), and finally by the central examination committee (CEC).¹

5. Marking, grading and staff training

The FLS adopts transparent and fair mechanisms for marking and for moderating marks. All tutors responsible for marking are provided with model answers (approved by external examiners) to the questions they will be marking. In addition, grades given by branch tutors are centrally processed and moderated by relevant committees to ensure objectivity.

AOU also ensures that faculty members involved in the assessment of students are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities. This is done through training, directives and memos sent from AOU HQ as well as through posting relevant information on AOU website.

6. Assessment regulations

AOU reviews and amends assessment regulations periodically to ensure that the regulations remain fit for purpose. New measures were introduced to ensure that assessments are valid and are monitored by relevant bodies.

7. Documenting and disseminating assessment decisions

¹ For details on the composition and responsibilities of these committees the reader is referred FLS *Assessment Booklet* (DOC #2).

AOU requires that all assessment decisions are recorded and documented accurately and systematically at each administrative level and that the decisions of relevant assessment panels and examination boards are communicated as quickly as possible.

MA MODULES ASSESSMENT

Components of Module Assessment

Module assessment is based on two main types of written works:

- (i) Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs)
- (ii) Final Exams (FEs)

Assessment Components

Students' module results will depend upon their achievements across the different components of assessment:

Continuous Assessment: This comprises the course TMAs which represent 50% of the Overall Assessment Score (OAS).

Final Assessment: This consists of ONE FINAL EXAM which represents 50% of the overall assessment score.

To pass a course, a student should obtain a minimum grade of C+, obtaining a minimum numerical score of 70 out of 100.

Students should pass all examined courses/modules with an accumulative average of not less than 3 points – i.e. an overall GPA of not less than B.

In the case of MA dissertation module, the AOU MA bylaws state that students are required to present a dissertation acceptable to a board of examiners. This board of examiners will consist of the student's supervisor (head of committee), one faculty member and an external examiner.

For more details, see the MA Award Bylaws.

How to Pass the Course/Module

In order to pass the course/module, a student must obtain:

An average of at least 60% across in each of the two main components of assessment (i.e. Continuous Assessment and Final Assessment), obtaining a numerical grade of not less than 70 out of 100.

In all these assessment components, students will be assessed according to criteria which are based on learning outcomes.

For the MA dissertation module, students are required to present a dissertation acceptable to a board of examiners.

Allocation of Marks

A. MA examinable modules

For each MA module, students are required to do the following tasks:

- (i) Prepare the required TMAs
- (ii) Sit for one final exam

The following table shows the distribution of marks for the various types of course assessment in the MA modules.

Components		Total Mark
CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT	TMAs	50
FINAL ASSESSMENT	FINAL EXAM	50
GRAND TOTAL		100

Notes on TMAs & Final Exams

(i) Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs)

These assignments are spread out over the duration of course delivery. In addition to gauging student progress of study, they serve to invoke and develop investigative and research skills. TMAs carry 50% of the overall grade of the course.

(ii) Final Exams (FEs)

Final exams are typically of the essay type and are divided into three Sections/Parts each covering one or two blocks/themes of the course as in the table below: Students will be required to answer 3 questions in 3 hours.

Part	Questions	Notes
A	1	- ONE compulsory question. The question typically deals with a very important/central topic
B	2&3&4	- This part consists of 3 questions - Students answer two questions only. - Each question is meant to test a certain block/theme

9. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning.

FLS evaluates and improves the quality and standards of teaching and learning through the following measures:

