

Module Sign-up Brochure 2025-26

Q302: English Language

Stage 1 going into Stage 2

1. Do your research

Read through the information on the SELLL website carefully and ask if you have any questions. If you're unsure of what modules you should be choosing, email UGOffice.e111@newcastle.ac.uk.

2. Sign up Online: Thursday 1st May, from 9am

- Have the rules for your programme, from this brochure, with you when you log onto The Student Portal. <https://studentportal.ncl.ac.uk/>.
- Compulsory modules will already be selected and optional modules will be listed for you to choose.
- The portal will close on **12th May at 8:00pm**.
- Further guidance and screenshots are available here: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/student-portal/>.

FAQs

How do I take an outside module?

Modules not listed on your degree regulations will not appear in this brochure and will not be available to you in the Student Portal. Instead, you will need to select 'HSS dummy module(s)'. Then you will need to fill in a module change form at the beginning of Semester 1 to change from the dummy module to your chosen outside module.

How long will module selection take?

A few minutes.

What if I suffer technical problems?

Please don't panic. You can call IT on [0191 208 5559](tel:01912085559) to log the issue. Alternatively, you can email e111@ncl.ac.uk and we will try to assist you.

Will I get my first choice of modules?

Not necessarily. We recommend that you login and submit your choices as soon as possible. We'd also recommend having back-up modules in mind, in case your first choices are full. This is why it's important to read the module descriptions and make your decisions before the portal opens.

I need further advice and guidance. Who should I ask?

If your question is in regard to a specific module, please contact the module leader listed in the module descriptions, via email. If the module leader is to be confirmed (TBC), the head of subject is listed and will also be able to answer your questions. If you don't understand your programme regulations, please contact your Degree Programme Director (DPD) Daniel Duncan (daniel.duncan@newcastle.ac.uk). If, after reading the module descriptions, you're struggling to decide which modules to take you can contact your personal tutor via email.

I had arranged to have a semester abroad next year. What should I do?

If you haven't done so already, please contact Niamh Kelly (niamh.kelly@newcastle.ac.uk) to discuss your options.

What if I change my mind or make a mistake?

If your choices do not comply with your regulations, they will be rejected and we will contact you to choose all your modules again – if you do not respond by the given deadline, modules will be chosen for you. If you change your mind you will be given the opportunity to change your modules at a later date. Further information will be released closer to the time.

Rules of your Programme

You must have a total of 120 credits with either a 60/60, 50/70 or 70/50 credit split across the semesters

Circle or highlight your choices, then add up your credits in the total column

Rules	Code	Module Title	Total Credits	Sem 1	Sem 2
Compulsory	SEL2091	Sociolinguistics	20	20	
	SEL2212	Early English: Texts, Patterns and Varieties	20		20
Language / Linguistics Pick 1	SEL2000	Phonological Theory	20	20	
	SEL2089	Syntactic Theory	20	20	
	SEL2234	Pragmatic Theory	20	20	
Language / Linguistics Pick 3	SEL2000	Phonological Theory	20	20	
	SEL2089	Syntactic Theory	20	20	
	SEL2229	Experimental Methods in Linguistics	20		20
	SEL2234	Pragmatic Theory	20	20	
	SEL2235	CHiLD: Current Hypotheses in Language Development	20		20
	SEL2237	Introduction to Second Language Teaching and Learning	20	20	
	SEL2239	Experimental Practicum	20		20
Optional Outside Modules Pick no more than 20 credits	NCL2007	Career Development Module for second year students	20	10	10
	HSS2110	Outside Dummy Module: 10 credits in Semester 1*	10	10	
	HSS2210	Outside Dummy Module: 10 credits in Semester 2*	10		10
	HSS2120	Outside Dummy Module: 20 credits in Semester 1*	20	20	
	HSS2220	Outside Dummy Module: 20 credits in Semester 2*	20		20
TOTAL					

**requires DPD approval. If you selected a HSS module, you will also need to complete a module change form at the beginning of Semester 1 in October 2025 to change your HSS code into your chosen outside module.*

Module Descriptions

Further details of each module can be found in the module catalogue:
<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/module-catalogue/>

SEL2091: Sociolinguistics

Module Leader: Dr Daniel Duncan

Semester 1, 20 credits

No pre-requisites

This module builds on the knowledge of language variation & change and data analysis skills obtained in SEL1032 in order to develop a fuller understanding of sociolinguistics. It introduces this domain of linguistics from two perspectives:

- Microsociolinguistics, the study of language variation and change at the level of individuals, groups, and communities. With particular emphasis on the framework of variationist sociolinguistics, the module explores how linguistic variation is influenced by societal factors like social class and ethnicity.
- Macrosociolinguistics, the study of language at the societal level. With particular emphasis on the sociology of language, the module explores how society shapes broader linguistic outcomes like language maintenance or shift, language endangerment, and the development of pidgins and creoles.

