1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Linguistics at the Nottingham Trent University. We hope that your time here will be a happy, positive and rewarding experience.

This handbook is designed to answer basic questions you are likely to have as a Linguistics student. We don't include things, which apply to all students regardless of the subject they are studying - such as information about the Student Union, residential accommodation, local public transport, etc. This information is provided elsewhere, in other handbooks.

Please read this Linguistics handbook carefully. It may be a good idea to mark things, which you think are particularly important, and to write notes to supplement the information we give. Ask your tutors about anything which you don't understand.

Keep this handbook with your Linguistics papers, and refer to it from time to time as you go through your course.

Remember: if you are not sure about something, the information is probably in
THE LINGUISTICS STUDENT HANDBOOK!

If you have suggestions about the handbook - re errors, omissions, things that are not clear - please let us know so that we can improve future editions.

2. YOUR UNIVERSITY AND YOUR SCHOOL

2.1 Nottingham Trent University

The University is one of the largest universities in the country. It presently has more than 25,000 students.

The academic work of the University is located in three principal sites: one in the city centre, one at Brackenhurst, and one at Clifton. Your Linguistics teaching is all sited at Clifton.

Teaching and research are organised in four Colleges. Your College is the **College of Communication, Culture and Education**. Within that College are two Schools; your School is the **School of Arts and Humanities**.

2.2 Linguistics at NTU

Linguistics is located in the **School of Arts and Humanities**.

Among the Undergraduate degrees in the School are:
BA [Joint Hons] Humanities;
BA [Hons] English;
BA [Hons] Media;
BA [Hons] Broadcast Journalism;
BA [Joint Hons] Modern Languages;
BA [Hons] History.

2.3 Finding your way about

Normally, all work in Linguistics takes place in the George Elliot Building on the Clifton Campus. If you don't already know the campus, it will be worth spending some time getting to know where different teaching areas, facilities and services are located.

Finding a particular room may be easier if you remember the following system:

All rooms have a three-figure number:
- if the first digit is 0, the room is on the ground floor;
- if the first digit is 1, the room is on the first floor;
- if the first digit is 2, the room is on the second floor.

A number with a prefix "G" indicates a room in the block nearest to Peverell Hall.
A number with a prefix "E" indicates a room in the so-called "executive wing", to the north-east of the cafeteria.

The Administrator who may be able to help you with enquiries regarding **Linguistics** is **Rachel Eden in Room 102**. If your enquiry relates to your Joint Honour Pogram, then the following administrators will be able to help you:
BA Joint Honours Humanities: **Elizabeth Heale Room GE 107**
BA Joint Honours Modern Languages: **Julie Eccles Room GE 107**

Identify the **main lecture rooms**, even if you are not time-tabled to use them regularly: **the Main Hall-032; the Small Hall-034; 004; 089; 090; G030. The John Clare Lecture Theatres 005 and 006.**

It will be useful to identify other principal subject areas; for example, Modern Languages has a base on the ground floor of the main block at the rear of the complex; Geography is based on the top floor of the same building and History is based in Griffin House Block, behind the HSBC bank.

See sections 2.5 and 2.6 below for more information about locations.

2.4 Communicating with each other

In a large School like ours, communication can break down if we don't share responsibility for communicating with each other effectively.

How do staff communicate with students?

[a] By announcements in lectures.
Remember: if you are absent from a lecture it is your responsibility to find out from someone who was present whether there were any announcements which affect you. Please do check.

[b] Messages on N-O-W
Any important news items (e.g. date and time of tests, hand-in dates etc.) may appear as news items on N-O-W. You should check regularly on the sites for all the modules for which you are registered.

[c] Through noticeboards.
It is important to find out where noticeboards are, and to look regularly at those which are likely to affect you. These include:

- the course noticeboard which carries information relating to your degree;
- noticeboard carrying information relating to Linguistics. This is located outside Room 109. This is where your seminar groups will be posted for large modules.
- Keep your eye on other boards - for example Course Boards, boards in the reception area, in the Library, etc.

[d] By Email.
Often a tutor may send you an email if they wish to see you urgently. Check your internal email daily, and do not ignore messages from tutors and other staff.

Note: Don't rely on things you hear on the grapevine: rumour can do strange things with the truth! Always check things you hear about casually against some more official source of information.

How can students communicate with tutors?
Of course all teaching staff have offices; however we cannot guarantee to be there all the time. There are many reasons for this: we may be in class teaching, or in a meeting. We all also have a professional obligation to contribute to the discipline by way of original research. Just like you, we prefer a quiet study area to do our work – this may be at home or in the library. Also bear in mind that some tutors have half- or part-time contracts. Because of this, we have made diligent attempts to make sure there are several ways to contact tutors.

[a] Many minor points can be dealt with quickly in seminar, or just before or just after.

[b] **By making use of a tutor's office hours**. Each tutor will tell you a particular regular time or times when s/he is available for "drop-in" visits from students, or when appointments can be made. These times are also displayed outside their offices. Please try and keep to these times, and be aware that they may need to change as lecturers' timetables are not always the same each week.

[c] **By sending email.** All students and tutors have access to email, and tutors usually read this frequently, including when they are working from home. You can send quick questions this way. Please respect your lecturers' rights to enjoy a weekend without email. In an email you must make sure you identify yourself clearly. If you email a tutor, make sure they know which module you are on, and give you full name. Remember, we teach many "Kirstys" and "Aminas". Also, please remember that tutors may not be as familiar with your emailing and texting conventions as your friends are. We prefer it if you write in formal English, with good spelling and punctuation.

In the days of instant electronic communication, it is not realistic to complain that a particular tutor is "never there". But if you have difficulty in contacting a Linguistics tutor, **Rachel Eden in Room 102 may be able to help you.**

2.5 The Linguistics Staff

The Linguistics Subject Leader is **Dr Liz Morrish**. She has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the provision of Linguistics modules.

For each module you take there is a module leader, who is responsible for the organisation of that particular module. You will find the name of this tutor in the module handbook. You will have a seminar tutor in each module you take. The seminar tutor may be the same person as the module leader, but frequently - especially in large first-year modules - it will be another member of the module teaching team.

If you need help or advice, or if you are having a problem with your Linguistics work, the first person to consult is your seminar leader. If you are having a module-related problem of a broad sort, they may refer you to the module leader (e.g., problems over a seminar time).

The **Linguistics Subject Administrator** is **Rachel Eden in Room 102.**
The following currently make up the Linguistics teaching team:

Linguistics Staff

All full-time lecturers have their photographs displayed on the noticeboard outside Room 109. You will also be able to read about some of their published work there.

Dr. Liz Morrish Subject Leader Room 111
General Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Phonetics, Language, Gender and Sexuality

Dr Natalie Braber Room 112
General Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Child Language Acquisition

Dr Louise Cummings Room 113
General Linguistics, Semantics, Pragmatics, Clinical Linguistics

Mr Dean Hardman Room 109
General Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis, Media Discourse

Dr Francesca Bargiela Room 17, Dame Laura Knight Building
Intercultural Communication

2.6 Getting information or advice

Normally, the first person to consult if you want advice about your Linguistics work will be the appropriate seminar tutor. The module leader provides a second, back-up level. Your personal tutor may not be able to help on matters relating to specific Linguistics modules, but is there to give advice on more general matters.

In general, it will save your time and ours if you make direct contact with the most appropriate person or office. The following list of key offices in the School may help:

Dean of School of Arts and Humanities
Professor Marianne Howarth.

Chair of Communications and Media Division: vacant

Linguistics Subject Leader: Dr Elizabeth Morrish Room 111

Linguistics Subject Administrator: Rachel Eden in Room 102

Admissions, enrolments, administrative matters: College Office, ABK 002

Handing in of work and recording of marks:
Tracking Office: Room 103

General matters about BA Joint Hons Humanities:
Course Leader, Dr Ben Taylor: Room 137

General matters about BA English Studies:
Course Leader: Dr.Phil Leonard: Room 165

General matters about BA Joint Hons Modern Languages:
Course Leader: Neil Hughes Room 084B

BA Humanities Course Co-ordinator: Elizabeth Heale **Room GE 107**

BA Joint Hons Modern Languages Course Co-ordinator: Julie Eccles **Room GE 107**

Library: Subject Specialist, Peter Donald and the Library advice desk

3. THE LINGUISTICS EXPERIENCE AT NOTTINGHAM TRENT

3.1 Who takes Linguistics at Nottingham Trent?

Approximately 450 students on a variety of degree programmes take one or more Linguistics modules each year. Linguistics exists as a main subject in BA Humanities and the Joint Honours Program in Modern Languages, and as a strand in BA Communication Studies. We are frequently joined by students from abroad - sometimes just for one semester, sometimes for longer.

3.2 What are the aims of Linguistics at Nottingham Trent?

The Linguistics team wishes to provide for you a well-structured academic grounding in the degree-level study of Linguistics.

