



UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE  
ESOL Examinations

TEACHING AWARDS

## **Delta Module Two**

## **Assessment Specifications**

## **Professional Development Assignment (PDA) - Specifications**

The focus of this assignment is development and extension of the candidate's teaching skills. It includes:

- Part A: Reflection and Action – 2,000-2,500 words  
Reflection and Action includes a series of tasks and activities which candidates work on throughout the course.
- Part B: Experimental Practice – 2,000-2500 words plus lesson plan  
Experimental practice involves exploration into a specific lesson approach/procedure/technique with which the candidate is unfamiliar.

### **Specifications for Part A: Reflection and Action**

The focus of Reflection and Action is on personal and professional development.

It includes:

- reading and research related to procedures for reflection, methods and/or documents for gathering data for reflection purposes
- reflection on the candidate's own beliefs and practices in the ESOL classroom
- selection of approaches, methods, techniques and materials that might enhance their practices and justification of this selection
- use and evaluation of some of the approaches, methods, techniques and materials as a means of developing the candidate's teaching skills
- ten hours' observation of other teachers and reflection on these observations. (Observations of other teachers can be filmed or 'live'.)

## **Part A: Reflection and Action: Outline and summary of stages**

### **Stage 1 Diagnostic observation** (There is no written submission for Stage 1)

- At the beginning of the course the candidate plans and teaches a lesson or part of a lesson (minimum 45 and maximum 60 minutes.)
- The lesson is observed by an approved Delta tutor.
- A post-lesson discussion is held between the candidate and the tutor (and, if appropriate/relevant, including feedback from colleagues and/or peers).
- During the discussion full oral and written feedback is given by the tutor and included in the candidate's coursework portfolio as an appendix to the PDA.
- The lesson is not formally assessed or graded and does not contribute to the grade received by the candidate in this module.

### **Stage 2** (maximum 1,000 words)

After the diagnostic observation, candidates:

- reflect and comment on their beliefs and practices as a teacher, identify key strengths and weaknesses in their teaching and comment on the positive and negative effects of these on their learners
- identify the possible reasons for these key strengths and weaknesses
- produce an action plan for the development of their teaching in response to the significant weaknesses they have identified
- select approaches, procedures, techniques or materials that will allow them to develop their teaching skills and enhance their learners' learning experiences
- select and/or design methods and/or documents for gathering data that will allow them to focus specifically on their performance in their assessed assignments during the Delta course. and briefly explain the reasons for choice(s). Candidates may also refer to any other lessons they are teaching during the Delta course.

### **Stage 3** (maximum 750 words)

Candidates complete the first two of their Language Systems/Skills Assignments after which, with reference to their action plan from Stage 2, they:

- identify and comment on any key development(s) they have made in their teaching practices since the diagnostic observation
- reflect on the effectiveness of the approaches, methods, techniques and materials they selected in Stage 2 in terms of how these have helped their development as teachers
- identify and comment on the most significant current weaknesses in their teaching practices
- select approaches, procedures, techniques or materials that will allow them to develop their teaching skills and enhance their learners' learning experiences
- select and/or design methods and/or documents for gathering data that will allow them to focus specifically on their performance in their remaining assignments and briefly explain the reasons for choice(s).

### **Stage 4** (maximum 750 words)

When all internal assignments have been completed, candidates:

- identify and comment on how their beliefs about teaching and learning and their classroom practice have changed as a result of this assignment
- identify and critically evaluate the most effective procedures and/or methods and/or documents for reflection and observation they have used for their own professional development in this assignment
- outline how they will continue to use these as part of their own continuing professional development.

## **Specifications for Part B Experimental Practice**

The focus of Experimental Practice is an investigation of a specific lesson approach, teaching procedure/technique with which the candidate is unfamiliar.

It includes:

- reading and research related to the chosen area
- a lesson in which the candidate experiments with the new practice
- identification, selection and/or development of methods, procedures and/or documents to evaluate the effectiveness of the experiment
- an evaluation of its success.

### **Experimental Practice: Outline**

Length: 2,000-2,500 words (excluding the lesson plan) but including the post-lesson evaluation.

Candidates:

- describe the background to the chosen area in terms of theory and practice
- explain their professional interest in this area in terms of experience, personal teaching preferences, and their own professional development
- identify objectives from the learners' and teacher's point of view for the experiment
- identify ways of finding out how far these objectives have been met
- plan and teach a lesson using the experimental lesson approach, teaching procedure/technique
- retrospectively:
  - evaluate the lesson in terms of identified learning and teaching objectives
  - identify ways in which this area may be adapted for inclusion in future work (or consideration of why this area is not worth further extension or adaptation).