1. Hiring professional tutors with excellent experience in the field and continually training and upgrading the skills of the junior ones. It also makes it a point to solicit high quality tutors in the field who are very passionate about their teaching and the subject matter. Our tutors have graduated from many of the best universities: they have very good quality research, and they frequently participate in conferences in their fields. Our tutors maintain effective channels of communication with their students, and ensure that the students are progressing well toward the fulfilment of their degree requirements. The Dean constantly follows up on the students' progress during the entire semester. At the end of the semester, the deanship reviews the students' marks and discusses the students' assessments and performance with their tutors. The students' proposals examined by the Deanship team so far reflect the high quality of students' work and the tremendous effort the tutors exert to coach and mentor the students. The tutors receive very satisfactory evaluations from their students at the end of every semester, which get very special mention in the External Examiners' reports.
2. Coordinating with the University QA Department: FLS receives the tutors' and students' evaluation of the programme from the QA Department and writes an annual monitoring report which includes a major section on the students' evaluation of the programme. The students' survey is rather extensive; it includes information about the learning resources, the performance of the tutors, the quality of the assessments and the university facilities available to them. This report is important to FLS: it helps the deanship to evaluate the programme and prepare an action plan to meet all the challenges that may arise.
3. The FLS Deanship keeps an excellent working relationship with the Academic Reviewers and the External Examiners in the programme. Both are constantly consulted about the different aspects of the programme. The External Examiner discusses his/her report with the tutors and the course chairs of the modules, highlights the strengths and weaknesses, and makes suggestions toward the improvement of the programme. The Deanship responds to these reports and takes action to implement all relevant suggestions and recommendations of the External Examiners.

The Dean meets with the students periodically. On many occasions, the Dean meets the students face to face to address their concerns.

10. Changes made to the programme since last (re)validation

NA / The programme is validated for the first time in 2019

Annexe 1: Curriculum map

Annexe 2: Notes on completing the OU programme specification template

Annexe 1 - Curriculum map

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✓) particular programme learning outcomes.

Level 7a	Study module/unit																			
		A1	A2	A3	A4		B1	B2	B3	B4		C1	C2	C3	C4		D1	D2	D3	D4
	EFL501: Theories of Foreign Language Learning	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	EFL502: Research Methods	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
	EFL503: English Language Teaching Methods: Receptive Skills	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	EFL504: English Language Teaching Methods: Productive Skills	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Level 7b	Study module/unit																			
		A1	A2	A3	A4		B1	B2	B3	B4		C1	C2	C3	C4		D1	D2	D3	D4
	EFL505: Technology in the Classroom	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	EFL506: Classroom Management	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓
	EFL507: Foreign Language Testing	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		
	EFL508: Practicum	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓

Level 7c	Study module/unit																			
		A1	A2	A3	A4		B1	B2	B3	B4		C1	C2	C3	C4		D1	D2	D3	D4
	EFL529: Proposal Prep	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓

EFL531: Thesis Module	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
OR A: a Comprehensive Exam and 1. the following two compulsory modules																
EFL521: Semantics and Pragmatics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
EFL522: Contrastive Linguistics and Error Analysis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

2. Any two of the following list of electives:

Elective Modules	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4	D1	D2	D3	D4
EFL511: English Linguistics and Applications	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
EFL512: Sociolinguistics	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
EFL513: Discourse Analysis	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EFL514: Pedagogic Grammar	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
EL515: Phonetics and Phonology	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Annexe 2: Notes on completing programme specification templates

- 1 - This programme specification should be mapped against the learning outcomes detailed in module specifications.
- 2 – The expectations regarding student achievement and attributes described by the learning outcome in section 3 must be appropriate to the level of the award within the **QAA frameworks for HE qualifications**: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Pages/default.aspx>
- 3 – Learning outcomes must also reflect the detailed statements of graduate attributes set out in **QAA subject benchmark statements** that are relevant to the programme/award: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx>
- 4 – In section 3, the learning and teaching methods deployed should enable the achievement of the full range of intended learning outcomes. Similarly, the choice of assessment methods in section 3 should enable students to demonstrate the achievement of related learning outcomes. Overall, assessment should cover the full range of learning outcomes.
- 5 - Where the programme contains validated **exit awards** (e.g. CertHE, DipHE, PGDip), learning outcomes must be clearly specified for each award.
- 6 - For programmes with distinctive study **routes or pathways** the specific rationale and learning outcomes for each route must be provided.
- 7 – Validated programmes delivered in **languages other than English** must have programme specifications both in English and the language of delivery.