

# Tuning

Tuning  
Educational  
Structures  
in Europe

Reference  
Points for the  
Design and  
Delivery  
of Degree  
Programmes  
in **Linguistics**



Education and Culture DG

Life Long Learning

Reference Points for the Design and  
Delivery of Degree Programmes in  
LINGUISTICS

### **Tuning Educational Structures in Europe**

The name *Tuning* was chosen for the project to reflect the idea that universities do not look for uniformity in their degree programmes or any sort of unified, prescriptive or definitive European curricula but simply for points of reference, convergence and common understanding. The protection of the rich diversity of European education has been paramount in the Tuning Project from the start and the project in no way seeks to restrict the independence of academic and subject specialists, or undermine local and national academic authority.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT AREA<sup>1</sup>

Linguistics is concerned with the apparently uniquely human attribute of language in all its forms (spoken, written and signed), questions of its nature and how human beings come to have it, and the consequences for issues surrounding human cognition and behaviour. Linguists concern themselves with many different facets of language, from the physical properties of the sound waves in utterances to the intentions of speakers towards others in conversations and the social contexts in which conversations are embedded. The various sub-branches of linguistics are concerned with how languages are structured, what they have in common, the range of and limits to the differences among them, how they are acquired and used, how they change, and so on. The study of the properties of language in this sense, and the construction of theoretical models for these areas of inquiry, all come under the rubric of linguistics.

Since the use of language by human beings involves a wide range of cognitive, social and interactional skills and competences, the intellectual tools brought to bear upon the study of language also come from a wide range of disciplines. This means that there is a range of viewpoints on language from formal, sociological and psychological perspectives, as well as from practical concerns such as language teaching. Because of this, much of linguistics is interdisciplinary in both the issues it addresses and the methodologies brought to bear. These approaches complement the modes of analysis developed to address traditional structural questions, leading to the rich interdisciplinary nature of much of linguistics.

Linguistics approaches language from a range of perspectives. An act of linguistic communication involves the deployment by each interlocutor of a vast range of skills, many of which are not subject to conscious introspection. Traditionally, a number of areas of analysis have been singled out into particularised domains of inquiry, which examine specialised linguistic properties and how these properties vary across speakers, time and space. In addition, other areas of study bring to bear perspectives on language which have developed out of concerns for the role of language in society, its nature as a cognitive domain, the way it is acquired, the way it changes and the way it forms part of a gamut of communicative modalities.

Linguistics thus involves the systematic, theoretical and empirical study of the structure, function and use of language in all its forms: spoken, written and signed. Modern linguistics is distinguished by an emphasis on the highly structured nature of both language and linguistic behaviour and the development of a range of discipline specific methodologies designed to elucidate the nature of these structures from a formalist or functionalist perspective. Language

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<sup>1</sup> This is an *abridged and adapted* version of the United Kingdom Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's benchmark statement for linguistics 2007, 2nd ed. ([www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Linguistics07.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Linguistics07.pdf)).

Adaptation of the benchmark statement focused on *points of departure* in the description of the discipline from a European perspective.

is taken to be structured on several levels each of which is studied as a sub-discipline of linguistics in its own right.

The study of the physical properties of speech sounds and of the articulatory and psychological mechanisms used in speech production and perception is known as **phonetics**. A subfield, often called 'practical phonetics', is the study of recognising, transcribing and producing the sounds of the world's languages. Phonetic theory deals with the mapping between language-specific cognitive representation of speech sounds and organs used to produce and perceive these sounds.

The study of the systematic use of sounds in language is known as **phonology**. Universal phonology is the study of the properties which all human sound systems are thought to share. The phonology of a particular language describes and tries to explain the relationship between the phonetic entities (both segmental and suprasegmental) found in spoken language and the abstract phonological representation thought to underlie them. This is done through specifying 'legal' sequences of abstract phonological units and identifying the processes through which pronunciations of these sequences can be realised.