In practice, our aims in relation to your own personal development are:

- to increase your knowledge of language and an understanding of the many ways in which it operates;
- to enable you to become independent learners
- to give you the opportunity to pursue your own research in Linguistics
- to aid you in developing a critical and informed stance on language-related issues in any number of contemporary debates
- to give you maximum opportunity to feed back to us your interests, needs, and views on the course.

In addition, we know from our experience of seeing graduates go out into the "job market" that Linguistics students have great opportunities to develop qualities which employers value highly.

For example, as a Linguistics student you have the opportunity

- to develop powers of independent, logical thinking;
- to develop your creativity;
- to develop both your self-confidence and your ability to work co-operatively with others;
- to develop your language skills, and your ability to express yourself coherently and convincingly both orally and in writing;
- to develop your sensitivity to language, the contexts in which it is used, and its effects;
- to learn computing/information technology skills such as word-processing;
- to develop the knowledge and skills needed as a basis for effective research.

3.3 What are teaching sessions like?

Most modules will be allocated between one and three teaching hours per week on your timetable. The first hour will usually be a lecture, followed [most commonly, but not always, on the same day] by a seminar or workshop, discussing material in detail. Some teaching may be by two-hour workshops. From time to time you will have a tutorial. To

arrange a tutorial you use the tutor's office hours (usually by 'signing up' for a session). A signing up list can be found on tutors' office doors.
Teaching sessions only fully work when the group has actually read the preliminary reading and completed the directed learning assignments detailed in the module handbook.

3.4 What are the different types of teaching sessions for?

Lectures
A lecture is a relatively formal session, intended to provide a 'framework': an overview of a topic/subject and to identify some key issues and key reading. Normally one lecturer addresses the audience, using visual aids, handouts, film extracts, etc., where appropriate. Often the lecture is given to a whole year of students: so, in some first-year modules for example, the audience may be over 100 people. Clearly, in such a situation opportunities for interaction between lecturer and students or between student and student are limited.

Lectures are most useful when, as part of your note-taking, you write down queries, references you would like to discuss, etc., so that you can pick them up in a seminar, tutorial, and you can follow them up in your own reading (see independent learning).

Seminars
In seminars you are divided into groups of about 15-20. The purpose of a seminar is to debate issues, usually those arising from a preceding lecture, or as preparation for a new topic/area. Sometimes your tutor may take the lead; sometimes a group of student will give a presentation and offer questions for discussion; sometimes you will be invited to discuss a topic in small groups before taking part in a general debate. Whatever the format, seminars are most useful when everyone has been to the lecture, done the preparatory reading, is prepared to listen carefully to other people's points of view, and is open to developing the skills for contributing their own opinions and interpretations. Your participation is crucial to a productive seminar.
Attendance at seminars is compulsory and is monitored

Workshops
A workshop is a session in which you work - often in small group - on a particular task. The task could be analysing some data in a group, working out a problem in linguistic methodology, completing a worksheet. The task will probably be set by your tutor, and the tutor may stay with you to offer advice, but essentially it will be you, the students, who do the work.
Attendance at workshops is compulsory and is monitored

Tutorials
A tutorial will usually be just you and a tutor talking one to one. It may be a brief meeting between a tutor and a small group of students. The purpose of a tutorial will usually be to discuss your individual work - either work in progress, or work which your tutor has just marked. You are also free to organise a tutorial around issues, themes or problems in a module which you need to discuss.
Tutorials do not appear on your timetable. They can usually be arranged as you need one by visiting the tutor in the tutor's office hours (e.g., by "signing up" for an appointment). Ask your seminar tutors to give you details of their arrangements.

3.5 Linguistics Attendance Policy

In Linguistics, we have evidence that there is considerable benefit to attendance, and considerable damage done to understanding by non-attendance. In Level 1 Linguistics modules, a record of attendance at each seminar class will be kept. Absence, for any reason at all, will be noted on your attendance record. **If your attendance dips below75% *for whatever reason*, you will not be considered to have done enough to take the module**, and you will not be permitted to be assessed. You will receive an email from your seminar tutor after each recorded absence. Attendance scores for each student will be accessible via N-O-W so that you know whether you are in danger of being barred from assessment. It is your responsibility to check your own record of attendance in Linguistics modules. If you do fail to reach the 75% threshold, you will be allowed to repeat the module again with adequate attendance in following year for a first sitting (and you will be awarded the full mark you earn).

In the event of a module failure due to poor attendance, you will not be able to make up these assessments over the summer referral period: you will have to repeat the module, with attendance, in the following year (when you will receive full marks for your assessments – i.e. they will not be capped at 40%, as is usually the case with referred work). Please note that this could have a serious detrimental impact on your studies:

- If you have failures elsewhere in your profile, your degree studies might be terminated.
- Even if you do proceed to Level 2, your workload will be higher, and your module options will be limited because of the need to avoid clashes with the Level 1 work you are repeating.

As has been stated above, in Linguistics modules, **you will not be permitted to be assessed if your attendance drops below 75%**. However, you will receive bonus marks on your module total mark for particularly good attendance, as follows

- 100% - 92% attendance (24- 22 weeks) - 5%
- 91% - 75% attendance (21- 18 weeks) – no bonus
- <75% attendance (<18 weeks) – Non Submission (NS) code in module and repeat the module again with adequate attendance in following year for a first sitting.

3.6 What am I expected to do outside of class time?

Lectures only take up a small part of your available time for study. It is your responsibility to progress your learning outside of lectures. This can take two forms in Linguistics:

Directed learning

These are tasks which may be detailed in the module handbook, or may be handed out in class. They may consist of: linguistic analysis problems, reading assignments, seminar preparation, answering set questions, collecting texts for discussion (this is not an exhaustive list). Often directed learning will not be assessed, though it may be called in so that you can be given feedback. **Remember that directed learning has been calculated into the tutor's expectations of what you will accomplish on the module.**

If you neglect it, you may be in serious deficit in terms of your knowledge when it comes to writing essays and taking tests.

Independent Learning

In addition to set work, you will need to read more widely around the topics covered in the modules you take. Particularly when you are researching for an essay, you will need to extend your repertoire of reading beyond what has been recommended as preliminary reading for the seminar, for example. The best essays will demonstrate broad scope in reading and will make reference to current journal articles, for example. (see Appendices BCDF for assessment criteria of written work).

N-O-W

The Virtual Learning Environment N-O-W is hugely important for supporting your work outside of class contact time. The successful student will make a point of using it on a daily basis.
N-O-W is at http://now.ntu.ac.uk/ (or via a shortcut on resource room machines) and has the following facilities, among others:

- Customisable profile, themes, news, favourites.
- Email.
- Lists of students on your modules
- Student photographs
- Module learning materials.
- Personal development planner.
- Programme, module and School news.
- Server space.
- Software tutorials.

You will have access to a page for each module you take while at University. Often tutors will post lecture and seminar handouts here – not so that you can then feel confident about missing lectures, but so that you can better prepare your reading in advance of them. Sometimes, handouts cannot be posted to N-O-W, because they are photocopied, or other materials. You will always be at a disadvantage if you choose to miss lectures on a regular basis.

Another feature of N-O-W is the collection of web resources for many modules. Some will use these more than others, and you should make full use as directed by module handbooks.

You will also find access to your **Personal Development Planner** on N-O-W. You should keep this up to date, and also make sure you provide tutors with the reference information sheet on the PDP if you ever request a reference.

3.7 Resources for Linguistics students

The Linguistics Resource Room

This is under development and information will be available soon.

Bookshop

Linguistics students at university are normally expected to provide their own copies of recommended books for study. The campus bookshop stocks texts on the current reading lists for every module. The bookshop will also help you to get any books currently in print for your general reading. Speak to the bookshop staff if you do not see titles you want. The bookshop also runs a second hand book scheme. Ask them for details.

A lively second-hand market in books is also organised informally by students. A notice board exists in the corridor between Room 117 and Room 120 on which books for sale can be advertised.

Audio-visual equipment

We have a team of audio-visual technicians who support us by providing the equipment we need from a central a-v resource room. If you want audio-visual equipment [for example, a cassette player or video for a seminar presentation] speak to your tutor, who will advise you or book the equipment on your behalf.

Computing

The University's Computing Services provide your Information Technology (or 'IT') resources. One of your top priorities should be to gain some IT experience. Every student should register as a computer user. If you are not already computer-literate, there are elective modules in computing/IT which we strongly recommend you take as part of your course. To get maximum benefit, take them in your first year as you will find that you are required to word-process your coursework assignments. The ability to word-process your work, for example, will be of enormous help to you as a student, and your computer literacy will also be of great interest to potential employers in the future. You can also get a qualification called a *European Computer Driving Licence* (ECDL) which tells an employer that you are familiar with most common computer applications.

IT resource rooms and drop-in support

In addition to any specialist IT support and equipment to which you have access in your programme, drop-in technical support is available from the User Support Teams. These are at the reception desks in Clifton library, Boots library and Arkwright IT Resource Room. (There are also phones in the resource rooms themselves if you're in another building.)

