



University of Sussex
Sussex Centre for Language Studies

YEAR ABROAD

**Pedagogic Report
for Language Assistantships**

Guidelines for students

2015-16

(Updated Oct 2014)

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Introduction

The **Pedagogic Report** is an assignment of 6,000 words, written in the target language (i.e. the language of the country of your Year Abroad.) It is worth 50% of your university assessment for that year.

Submission date: 4pm Monday 13th June 2016

The Report needs to focus on one or two key aspects of your experience as a Language Assistant, and develop these ideas into a coherent piece of academic writing. It must be on a separate topic from your Dissertation. It can be reflective in part, but should not simply be a diary-style record of your time. It requires a pedagogic focus and a title, clear aims, organisation and analysis, in addition to your personal input as a language teacher and learner.

Learning outcomes

The successful student will:

- ❖ demonstrate a high level of awareness of the social and cultural context in which the Teaching Assistantship takes place.
- ❖ be able to describe and analyse the educational setting, organisation and roles relevant to the chosen focus of the Report.
- ❖ reflect upon the personal experience gained during the Assistantship.
- ❖ show a theoretical awareness of the basics of language teaching methodology.
- ❖ be able to evaluate various aspects of language pedagogy and the learning process, in the light of his/her own teaching.
- ❖ communicate the above with appropriate academic focus, structure and use of both reflective and analytical skills.

Before you go abroad

Do some **research into the education system** of the country you are going to, in particular try to find out more about the school system and the teaching of foreign languages, especially English. If possible, contact other students from that country, recent Year Abroad returners, use the library and the web. This will help you to put your teaching and learning experience into a wider perspective.

Make time to read something related to **language teaching and learning** (see *Useful references* below), and review any materials from the *English Teaching for Language Assistants* course, if you attended. Consider your own experiences as a language learner, at school and at university, and start to reflect upon what *you* believe to be effective teaching/learning methods, strategies, materials, classroom management techniques etc.

Planning your report

The process of planning the project ideally starts before you arrive in your destination country, in terms of anticipating the situation and your likely role as a Language Assistant. As the first few weeks progress, it is important that you reflect on your initial reactions in writing, as this may prove useful later on as you define your approach. **Keep a notebook and/or diary/blog for this purpose.** You need to select an aspect of the Assistantship that interests you, and produce a report that analyses this area in an appropriately academic manner, along with your personal reflections upon the experience. You will not be able to do all of that satisfactorily, from memory, a week before the Report deadline.

Your project and the Report should **focus on one or two areas**, as appropriate for the situation you encounter. Consider the various aspects of your Assistantship:

The educational setting: the school or institution itself, how it is organised and managed, the language curriculum, facilities, materials, your role/status and the support provided for you and other teaching staff. There may be issues relating to external factors such as the education system, public examinations, parental involvement, government policy, teacher training etc. that have an influence on language teaching provision. Think about the wider social and cultural context in the country, attitudes towards language learning, towards English in particular, motivation, employment prospects etc.

Language learners: age, level of ability, other school subjects, examinations, group dynamics, attitudes or goals regarding the language, individual learners and differences in learning styles, progress and achievement, affective or emotional factors. How does your experience as a *teacher* reflect on your view of yourself as a language *learner*?

Language teaching: principles and theory (supported by reading), your experience/training (if any) and beliefs about teaching (see 'Before you go abroad', above.) The practice of teaching: methodology, materials, classroom management, lesson planning and delivery, assessment and testing, your development as a (trainee) teacher. How do your attitudes to your own language change as you try to teach it?

Research topics: possible approaches and topics may include an 'Action Research' element, where you focus on specific factors, people or materials in your teaching. For example, you might choose to write about a particular class of language learners (or a smaller group/individual) to observe and evaluate the impact of specific methods or materials used in your teaching. Other areas include the influence of examinations, the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), learners' age, motivation, success in other school subjects, particular language skills or knowledge (e.g. speaking, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary) etc.

The list is potentially long, so you need to **identify an area and a focus for your Report reasonably quickly (preferably by December)**, which you are interested in and is practical in terms of time and resources. You also need to remain sensitive to local factors of a cultural, personal or organisational nature (including the question of

confidentiality) and of course treat everyone involved with respect. Your Supervisor will be able to advise you once the scope and direction of your Report become clearer.

Writing your report

The Report should be written in an appropriate academic style, following conventions of referencing and citation. Normal University standards of presentation and layout apply, as with any formal assessment. (Please refer to the **Year Abroad Handbook** and *Dissertation Style Sheet* for further guidance in this area, as the same criteria apply.) Given the timeframe and the word limit, it is important that you plan the structure of the Report carefully, organise your material clearly (using headings etc.) and keep your central aims in mind as you develop your ideas. You need to consider all aspects of the writing process, especially in a foreign language, including re-drafting and proofreading your work.