The study of the structure of words and of the properties of the minimal units that bear independent meaning or grammatical function is known as **morphology**. Morphologists investigate how these minimal units are constituted and how they interrelate, addressing such questions as the nature of lexical entries and how these relate to the morphological patterns found in language.

The investigation of how sentences are constructed and what relations may hold between their subparts is known as **syntax**. Syntacticians investigate how these larger structures are built up.

The nature of the meaning of the minimal units characterised by morphology, how these meanings interrelate and how they compose via morphological and syntactic means to give more complex meanings is known as **semantics**. Semanticists also investigate the meaning properties and relations that hold between different structures built up by the syntax, often, but not only, using techniques from formal logic.

The study of the way people use linguistic structures in particular situational or discourse contexts is known as **pragmatics**. This involves the meanings that are intended and understood by language users producing and interpreting utterances in real situations, especially when these are not literally expressed in the semantics of the words and structures used.

Investigations of relations between language, action, knowledge and situation are undertaken at the analytical level of **discourse**, which is variously understood to refer to connected stretches of language occurring beyond the sentence, to situated verbal interaction and to a specific domain of language use.

The **lexicon** holds information about the phonetic, phonological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties of words and consequently has a central role in these levels of analysis. It is also a major area of investigation in other areas of linguistics, such as psycholinguistics, typological linguistics and language acquisition. Lexicology is concerned with the nature of the

vocabulary and the structure of the lexicon; and lexicography applies the insights of lexicology, along with those of other linguistic disciplines, to the study of dictionaries and lexicons.

This structured perspective on language and linguistic behaviour may also be applied to questions of language acquisition, language production and processing and language variation and change. Each of these sub-branches of linguistics focuses on the construction of a theoretical model with the predictive capacity to account for the relevant properties of language as a uniquely human attribute:

**Sociolinguistics** includes the study of variation in the language of individual speakers and groups of speakers, and their (conscious or subconscious) intentions in selecting particular speech styles and forms. Consequently, this includes the study of regional dialects, the ethnography of language, and anthropological linguistics. Features as diverse as gender, age, social status, topic of conversation and identity of interlocutor can also correlate with particular linguistic variants. Variation may involve code-switching and multilingualism, and may also lead to borrowing between languages used in a single community. Further possible consequences are language endangerment and/or death, or the rise of pidgin and creole languages. Another important area of study within this field is the interface between language and power/language and politics.

Language variation can also be seen as language change in progress. More generally, **historical linguistics** has three subparts: the study of language change over time; the genealogical classification of languages into family groups; and the reconstruction of hypothetical ancestors for those groups. Historical linguists may work on the origin and evolution of language or pursue connections of linguistic groupings and data. The study of language change will also incorporate the identification of motivations for change in terms of, for instance, phonetics, acquisition, and social and political factors. An important area of study involves the interaction of change with language variation and the extent to which both can be integrated with linguistic theories.

**Typological linguistics** involves the classification of languages in terms of common structural features and the implicational relations among those features. Areal linguistics is concerned with similarities and differences between languages in a particular geographical area. Contrastive linguistics involves comparisons between two or more individual languages, which may or may not be historically related.

**Psycholinguistics** is the study of how language (spoken, written or signed) is represented in the mind, acquired, understood and produced. The study of the mental processes involved in language comprehension and production is a major focus of investigation. In comprehension, psycholinguists study the parsing of syntactic structure, word recognition, the semantic and pragmatic interpretation of utterances, and perceptual aspects of language processing. The study of language production aims to elucidate what is involved in the planning of utterances at all levels, from intention to articulation. Neurolinguists study the neurological basis for language use and development.

In studying **language acquisition**, linguists and psycholinguists are concerned with how the different levels of language develop in children acquiring their native language, or in individuals acquiring a second or third language. Core issues underlying current investigations of first language acquisition are concerned with what constitutes knowledge of language and how it is acquired by children; whether, or which aspects of, language behaviour are innate or learnt; and language socialisation in childhood. **Second language acquisition** is the study of the acquisition of a language after the first language is established. As well as the core issues mentioned above, a comparison between first and second language acquisition serves to further enhance the nature/nurture debate, and a link with pedagogical issues is often made. The study of the acquisition of two or more languages from birth (**bilingualism/multilingualism**) focuses on the mental organisation of the two language systems and its implications for our theories of how language is mentally represented, as well as on the social and psychological forces underlying their use (such as interference and code-switching).