You can ask these User Support Teams for spot help with Office software or report any problems on the resource room computers (like the printer running out of toner). You can also go to them to top up your printing account, or to make a query about your server space, VLP access or email.

Please consult the LLR site for further details of location and opening hours www.ntu.ac.uk/llr).

Developing and improving your IT skills

You may wish to build on your IT skills while you study at NTU. You may also find it very useful to have a **recognised IT qualification** on your CV. Or you may just need to learn some specific software at some point—like *PowerPoint*, for an assessed presentation.

In any case, you'll be pleased to know that we are offer training for the *European Computer Driving Licence* (ECDL). This qualification is recognised throughout the European Union and in many countries world-wide, where it is referred to as the International Computer Driving Licence)

To support the ECDL and your general IT development, we have online materials available through N-O-W and drop-in, optional classroom sessions, with experienced IT tutors. You can use these whether you're studying for the ECDL, or just developing your IT skills. They run twice a week over 24 weeks. Please check N-O-W for details of ECDL workshops.

Specialist software support
In addition to the general and professional IT support described above, you may find you need support for *specialist* software during your programme. In this case, support is provided in-module, during timetable or additional sessions. Please ask your module leader or academic adviser for further information.
If the need arises for occasional open workshops to provide training in commonly used advanced skills, we will advertise these through the normal routes, such as N-O-W and posters.

Foreign Language Study
There are electives available for students who wish to study a foreign language in our University-wide Language Programme. We recommend you look closely into studying one of these electives.

Specialised needs
If during your course you need special equipment [e.g., video cameras, editing facilities, specialised computing facilities, etc] speak to your tutor about it. We may be able to help you.

3.8 Academic Support
Who? Your **academic support co-ordinator**, Donna Humphrey, will help you to develop your academic skills. Ask yourself some questions before engaging with your first few assignments: Is there anything you need extra help with? Study anxiety? Lack of confidence? Writing skills? Writers block? Want some exercises to practise your skills? Check whether the lecture programme which Donna organises covers it.

3.9 The Library
For Linguistics students, the library is the most important resource of all.

The University library has two locations: in the city [The Boots Library], and Clifton. Almost all items relevant to Clifton-based courses are in the Clifton library. However, you are fully entitled to use both libraries, and you may find much useful material at The Boots Library. The library will bring books to Clifton from The Boots Library for you within 24 hours if you request them.

The Linguistics Information Specialist, Peter Donald (Ext 3013) will help with any special requests or problems. The library has provided a dedicated subject guide:

Linguistics: how to find information which you should ask for on your first visit to the Clifton Library.

Talk to us about library issues relating to particular modules. In particular, tell us if there is a specific shortage or problem in obtaining books. Rarely, you may find a book missing from the library which is on a booklist (eg, it has been stolen), or you may feel a book should be in short-term loan. If so, or if other sorts of related problems crop up, see your seminar leader or the module leader as soon as you can, to tell him or her about this problem. If we don't know there is a problem, there is nothing we can do to rectify it! So, please provide feedback.

The following are some of the more important library facilities and services:

The electronic catalogue: If you are not familiar with it, invest some time getting to know how to make the electronic catalogue work for you. Apart from giving bibliographical details and shelf location, it can tell you whether a book is available for loan; how many copies we have; help you search for what is available in both the Clifton and Boots Libraries; and so on.

Borrowing: All students in the University are entitled to borrow books from the library. Please help the system by using books quickly and returning them as soon as you have finished with them. Don't let books lie idle in your room for the full loan period if you are not using them - someone else may be desperate to use them!

For more ambitious pieces of work in the later parts of your course, you may want to borrow material from other libraries. Inter-library loans are possible: talk to your tutor about it when the time comes.

Reference: The library has a number of dictionaries of Linguistics which you may find helpful to consult – Linguistics is a subject where precise use of terminology is very important and terms can easily become confused.

- D. Crystal (1997) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*
- D.Crystal (1991) *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*
- R.Hartmann and F.Stork (1972) *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*
- M.Pei (1970) *A Dictionary of Linguistics*
- R.Trask (1993) *A Dictionary of Grammatical Terms in Linguistics*

Short loan collection: This is a tremendously important facility designed to make maximum use of books, which are much in demand. The system takes books off the open shelves and allows you to use them in the library during the day or to take them out overnight for early return the next day. Module leaders will tell you which books are reserved at the library desk for short loan. The books that are on short loan are clearly indicated as such on the electronic library catalogue. Use it!

Journals (Periodicals): The library takes a large number of periodicals. Many of these are much less used by students than they might be. The most recent issues are on the ground floor on display shelves close to the issue counter. Back issues are on shelves nearby. Journal articles contain really up-to-date material on a range of linguistic and other topics: a valuable source for debating issues for essays or seminar papers. Just a quick browse through some recent periodicals can yield some interesting material.

The library subscribes to the following periodicals relevant to Linguistics (some may be shelved at Linguistics 400 or Education 370):

Annual Review of Applied linguistics (2001-)
Applied Linguistics (1999-)
Applied Psycholinguistics (1989-)
Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics (1987-)
Cognition (1972-1985; 1994-1999)
Critical Discourse Studies
Discourse and Society (1990-)
Discourse Processes (1994-1996; 1999-)
Discourse Studies (1999-)
Intercultural Communication Studies
International Journal of the Sociology of Language (1983-)
Journal of Child Language (1984-)
Journal of Language and Social Psychology (1999-)
Journal of Linguistics (1974-)
Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development (1984-)
Journal of Neurolinguistics (1989-)
Journal of Politeness Research
Journal of Pragmatics (1987-)
Journal of Psycholinguistic Research (1987-)
Journal of Sociolinguistics (1999-)
Journal of Speech and Hearing Research (1995-1996)
Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research (1997-)
Language and Cognitive Processes (1990- 2002)
Language and Communication (1982-)
Language and Literature (1994-)
Language in Society (1976-)
Mind and Language (1987-)
Multilingua (1998-)
Pragmatics (1993-)
Style (1991-)
Text: an interdisciplinary journal for the study of discourse (1983-)
Topics in Language Disorders (1983-)

Library and Learning Resources website gives you access to **e-Search**. If you hit 'Select databases for metasearch' you will find relevant resources for Linguistics. Most importantly you can access Linguistics Abstracts Online which will allow you to search for references to relevant articles by searching on a key word. Check this site every time you receive an essay or project assignment. There is also a link to the Linguist list which is a gateway to many useful links. Here, you have access to several *corpora* (collections of real language texts) which you can use in your own research. There are also corpora-based dictionaries, and a web-page dedicated to Alex, the talking parrot!

Video Loan: Some videos are also available for loan in the library.

Photocopying facility: The library has a useful pay-as-you-copy system.

4. ASSESSMENT OF LINGUISTICS WORK

4.1 How often am I going to be assessed?

For your overall assessment pattern, it is most important that you read carefully the assessment details in your degree handbook. We don't attempt to summarise all that information here. For more information regarding University Regulations on assessment, handing-in procedures, extensions, late work etc, you should consult the **School of Arts and Humanities: Student School Handbook (SSH).**

As far as Linguistics is concerned, although there are some variations in the way we assess you between one module and another, you normally have to produce two assessment pieces in each module you take. Most commonly, but not invariably, these two pieces are **one piece of coursework and one test or examination.** Occasionally you will make a presentation in place of an essay. In some modules, a project or a series of shorter tasks may be set instead of the essay, or a timed response (where you have sight of the questions in advance) instead of an examination.

4.2 By what methods will I be assessed?

By Essay

A course-work essay is usually a piece of continuous prose of about 1500-2000 words (longer in Years 2 and 3; length progressively increases). The main aim of an essay is to organise your knowledge and ideas into a coherent argument relevant to the theme of the module concerned. Your tutors will set you a title or choice of titles.

See the essay assessment criteria in Appendix B

For further help on the writing of essays, and for marking criteria, see Appendices to this handbook. When writing essays you will want to interact with the ideas of other critics, to help you develop your thinking. A risk here is that, when taking on board the ideas of these other critics, you will **fail to properly acknowledge** that these ideas were originally those of another/others. This can lead to **plagiarism,** which is defined as "the deliberate, substantial and unacknowledged incorporation in a candidate's work of material derived from the work (published or unpublished) of another" [SSH p9]. You should read carefully the section on plagiarism and other academic irregularities in the Student School Handbook (p8-10). There is also a very helpful and detailed leaflet available in the library. Please make sure you pick one up. You must also work through the tutorial on plagiarism that is on N-O-W Resources site:
https://elearn.ntu.ac.uk/mle/scormcontent/coursegenie/plagiarism/start.html

Plagiarism carries very severe penalties, so it must be avoided at all costs.

By Class Test or an Examination.

