

The University of Hong Kong
Faculty of Education

Master of Education (MEd)
English Language Education

Specialism Coordinators:

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The specialism aims to provide experienced teachers and language specialists with an appropriate theory-based framework within which to understand and investigate issues involved in English language education, in order that they can develop leadership roles in the profession. The specialism focuses on the development of participants' language awareness, with a view to equipping them with the expertise necessary for a critical understanding of approaches to research and development in English language teaching and learning. The specialism also develops the practical skills needed for school-based classroom research, curriculum development, and the implementation of innovations.

Who would benefit from this specialism?

The main target groups are as follows:

- English language teachers in local primary and secondary schools;
- Other language teaching professionals from within the region who may be interested in full-time or part-time M.Ed study;
- Other Hong Kong-based professionals involved in language education, such as language instructors, research assistants, teacher educators and education officers.

Applicants with the following background are preferred:

1. Have obtained a minimum level 7 overall in IELTS or equivalent and no less than 6.5 in any skill (where applicable)
2. Hold a first degree in a language related discipline
3. Hold a teaching qualification
4. Have at least 1 year of full-time teaching experience (discretion may be applied in considering individual cases)

Mode of study:

The specialism is available in 1-year full-time and 2-year part-time modes of study.

Outline of the four specialist courses:

Course 1: An Introduction to Sociolinguistics (6 credits)

This course provides opportunities for candidates to explore the relationships between language, education and society. It addresses a variety of topics including social and regional diversity within a language, multilingualism, language shift and maintenance, the rise of English as a global lingua franca, language planning, choice of a language as medium of instruction, as well as language and identity. The course aims to help candidates to develop an understanding of basic concepts in sociolinguistics; a critical understanding

of the roles of language in society and education; a critical awareness of professional challenges resulting from shifting sociolinguistic conditions.

Course 2: English Language Curriculum and Assessment (6 credits)

This course is concerned with developments in the English Language curriculum, both in the Hong Kong context and also in relation to regional and global trends. The course focuses on processes of curriculum renewal and the implementation of curriculum innovations, and examines assessment as an integral part of the curriculum, along with syllabus and methodology. The main topics covered include: trends in ELT methodology (communicative language teaching, task-based language teaching, the incorporation of language arts, IT in language learning); relations between assessment and curriculum, (feedback, washback, formative assessment and school-based assessment). These developments are analysed within a framework of curriculum innovation and educational change. All of these are considered in relation to Hong Kong curriculum reforms, such as the New Senior Secondary English curriculum. The course aims to develop participants' understanding of the key developments and innovations in the English Language curriculum, and their criticality in evaluating the implementation of ELT innovations in their own context.

Course 3: Language Awareness: Grammar and Lexis (6 credits)

This course focuses on the interface between teachers' knowledge about language (specifically grammar and lexis) and their pedagogical practice. It is concerned with descriptions of English grammar and lexis and their close interrelationship. Rather than attempting an overview of English grammar and lexis, the course highlights certain key areas for in-depth exploration. The course aims to act as a catalyst to promote improvement in participants' knowledge about grammar and lexis, since this is seen as essential to their work as English language educators. At the same time, it invites participants to consider the impact of their knowledge about grammar and lexis on the decisions they make and the strategies they employ in their teaching.

Course 4: Second Language Acquisition (6 credits)

This course aims to develop participants' critical understanding of the key issues in second language acquisition. It seeks to engage them in understanding and reviewing these issues from the cognitive and sociocultural perspectives. Participants are also required to apply these theoretical perspectives to their own experiences as second language learners and teachers. Both theoretical and pedagogical issues will be addressed through an analysis of authentic evidence of second language learning reported locally and internationally. Participants will also be introduced to current debates in the field, in particular the relationship between language and cognition, as well as the roles of input, interaction, output, form-focused instruction, motivation and learner strategies in second and bilingual language development. The course will also address the broader socio-political context of second language learning and language policy development.

In addition to four specialist courses, students will also have to complete:

- The compulsory core course Educational Issues and Research (6 credits);
- Three elective courses (6 credits each); and
- An option of a professional portfolio (12 credits) or a research project (12 credits).