In addition to these sub-disciplines of linguistics, a linguistic perspective may also be applied to the analysis of language in the context of other areas of human activity (inter alia: technology; education; translation; intercultural communication; language disorders):

**Clinical linguistics** is the application of linguistic theories and analytical techniques in the field of speech, language and communication impairment. It can be used in the description, explanation and remediation of a wide range of impairments in children and adults. All areas of linguistics can be applied clinically to study breakdown in the perception, production and representation of language in all its modalities. By investigating the ways in which communication may be impaired, clinical linguistics also provides insights into the nature of normal language, its development and use.

**Computational linguistics/natural language processing** covers a wide area concerned with computer processing of human language, often for practical purposes such as human/machine interaction, but also as a methodology for testing implementations of linguistic analysis (for example, computer simulations of language and speech).

Language is central to educational processes at all levels, and the academic study of **language in education** is a recognised focus of the broader linguistics curriculum. Themes typically addressed in language in education programmes include: the role of language in all types of learning and in children's cognitive and social development; educational discourses and genres; the uses and meanings of literacy in educational and non-educational settings; literacy development; educational responses to language disorders; language education policy and planning; the role of standard languages, dialects and minority languages in education; the learning, teaching and assessment of first, second and foreign languages; multilingualism and multilingual education.

## 2. DEGREE PROFILES AND OCCUPATIONS

Addressing typical degrees in the field at BA level, involves identifying the broad range of first cycle degree programmes that incorporate a linguistics component since linguistics is not typically offered as a single subject degree at this level (with some exceptions e.g. in the UK). The degree programmes are separated into those that overtly combine linguistics with another subject and those that incorporate linguistics as an integral element of some overarching subject. At Master's level, similar issues arise in that the range of Master's programmes include programmes that incorporate a component of linguistics, programmes that exclusively teach linguistics (including both conversion and progression programmes), advanced programmes that specialise in a sub-discipline of linguistics and advanced programmes that specialise in some application of linguistics.

It is also not a simple matter to identify "typical" occupations related to linguistics, since there is no "professional field" of linguistics over and beyond the academic discipline itself. The issue is further complicated by the lack of a clear sense of a "typical degree" in linguistics, meaning that there is not a "typical graduate". Moreover, vocational applications of linguistics typically require the first cycle graduate to engage in a second cycle programme that delivers a vocational application of the discipline.

### 2.1 TYPICAL DEGREES OFFERED IN LINGUISTICS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The subject of linguistics is taught in a variety of guises in the first cycle of HE (Bachelor level) and in some contexts may not even be explicitly named as linguistics but by more general descriptors such as language sciences or communication<sup>2</sup>. The single subject first cycle linguistics degree does exist but is relatively uncommon<sup>3</sup>. Typically linguistics is either combined with another named subject or is embedded within the degree programme of another named subject. Linguistics may be combined with a wide range of other subjects in the humanities, social sciences and even sciences. Linguistics can be found embedded within the study of national and/or minority language studies, foreign languages, philology, philosophy, psychology, computing, speech therapy, etc. The single subject degree is generally differentiated from the combined linguistics curriculum by the breadth of coverage in that the single subject student has the opportunity to engage with a wider range of levels and applications of linguistics. The "embedded" linguistics curriculum is typically influenced by requirements of the named subject of the degree programme

In addition to occurring in a variety of subject combinations, it is important to note also that linguistics is not always based within the humanities. In some institutions, it may be based in

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<sup>2</sup>But it is important to note that in many contexts *communication* refers not to linguistics but to media studies or aspects of social psychology that relate to communicative behaviours of the individual, group or organisation,

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps because linguistics is not a discipline that is typically taught in secondary education

social sciences. Hence linguistics programmes are potentially either BA/MA or BSc/MSc. This distinction in the sectoral home of the discipline may (but need not) have an impact on the particular emphases placed in the specific curriculum of the programmes offered. Where linguistics is embedded with other disciplines such as computing or speech therapy, this clearly impacts on both the structural location within a specific sector as well as the emphasis placed on the curriculum delivered.