Sometimes, mid-way through a module you may be asked to write what we call a "timed response". This will involve you in writing, usually on one or two topics, usually for 50 (Years One and Two) or 120 minutes (Year Three). The aims will be similar to those indicated for the essay above, but with the added constraint that you have to organise and express your thoughts within a time-limit. An important factor which we believe makes the "timed response" a fair and useful complement to the course-work essay is that, unlike course-work, all students have to work in the same conditions and for the same length of time (unless there are special circumstances - e.g., dyslexia). Otherwise, the

"timed response" may consist of a paper you take home with you to work on for a set period of time (e.g. three or four days).
See the 'exams/class test assessment criteria in Appendix C.

By Presentation/ Poster
This type of response involves you delivering the results of your researching into, and thinking about, a literary or linguistic topic in person rather than in conventional written form. You might make a presentation individually, or as a member of a group. You would be expected to communicate effectively with your audience without excessive reliance on a script, and to have prepared handouts, audio-visual materials, etc., if appropriate. A presentation is delivered orally. A poster may supply the same information in written/ visual form. The information may be complemented by graphics.
See the presentation/ poster assessment criteria in Appendix E.

By Project
Projects may take various forms. The characteristic of the project is that it requires initiative from you in the researching and gathering of material, in the analysis of it, and in the most effective way of presenting the material and the analysis, together with your conclusions. The criteria for the assessment of projects vary according to the nature of the subject matter and the task you undertake. It will therefore be very important for you to look carefully at your tutor's criteria if you undertake a project.
See the project assessment criteria in Appendix D.

By Dissertation
A Linguistics dissertation may be an option for you in your final year, depending on which degree you are taking. This is an extended piece of work, which enables you to develop a topic of your own choice, and to deploy your critical and analytical skills in a scholarly way. You need to seek out a tutor to supervise your dissertation, if you want to undertake one. Use the list of staff interests in Section 2.5 of this Handbook to guide you to a suitable tutor for the topic of your choice.
For dissertation assessment criteria, see Appendix F.

By attendance in seminars and workshops.
This is compulsory. Poor attendance will affect your mark in Linguistics. **See Section 3.5 (Linguistics Attendance Policy).**

4.3 What are tutors looking for when they mark students' work?
It is important for you to understand the criteria by which we assess your work. The criteria may vary somewhat from module to module, according to the nature of the material you are studying. Each module will give you guidance on its criteria, both through the module handbook/document and through lectures.
Read Appendices A, B, C,D,E,F for a summary of the kind of criteria Linguistics tutors are likely to apply in assessing your work.

4.4 What kind of feedback will I get on my work?
In many ways, what you learn from each piece of work you do is more important than the mark you get for it. When you get marked work back from your tutor, look again at our list of criteria; then look carefully at the tutor's annotations and comments - both the marginal comments, and the comments on the cover-sheet. These should help you to identify the main strengths and weaknesses of your work, and help you to improve your

performance in your next piece of work. If you don't fully understand the written feedback, then your tutor will be happy to talk to you about it - either (briefly) at the end of a seminar hour, or more usually in their office hours.

4.5 Where do I hand work in ?

At the School Assessment Office, Room 103. See Student School Handbook for more details.

5. THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF LINGUISTICS

5.1 Structure and progression within Linguistics

Your work in Linguistics will be structured in a way that combines coherence and a strong sense of development on the one hand, with variety and a wide range of choice on the other.

Level 1 modules ensure that you have a good grounding in linguistic concepts and become practised at dealing with linguistic analysis and issues about language. We want you to have as much practical experience as possible in collecting your own data and developing sensitivity to the different ways in which language is used. We want all Linguistics students to have a grounding in the critical skills which Linguistics students need, and to have a range of experience which will enable you to make informed decisions when you have the opportunity to choose what to study at levels two and three. If you wish to study Linguistics modules in later years, you must take a level 1 module in Linguistics. We particularly recommend **LING101 Introduction to Language and Linguistics (40 Credits).** This module will raise some of the questions that make language one of the most fascinating subjects in the humanities. Among the questions raised are: how do we manage to manipulate language so powerfully in our everyday encounters, spanning functions which range from seduction to giving evidence in court? How does language function ideologically? How are stigmatised groups represented in language? This module will give students the opportunity to explore these questions and apply linguistic theory to language found in everyday life.

Also at Level 1 we offer **LING102 Exploring English Language** which will introduce students to current approaches to linguistic theory and students will have practice in applying theory to analysis of linguistic data. Material covered in this module will be beneficial to students who intend to follow higher level work in Linguistics or who may find themselves otherwise dealing with aspects of language structure and function.

The module also introduces the development of the English Language and its function as a spoken and written medium of communication. An awareness of the history of the language and the ways in which language changes according to mode and context including the role of personal, social, historical and political factors in influencing meanings and forms, will provide a framework for the analysis of text.

Level 2: LING201 Sociolinguistics explores different aspects of language variation in response to changing contexts and social practices. We are all interested in the regional accents and dialects of English, but other factors play a part in variation, too, for example, age, ethnic background, gender and sexuality. As part of the assessment, we offer you the opportunity to investigate an aspect of language variation yourself. In groups, students identify an area for investigation, form a hypothesis, e.g. “informants will demonstrate a preference for some regional accents over others”, collect their own data, analyse it and reach a conclusion. This work is presented in the form of a project, and we have had some really excellent work from students taking this module. The techniques and skills you will acquire in **LING201** are enormously helpful when you reach the dissertation stage (even if this is not a Linguistics dissertation!)

LING 202 Language and the Mind will introduce students to the concepts of language from a psychological perspective. It will deal with theories of language acquisition and learning, the differences between human and animal language, theories of language evolution, and the examination of linguistic impairments due to brain damage and other causes.

Another module currently offered at Level 2 is **LING203 Phonetics**. This appeals to the student who is curious about how the sounds of their own, and other languages are articulated (spoken) and transcribed phonetically. Starting with an overview of the human vocal apparatus, we investigate in detail all the possible human speech sounds. From there we look at the pronunciation patterns of British English, and compare them with American pronunciation. This module will sharpen your awareness of speech sounds, and will provide you with another tool of analysis for a linguistics project. If you have a view towards a career in Speech and Language Therapy, teaching English Language or English as a Foreign Language, then Phonetics is a very valuable skill.

LING211 Semantics introduces students to the basic concepts and strategies of analysis in semantics (meaning). It examines the meanings of sentences, words and morphemes. Also many words derive their meaning from reference to objects and people in the world; the meaning of other words is based upon the sense relationships that exist between words. How word meanings change over time (lexical semantic change) will also be addressed.

LING 212 Child Language Acquisition. This module will allow students to investigate the course of language acquisition from birth to the age of four, paying particular attention to the development of phonetics, lexis and grammar. As well as looking at linguistic progression, there will also be the opportunity to focus on fields such as social and pragmatic development and the chance to compare 'normal' development with groups of special populations where children may come across particular problems with language learning.

LING 215 Discourse Analysis introduces students to the study of naturally occurring language across extended texts, both spoken and written. The module begins by surveying the various approaches and issues within discourse analysis, before introducing a critical element to analysis and finally applying the methods across a range of discourse types. The module aims to provide a systematic linguistic toolkit for analysing discourse, and to show how the tools can be applied to a wide range of spoken and written texts. It also aims to offer a solid grounding for all of the third year modules in the 'Discourse' pathway, 'Language, Gender and Sexuality', 'Intercultural Communication' and 'Media Discourse'. Students will be encouraged to develop their theoretical and practical linguistics skills and to apply themselves critically to the study of language.

At **Level 3** we offer a variety of options. By this point you will already have developed particular interests which you wish to follow up, or perhaps you have decided you are hooked on Linguistics, and you want to take everything there is!

LING 302 Psycholinguistics allows students to look at language from a psychological perspective. Some of the topics which will be covered are those of language acquisition, language production, language comprehension and language loss. Within these subjects it will be possible to view such processes under 'normal' circumstances, as well as in cases where the language system has broken down (for example brain damage and different types of dyslexia).

LING307 Language, Gender and Sexuality. You will probably have been introduced to this topic during the Sociolinguistics modules LING201. This module enables you to pursue the topic in more depth, and in different directions. You will explore key aspects of the study of language and gender, such as theories of language and gender (difference, dominance, discursive approaches), sexist language and language change, language and gender in different contexts (e.g. in the media, in books etc.). The module will give

students the opportunity to explore and critically evaluate the discursive construction of both femininities and masculinities, in theoretical and practical ways.

LING308 Clinical Linguistics. Students will be invited to apply their knowledge of language structure and function to a clinical context. A range of child and adult speech and language disorders will be examined. Examples of disorders which will be studied are: cleft palate, Down's syndrome and autism, cerebral palsy, stroke, brain tumour, dementia, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, head trauma, glossectomy, dysarthria, stammering and disorders of voice.

