Subject to change

REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS (MA[AppliedLinguistics])

These Regulations apply to candidates admitted to the Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics curriculum in the academic year 2026-27 and thereafter.

(See also General Regulations and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula)

Any publication based on work approved for a higher degree should contain a reference to the effect that the work was submitted to the University of Hong Kong for the award of the degree.

MAAL1 Admission requirements

To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics, candidates shall:

(a) comply with the General Regulations[1];
(b) comply with the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
(c) hold a Bachelor's degree of this University or a qualification of equivalent standard from this University or another comparable institution accepted for this purpose; and
(d) satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination if required.

MAAL2 Qualifying examination

(a) A qualifying examination may be set to test candidates' formal academic ability or their ability to follow the course of study prescribed.
(b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until they have satisfied the examiners in the examination.

MAAL3 Advanced standing

Subject to the approval of the Board of the Faculty, advanced standing for 6 credits (one core course) may be granted to candidates in recognition of their successful completion of previous studies which are similar to a core course within 5 years before admission to the curriculum in accordance with TPG 3 of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula. Application for advanced standing should be made in writing at the time of application for admission to the

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[1] In addition to the admission requirement specified in General Regulation G 2, the Faculty also requires:

(a) TOEFL : a Writing score of 25 or above (for tests taken before January 21, 2026) or 5 or above (for tests taken from January 21, 2026 onwards) in the TOEFL; and
(b) IELTS : a minimum overall Band of 7 with no subtest lower than 5.5.

curriculum accompanied by a copy of the academic transcript to support the application, and it will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Credits granted for advanced standing will not be included in the calculation of the GPA but will be recorded on the transcript of the candidate.

MAAL4 Award of degree

To be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics, candidates shall:

(a) comply with the General Regulations;
(b) comply with the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
(c) complete the curriculum as prescribed in the syllabuses and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations set out below; and
(d) have achieved a Cumulative Grade Point Average of 1.0 or above.

MAAL5 Period of study

The curriculum shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study. Candidates shall not be permitted to extend their studies beyond the maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or four academic years of part-time study, unless otherwise permitted or required by the Board of the Faculty.

MAAL6 Completion of curriculum

To complete the curriculum, candidates shall:

(a) satisfy the requirements prescribed in TPG 6 of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
(b) take not fewer than 69 credits in the manner specified in these regulations and the syllabuses, and follow instruction on the syllabuses prescribed and complete satisfactorily all specified work as required;
(c) satisfy the examiners in all forms of assessment as required;
(d) complete satisfactorily a capstone experience on a subject; and
(e) satisfy the examiners in an oral examination if required.

MAAL7 Capstone Experience: Dissertation or Portfolio

(a) The capstone experience is compulsory of which two options are available, taking MAAL6037 Advanced research methods and submission of a dissertation; OR taking an additional elective course and submission of a portfolio.
(b) Candidates shall each submit a title by not later than March 1 of the year in which they plan to complete their study and shall present a

dissertation/portfolio by a date as prescribed by the Programme Committee.

(c) Candidates shall each submit a statement declaring that the dissertation/portfolio represents their own work undertaken after registration as candidates for the degree.

(d) The examiners may also prescribe an oral examination on the subject of the dissertation/portfolio.

MAAL8 Assessment and re-examination

(a) The assessment shall be as specified in the syllabuses. Only passed courses will earn credits. Grades shall be awarded in accordance with TPG 9(a) of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula.

(b) Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners on the first attempt in not more than 24 credits of full-time study or 12 credits of part-time study taken in an academic year may be permitted to re-submit their work for the failed credits for re-assessment within a specified period determined by the Board of Examiners, but no later than the end of the following semester (not including the summer semester).

(c) Candidates who have failed to present a satisfactory dissertation/portfolio but have satisfied the examiners in all the remaining credits may be permitted to revise and re-present the dissertation/portfolio for re-examination within a period of not more than 12 months after it is deemed unsatisfactory.

(d) There shall be no appeal against the results of examinations and all other forms of assessment.

MAAL9 Discontinuation of studies

Candidates who:

(a) are not permitted to present themselves for re-assessment in any courses in which they have failed to satisfy the examiners; or

(b) have failed to satisfy the examiners in a second attempt in any courses; or

(c) have failed more than 24 credits of full-time study or 12 credits of part-time study on the first attempt in an academic year; or

(d) have failed to achieve a Cumulative Grade Point Average of 1.0 or higher for two consecutive semesters with course enrolment; or

(e) have exceeded the maximum period of registration as specified in MAAL5

may be recommended for discontinuation of studies under the provisions of General Regulations G 12.

MAAL10 Assessment results

On successful completion of the curriculum, candidates who have shown exceptional merit may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates' degree diploma.

SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS
(MA[AppliedLinguistics])

These Syllabuses apply to candidates admitted to the Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics curriculum in the academic year 2023-24 and thereafter.

Candidates are required to complete 69 credits in total: five core courses (6 credits each); three elective courses (6 credits each); and a capstone experience of which two options are available: (a) taking MAAL6037 Advanced research methods (6 credits), and submission of a dissertation (15 credits); OR (b) taking an additional elective course (6 credits), and submission of a portfolio (15 credits).

The assessment can be based on essays, term papers, projects, oral presentations, quizzes, and other kinds of oral or written work as prescribed by course teachers.

Not all elective courses listed below will necessarily be offered each year. Full-time and part-time students are allowed to take up to a total of two elective courses online (i.e., up to 12 out of 69 credits, equivalent to 17.4% of the total curriculum load) throughout their studies. Up to two elective courses may be offered online in an academic year.

CORE COURSES

MAAL6002. Second language curricula (6 credits)

This course examines the cycle of curriculum design and renewal in English language programmes with particular emphasis on their theoretical basis and practical implementation with reference to secondary and tertiary contexts.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL6028. Introduction to research methods (6 credits)

This course provides an overview of key methods for researching applied linguistics. At the end of the course candidates will be able to identify, describe and evaluate the relevance of research methods.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL6029. Second language acquisition (6 credits)

This course provides an overview of the key approaches and current trends within second language acquisition (SLA). By the end of the course, candidates will gain a clear

understanding of the relationship among different SLA theories, as well as the methodology and techniques used when analysing second language data. Topics to be covered include universal grammar, interactionist, functional and processing approaches to SLA, interlanguage development, individual differences and their effect on SLA, and classroom based approaches to SLA that cover teaching and learning.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL6030. Understanding language through grammar (6 credits)

This course adopts a functional view of grammar to understand language as a stratified system. At the end of the course, candidates should be able to (1) identify and describe the language use and function in some common genres, (2) apply relevant grammatical categories to critically analyse and interpret language data; and (3) diagnose problems of language learners.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL7005. Spoken discourse analysis (6 credits)

This course introduces candidates to a range of approaches to the analysis of spoken discourse. These include Pragmatics, Conversation Analysis, and Semantics. At the end of the course, participants should be able to describe, compare, and apply the different approaches to analyse spoken texts.

Assessment: 100% coursework

ELECTIVE COURSES

Elective courses will be offered based on candidate interest.

MAAL6014. Language testing and assessment (6 credits)

This course introduces the fundamental principles of language testing and explores the design**,** trialling, moderation, validation and evaluation of testing instruments.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL6017. Phonology (6 credits)

This course reviews current issues in phonology and discusses the teaching of pronunciation and intonation in the Chinese context. By the end of the course, participants will be able to discuss general aspects of phonological systems, compare theoretical perspectives and identify the specific pronunciation problems of Chinese learners of English.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL6018. Vocabulary teaching and learning (6 credits)

The course helps candidates focus on English vocabulary acquisition and how to present words effectively to ESL/EFL learners. The kinds of words that learners need most, effective vocabulary learning strategies and use of corpora and online learning resources are also covered.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL6023. Advances in writing pedagogy (6 credits)

This course will bring candidates up to date with developments in writing pedagogy. It reviews theoretical and practical developments that have influenced the teaching of writing in recent years and looks in particular at process, genre and critical approaches to writing and discourse studies.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL6031. Technology in language teaching and learning (6 credits)

This course prepares teachers to use technology effectively in their professional practice. It explores some of the key issues in current and emerging uses of technology in language teaching and learning. It looks in particular at concepts of Computer-Assisted Language Learning, network-based teaching and learning, and digital literacies. It discusses the use of various technological tools, resources, materials and activities in enhancing teaching and learning. It examines the use of technology from pedagogical and socio-cultural perspectives particularly with reference to language education. No prior experience in teaching using technology is required.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL6034. Gender and language (6 credits)

This course explores the role of gender as a sociolinguistic variable in female and male speech. Candidates will learn the linguistic features associated with gender-specific speech in different speech communities, and examine major theoretical approaches to the analysis of the differences between female and male speech behaviour. Topics such as sexism and language use in different cultural contexts and gender-based language reforms will also be addressed.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL6035. Language teacher development (6 credits)

This course engages participants in exploring how teachers of English as a second/foreign language learn, teach, and research in their pursuit of professional development. Topics include the expertise of language teachers, the transition from general to academic English teachers, the teaching of English skills for specific purposes, teachers' beliefs and practices, reflective practitioners, teacher learning and teacher research, teacher autonomy, agency, and teacher identity.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL6036. Sociocultural dimensions of SLA (6 credits)

