

## MA TESOL Program Policy

### 1. Admission Policy

The Master's Program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) seeks pre-service and in-service teachers of English who

1. Possess sufficient academic abilities and a proactive mindset to participate actively at the graduate school level.
2. Exhibit a keen interest in collaborating with others from diverse backgrounds in pursuit of common goals.
3. Demonstrate an ability to apply TESOL principles to examine and inform classroom practice.
4. Show a commitment to reflective practice, including examining and challenging their own beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning.
5. Demonstrate an interest in English education in Japan or a future aspiration to become an English teacher in Japan.
6. Aspire to take up a leadership role to impact English language education in their teaching communities.

### 2. Curriculum Policy

The Master's Program has as its mission helping teachers—both in-service and pre-service—to become reflective practitioners who can make pedagogically sound decisions about their classroom practices based on a well-articulated understanding of current theories of language and second language learning and teaching. Recognizing the diversity and complexity of today's classrooms, this degree program aims to help teachers develop an extensive repertoire of

instructional methods and strategies as well as the professional knowledge and skills to enable them to take appropriate action to address the learning needs of their students. Furthermore, the program aims to provide a solid foundation for long-term teacher development by helping cultivate the habit of self-observation and self-evaluation. Graduates of this program will be self-directed language professionals well-prepared to take a leadership role in the community of TESOL teachers. In furtherance of this mission, the following curriculum specifications are provided:

## 1. Curriculum Content

- The curriculum is divided into the following categories: *TESOL Methodology; Practicum and Classroom Observation; Language Analysis, Acquisition and Assessment; Electives; and the MA Research Project*. Together, these categories provide an exploratory space for student-teachers to not only learn about current principles, practices, topics, and issues in the field of TESOL but also to evaluate their relevance to particular educational settings and adapt them in response to the varied and evolving needs of learners and institutions.
- Reflective practice is a priority across the curriculum, providing an entry point for problem-solving, pedagogical innovation, and self-evaluation. Reflective techniques are modeled in the two compulsory practicum courses, where student-teachers have an opportunity to identify pedagogical issues, try out new techniques, observe other teachers, receive feedback, and assess their teaching.
- Emphasizing the intersection between principles and classroom practice, courses throughout the program include a focus on application and implications for the classroom. This includes linguistics-oriented courses on topics such as phonetics and phonology and second language acquisition.
- Acknowledging the value of both a broad and specialized understanding of TESOL principles and practices, the *TESOL Methodology* curriculum category offers a foundational course as well as various workshop-style courses on a

diverse range of methods, topics, and issues in TESOL. These offerings and other elective courses allow students to delve into areas of specific interest, encouraging deeper exploration and specialization.

- To support teachers in developing the disciplinary skills and abilities needed for participation in an academic community of TESOL practitioners, guidance in these areas is embedded in milestone assignments in designated courses throughout the program. These assignments are coordinated at the program level and aligned with the capstone assignment (The MA Research Project) to ensure that skills and abilities are systematically and incrementally developed throughout the program.

## 2. Curriculum Methodology

- To support student-teachers in their reflective journey and enable them to benefit from the diverse perspectives of others, the program emphasizes active learning approaches that prioritize dialogue, interaction, and collaborative problem-solving.
- In response to the diverse needs of teachers throughout Japan, a choice-based course delivery system is used. Teachers can choose to take all their courses online or a combination of in-person and online courses.

## 3. Assessment Methods

- Student performance is assessed based on *a priori* criteria detailed in course syllabi. Key outcomes for required courses are referenced to program diploma policy statements.
- Individual student growth and performance are routinely monitored and results are used to inform program evaluation and development.

### 3. Diploma Policy

Upon completion of the MA TESOL Program graduation requirements and the designated curriculum, graduation will be recognized, and the degree will be conferred to students who demonstrate the following competencies:

1. A comprehensive understanding of the nature of the English language system (phonology, morphology, syntax, discourse, and pragmatics).
2. Critical analysis and evaluation of a broad range of language teaching methodologies, approaches, and techniques and the ability to implement and adapt them according to instructional needs.
3. Awareness of the complex cultural, social, cognitive, and affective variables that shape students' learning inside and outside the classroom.
4. The ability to reflect on classroom practice and design pedagogical interventions that are well-articulated and well-reasoned with respect to TESOL principles.
5. An understanding of the characteristics and strategies of effective language learners and ways to foster learner autonomy.
6. Familiarity with appropriate techniques to assess students' language proficiency for placement, evaluation, and instruction.
7. The capacity for continued learning as language professionals and willingness to assist other teachers in furthering their professional development.
8. The ability to conduct language classes in English and make well-reasoned decisions about language choice, including L1 use.
9. An awareness of English as an international language and its implications for the classroom, including materials selection and language modeling.
10. The English communication skills needed for participation in professional and academic communities for continued impact on English language education beyond the MA Program.