LING309 Pragmatics. This module will look at the ways we make and understand meaning in language. For instance meanings are often non-literal, and we need quite a lot of world-knowledge to understand conversations. Reasoning, logic and argumentation will also be studied. Why is the language of schizophrenic patients so noticeably bizarre? Why do young children find words like 'today' and 'tomorrow' particularly difficult to acquire? If saying something which you know to be false is the hallmark of a liar, then why do we not use the term 'liar' of every speaker who says on a rainy day 'We're having lovely weather at the minute'? To obtain answers to each of these questions, we must turn to a branch of linguistics called pragmatics. Pragmatics is variously defined as the study of nonliteral meaning (i.e. nonsemantic aspects of meaning) or as the study of the relationship between language and the context in which language is used. In this module, we will examine central concepts (e.g. implicature) and theories (e.g. relevance theory) in the field of pragmatics.

LING 312 Intercultural Communication. The module aims to develop students' understanding of spoken and written communication in its intercultural and crosscultural dimensions. To this effect, students will be guided to revisit critically key concepts such as 'culture(s)', 'identit(ies)', 'miscommunication', 'stereotype' and 'face' from a range of methodological perspectives (ethnography of speaking, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, interactional linguistics, politeness, contrastive pragmatics), in a variety of settings (conversational, institutional, professional) and using authentic data from instances of face-to-face, mediated or written communication.

LING 315 Media Discourse. This module will allow students to explore critically the written and spoken product of both print and broadcast mass media. The module will begin by outlining the principles and methods of Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Linguistics. Subsequently, students will examine the workings of the media as an institution and explore methods of media text production, such as how journalists select "stories" and the editing process. The next section of the module will then address a variety of issues within media discourse, such as sexism, racism and social change. Lastly, the module will examine the future of the media by exploring "new media" texts such as weblogs and podcasts, utilising a corpus linguistics approach.

LING 316 Literary Linguistics. This module introduces students to a range of approaches to the study of language and linguistic frameworks and allows them to apply these to the study of literary texts. The module begins by introducing the concept of stylistics and examining the current debates within the field, before moving on to cover issues such as cohesion within literary texts, pragmatic stylistics, narrative analysis and point of view. The module then examines critical and feminist stylistics before looking to the future of literary linguistics by introducing the method of corpus stylistics.

At Levels 1, 2 and 3 we offer pathways through Linguistics, but you do not need to feel obliged to identify or follow a particular pathway – you are still free to 'pick and mix'. Your choices will be constrained, however, by the particular degree program you are

taking, and by which modules we are able to offer in any one academic year. You must understand that it is not always possible to offer every module in the curriculum, for various reasons: staff study leave, illness, retirement etc. Just because it is listed here, does not mean that we can guarantee each module will run each year. You must check with the appropriate Course and Subject Leaders whether you are taking enough credits to fulfil your intentions regarding your choices for Main or Minor Subjects. Course Co-ordinators can also give advice on credit requirements. The Subject Leader can advise on the requirements for an identified pathway.

5.2 Pathways in Linguistics

There are two possible routes through Linguistics: a Pre-Clinical pathway, and a Discourse pathway.

Pre-Clinical

The modules identified under the Pre-Clinical pathway will prepare you academically to make an application to an M.Sc. course in Speech and Language Therapy. We must emphasize that even in the event of good academic performance, such applications are not automatically successful. The admissions tutors for such courses also wish to see personal qualities such as confidence, competence and leadership. Your Personal Development Planner will help you add to your CV on these counts. They will also wish to satisfy themselves that you have had experience in the field, through observing, or working as an assistant in a SLT clinic. Most M.Sc. courses do not take students directly after graduation, so you should plan on spending some time acquiring relevant experience after leaving NTU.

Level 1

LING 101 Introduction to Language and Linguistics	LING 102 Exploring English Language

Level 2

LING 201 Sociolinguistics	LING 211 Semantics	LING 212 Child Lang. Acq.	LING203 Phonetics

Level 3

LING 309 Pragmatics	LING 302 Psycholinguistics	LING 308 Clinical Linguistics

Discourse

The modules identified under the Discourse pathway will prepare you academically to make an application to postgraduate courses in such fields as Copywriting, Public Relations, Journalism and Teaching. Again we must emphasize that even in the event of good academic performance, such applications are not automatically successful. Admissions tutors will wish to see evidence of commitment, natural talent and/or experience in the field, and you should consider trying to gain relevant work experience during your University vacations.

Level 1

LING 101 Introduction to Language and Linguistics	LING102 Exploring English Language

Level 2

LING 201 Sociolinguistics	LING 215 Discourse Analysis

Level 3

LING 307 Language, Gender and Sexuality	LING 312 Intercultural Communication	LING 315 Media Discourse	LING 316 Literary Linguistics

5.3 Student evaluation of Linguistics courses

We want you to have maximum opportunity to comment on the courses that we run. Please let us know constructively if there is something we can do to improve the quality of the Linguistics experience here.

There are several ways you can help:

1. By informal feedback to your tutors in seminar and tutorial about your reactions to a module in general, or to particular aspects of it.

Tutors (like everyone else) don't enjoy adverse criticism; but a comment like "We particularly liked the format of last week's seminar" is a useful as well as acceptable indication to us of the kind of session you find stimulating - and it could be a way of opening up discussion on what was less good about this week's seminar!

2. By responding thoughtfully and constructively to the formal evaluations which take place towards the end of every module. We do take these evaluations seriously and your comments feature in module reports and sometimes in the end of year subject report. If it is both practicable and desirable to take up your suggestions, we will do so.

3. If you want to raise matters which are not just Linguistics matters, but of broader School or University relevance, you can use the machinery of student representation formally provided for in the School. Students are represented on the various degree Boards of Studies.

4. We particularly value the considered comments of Final year students who can reflect on three years of study in Linguistics. We have a questionnaire on which final year students are invited to comment on their three years of Linguistics.

Remember, if you have a problem, take it up first with your seminar leader, then your module leader. They should be told first.

6. COMPLETING THE PICTURE

Is this all there is to being a Linguistics student?

No. The real emphasis at degree level falls on private study and reading, using the directions of staff. In particular, in advance of each teaching session you need to complete the preliminary reading or other assigned tasks. If you are unsure what you are supposed to be doing, contact a tutor. Go and see the tutor in the tutor's office hours.

Life as an undergraduate is not just a matter of academic study. In addition, university life gives you the chance to develop interests and skills through what we sometimes call "extra- curricular activities": the things you do outside the course. For some, these may in the end turn out to be as important as the academic work of the course itself.

We recognise that some students have responsibilities and commitments which severely limit the time and energy they have for such "extras". But we do believe that the people who are likely to get most out of the undergraduate experience, and (to be pragmatic) who are most likely to interest future employers, are those who take the opportunity to develop their personal potential to the maximum.

So we strongly recommend that you think seriously about developing your skills and interests not only on the course, but also outside it. For example, things past students have successfully done alongside their academic work have included:

- studying abroad – you should contact the International Office for more information, and discuss the compatibility of Linguistics modules at another university with the Linguistics Subject Leader;
- working actively in the student union, whether in an organisational, political, or social capacity (e.g. drama society);
- participating in the running of the School - for example, by accepting nomination as representative on a Board of Study;
- writing, for an undergraduate paper, or freelance;
- voluntary work in the Nottingham area, for example, in a Speech and Language Therapy clinic, or for a language disorders charity, in the Broadway cinema; drama and music groups; hospitals' radio; adult literacy teaching; etc.

Some of these may be relatively minor activities; some could be very time-consuming. But all encourage the development of the same personal qualities which we want our students to develop. Talk to tutors, careers advisers, friends, relatives about your interests, and how you might continue to develop them. We believe that many activities are happily complementary to Linguistics, and that they can encourage your positive involvement with the subject, enhance the rewards you get from the course, and enormously increase your opportunities in employment or further study when you graduate. You can log the skills you have acquired on your cv and in your **Personal Development Planner** on N-O-W.

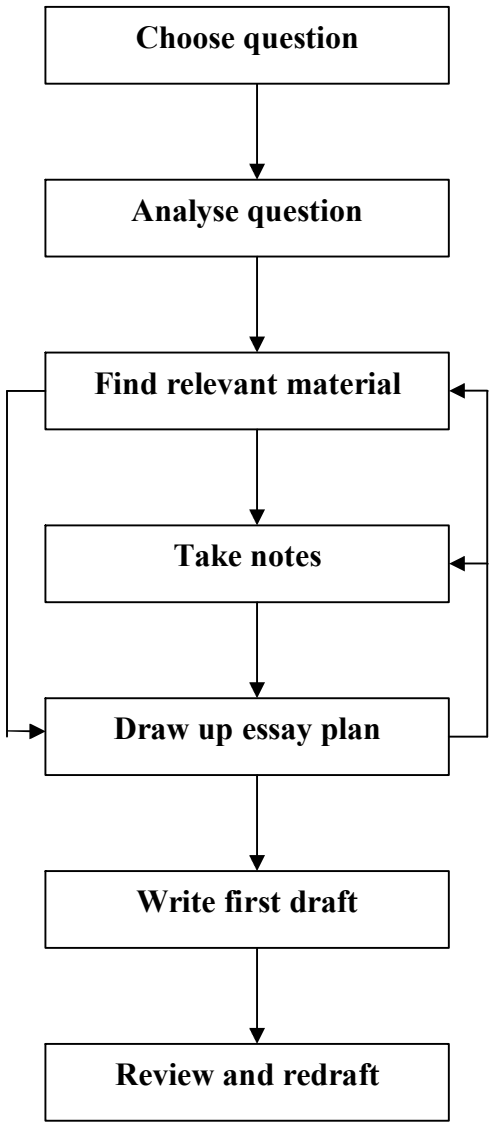
We have tried to tell you in this handbook something of what being a Linguistics student at the Nottingham Trent University is like. Completing the picture is up to you.