## **Professional Development Assignment Assessment Criteria**

### **Part A – Reflection and Action (RA) and Part B – Experimental Practice (EP)**

Successful candidates can:

1. present an assignment which:
  - a) is written in language which is clear, accurate, easy to follow and does not impose a strain on the reader
  - b) is cohesive and clearly ordered and in which component parts of the assignment are relevant to the topic
  - c) uses appropriate terminology accurately
  - d) presents a range of relevant information, rationales and arguments, and supports these by
    - referring to and referencing key sources
    - referring to relevant aspects of their teaching practices and professional development
  - e) contains a bibliography of key sources consulted
  - f) follows widely accepted referencing conventions
  - g) respects the word limits of individual stages of the assignment and the overall word limit (2,000–2,500 words) and states the number of words used.

### **Part A – Reflection and Action (RA)**

Successful candidates can:

2. focus on the topic of the assignment by:
  - a) selecting and critically reflecting on specific strengths and weaknesses in their teaching practices and providing a rationale for their selection
  - b) identifying, evaluating and critically reflecting on the effectiveness of approaches, procedures, techniques or materials for teaching they have selected to promote their professional development
  - c) identifying, evaluating and critically reflecting on the effectiveness of the methods and/or documents they have selected/designed to gather data to allow them to focus on their teaching practices
  - d) providing an appropriate action plan to promote their professional development
  - e) reflecting on, reviewing and evaluating their own teaching practices and beliefs during the course of this assignment.

### **Part B – Experimental Practice (EP)**

2. focus on the topic of the assignment by:

- a) selecting approaches, techniques and materials and providing a rationale for their selection
- b) making appropriate reference to theory, to the characteristics and needs of specific groups of learners, and to their own professional development to inform their selection in a)
- c) identifying, evaluating and critically reflecting on the effectiveness of methods and/or documents they have selected/designed to gather data to allow them to focus on their teaching practices
- d) evaluating their investigation with reference to the specific group of learners and their own professional development
- e) showing awareness of the links between practice and underlying theory.

## **Language Systems and Skills Assignments Specifications**

The focus of the Language Systems/Skills Assignments is an investigation into different areas of language systems and language skills and issues related to teaching the chosen area.

Each assignment includes:

- A background essay (2,000-2,500 words) involving reading and research, analysis of a chosen area of language systems or skills, and discussion and critical evaluation of specific approaches, methods, techniques and materials that might enable the teaching/learning of the chosen area
- planning and delivering a lesson (45-60 minutes) designed to teach the chosen area to a specified group of ESOL learners
- reflection on and evaluation of the candidate's own teaching practices with reference to the chosen area of language systems/skills and the lesson taught (c. 300 words).

## **Background Essay**

Length: 2,000-2,500 words

Candidates should make reference in their essay to their reading, research and experience gained through their own teaching.

- **Topic of assignment**

Candidates should:

identify for analysis a specific area of a language system (grammar, lexis, phonology or discourse) or a specific skills area (listening, speaking, reading or writing)

define the scope by stating what aspect of the identified area the assignment will focus on, with reference to e.g. learner needs, level of learners, specific learning context, language area, text type, and where relevant teaching approach or method

outline the reasons for choosing the particular aspect by making reference to classroom experience, observation, research and reading.

- **Analysis of area and discussion of learning problems and teaching issues**

Candidates should:

analyse the specific area of the selected language system or skill. This could be in terms of form, meaning/use and/or phonology in the case of language systems, and in terms of linguistic, discursal and communicative features and/or subskills in the case of skills

in relation to the scope identified above, identify and discuss common learning problems and key teaching issues in a range of learning contexts e.g. different learner characteristics and/or goals.

- **Suggestions for teaching**

Candidates should:

describe, show familiarity with and critically evaluate a selected range of procedures, techniques, resources and/or materials which are designed to develop learners' competence in the selected area.

## Background Essay Assessment Criteria

### 1 Quality of writing

Successful candidates demonstrate that they can effectively present an essay which:

- a) is written in language which is clear, accurate, easy to follow and is cohesive and clearly ordered
- b) uses appropriate terminology accurately
- c) refers to and references key sources
- d) follows the conventions of a standard referencing system for in-text referencing and the bibliography
- e) respects the word limit (2,000-2,500 words) and states the number of words used.

### 2 Clarity of topic

Successful candidates demonstrate that they can effectively make clear the topic of the essay by:

- a) identifying for analysis a specific area of the grammar, lexis, phonology or discourse system of English, or a skills area (listening, speaking, reading or writing)
- b) defining the scope of the area they will analyse with reference to e.g. learners, teaching approach, method, learning context, learner needs or text type
- c) explaining with reference to classroom experience, reading and research why they have chosen this area
- d) making all parts of the essay relevant to the topic and coherent
- e) following through in later parts of the essay on key issues identified in earlier parts.

### 3 Analysis and issues

Successful candidates can effectively demonstrate an understanding of the specific area by:

- a) analysing the specific area with accuracy, identifying key points
- b) showing awareness of a range of learning and teaching problems occurring in a range of learning contexts.