This course aims at broadening candidates' perspectives in second language acquisition (SLA) by drawing upon key sociolinguistic concepts and theories. It examines language spread and politics surrounding salient issues of SLA. A special emphasis will be placed on the context of acquiring and teaching English as a second language in Hong Kong.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL6037. Advanced research methods (6 credits)

This course consists of a series of interactive workshops which will focus on the skills needed to enter into the research phase leading to the production of a dissertation. By the end of the workshops, candidates will be able to design and carry out their own research plan. As a result, they will be ready to prepare their dissertation research proposals.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL7001. Applied corpus linguistics (6 credits)

This course introduces candidates to a variety of applications of corpus linguistics, including genre/register analyses, contrastive (interlanguage) analyses, critical discourse analyses, and L1/L2 corpora for assessment and pedagogical purposes.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL7002. Applied linguistics in the workplace (6 credits)

In the contemporary workplace, communication is not only concerned with language-in-use but embraces a range of associated social issues. This course introduces to participants key aspects of workplace communication and organizational interactions that are pertinent to applied linguists, such as rapport management, identities, roles, and interactional strategies. These aspects will be contextualized within a range of professional contexts and relevant discourse data will be provided for analysis with reference to frameworks such as communities of practice, critical discourse analysis and interactional sociolinguistics.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL7003. Understanding intercultural communication (6 credits)

This course introduces different approaches to study and conceptualize sociolinguistic notions of intercultural communication and intercultural communicative competence It also aims to provide a thorough grounding in the application of relevant theoretical concepts to practical situations and encourage students to reflect on their own experiences in dealing with issues arising from intercultural contexts, particularly as a result of using English as a lingua franca in a highly globalised world. Through the exploration of various intercultural concepts, the course equips students with the analytical competence required for the evaluation of effective language use as determined by the social-cultural context in which the language user is involved, and asks students to reflect on the importance of intercultural communicative competence for pedagogical purposes.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL7004. Instructed second language acquisition (6 credits)

This course introduces students to a wide range of issues related to Instructed Second Language Acquisition (ISLA). It discusses key issues and questions in language acquisition that have driven the bulk of L2 research and theorizing. While the course will cover theoretical and methodological issues of ISLA research, particular attention will be paid to the link between research findings and pedagogy—how teachers can use empirical evidence of ISLA and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research in their classrooms.

Pre-requisite: MAAL6029 Second language acquisition

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL7006. Psycholinguistics (6 credits)

This course is an introduction to psycholinguistics – the use of experiments to study how psychological and cognitive processes affect language comprehension, production, and acquisition. The course will examine issues and debates central to the psycholinguistics of bilingualism and second language acquisition, following a survey of foundational topics including basic psychological processes, memory, speech production and errors, word recognition, sentence comprehension and processing, language disorder and aphasia, language and thought.

Pre-requisite: MAAL6029 Second language acquisition

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL7007. Language Policy (6 credits)

Language policy, originated as a branch of sociolinguistics, is an interdisciplinary area which attracts attention in various fields including education. Drawing on the work of sociolinguists, applied linguists, language educators and ethnographers, the course explores the intersection of language policy as intended by political and economic interests. Another aim of the course is to introduce students to contemporary theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches within the field of language policy at macro and micro levels, and to link them with practical implications. Special attention is placed on an understanding of key conceptual underpinnings of language ideology, language rights, linguistic landscape, multilingualism, nationalism, and language standardisation within globalisation processes. Data from Hong Kong and selected world contexts will be used to explore these core issues.

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL7008. Pragmatics in Digital Communication (6 credits)

Communicating through digital means has become an indispensable part of human interaction and a burgeoning field of study in the pragmatics discipline. This course will explore integral pragmatic concepts and other key concepts for the purpose of analyzing and characterizing communication in a variety of digital modes including emailing, text messaging, and social media networking. It will also evaluate the extent to which key theories and concepts in pragmatics can explain contextual behavior in digital communication. Implications for researching and teaching pragmatics in digital communication will also be discussed.

Assessment: 100% coursework

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

MAAL8999. Capstone Experience: Dissertation (15 credits)

Candidates are required to complete a dissertation of no more than 15,000 words on an approved topic. Candidates will be assigned to a supervisor who will monitor progress during the research and dissertation writing.

Co-requisite: MAAL6037 Advanced research methods

Assessment: 100% coursework

MAAL8998. Capstone Experience: Portfolio (15 credits)

Candidates are required to draw references from at least two assignments from different courses (core or elective courses), write a mission statement, undertake a critical review of concepts and/or develop scholarly-informed materials, and a person reflection on how the portfolio contributes to the understanding of a specific issue/topic in Applied Linguistics or the

profession or development of English learning materials. The length of the portfolio should be around 10,000 to 12,500 words.

Candidates taking this option are required to take an additional elective course, subject to the course listing in the Student Handbook of the programme.

Assessment: 100% coursework