At Masters level independent linguistics programmes are the rule, although specialisations in various directions are frequent. General programmes can run under names such as Linguistics, Theoretical Linguistics, General Linguistics, and Language Sciences. Specialisations come under labels such as Neurolinguistics, Computational Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and Psycholinguistics. Another option frequently followed is embedding linguistics in a larger Master's programme, such as philology, teacher training, language studies, translation and language mediation, speech therapy, language and speech technology. These two options will lead to degrees either in linguistics proper or in some other subject with a linguistics specialisation. Linguistics also figures as a minor subject in non-linguistically oriented programmes, such as psychology, philosophy, cultural anthropology, cultural studies, communication studies. In these programmes linguistics will not typically feature in the denomination of the degree.

## 2.2 TYPICAL OCCUPATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATES OF LINGUISTICS

Since there is no linguistics profession per se outside of academia, a distinction is drawn between those vocational disciplines that apply outcomes of linguistics research in applied professional domains and those language centred and language related professions that apply expertise in language/languages that is informed by linguistics training. There is inevitably significant overlap between these two domains as practices within most of these professions vary considerably in the degree to which they are informed by core thinking/research in linguistics. It is also recognised that many linguistics graduates enter the generic graduate employment market, drawing on the breadth of transferrable skills offered by linguistics as profiled in the EQF descriptor. The situation, however, may vary from country to country.

### *Direct applications of linguistics*

The vocational applications of linguistics listed here typically require the first cycle graduate to engage in a second cycle programme that delivers the vocational application of the discipline.

Clinical linguist, speech and language therapist, forensic linguist, legal linguistic expert, language and speech technology expert, lexicographer, etymologist, dialectologist, language planning specialist, language policy expert, speech analyst.

### *Language centred and language related professions*

Graduates of both first and second cycle programmes that combine linguistics with the study of one or more modern languages are likely to enter language-centred and language related industries:

Translation specialist, translator, interpreter, text editing specialist, terminology expert, language related field worker, minority language specialist, technical writer, copy editor, language mediator, test designer, language consultant, language corpus manager, multilingual communication specialist, language intelligence specialist, localisation expert, language and dialect coach, language teacher.

### *Occupations in neighbouring disciplines*

As outlined above, there are neighbouring disciplines that incorporate some linguistics Teacher trainer, language teaching curriculum developer, communication and media professional, social worker for minorities, library and documentation specialist, cultural mediator, cultural anthropologist, speech recognition expert, artificial intelligence specialist, marketing language expert.

## **3. SUBJECT SPECIFIC AND GENERIC COMPETENCES IN LINGUISTICS PROGRAMMES**

Competences in the Tuning framework are conceived as a "dynamic combination of knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities" developed or obtained by the learner in the process of study. The competences fostered by an educational programme can be differentiated into the subject specific and the generic, often referred to as "transferable skills". The identification of the key subject specific and generic competences acquired by linguistics graduates followed the two stage process established by Tuning in which an initial and extensive set of competences is first identified and subsequently sent out for consultation with stakeholders, including students, academics and employers.

An initial set of 31 generic competences had already been established as the outcome of the Tuning I Survey (Tuning 2003). The initial set of 23 subject specific competences were established through round table discussion within the Subject Area Group of the measurable linguistic knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes demonstrated by a successful student in each of the core and applied sub-disciplines of linguistics. As far as possible, the competences were articulated in a form that generalised across the sub-disciplines of linguistics with due regard nonetheless paid to representing the potential breadth and variability within linguistics programmes.