7. Writing an Essay

7.1 First Steps

Figure 1 below shows the main steps in writing an academic essay.

***Figure 1*: Steps in Writing an Essay**



1. Choosing the question

- Choose one which you both understand well and which suits your essay style.

2. Analysing the question

- Explicit *directive* verbs (*discuss, compare, explain*) tell you how to structure your argument.
- Other words indicate precise *topic* and *focus*.

3. Finding relevant material

- Scan through books/articles for *relevance* before photocopying or taking out of library.
- Always keep in mind your analysis of the essay question. Only select material that is *relevant* to the precise question.

4. Taking notes

- Paraphrase and summarise authors and use as many symbols and abbreviations as possible This is quicker and will ensure you avoid plagiarism.
- Select a few 'useful' quotes, but remember to note down the page number and full references.
- Note down full references for all books and articles consulted.

5. Planning the essay

There are no 'rules' here, but most plans fall into one of the following types:

- *Rough sketch*, where you catalogue the key points you intend to cover;
- *Basic plan*, where you outline and order these points into a sketch of your argument.
- *Evolving plan*, which might begin immediately after analysing the question and continue right up to the redraft stage.
- *Extended plan*, where you detail every move in your argument so that writing the first draft is simply a matter of connecting your notes.

However you prefer to do it, you must at some stage have a plan or your essay will not develop.

6. Writing the first draft

Concentrate on your line of argument, not style. This is stated in your introduction, developed logically in the body and tied up in your conclusion. Make sure all your points are backed up by evidence.

7. Review and redraft

Review *critically* what you have written **firstly** in terms of *argument* (do all points follow logically and coherently?) and **then** in terms of *clarity* (is it written clearly and concisely in good English?).

7.2 Tips for Improving your Grades

Appendix A lists what we believe are the essential criteria involved in evaluating an essay in linguistics. These criteria can be seen to fall into one of four major areas: Understanding, Argument, Analysis and Presentation. These major criteria are probably applicable to almost all essays you have or will produce in the humanities, while the minor criteria contained within those categories will vary from subject to subject.

It is important to understand what lecturers are actually looking for in your essays, but it is even more essential to know how you can improve your performance. The sections below explain the major assessment criteria used in Linguistics and provide a few tips for future work.

Understanding

Three levels of understanding are evaluated in language study essays:

Understanding of general linguistic principles

This is the highest order of understanding and, to a certain extent, is the principal goal of 1st year work. It includes such things as grasping the nature of constituency and realising that linguistics is a descriptive and not prescriptive endeavour.

Tips: Read more! Stand back from the details to grasp the overall picture. Do practical linguistic tasks as much as possible. Check the meaning of linguistic terms before using them.

Understanding of linguistic framework and topic

This concerns the area of linguistics under study and the particular frameworks used to study it.

Tips: Make sure you read the material on the framework carefully. Check the meaning of terms. When you are sure you understand the framework, consider critiques of it and compare it with other frameworks.

Understanding and coverage of key issues raised by question.

All good essay questions have been written to encourage you to discuss certain key issues in the subject area. It is a part of your job to recognise what those key issues are and to discuss them accordingly. It is not usually expected that you will discuss all the relevant key issues (unless they are very clearly spelled out in the question or in classwork) but a marker will expect to see at least some. Equally importantly, she will not expect to see copious discussion of irrelevant points or minor points (unless the latter are particularly perceptive or original).

Tips: Most of the key issues to any question will have been discussed in some capacity, or at least suggested, in lecture or seminar work. You probably *know* them, but the problem is recognising their relevance (or lack of) to the specific question. Analyse the question, as indicated in Step 2 above. Then:

- Brainstorm for key points *before* you start doing any research;
- Skim through your lecture/seminar notes to pick up key areas.

Other key issues might appear as you carry out your analyses and research. These are often more interesting, as you have found them yourself, and are therefore potentially more valuable. But always check that they are relevant to the question.

Argument

Presence of argument.

All academic essays must have an argument – it is this which distinguishes them from commentaries or notes. An argument is simply a series of logically-connected points presented to support a proposition. The proposition need not be controversial: 'there are several ways in which spoken language differs from written language.' Nor is it necessary for the conclusion to be particularly decisive: 'this analysis would tend to suggest that the rule might be effective…'

Unlike the arguments of politicians, those of academics are meant to be more objective and to take into consideration all sides. Consequently, each point supporting a proposition might be discussed at some length, with equal weight given to counter-propositions within those mini discussions.

Tips: Throughout the essay writing process continually ask yourself what your argument is, where you are heading. At the same time, don't commit yourself too heavily to one argument in the early stages as further research or analysis may prove that argument wrong. Furthermore, trust your data, your evidence, even if it goes against your own preconceptions or what you have been taught.

Organisation of argument.

Arguments can be organised in several basic ways:

- Descriptive: points are more or less listed and it is the accumulation of points that leads to the conclusion.
- Thematic: points are grouped together into themes which provide a smaller set of more major points leading to the conclusion.
- Theoretical: points are grouped together for their theoretical significance and there is generally a more complex development towards the conclusion.

In general, the thematic and theoretical are valued higher than the descriptive.

Tips: The most important thing is to have a clear line of argument, so don't try creating theoretically-organised arguments unless it comes naturally. It *is* a good idea, though, to try grouping your points into themes, especially if you have a large number of small points. This is *not* too difficult and it *can* make a big difference to the impact of your argument.

Introduction

All essays must have some form of introduction. The introduction focuses your reader on the scope of your argument. It does this usually by:

- Setting the question against a wider background
- Clarifying your understanding of the question, perhaps by rephrasing it or by defining key or problematic terms
- Outlining the approach you will take to the question, probably by stating your aims and possibly by indicating your essay structure.

Tips: Remember that your reader/marker doesn't *know* your essay in the way you do. He or she will want to have a very good idea of where you're heading right from the first paragraph. Most markers would agree that the first paragraph is by far the most important and the one which initially orients them towards a grade band. So it's vital to get it right. There's no one way to do it, but make sure that:

- Your aims are stated clearly – your argument will be assessed on this statement
- It's as short as possible – it's meant to introduce, not take up half your essay

Main body

An argument is a series of *logically connected* points, so the main body of the essay must show this clear logical development. Paragraphs normally discuss one major point, or a part of a point if the point is particularly long. A number of small points can be grouped together thematically into a longer paragraph. The main argument development, then, is from paragraph to paragraph and this development should be signalled clearly. Paragraphs consist of sentences, each of which should show one step in the development of the point.

Tips: Connections between sentences and paragraphs frequently occur through *connectors*. The type of connector you use will depend on the type of *logical development*: e.g. listing (*firstly, secondly, then, next, finally*), contrast (*however, nevertheless, yet*). These connectors are vital to your argument so make sure you are using them properly. e.g. Avoid 'double contrasts': But… But…

Conclusion

The conclusion should follow naturally from the points in the main body of your essay. It might summarise these in a few words and then sum up. It might also link back to the question and review it in a new light, perhaps showing some relevance to the world beyond the specific question.

Tips: There are no hard-and-fast rules for writing conclusions, but note:
1) An effective, well-written conclusion can make a difference
2) Never introduce further points to your argument: your argument must *conclude*.

Analysis

This criterion appears to involve two separate, but interrelated, factors:

- The systematic application of an established methodology to a text;
- The provision of evidence to support the points in the argument.

The first of these is sometimes not essential, but the second is always vitally important whatever the nature of the essay. For example, a classic undergraduate literature essay may not apply a particular critical framework (although this is much more frequent at higher levels) but it definitely will be expected to provide strong support for the points made in the argument.

Application of Established Methodology

This involves activities such as phonetic transcription or the identification of certain linguistic elements in a text. These types of analysis can appear in their own right as separate tasks or assignments. But if they appear in an essay, reference to them will depend on the needs of the argument. At this point, the results of analysis simply become convincing pieces of evidence supporting points in your argument, and therefore are no different in kind from any other type of evidence.