The organisation of the final Report will depend on the topic or approach you choose, but will probably incorporate most of the following headings:

- Introduction and aims.
- Outline of topic and area of research.
- Background and wider context.
- Methodology and data collection.
- Results and analysis.
- Conclusions.
- Reflections on the process.
- Acknowledgements.
- References/bibliography.

For further information regarding language teaching and learning research, see 'Useful references', below. Remember that your *Report* topic must be clearly distinct from that covered in your *Dissertation*. In this Report, you probably do not need to go into the theoretical aspects in great detail, but you should be able to relate theory to practice in the light of your experience in the classroom, as a Language Assistant, and outside, as a member of the wider community.

Language

The following guidance is taken from the *Assessment Bands and Criteria for Dissertations and Reports (in the Year Abroad Handbook 2014-15)*:

The Pedagogic Report is assessed predominantly on the *academic* quality of its content (weighted at 60%) as distinct from the *linguistic* proficiency of the language in which it is expressed (40%). The Language criteria are as per those for a 'Content Essay' in the Modern Languages 'Red Book' of Assessment Criteria.

You are also reminded of the need to avoid collusion and plagiarism, both of which are forms of misconduct and may be heavily penalised. Students should refer to the section 'Plagiarism, Collusion and Misconduct' in the *Examination and Assessment Handbook for Undergraduate Students* if uncertain about their meaning, particularly in relation to the advice above concerning local help with the Dissertation [Report] which you are permitted or encouraged to obtain on your Year Abroad. Help with the language of your Dissertation [Report] should be

corrective only and should not amount to (re)writing of the content. Any help received must be acknowledged. Further advice about this may also be obtained from your supervisor.

Timetable, deadlines & supervision

You should aim to **submit an informal outline of the proposed area of study** to be covered in the Report to the Academic Advisor (see below) by email by **mid-December 2015**. This (unassessed) outline should include a clear indication of the topic area you wish to cover, a rationale for selecting this area, some idea as how you propose to investigate this, and any initial questions which may require clarification. (Approximately 300 words, in English.)

By **end March 2016** you also need to **update the Academic Advisor** by email, with more detailed proposals for the aims and content of the Report, and an indication of progress made to date. (Approximately 500 words, in English.) At this point, you should also indicate the intended subject for your *Dissertation*, to ensure that these two projects are developing along separate tracks.

Further supervision arrangements may be agreed as required during the Year Abroad. There will also be a Study Direct site for Language Assistants, with information and a discussion forum (details to follow).

Please refer to the *Year Abroad Handbook 2014-15* for rules relating to this assessment.

Submission date: 4pm Monday 13th June 2016

Contacts

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Useful references

Teaching & Learning

- Harmer, J. (2007) *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (4th edn.) Harlow: Pearson Longman. [includes DVD of lesson samples]
- Scrivener, J. (2011) *Learning Teaching* (3rd edn.) Oxford: Macmillan. [with DVD]
- Watkins, P. (2005) *Learning to Teach English*. Addlestone: Delta.
- Harmer, J. (2007) *How to Teach English* (new edition). Harlow: Pearson Longman.
- Cameron, L. (2003) *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Lightbown, P. & Spada, N. (2006) *How Languages are Learned*. (3rd edn.) Oxford: OUP.
- Hall, G. (2011) *Exploring English Language Teaching: Language in Action*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Swan, M. & Smith, B. (2000) *Learner English* (New Edition). Oxford: OUP.

Research

- McKay, S. (2006) *Researching Second Language Classrooms*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Nunan, D. (1992) *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Brown, J. & Rodgers, T. (2002) *Doing Second Language Research*. Oxford: OUP.

Grammar practice & reference for learners

- Murphy, R. *English Grammar in Use* (with answers & CD ROM). CUP.
- Eastwood, J. *Oxford Practice Grammar* (New Edition). OUP.

Learners' Dictionaries (most now include CD ROM)

Longman Active Study Dictionary/Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English
Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. OUP.

(and similar publications from Macmillan, Cambridge etc.)

Macmillan online free dictionary: <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>

Selected Course Books & materials

- English File* series (OUP)
- Cutting Edge* series (Longman)
- English Unlimited* (CUP)
- Global series* (Macmillan)
- Pronunciation Games* (Hancock, M.; 1995, CUP)
- Pair Work* series (Walcyn-Jones, P.; Ed. 2002, Penguin)

www.onestopenish.com (website for teachers)

www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish (for learners and teachers)

www.sussex.ac.uk/languages (Sussex Centre for Language Studies homepage, with links for English language teachers and learners.)

Year Abroad Language Assistants Study Direct site:

<https://studydirect.sussex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3282>

Sussex Abroad Study Direct site:

<https://studydirect.sussex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=8369>

The British Council (with advice and comments from Language Assistants)

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/languageassistants>

<http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/>