

Section 2: Programme Specification

1.	Awarding institution/body: N/A
2.	Teaching institution: University of Worcester
3.	Programme accredited by: N/A
4.	Final award: N/A
5.	Programme title: International Foundation Programme
6.	Pathways available: N/A
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery: Classroom and e learning based. University of Worcester site.
8.	Mode of attendance: Full-time – Standard programme: 3 blocks of 12 weeks' study, over 1 year. Fast track: 2 blocks over 12 weeks.
9.	UCAS Code: N/A
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement N/A
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/revision July 2012

12. Educational aims of the programme

The programme is aimed at international students who wish to study at undergraduate level in the UK context. It is available in two forms: a standard 36 week programme or a 12 week fast-track option. On successful completion and, on reaching CEF B2 level as verified by the *PTE Pearson (Academic)* test, students will be able to progress to undergraduate study at UW, subject to fulfilling specific requirements (other than level of English). The minimum number of participants will be 10 students, for both the 36 and 12 week programmes.

The course aims to:

- a. Prepare international students, whose first language is not English, for entry into an undergraduate or HND course in a UK university, verified by an external (SELT) test to CEF B2 level.
- b. Widen access to UK Higher Education for students whose first language is not English, by preparing them for public (SELT) examinations at CEF B2 level.
- c. Enable students to communicate effectively and appropriately in a wide range of academic and social contexts at CEF B2 level, verifiable by public (SELT) examinations.

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- a. Identify the best learning styles for them as part of their learner development aims, and learner independence will be fostered, in readiness for independent work in undergraduate courses, including self-access and e learning opportunities.
- b. Identify the differences in learning and teaching styles between their culture and British culture and begin to accommodate these differences.
- c. Apply wide vocabulary bases in both social and academic language, sufficient for undergraduate study, (at CEF B2 level).
- d. Demonstrate oral skills in fluency, pronunciation and patterns of intonation sufficient for undergraduate level study, (at CEF B2 level).
- e. Demonstrate improved reading skills, including speed of reading; strategies for efficient reading; note taking from books and journals; a critical and analytical approach to reading texts, (to CEF B2 level).

- f. Demonstrate familiarity with the conventions of academic writing in HE in the UK and have improved their ability to write more fluently and coherently in a style appropriate to the task, (at CEF B2 level)
- g. Demonstrate listening skills, extracting and noting information reasonably efficiently, in lectures and seminars, (at CEF B2 level).
- h. Access and confidently undertake online computer adaptive testing in all four skill areas.

Teaching and Learning Methods:

- Tutorials
- Guided e learning
- Interactive workshops
- Group tasks and activities
- Mini-lectures
- CLIL¹

Examples of Assignments:

- Reflective Journal
- Scheduled and guided e learning
- Speaking/Presentations/Simulations
- Group presentations
- Building an electronic portfolio of e learning materials accessed/work produced

14 Assessment Strategy

The twin strands to the assessment strategy will be:

1. Use of self-assessment throughout the three blocks of the Foundation Programme.
2. Use of standardised testing from an independent testing organisation, on completion of the third block.

Self-assessment:

Reflective self-assessment will be of paramount importance, during the programme. Intrinsic to the delivery will be the balance of students meeting in class for workshops and other forms of tutor-directed input, together with the students working independently on guided tasks in e learning. The feedback from tutors to students will be ensured through a system of individual and small group tutorials, whilst students will be able to access instant feedback from software, when working on e learning tasks, which will both formative and summative. Electronic portfolio profiling of students will be set up automatically, as part of the e learning package, allowing both tutors and students to see at any point where they are, in terms of both their efforts and achievements. The software available, together with the capabilities of Blackboard in the area of profiling, will mean that it will be possible for tutors and students to have a snapshot of their e learning activities at any stage in their studies, as well as a detailed on-going portfolio of all they have done. This together with the instant feedback and support offered by the interactivity of the software will encourage students in their studies, as well as giving the sort of accuracy, in terms of a student's effort and achievement, which it would be difficult to replicate, through classroom

¹ CLIL: Content and language integrated learning. The language of the topic or unit is the target language, in this context. The term CLIL was coined by David Marsh, University of Jyväskylä, Finland (1994). "CLIL refers to situations where subjects or part of subjects are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language".

observation or by the marking of set assignments on an irregular basis. The e learning element of delivery, with its instant and cumulative feedback to students, will require access on a **daily basis**, which it is felt is pedagogically sound, in terms of language acquisition and development.