Following this initial comprehensive identification of generic and subject specific competences achieved by linguistics graduates, consultation with stakeholders was carried out in order to determine a prioritisation of the competences. The stakeholders were identified by the members of the Subject Area Group. Each group member surveyed their own current students and graduates. In addition, group members consulted with their own national and international professional networks of academic colleagues in the discipline and employers of linguistics

graduates. Following established Tuning procedures, these stakeholders were asked to rate both the importance and achievement of the competences in linguistics degree programmes and then to rank the top five subject specific and generic competences.

A coding procedure was then established by the Subject Area Group for identifying the key competences (generic and subject specific) that emerged from the ratings and rankings of all four stakeholders. In the case of the generic competences, the ten competences that emerged by this procedure were agreed to be appropriate and representative. In the case of the subject specific competences, nine competences emerged via this procedure. Two additional subject specific competences from the original list were considered to be essential and there was some discussion about the rewording of the competences to capture their agreed importance.

One critical consideration in this identification of key competences was the concern that the overall coherence of linguistics as a discipline would be captured. The resulting final set of competences addressed the following core themes:

- structure and use of language;
- linguistic argumentation;
- the nature of linguistic theorising;
- linguistic methodologies and their relationship with theory;
- the role of language in society.

These themes were agreed to capture the vital core of linguistics as a subject area whilst also allowing for the diversity in curriculum design that stems from the variability in perspective, emphasis and degrees of specialisation evident in different institutional contexts as well as different national contexts.

GENERIC COMPETENCES	SUBJECT SPECIFIC COMPETENCES
1. Ability to communicate in a second language.	1. Ability to recognise linguistic problems.
2. Capacity to learn and stay up-to-date with learning.	2. Identify linguistic units and levels of analysis, the relations among them and processes affecting them.
3. Ability to communicate both orally and through the written word.	3. Ability to select appropriate methodologies for different types of linguistic research.
4. Capacity to generate new ideas.	4. Ability to formulate linguistic generalisations on the basis of language data.
5. Ability to apply knowledge in practical situations.	5. Ability to examine and reflect on the relationship between language and its social context.
6. Ability to be critical and self-critical.	6. Ability to gather data, construct linguistic corpora and manage, maintain and retrieve information from them.
7. Ability to identify, pose and solve problems.	7. Ability to use linguistic data in the construction of linguistic argumentation.
8. Knowledge and understanding of the subject area and understanding of the profession.	8. Understanding of the nature of linguistic theories, hypotheses and explanations.
9. Ability for abstract thinking, analysis and synthesis.	9. Awareness of the relationship between theoretical approaches and methodological practices.
10. Ability to search for, process and analyse information from a variety of sources.	10. Ability to critically reflect on popular misconceptions of language and language behaviours,

#### 4. COMPETENCE BASED CYCLE DESCRIPTORS

While the key competences identified above capture the essential core of the discipline from the perspective of the development of the learner, developing cycle descriptors for the design of programmes of study involved teasing out different levels of knowledge, skills and abilities/attributes and the different degrees of autonomy with which the student might be expected to demonstrate these. In addressing this task, the Subject Area Group worked from the lists of key competences. For each key competence, the first issue was to determine whether the competence represented knowledge, skills or competence in the conceptual framework of the EQF or a synthesis of more than one EQF category. Thus, for example, the subject specific competence, "Ability to use linguistic data in the construction of linguistic argumentation", is articulated both as a knowledge based learning outcome (Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the role of language data in linguistic argumentation) and a skill (Argue for or against a particular linguistic analysis on the basis of data sets). The next step was to articulate the components of the key competence as concrete and verifiable (assessable) outcomes of the learning process at a specific level. Thus, for example, the change from Level 6 to Level 7 for the learning outcomes mentioned above involves the degree of theoretical reasoning and the complexity of the data sets involved.