This type of analysis based on fixed procedures requires two features:

- Systematic application of methodology
- Accurate results

Tips: Linguistic methodologies tend to be fairly rigorous. So:

- Try to follow 'rules' (like those for identifying clause elements) rather than just intuitions (although these *are* important).
- Use terminology consistently and systematically. Don't use different terms to refer to the same thing.
- Check and double-check your results.

Remember that any analysis carried out for an essay is *background* work, rather like note-taking. Don't expect to use all of your results in your essay – only a few may be relevant to your argument.

Provision of Evidence

All the points you make in your argument must be supported by evidence. There are two main sources of evidence:

- *Primary Sources*. This might be the text you are analysing (or the literary text in the case of literature essays). But in language work it might also be any source of language use or even your own intuitions about the way language is used. This type of evidence can be presented as it appears in the text, in the form of 'examples' *or* it can be presented in an *analysed* form, as the result of the types of analysis described above.

- *Secondary Sources*. These are usually books or articles *about* the primary sources: critical texts in the case of literature, linguistics textbooks and grammar books in the case of language study. These sources provide both theoretical evidence and authoritative support for your ideas.

Tips: You should try to provide a mixture of primary and secondary evidence.

- *Primary evidence* is more essential for your argument because it is more direct. Don't make claims about a text without providing examples. Just one or two will often do as long as they clarify what you are getting at.
- *Secondary evidence* shows that you have been doing some research (quite essential in most academic work!).
- You need to balance three ways of referring to secondary sources:

1) *Mention* attributes the ideas you are putting forth to another researcher

There are two irreducible modes of thought (Bruner 1986: 11)

2) *Summary* paraphrases the author's actual words

Bruner (1986: 11) claims that there are two modes of thought which construct experience in distinctive ways.

3) *Quoting* cites those words directly

Bruner claims that there are 'two modes of thought, each providing distinctive ways of ordering experience, of constructing reality' (1986: 11).

Mention is the most frequently used, while quoting should be used sparingly. Quoting might be seen as the icing on the cake.

Presentation

The major assessment criterion of *presentation* includes a number of factors concerning conventions followed in academic writing. These conventions are designed to help the reader rather than make life difficult for the writer and, once you get used to them, you should find that they are indeed helpful.

Citing References

The main reasons for citing references are linked to the major assessment criteria:

- To demonstrate the body of knowledge on which your research is based (Knowledge & Understanding)
- To acknowledge debts to other writers in the formulation of your line of thought (Argument)
- To provide evidence for the points you make (Analysis)
- To enable your reader to locate your sources easily (Presentation)

The first three reasons show how vitally important it is to cite references at all. The fourth reason shows that the <u>way</u> you cite your references is also crucial because it makes life easier for your reader.

There are two fundamentally different ways of citing references:

1) Provide a short abbreviated reference in the body of your essay which points the reader to a list of References which includes the full bibliographical information of all works cited. We can call this the 'Short Citation and References' method.
2) Use a series of superscript numbers which point the reader to footnotes or endnotes containing the full reference to the cited text or an abbreviated reference referring back to a previous footnote. i.e. the 'Footnote' method.

Most academic subjects have adopted a version of the Short Citation & References method, but law, English, history and a few other arts subjects prefer the Footnote method.

As indicated in Appendix G, Linguistics uses the Harvard 'author-date' system, as outlined in the library guide and at http://www.ntu.ac.uk/lis/library/citingrefs.htm. Study this system very carefully and use the library guide as your authority on referencing. Once you know it, you should find the Harvard system easy to use both as a writer and reader.

Tips: There are two key points to watch out for here:

- *Harvard v Footnotes*. If you have to use a Footnote system for another subject, make sure you understand the differences between the systems (see Appendix G). In your Linguistics essay, do **not** include any of the following: footnotes or endnotes with bibliographical details, Latin abbreviations such as *ibid.* and *op. cit.* (though *et al* is used in short citations where there are more than two authors), full references within the text itself. In the References, do not include books you have not actually cited (Appendix G).
- *Proofreading*. Check the linking between citation and reference. There is nothing worse for the reader than finding a citation and turning to the References only to find that the work is not listed or is not listed in alphabetical order. The easiest way of checking is to read through your essay as if you were the intended reader and then, each time you come to a short citation, look it up in your list of references. This will reveal any cited works which have not been referenced and also any problems with the ordering of your references. You can check that you have not listed uncited works by ticking off each reference you look up. It is very important to proofread references last because many problems occur (even in printed works) when citations are added or removed during the editing stage. Also, check that the formatting is identical (including punctuation) in each of the short citations and in each of the references.

Style

Academic writing should be relatively formal, impersonal and technical, but also clear and concise. This still leaves some scope for developing a personal style, but it must fall within the constraints of academic style.

Tips: Avoid colloquialisms and slang as much as possible (except in the data, of course!). Write complete sentences (check that you have a verb) and do not let them run on and on by using *and*s and commas rather than full-stops. Present your ideas mostly in the third person, though first person is often useful when you are indicating your intentions in the Introduction (do not use 'the author' when you mean 'I'). Avoid 'big' words when there is no need to use them – they won't impress your reader if they make the text obscure. Similarly, watch out for overly dense and complex sentences. Be as concise as possible: don't repeat yourself constantly. But don't be so concise that you cease to be clear. Finally, remember that some of the very best academic writing is surprisingly clear and simple, and that obscurity is often a sign of ignorance.

Quality of English

Poor grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation can make an essay very difficult to read, which in turn will make it difficult to follow your argument. Bear in mind the following points:

- Always run spelling and grammar checks before submitting essays. These will not pick up *all* mistakes, but they can certainly help.
- Check the meaning of words in dictionaries. If they are linguistic terms, check the meaning in linguistic textbooks or in dictionaries of linguistics.
- Read up on the use of apostrophes e.g. in *Projects in Linguistics* or *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*. Do not use an apostrophe when you have a plural (*apple's).
- Do not use commas as full-stops. Again, read up on the use of punctuation if you are not sure.

Layout and Format

Although not strictly an *academic* criterion, the way a piece of work looks and is set out can greatly help or hinder the reader. Try to make the layout as neat and clear as possible. Always type and print your essays and projects. Make sure all pages are numbered and that all sections are clearly labelled. Type out your data clearly and present it in clear appendices.

Think very carefully about how best to present quantitative data. Charts are often clearer than tables. When using tables, make sure they can be read easily. Do not pack too much information into one table.

Finally, think about your marker before using fancy presentation formats. A hard ring-binder with each sheet of work in separate transparent pocket folders may look pretty but is very awkward to mark because each sheet has to be removed from and returned to its folder. Essays, projects and dissertations are most convenient when they are presented in spiral binding. However, it is usually sufficient to staple essays in the top left corner (make sure you use a large enough stapler).

ESSAY SURVIVAL CHECKLIST

(tick as appropriate)

Cover Page

My first/cover page clearly shows:

- ❑ my name
- ❑ course title and number
- ❑ my tutor's name
- ❑ the question I have chosen
- ❑ the date I handed in the assignment

Introduction

My introduction:

- ❑ sets the question against a wider background
- ❑ clarifies my understanding of the question, including defining key or problematic terms if necessary
- ❑ outlines the approach I will be taking to the question

Body

The main body of my essay:

- ❑ clearly presents the key points in a logical sequence
- ❑ systematically backs up the points I have made with evidence from primary and secondary sources
- ❑ accurately quotes and cites references to other works
- ❑ labels diagrams, figures or tables clearly

Conclusion

My conclusion:

- ❑ brings together the main points and/or
- ❑ links back to the question/topic and/or
- ❑ states my conclusions clearly

Presentation

I have:

- ❑ run a spelling check (and grammar check?)
- ❑ proofread the essay for grammar, spelling and punctuation
- ❑ checked that all citations in the body correspond to entries in the 'References' section and that the citing is systematic
- ❑ checked that the References section is in alphabetical order
- ❑ written the number of words in the essay at the end

I have then shown the essay to a classmate, and they say it:

- ❑ reads clearly throughout and that the argument is clear

Appendix A:

GENERAL CLARIFICATION OF MARK MEANINGS FOR EXAMINATIONS, ESSAYS, DISSERTATIONS AND PROJECTS.

Outlined below are statements interpreting the meanings of the mark bands used in assessing written work. Informing the guidelines are broadly agreed understandings of the honours classification system of degree marking.

Generally in a piece of work we are looking for you to:
be relevant:
be able to sustain and develop an argument of your own;
be conceptual and analytic;
base your argument on reference to a range of texts and display some theoretical and/or methodological awareness;
base your argument on good background reading, as directed by staff;
write in clear and accurate English.