Part of the process of student-tutor consultation around the reflective journal will include feedback and feed-forward. Additional to the profiling mentioned above, tutors will set tasks during class sessions, which will be the basis of discussions later. This will include the setting of written work, research related activity and more sophisticated project work, perhaps resulting in presentations, which the tutor may review both formally and informally. Review and comment/feedback will not be restricted to coming from the tutor, as peer review will also be encouraged.

This blend of assessment and review styles will ensure that students do reflect on their work, have the opportunity to improve, have experience of working to deadlines and of working in differing groups as well as individually, all of which they will be able to use in their on-going studies, at a later stage.

Standardised testing:

Students will have the opportunity to request an update on their overall performance in English, using a standardised test, *Oxford QPT*. They may also request to take the *PTE Pearson Academic* test at the end of blocks 1 and 2. Tutors will advise whether students should take a standardised test, as part of their counselling of students, but it will be left to individuals to take a decision as to whether or not this is necessary. Only the *PTE Pearson Academic* test at the end of block 3 will be compulsory.

15 Programme structures and requirements

Programme Structure

The IF Programme will be arranged into three blocks, each of 12 weeks' duration. IF Programme students will therefore undertake:

Block 1:

- Unit in English Language Studies (IFPP 0100)
- Unit in Study Skills for Higher Education (IFPP 0200)

Block 2:

- Unit in English for Academic Writing (IFPP 0300)
- Unit in English for Specific Purposes - ESP (IFPP 0400).
- Unit in Academic Listening and Reading (IFPP 0500)

Block 3:

- Unit, based on a Foundation Project in which an extended project is undertaken (IFPP 0600)
- Unit introducing British Life and Institutions (IFPP 0700)
- Revision and test preparation

Students joining the course as fast track students will take IFPP 0300, 0400, 0500, 0600, 0700 over a period of 12 weeks, which will normally be during the summer-school period.

Each block consists of approximately 200 hours of input, split almost equally between face-to-face classroom time and e learning, together with built-in time each week for individual and small group tutorials. The intention is that students will achieve an increase in their overall abilities, measurable on a standardised test, by the end of each 12 week block. To achieve this, students will be required to attend all timetabled classroom sessions as well as completing all guided e learning assignments, within the allotted time of 12 weeks. Portfolio monitoring by the tutor(s) for each unit, together with exit testing using Pearson (Academic) at the end of the third block will ensure that all students are monitored throughout the programme and have sufficient regular feedback on their progress, which can be discussed throughout, during tutorial sessions. Attendance at all timetabled sessions, (classroom **and** e learning), will, therefore, be compulsory. Practice in the format of online testing will also be offered to all students, through use of Pearson's published practice items (for the Pearson Academic test).

16 QAA Academic Infrastructure

N/A

17 Support for students

- IFP students benefit from an appropriate range of learning and teaching methods such as interactive workshops, group tasks and activities, e-learning through Blackboard and via specialist software.
- The Language Centre has its own purpose built self-access facility and library resources, which provide students with a wide range of independent learning resources, assisted by advice from both the course tutors and the (self-access) language adviser. Students will also be able to access all e learning materials campus-wide, through Blackboard. All software will have site licences in place for campus-wide use.
- A Course Handbook will be provided for each student, both as hard copy and available on Blackboard.
- All students will have a personal (academic) tutor drawn from the core teaching team, whose role is to provide direct support and, where their own expertise is insufficient, to direct students to specialist staff and services, either in the University or outside. Tutors follow the institutional guidelines for personal development programmes with their tutees.
- As all IFP students come from abroad, it is recognised that they will require support in their daily life as well as their academic life, as they settle down and adapt to a new culture. The programme will be delivered mainly within the Language Centre, working closely with the International Centre, which has direct responsibility for international students, so that a two-way flow of information between these two bodies concerning the students' personal welfare will be created.
- University induction, library induction and self-access induction programmes are provided.
- A wide range of resources and services is provided by Information and Learning Support Services (I.T, Media and Print).
- There are opportunities for cultural visits to other cities, arranged by the International Centre, to extend students' knowledge and experience of life in Britain.
- Advice and assistance will be available on matters such as health, finance, equal opportunities and careers from the Student Information and Guidance Service.
- Advice and guidance about all disability-related matters from the Disability and Dyslexia Service.