### 4 Suggestions for teaching

Successful candidates demonstrate that they can effectively draw on experience and research to:

- a) outline and show familiarity with relevant key procedures, techniques, resources and/or materials
- b) evaluate how the selected procedures, techniques, resources and/or materials might be used effectively in classroom practice
- c) demonstrate how the procedures, techniques, resources and/or materials address points raised under 'Analysis and issues'.

## **Language Systems/Skills assignments – The Lesson (Planning, Teaching and Evaluation)**

### **Lesson requirements**

Each Systems/Skills Assignment includes planning, teaching and evaluation of a lesson which is linked to the topic of the background essay, though the lesson will be narrower in scope than the background essay.

Each lesson must be a minimum of 45 minutes and a maximum of 60 minutes.

The class size will vary according to context. There is no maximum class size but the absolute minimum is five learners.

The age range of classes selected for assessment purposes is not specified. Any age group may be taught provided that the research and teaching undertaken allow the teacher to achieve the assessment criteria.

For each lesson the candidate must submit a lesson plan and supporting documentation and a post-lesson evaluation (approx. 300 words).

**Language Systems and Language Skills Assignments**  
**Teaching Assessment Criteria (numbers follow on from Background Essay**  
**assessment criteria)**

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**5 Planning and preparation**

Successful candidates have designed and presented a lesson plan and supporting documentation which:

- 5a) includes
  - (i) a brief general overview of the group of learners and the course
  - (ii) information about individual learners relevant to the lesson
- 5b) sets out clear and appropriate overall aims and learning outcomes for the lesson in relation to language systems and/or language skills and learner needs
- 5c) provides relevant analysis of target language in terms of meaning, use, form and pronunciation
- 5d) outlines any relevant link(s) between this lesson and relevant aspects of preceding and subsequent lessons, and if relevant the course as a whole
- 5e) states assumptions made about the learners' knowledge, abilities and interests relevant to the aims and learning outcomes of the lesson
- 5f) anticipates and explains potential problems in relation to the lesson's aims and learning outcomes, the learners and the learning context, and the equipment, materials and resources to be used
- 5g) suggests appropriate solutions to the problems outlined in 5f
- 5h) describes suitably sequenced procedures and activities appropriate to achieving the stated overall aims and stage aims
- 5i) states materials and/or resources to be used, which are appropriate to the teaching and learning context, the learners, the lesson aims and learning outcomes, and the time available, and includes a copy/copies of suitably presented materials, sourced where necessary
- 5j) assigns realistic and appropriate timing for each stage and/or group of stages in the procedure
- 5k) includes a commentary, of between 500 and 750 words, which provides a clear rationale for the lesson plan with reference to learner characteristics and needs and the candidate's reading and research in the background essay.

## **6-9 Teaching**

### **6 Creating and maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning**

Successful candidates demonstrate that they can effectively:

- 6a) teach the class as a group and individuals within the group, with sensitivity to the learners' needs and backgrounds, level and context, providing equal opportunities for participation
- 6b) purposefully engage and involve learners
- 6c) vary their role in relation to the emerging learning and affective needs of learners during the lesson
- 6d) listen and respond appropriately to learner contributions.

### **7 Understanding, knowledge and explanation of language and language skills**

Successful candidates demonstrate that they can effectively:

- 7a) use language which is accurate and appropriate for the teaching and learning context
- 7b) adapt their own use of language to the level of the group and individuals in the group
- 7c) give accurate and appropriate models of language form, meaning/use and pronunciation
- 7d) give accurate and appropriate information about language form, meaning/use and pronunciation and/or language skills/subskills
- 7e) notice and judiciously exploit learners' language output to further language and skills/subskills development.

### **8 Classroom, procedures and techniques**

Successful candidates demonstrate that they can effectively:

- 8a) use procedures, techniques and activities to support and consolidate learning and to achieve language and/or skill aims
- 8b) exploit materials and resources to support learning and achieve aims
- 8c) deliver a coherent and suitably varied lesson
- 8d) monitor and check students' learning and respond as appropriate.

## **9 Classroom Management**

Successful candidates demonstrate that they can effectively:

- 9a) implement the lesson plan and where necessary adapt it to emerging learner needs
- 9b) manage the classroom space, furniture, equipment, materials and resources
- 9c) set up whole class and/or group and/or individual activities, as appropriate
- 9d) ensure the learners remain focused on the lesson aims and the learning outcomes

## **10 Reflection and Evaluation c. 300 words**

Successful candidates demonstrate that they can effectively:

- 10a) reflect on and evaluate their own planning, teaching and the learners' progress as evidenced in this lesson
- 10b) identify key strengths and weaknesses in planning and execution
- 10c) explain how they will (would) consolidate/follow on from the learning achieved in the lesson.