The very best first class work attracts a mark of (80% +).
This work will be outstanding in terms of intellectual argument, expression and thorough research. In your final year it will be not far short of publishable standard. It will be:
(a) confidently argued, clear, coherent - all of the criteria marking out first class work
(b) highly sophisticated, original, subtle and be closely detailed in its textual analysis and/or
(c) highly theoretically informed and sophisticated

First Class Work (70% +):
This work will be outstanding, both intellectually and in terms of its expression. It will show an awareness of how issues are problematic (e.g., take on board more than one side of an argument and arbitrate between them). It should:
a) show sophisticated analysis, be critical, perceptive and sharp
b) be clear and coherent in structure
c) be able to develop subtle arguments
c) evaluate evidence and criticise sources rigorously
d) show originality and independence of thought in responding to texts and/or theoretical and critical writings
e) display a confident style of expression and argument
f) be well written and well presented
g) show scholarship

Upper Second (60%-69%) (2i):
Work in this class will lack the conceptual awareness, originality and sustained power of argument of first class answers, but will nevertheless be of high quality. It will:
a) demonstrate analytical intelligence and not be mere description
b) be relevant in its argument
c) illustrate its argument via appropriate textual and/or critical and/or theoretical reference, using good background reading.
d) show some awareness of relevant theory

e) show a knowledge of context
f) use the English language with some sophistication.

Lower Second (50%-59%) (2ii):
Usually the most commonly found category of student work. It is important to recognise that **work of this level is considered to be of good honours standard** and not merely satisfactory, fair or average. Work of this calibre will show some of the qualities listed above (under Upper Second) but to some extent the qualities shown will be compromised by some of the following shortcomings:
a) it will tend to be less enquiring than that in the higher categories, and depend more upon description and upon secondary authorities such as critics and lecturers;
b) there will often be a lack of confidence in challenging orthodox opinions, and a narrower range (in terms of debates, or texts or authors will be considered);
c) the written expression will be uneven; and/or the answer long-winded, repetitious and imprecise.

Third Class (40%-49%):
Work in this band is intellectually weak, and is typified by some of these features:
a) it may be overly descriptive, too generalised or assertive and/or fall back upon narration or plot recounting and/or un- or under-theorized description;
b) there is likely to be little critical detachment or sense of reflection in such work nor the construction of coherent and relevant arguments;
c) it may consist of short and thin answers suggesting that the syllabus has not been studied carefully enough.
d) written expression will be consistently weak.

Fail Answers
Marking fail answers is difficult, yet it is important to agree on criteria that are consistent and commonly agreed.

1% to 9%: No answer attempted, no more than the question number, one or two lines of writing (test/exam) or little more than a couple of sides of writing (essay); complete evasion of question. Effectively has not begun to write or develop an answer.

10% to 19%: No real attempt to answer the question. Very short answer which makes no serious effort to focus on the question. Has clearly given up.

20% to 29%: Very limited and intermittent attempt to answer the question, usually revealing severe intellectual limitations. Manifests a profound misunderstanding of the implications of the question: may also be poorly written, inchoate and/or overly short.

30% to 34%:Failure, but one showing some (unsustained) attempt to answer the question and/or showing some limited and intermittent insight, usually accompanied by some misunderstanding; shows some deep intellectual limitations.

35% to 39%: Marginal failure; may try to address the question, but is either incomplete or does not reach the academic level of discussion required at degree level. Shallow, superficial, intellectually limited, and usually revealing a poor command of written English. Accentuates the faults shown by third class work.

Because borderline answers are always crucial to students, markers take special care to discriminate between scripts that fall between categories. The scrutiny of external

examiners is often valuable in such instances and these papers/essays are often singled out for attention and remarking. Marking cannot be an exact science, but the above criteria provide some guidance.

Appendix B:

LINGUISTICS ESSAY: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Not all modules employ exactly these criteria; if not, then the module leader (perhaps via the seminar leader) will provide you with a different statement of the criteria applied in that module. Most modules, however do use these criteria. These are not placed in rank ordered exactly, but the ones appearing near the top are generally held to be more significant.

You should remember that essays are marked holistically. So, for example, in some cases weaknesses in one or more areas may be outweighed by qualities shown in other areas. Furthermore, some essay topics will demand particular qualities more than others (and some may even become fairly unimportant in that particular essay).

- Relevance to the question
- Clarity & coherence: planning, debating, developing,
- evaluating arguments and supporting points made
- Insight and originality
- Grounding the discussion in the necessary contexts
- Use of appropriate supportive materials
- Awareness of formal & stylistic appropriacy
- Accurate footnoting & bibliography
- Overall presentation, spelling, syntax and punctuation

Appendix C:

LINGUISTICS EXAM/CLASS TEST: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Tutors will be looking for the following in marking exam responses.

You should remember that answers are marked holistically. So, for example, in some cases weaknesses in one or more areas may be outweighed by qualities shown in other areas. Furthermore, some questions will demand particular qualities more than others (and some may even become fairly unimportant for that particular question).

- Relevance to the question – does your answer address the focus of the question
- Clarity and coherence – make sure your answer has a clear line of argument
- Grounding the discussion in the necessary contexts
- Ability to evaluate and justify points made – show an ability to arbitrate between opposing positions
- Insight and originality
- Overall presentation, spelling, syntax and punctuation

Exam answers are not expected to be as lengthy as your coursework essays, neither do we expect that students will quote from scholarly sources at length. However students are rewarded when they can demonstrate familiarity with the work of scholars who have contributed to arguments relevant to a chosen question.

Appendix D:

LINGUISTICS PROJECT: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Projects are often marked in two stages: the proposal and the finished project.
In marking projects tutors will be looking for the following:

- Appropriate selection and knowledge of theories and concepts for discussion
- Sufficient collection of data and a full analysis of findings which shows methodological rigor
- Detailed reporting of methods and techniques of analysis, so that the study could be replicated by another scholar
- Appropriate use of relevant supporting material – including critical reference to previous published research
- Ability to develop a viable argument, and conclusions which do not over-reach the data
- Awareness of implications of own research in the context of previously published material
- Ability to sustain a high degree of coherence and readability
- Use of appropriate scholarly conventions for referencing, presentation and proof-reading.

If it is a group project, then successful team-work will be rewarded.

Appendix E:

LINGUISTICS PRESENTATION/ POSTER: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

You should make every effort to make sure you display the following in your presentation:

- The structure of your presentation: include an outline of aims, hypotheses, results, conclusion/summary
- Overview of analytical techniques
- Results presented and related to hypotheses
- Clarity of presentation of results
- Conciseness
- Theoretical grounding
- Use of audio-visual aids (these may be handouts, overheads, audio/video tapes etc)
- Awareness of limitations of study
- Response to audience

Appendix F:

LINGUISTICS DISSERTATION: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

In marking dissertations tutors will look for:

- Appropriate selection and knowledge of theories and concepts for discussion
- Appropriate use of relevant supporting material – including critical reference to previous published research
- Use of diverse and perhaps conflicting evidence from other scholars' contributions to the debate in hand
- Ability to develop a viable argument, and conclusions which emerge logically from the evidence, analysis and arguments which have been presented
- Awareness of implications of own research in the context of previously published material
- Ability to sustain a high degree of coherence and readability; stylistically sophisticated
- Use of appropriate scholarly conventions for referencing, presentation and proof-reading.
- Full and up-to-date bibliography

Appendix G:

REFERENCING YOUR WORK

In Linguistics we follow the **Harvard** system of referencing, which is the one recommended by NTU guidelines. A clear and comprehensive outline of the system can be found in a Library and Learning Resources (LLR) guide:

'**Citing References: a guide for users**',

This is available as a free booklet in the library and is regularly updated. It is also available online at http://www.ntu.ac.uk/lis/library/citingrefs.htm. Please study this guide carefully if you are taking any 2nd or 3rd year Linguistics modules because you will be expected to follow this system in your essay and project work. Make reference to this guide constantly, both when you are citing particular passages and when you are producing your list of references at the end of your work.

We are aware that some subjects in the School require a different way of referencing. This may mean you have to learn more than one system. However, the ability to adapt to different systems and to apply them accurately is a vital work and life skill, and one which is fostered by the Linguistics programme, so it is ultimately only beneficial to learn more than one system.

If you are currently used to a system based on footnotes and bibliography, please note that *neither* of these is used in the Harvard system. Note in particular:
Footnotes are replaced by short in-text *author-date citations* e.g. (Jones 2005: 34);
The full details for these abbreviated sources are found not in footnotes or endnotes but in an alphabetical list of *References* at the end of your essay;
The *References* list all and only the sources you have cited within your essay. Do not list any works which are not cited in your essay. In this sense, References are very different from a *Bibliography*, which is a list of all works you have consulted in preparing your essay, whether or not you have cited them.

When studying the library guide on Citing References, note carefully the short section on 'Citing References for Items you have not Actually Read', i.e. authors cited by other authors, since this is a frequently used practice in undergraduate work. Also, remember that your reader needs to be able to access the precise text you are citing quickly and easily. This can only be done if your page references are accurate.

When in doubt about details of the referencing system, always consult the library guide in the first instance. In the rare case that you cannot find the information you need, consult one of your Linguistics tutors.