This module refines data analysis skills by further developing quantitative reasoning skills. It adds basic inferential statistics to the analytical toolkit and explores how these are used to refine and test linguistic hypotheses.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Reflective Log	Mid	20	Sociolinguistic interview and reflection, 500 words in total.
Portfolio	End	80	Quantitative and qualitative research write-up, 3000 words in total.
Problem Solving Exercises	Mid	Formative	N/A

SEL2212: Early English: Texts, Patterns and Varieties

Module Leader: Professor Karen Corrigan

Semester 2, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: Students must have completed **SEL1032** or have the permission of the module leader to enrol on this module. For incoming exchange students: basic introductory course(s) in linguistics.

Module aims:

- To develop students' competence in reading texts from a variety of periods in the history of English;
- To develop students' ability to analyse linguistic features of texts;
- To build on the knowledge and skills relating to language change gained in SEL1032 (Language Variation and Change);
- To enhance students' knowledge of the processes by which the English language has evolved into its present-day state;
- To develop competence in using dictionaries, historical corpora and other electronic resources.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Essay	Mid	40	1500 words
Written Exercise	End	60	Section 1: Text Analysis. Section 2: Essay (c.2500 words total)

SEL2000: Phonological Theory

Module Leader: Dr Rory Turnbull

Semester 1, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: Students must have completed **SEL1027** or have the permission of the module leader to enrol on this module. Erasmus students and transfers in from other universities must have an appropriate background, i.e. an understanding of basic phonetics.

A course in intermediate phonology, this module builds on the foundations laid in SEL1027, introducing theoretical models of phonology. The aim is for students to investigate a number of phonological models, including both derivational and optimality theoretic, in order for them to come to an understanding of how evidence and argumentation are used in phonological theory building.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Problem Solving Exercise	Mid	20	This will consist of a data analysis problem set
Essay	End	80	2000-words or equivalent

SEL2089: Syntactic Theory

Module Leader: Professor Michelle Sheehan

Semester 1, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: Students must have completed **SEL1028** or have the permission of the module leader to enrol on this module. Equivalent introductory modules in SML will also be accepted.

Following on from SEL1028, this module provides a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the syntax of natural language with modern English as the main object of study. Topics to be addressed may include phrase structure (X'-Theory), argument structure (theta-roles), Case, agreement, noun phrase structure, binding, various kinds of movement, architecture of grammar and syntactic variation. Not necessarily all of these are covered every year.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Written exam	End	100	24-hour take-home project. 3000 words.
Written exercise	Mid	Formative	Portfolio of semi-weekly problem sets (pre- and post-seminar)

SEL2234: Pragmatic Theory

Module Leader: Dr Gabriel Martinez Vera

Semester 1, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1028.

This module concentrates on the study of meaning at the level of pragmatics, i.e., on how we create meaning from the linguistic expressions that we utter in context (e.g., in exchanges). It introduces foundational notions in pragmatics and provides tools to analyse phenomena in the field. It further discusses pragmatics and its relation to other domains of grammar and introduces different research methods to collect and annotate data.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Written exercise	Mid	25	1000-word written exercise
Essay	End	75	2500-word essay

SEL2229: Experimental Methods in Linguistics

Module Leader: Dr Christine Cuskley

Semester 2, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: Students must have completed **SEL1027** and **SEL1032** or have the permission of the module leader to enrol on this module.

This course provides a broad overview of the foundational issues with respect to experimental methodology in linguistics. Lectures will cover theoretical and philosophical considerations, methodological approaches and issues, and tools used in data collection. By the end of the course, students will be able to critically evaluate experimental research in linguistics, from both theoretical and methodological points of view. Alongside this, students will learn the basic skills necessary for carrying out their own experimental research project, including experimental design, data wrangling, and statistical analysis.

The course will focus on general philosophical, methodological, practical, and ethical issues that arise in the course of research in linguistics. Topics will include: science communication, the scientific method, computational approaches to language and linguistic research, null hypothesis testing, tools for collecting experimental data (online and in-lab), and basic data wrangling and statistics. The course will also introduce students to specific methods and tools allowing them to undertake survey-based or experimental research, and independently design their own experimental methods.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Practical/Lab Report	Mid	30	Data wrangling and analysis
Essay	End	70	2000-word novel experimental design
Research Proposal	Mid	Formative	Experimental design proposal

SEL2235: CHiLD: Current Hypotheses in Language Development

Module Leader: Dr Emma Nguyen

Semester 2, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1027 and SEL1028

Language is an incredibly complex system of knowledge. Not only are there multiple levels of representation - sounds and words and phrases and whole utterances and meanings - but within a given level, even simple forms can be derived from multiple interacting pieces of knowledge. Yet as speakers of any given language, we are often blissfully unaware of how much we need to know in order to be able to communicate with language.