In this process it was clear that the emphasis on autonomy in the EQF category *competences* meant that as the cycle level changed so the EQF category of a learning outcome might potentially change. For example, the ability to convey linguistic ideas to a non-specialist audience is articulated as a skill at levels 6 and 7, where the change in level is reflected in the complexity of the linguistic ideas involved. In the development from level 7 to level 8, the outcome is re-interpreted as a competence since the student is expected to be able to independently recognise and respond to the opportunities to promote linguistic ideas to a wider audience.

Articulating the learning outcomes in a form that corresponds to the terminology of the EQF descriptors is challenging for linguistics which is a discipline that only begins to be taught at HE level. In particular, EQF descriptors for level 6 specify "advanced knowledge" which might be understood as inconsistent with first cycle programmes that introduce students to foundational concepts in linguistics. Similarly, "conversion" Masters programmes, which require little or no prior study of linguistics, are difficult to reconcile with the EQF level 7 descriptor which specifies "highly specialised knowledge". In the end, it was agreed that linguistic units, techniques and analyses are highly technical and abstract, hence acquiring them implies a form of 'advanced knowledge'. Conversion Masters degrees were also seen to culminate in a Masters dissertation which satisfies the specification of "highly specialised knowledge". Hence the group adopted the terminology of the EQF descriptors, recognising that some further clarification of their interpretation in the context of linguistics might be required.

	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCE
	GRADUATES IN LINGUISTICS AT LEVEL 6 ARE EXPECTED TO...		
<b>LEVEL 6</b>	<p>Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the structure and use of language</p> <p>Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the role of language data in linguistic argumentation</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge of linguistic theories, principles, hypotheses and explanations</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge of linguistic methodologies and their relationship to linguistic theories</p> <p>Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the role of language in society</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge of the relatedness between linguistics and other disciplines</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge of the acquisition, production and comprehension of language</p>	<p>Ask empirically motivated questions in relation to language</p> <p>Analyse language data using appropriate linguistic techniques</p> <p>Formulate linguistic generalizations on the basis of structured data</p> <p>Collect, organise and interpret language data under guidance</p> <p>Argue for or against a particular linguistic analysis on the basis of data sets.</p> <p>Convey basic linguistic ideas to a non-specialist audience</p> <p>Write and speak in the language of instruction</p> <p>Engage in abstract thinking and carry out analysis and synthesis</p> <p>Search for, process and analyse information from a variety of sources</p>	<p>Demonstrate sensitivity to issues of register and language appropriacy.</p> <p>Demonstrate a capacity to learn and stay up-to-date with learning</p> <p>Demonstrate awareness of one's own knowledge and skills</p> <p>Demonstrate a capacity to reflect on one's own performance</p> <p>Demonstrate a capacity to reflect on one's own problem solving skills</p>

	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCE
	GRADUATES IN LINGUISTICS AT LEVEL 7 ARE EXPECTED TO...		
LEVEL 7	<p>Demonstrate specialised knowledge within the areas of linguistics relevant to the program</p> <p>Demonstrate theoretically grounded knowledge of the role of language data in linguistic argumentation</p> <p>Demonstrate advanced knowledge of linguistic theories, principles, hypotheses and explanations</p> <p>Demonstrate specialised knowledge of linguistic methodologies and their relationship to linguistic theories</p> <p>Demonstrate specialised knowledge of the relatedness between linguistics and other disciplines</p>	<p>Formulate theoretically grounded questions in relation to language</p> <p>Formulate linguistic generalisations out of independently sourced data.</p> <p>Select appropriate research methodologies</p> <p>Collect and organise language data independently</p> <p>Analyse and interpret complex language data within a relevant framework</p> <p>Use appropriate linguistic techniques in handling data</p> <p>Provide theoretically informed argumentation for or against a particular linguistic analysis on the basis of complex data sets.</p> <p>Convey linguistic ideas to a non-specialist audience</p> <p>Communicate in one or more major languages of the world</p> <p>Write and speak according to the relevant register (formal, informal and specialist)</p>	<p>Demonstrate a capacity to generate new ideas</p> <p>Demonstrate an ability to determine the nature of a problem and to reflect on the appropriate approach to its solution</p> <p>Demonstrate an ability to be critical and self-critical</p> <p>Demonstrate an ability to evaluate one's own problem solving skills</p> <p>Demonstrate an ability to work independently with abstract ideas</p> <p>Demonstrate an ability to independently search for, process and analyse information from a variety of sources</p>

