



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Education Department
Master of Education
(English Language Teaching)

MEd(ELT): full research or coursework

There are two routes to obtaining an MEd in English Language Teaching (ELT):

- MEd by coursework and half thesis (part-time over two years or full-time over one year)
- MEd by full thesis (part-time over two years or full-time over one year)

1. MEd (ELT) by coursework and half thesis

This degree is intended for language educators (e.g. teachers, teacher educators, subject advisors, curriculum developers, publishers). It is designed for students who want to develop their professional expertise in the field of English language and literacy teaching and learn how to do research.

Students applying for this course are expected to have several years' experience and a proven track record in the English language education field. They should also have a strong academic background in English.

Focus of the course

Over the last 15 years, there has been significant change in language education in South Africa and more broadly in the southern African region. This change has been reflected in new language policies, in the introduction of outcomes-based and/or learner-centred curricula, in new methods of assessment and in new ways of viewing literacy.

These changes in policy, curriculum and pedagogy are not unique to South Africa. They reflect global developments in language and literacy education. The MEd in ELT is designed to help educators understand and engage with these developments. It thus addresses the needs of local students and those who wish to teach English internationally.

The course provides a structured programme of lectures, seminars, guided reading and carefully scaffolded research tasks designed to develop a critical understanding of the theory and research underpinning language policy, curriculum and pedagogy in southern Africa. A central concern is to integrate students' understanding of theory and practice.

The course is also designed to develop academic and research skills. For example, students learn how to use the computer and internet for research purposes; they carry out small scale research and evaluation projects, write these up in research reports and present their findings in seminars using audio-visual aids of various kinds. The course prepares students to carry out an independent piece of research in the field of English language and literacy teaching and write this up in the form of a half thesis. Students are strongly encouraged to publish the results of their research in an academic journal together with their supervisor.

Structure of Course

If done part-time, the first year is taken up with coursework and the second year with completing an independent piece of research and writing up the half thesis. If done full-time, the two elements of the course run concurrently.

The coursework component consists of 5 modules, each roughly 7 days in length. One of these modules is a short course in Research Design. The modules are scheduled to coincide with school holidays where this is possible. They take place at various times throughout the year. The first module is usually in January before school commences.

In the second year, there are usually 6 meetings of shorter duration (3-4 days). At these meetings, students report on the progress of their research and are guided in writing it up. Students are also encouraged to have regular meetings with their supervisor. Where distance necessitates, some of this may be done via e-mail.

Assessment

Coursework: In total, this accounts for 50% of the final mark. As part of the coursework component, students carry out a number of small-scale research, materials development and evaluation tasks and present their findings orally, visually and in writing. The marks for these assignments make up 25% of the final mark. The students also develop a professional portfolio and write an examination. Together this counts for 25% of the final mark.

Independent research project: This comprises the second part of the degree. Students are expected to design a piece of independent research and write this up in the form of a research proposal, which is evaluated by the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees Committee. Once approved, students proceed to carry out their research and write up a half thesis of not more than 30 000 words. This is submitted in December of the first year for full-time students and of the second-year for part-time students, allowing students to graduate in April of the following year. The half-thesis accounts for 50% of the final mark.

2. MEd (ELT) by full thesis

The full thesis route to the MEd (ELT) is intended for students who already have a strong academic background in the field of English language teaching. Such students would be expected to be familiar with the literature of applied linguistics and second language

acquisition research. They would also be expected to have demonstrated their ability to carry out independent research at the Honours level.

Students wishing to do a full thesis should already have a research topic in mind. Their intention would be to develop in depth knowledge of a specific aspect of English language learning and teaching rather than to develop the broader, professional and research expertise offered by the coursework Masters.

If you wish to do the Masters by full thesis, you should in the first instance contact the course coordinators, Sarah Murray and/or Sally-Ann Robertson, in order to arrange a meeting to discuss the research topic you have in mind. Their contact details are provided below.

Registration requirements

Applicants should normally be in possession of either a BEd (Hons), ideally with an English language teaching component, or an Honours degree in linguistics, applied linguistics or English language teaching. Exceptions may occasionally be made where there is a strong justification, for example, extensive relevant experience. A professional teaching certificate or diploma is a further recommendation.

Applications for the MEd(ELT) by coursework and half-thesis

The criteria used for selecting students are:

- The previous academic record of the applicant
- A 'track record' in English language education e.g. teaching experience, membership of professional associations, significant achievements
- The contribution that the applicant is likely to make to English language teaching in the future

Therefore when submitting an application, you should include:

- A curriculum vitae giving any information which you consider relevant to the above criteria
- The transcript showing the results of your Honours degree
- The names of two referees; at least one of these should be a person who taught you on your Honours degree course
- A brief account of why you are applying to do the course and how you hope to use what you learn.

The next coursework intake is in 2012.

Application forms are available from the Rhodes website:

<http://www.ru.ac.za/registrar/forms/>

or from:

Student Bureau
Rhodes University
P O Box 94
Grahamstown
6140

Tel: +27 (0) 46 603-8276

Fax: +27 (0) 46 603-8300

E-mail: registrar@ru.ac.za

Applications close 30 September 2011.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by 31 October 2011.

Facilities for studying English language teaching at Rhodes University

Rhodes has excellent facilities for studying English language teaching. The university has a number of institutes and projects concerned with research and development in the field: the Institute for the Study of English in Africa (ISEA), the Dictionary Unit for South African English and the National English Literary Museum (NELM). The internationally renowned Molteno Project originated at Rhodes and the ISEA currently has two major schools projects: the Schools' Language Project and the Shakespeare Schools Text Project. The university has thriving Linguistics, Drama and English Departments, which offer possibilities for joint supervision. It also has an Academic Development Centre where staff are actively involved in researching academic literacy in English.

As a result of Rhodes' extensive involvement in English language education, the library has excellent holdings of books and journals and electronic resources in this field.

Titles of some recent theses written by MEd (ELT) students

- Gray, W. (2006). Apprenticing learners in the context of the Grade 10 physical science classroom. (Full thesis)
- Hodgskiss, J.A. (2007). A case study: tracing the development of emergent literacy in a Grade R class. (Half thesis)
- Kajinga, G. (2006). Teachers' beliefs regarding the role of extensive reading in English language learning: a case study. (Half thesis)

- Leask-Smith, L. (2009). A picture's worth a thousand words: A case study of grade 10 English language educators teaching visual literacy. (Half thesis)
- Magambo, J. (2009). Investigating perceptions of students' language needs at a Rwandan institution of higher learning. (Half thesis)
- Mbelani, M. (2007). Making visual literacy meaningful in a rural context: an action research case study. (Half thesis)
- Molete, B. (2008). Perceptions of the gap between theory and practice in the preparation of English language teachers at the Lesotho College of Education. (Half thesis)
- Baron, E. (2010). The role of teacher cognitions in the uptake of technology in English teaching: A case study. (Half thesis)
- Simanga, E. (2010) Teaching struggling adolescent readers in Namibia: A case study. (Half thesis)

Further information

If any further information is required, contact one of the course co-ordinators:

Sarah Murray/ Sally-Ann Robertson
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Rhodes University
Box 94
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