One of the most striking things about language is that all typically-developing children learn their native language flawlessly, especially when compared to adults trying to accomplish the same task. This is true despite adults' superior cognitive skills. Children of the world seem somehow suited for language acquisition in a way that adult humans - and other animals - are not.

In this module, we survey the broad topic of language acquisition, focusing not only on children's developmental trajectory, but also on what knowledge of language is, how language acquisition relates to cognition in general, and acquisition of language by speakers with sensory or cognitive deficits.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Written Examination	Mid	60	In-person exam to objectively test student understanding of foundational notions and empirical discoveries in Child Language Acquisition.
Written Exercise	End	40	Abstracts written exercise: Students will write two conference-level abstracts distilling two linguistic studies

			reporting on child language acquisition. 1000 words or equivalent
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SEL2237: Introduction to Second Language Teaching and Learning

Module Leader: Dr Sujeewa Hettiarachchi

Semester 1, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1027

This module introduces students to the fundamental theories and practices involved in learning and teaching second languages. It explores the relationship between key concepts in second language acquisition (SLA) and the dominant approaches and methods in English language teaching (ELT), situating them within their theoretical and historical contexts. By engaging with both learning and teaching perspectives, this module equips students with the knowledge and skills to critically evaluate SLA theories and teaching methodologies, preparing them for advanced academic and professional roles in language education.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Problem Solving Exercise	Mid	50	2000-word problem-solving exercise
Essay	End	50	2000-word essay

SEL2239: Experimental Practicum

Module Leader: Dr Rebecca Woods

Semester 2, 20 credits

No pre-requisites

Co-requisites: SEL2229. The co-requisite will also be accepted as a pre-requisite in the case of Stage 3 (or later) students who want to take SEL2239 and have taken SEL2229 at Stage 2.

The job of a linguist is to scientifically study language in order to capture and explain patterns of linguistic structures and language usage. In order to do this, a linguist makes use of certain tools in their toolbox. The aim of the Practicum module is to provide students with practical research experience and skills while working under the supervision of an established researcher. Additionally, students would be introduced to the methodologies and approaches to data analysis used in formal linguistic investigations of language acquisition.

Students will gain hands-on research experience by being able to contribute to at least one of the following elements of the research process:

- Information gathering, including systematic literature searches and evidence synthesis.
- Aspects of data collection, including building studies to be run in the Linguistics Lab and/or Science Adventures and/or on data collection platforms.
- Data manipulation, including data screening and cleaning, data entry/ transcription/coding, and data analysis.

Whereas a course on language acquisition and development (e.g. SEL2235 and SEL3438) may focus on the process of development and what it means to become a speaker of a language, this course focuses specifically on how we experimentally investigate acquisition and the competence of language learners through carefully designed linguistic experiments and the practical application of this knowledge.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Oral Presentation	Mid	30	Present in person 10-minute small group presentation for a proposed CLA experiment with 5 minutes for questions.

Reflective Log	Mid	70	A structured research diary completed throughout the semester.
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SEL2241: Philosophy of Linguistics

Module Leader: Dr Geoffrey Poole

Semester 2, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1028

The first part of the module (prior to the Easter break) considers two fundamental and interrelated philosophical questions about language: (1) What is it, really? and (2) How do we (or should we) study it? It examines a number of different approaches, particularly as they were developed during the course of the 20th century: language as a physical object, language as behavior, language as a property of communities, and language as a property of mind.

The post-Easter weeks will apply the pre-Easter foundational/philosophical discussion to various past and present controversies in language and linguistics (e.g., linguistic determinism (aka the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis), whether generative AI systems actually do (or even could) 'have language' (or 'be intelligent'), and linguistic issues connected to class, gender, and disability).

At the end of the module, students are expected to be able to critically discuss foundational philosophical questions in the study of language and mind and be able to apply those insights to historical and current controversies in language and linguistics.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Essay 1	Mid	75	2500-word essay
Essay 2	End	25	1000-word blog entry

NCL2007: Career Development Module for Second Year Students

Module Leader: Dr Michael Cook

Semesters 1 & 2, 20 credits total

No prerequisites

The NCL2007 Career Development module offers students the opportunity to undertake work-related learning or have a professional experience in a variety of environments, both on and off the University campus, or remotely if appropriate. Through engagement with the module, students will start to develop an understanding and awareness of their skills and attributes and how they might use these in future roles. Students will enhance their employability and graduate skills as well as contributing towards meeting the aims of their host organisation.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Professional Skills Assessment 1	Mid	40	A summary of intended personal development actions towards module learning outcomes for the module.
Professional Skills Assessment 2	Mid	50	Formal 10-minute presentation recorded online using PowerPoint and submission via a single submission date assessment point.
Written Exercise	Mid	10	Students must complete at least 12 of 15 tasks to gain the marks available.