	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCE
	GRADUATES IN LINGUISTICS AT LEVEL 8 ARE EXPECTED TO...		
<b>LEVEL 8</b>	Demonstrate highly specialized knowledge as the basis for original thinking and research within linguistics	Design and implement complex data collection procedures  Write and present for a targeted professional audience  Argue clearly and persuasively in a scholarly and/or professional environment  Communicate in a variety of modes at an expert level  Identify significant and topical research questions	Demonstrate a capacity for original thinking in linguistics  Demonstrate a capacity to generate and recognise contributions to the field of linguistics  Recognise and respond to opportunities to promote linguistic ideas to a wider audience

## 5. LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

A competence/learning outcome<sup>4</sup> based approach to learning, teaching and assessment is an inherently student-centred approach to pedagogy that places the emphasis less on top down delivery of subject matter and more on student outcomes as measured through assessment practices whether formative or summative. In other words, from the students' perspective learning is driven by what they are expected to be able to do and how these expectations will be assessed. From the assessment perspective, a learning outcome based approach shifts the focus from domains of knowledge to what the students are expected to be able to "do" with their knowledge and the attitudes and competences they have developed in their learning. Moreover, module assessment methods should not be viewed in isolation, but should be part of an overall course strategy, linked to course outcomes expressed in the EQF categories. In addition assessment criteria should be mapped to the learning outcomes of the module and therefore the course. This then feeds back in to the learning and teaching methods which should reflect the learning outcomes of the module and the programme.

A key focus in the learning outcomes descriptor for linguistics programmes is on the students' ability to work with language data. Learning, teaching and assessment practices in linguistics will thus include highly data-centred practices where the data are carefully designed to support progression in student understanding. In linguistics, the development of student understanding of the relationship between theory and practice also reflects the data-centred nature of the subject. Student must first develop a basic ability to identify and describe abstract linguistic

<sup>4</sup> Henceforth, this section refers to learning outcomes rather than competences, to avoid confusion with the individual EQF category "competences".

phenomena before engaging with theoretical models of such phenomena. As student's theoretical understanding develops, so their understanding of the complexity of the linguistic phenomena develops. Hence, progression in knowledge, skills and competences in linguistics programmes is reflected in increasing autonomy in working with data and an increasingly critical understanding of the relationship between theory and data.

The table below provides an illustrative mapping between specific outcomes/competences and potential assessment methods demonstrating how a single assessment might assess multiple outcomes/competences and how progression in the learning outcomes is demonstrated through the assessment method.

Level	Outcomes	Illustrative Assessment Method
<b>Level 6</b>	<p>Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the structure (and use) of language (Knowledge)</p> <p>Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the role of language data in linguistic argumentation (Knowledge)</p> <p>Formulate linguistic generalizations on the basis of structured data (Competence)</p>	<p>Students are provided with data sets designed by the tutor to illustrate a particular linguistic generalisation. The task for the student is then to employ the relevant categories and units of linguistics to formulate the particular linguistic generalisation.</p>
<b>Level 7</b>	<p>Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the structure and use of language (Knowledge)</p> <p>Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the role of language data in linguistic argumentation (Knowledge)</p> <p>Formulate linguistic generalisations out of independently sourced data (Competence)</p>	<p>Students might be guided towards a particular linguistic generalisation in a task in which they have to identify an appropriate data set, formulate the relevant linguistic generalisation and demonstrate how the data set provides evidence for a the generalisation they have formulated. Crucially, the structured learning in such a task comes from the guidance to examine a particular empirical focus.</p>

## 6. MEMBERS AND EXPERTS OF THE LINGUISTICS SUBJECT AREA GROUP

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