18 Admissions policy, criteria and procedures

The standard three-block, full-time IFP has been developed for those students whose level of English is below the level required for direct undergraduate entry, where a student typically presents with an IELTS score of 4.5 overall.

In order to be admitted to the standard 3-block IFP, students should normally have as minimum entry requirements:

- Home country qualifications of at least university entrance standard.
- An educational level which indicates likely success on the IFP programme.
- An English language IELTS score of 4.5 (with not less than 4.5 in the written test), or an acceptable equivalent.

In order to be admitted to the fast track 12 week IFP, students should normally have as minimum entry requirements:

- Home country qualifications of at least university entrance standard.
- An educational level which indicates likely success on the fast track IFP.
- An IELTS score of 5.0 (with not less than 5.0 for the writing test) or an acceptable equivalent.

Students apply in two ways:

1. Through agents in their home country, whereby the application is dealt with via UW International Centre.
2. Directly for undergraduate entry, whereby the course leader concerned will refer the candidate to the Language Centre, if it is felt that there is a requirement for the student to improve English language skills to CEF B2 level. This is again done via UW IC.

19 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

- Annual report from the Language Centre.
- Student evaluation of units through end of course questionnaires.
- Evaluation of units through statistical and data analysis of electronic portfolio profiling of students, using Blackboard and other software packages.
- IFP Course Committees.
- Peer observation by staff, and regular discussion of teaching/delivery models.
- All-staff away-day conferences, at least twice per academic session.
- Staff participation in delivering conference papers, workshops and other research-based activity.
- Staff development opportunities provided by UW and external courses and conferences, to promote sound learning and teaching practices.
- Language Centre subscription to linguistics journals and departmental membership of IATEFL, both of which keep staff updated on new research and teaching methods.

20 Regulation of assessment

Continuous assessment

- Students are required to develop and maintain a reflective journal to record their learning

and are expected to discuss this with their tutor on a weekly basis.

- Students are expected to complete all assignments and learning activities set and to ensure these are recorded and evidenced in the reflective journal.
- Students must attend all timetabled sessions; students should contact their tutor or course leader wherever possible in advance of missing a session because of illness or other mitigating circumstances.
- Students who are absent from the University for more than five working days due to ill health must produce medical certificate(s) to cover the period of absence
- Students who miss more than three sessions in a unit of study may put at risk their continuation on the course.
- Failure to meet the attendance requirements for a block of study may result in the block being failed, resulting in a grade of NA (Fail) or in the student being asked to withdraw from the programme.

Requirements for progression: Standard full year programme.

- There are formal progression points at the end of each block of study.
- In order to progress from block one to block two, and from block two to block three, students must have maintained satisfactory progress as evidenced through a satisfactory attendance record and maintenance of the reflective journal to the satisfaction of their tutor.
- In certain cases, a student may be asked to complete the Oxford QPT test in order to inform the tutor's decision regarding satisfactory progress.
- Students who are deemed not have made satisfactory progress at the end of a block may re-study the block once only on a full fee basis, unless the failure was due to non-attendance, in which case the students will be required to withdraw from the course.
- In order to be entered for the Pearson PTE (Academic) test, a student must be deemed to have satisfactorily completed block 3 as evidenced through a satisfactory attendance record and maintenance of the reflective journal to the satisfaction of their tutor

Requirements for progression: Fast track programme.

- There is no progression point between blocks 2 and 3; students take both blocks consecutively.
- In order to be entered for the Pearson PTE (Academic) test, a student must be deemed to have satisfactorily completed both block 2 and block 3 as evidenced through a satisfactory attendance record and maintenance of the reflective journal to the satisfaction of their tutor.

21 Indicators of quality and standards

- Standardised test scores.
- Student feedback from staff-student IFP consultative committees.
- Annual Evaluation Reports.
- Portfolio data from VLE and other sources.
- Statistical data
- Student comments

22 Progression Opportunities

This course prepares international students for undergraduate and HND, (to CEF B2 standard, required by UW and UKBA for undergraduate-level study in the UK).

Please note: More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each unit can be found in the unit study guides and course handbook.