



# APPL924

## Language Testing and Evaluation

S2 External 2016

*Dept of Linguistics*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MAppLing or PGDipAppLing or MTransInterMAppLing or MAppLingTESOL or MTransInterMAppLingTESOL

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit explains key concepts and issues in language testing and provides students with principles and techniques for designing and evaluating language tests and assessment tasks. Functions of language tests, models of language proficiency, and assessment of language skills and components are discussed in this unit. The unit also focuses on other issues such as the reliability and validity of language tests in social contexts.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Define and describe key terms and concepts in language testing and assessment
- Identify a range of purposes for assessment in language learning programs
- Apply knowledge of language assessment to the construction of tests and assessment tasks
- Appraise issues and challenges in assessing language skills and components
- Identify and use relevant language testing and assessment resources
- Demonstrate familiarity with current issues and debates concerning the nature of language proficiency and how it is assessed
- Identify key features of quality assessment and apply them to language

tests and assessment tasks in use to evaluate their usefulness • Describe steps in constructing language tests and design a language test • Evaluate test usefulness using available frameworks by applying critical thinking

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<a href="#">Online Forum</a>	25%	Week 8 September 20 2016
<a href="#">Essay: Literature Review</a>	35%	September 30 2016
<a href="#">Test Review</a>	40%	November 18 2016

### Online Forum

Due: **Week 8 September 20 2016**

Weighting: **25%**

#### Assignment 1: Online Forum

**Length:** 1000 words

**Due Date:** 20 September

**Weight:** 25%

You, the participant, will drive this Forum. However, your Lecturer/Tutor will also interact and monitor your postings. Each week (from Weeks 3-7 inclusive) you will participate a minimum of one-two times in the Online Forum, by posting on the Topic of that week - sharing, interacting and exchanging thoughts about the themes discussed in the lectures and subject readings and/or the next assignment for which you will be preparing.

You are especially encouraged to raise questions as well respond to the comments and queries posted by your peers. You can recommend further readings or post useful links.

Postings need to reflect critical thinking as appropriate to the topic under discussion.

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it is assessed • Identify key features of quality assessment and apply them to language tests and assessment tasks in use to evaluate their usefulness • Describe steps in constructing language tests and design a language test • Evaluate test usefulness using available frameworks by applying critical thinking

## Essay: Literature Review

Due: **September 30 2016**

Weighting: **35%**

**Assignment Two:** Essay: Literature Review

**Length:** 2500 words

**Due Date:** 30 September

**Weight:** 35%

Choose one of the four communication skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing) and prepare a Literature Review on the challenges of testing this skill. The challenge may be related to different aspects of assessing the skill from the construct definition (how the skill is defined), using appropriate test materials, setting criteria for assessment (e.g. rating scales) to the scoring and interpretation of performance. You may choose to focus on one of these themes or a combination of them, but please be advised that the main focus of the assignment is on “challenges” as perceived by test developers or test score users.

Your lectures, readings and the online discussion forum should provide you with enough structure and content to write the review paper; however, you will need to conduct and refer to further specific research, as well as add create a coherent argument to enhance your review paper. Summarise and evaluate the most relevant and current literature relating to your topic, while identifying the most significant challenges. The structure of the review paper will follow an introduction, body and conclusion as elaborated below.

### Introduction

Introduce the topic and its significance both theoretically and practically (you may cite selective but significant sources to support your argument) as well as personally (how the chosen topic is important to you and your career etc.). Explain the structure and the scope of your paper (what aspects, problems, challenges will be discussed in the paper).

### Body

Present and discuss the main arguments under headings and sub-headings in this part. The headings and sub-headings correspond to the aspects, problems, challenges you referred to in the introduction. Remember, you should not simply provide “annotations” of your researched readings; rather, you need to synthesise the sources you have read in order to present a coherent and effective discussion of each heading or sub-heading and to support your argument. Therefore, your headings and sub-headings will show your line of argument (your “voice”).

### Conclusion

Conclude your paper by highlighting the main arguments you presented in the body of your paper. Try to end your paper by making some general conclusions and suggestions based on the arguments you presented in the body of your paper.

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## Test Review

Due: **November 18 2016**

Weighting: **40%**

**Assignment Three:** Test review

**Due Date:** 18 November

**Length:** 2500 words

**Weight:** 40%

Goals: The goals of this assignment are to provide you with an opportunity to:

- demonstrate your understanding of the relationship between theory and practice in language testing
- evaluate a language test relevant to your own professional context

This is an extension of Assignment 2 and involves an applied evaluative commentary on a language test of your choice. You may wish to look at a well-known public language proficiency test (such as the IELTS, TOEFL or Pearson) or you may want to examine a test that is used in the context in which you work.

You may choose to evaluate either the whole test or a single component of it, such as the reading or the speaking module. If you choose to evaluate a large-scale test you will probably find that the latter option is more manageable. Use the six categories in Bachman and Palmer (1996, Chapter 2) of test usefulness framework (authenticity, reliability, validity, practicality, interactiveness, and impact) as a way of organizing your evaluation of the test or its component. You may choose to include all the six features or you may choose some of them depending on

the scope and focus of your evaluation.

You will need to search for the related literature (evaluation of the tests or their components), read them carefully and include relevant resources in your evaluative commentary.

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## Delivery and Resources

This unit is offered both face-to-face and online. The face-to-face mode will include weekly lectures and on-campus students must attend classes. Online mode covers the same topics as listed in the unit schedule and distance students must access and read unit materials and perform learning activities from folders in iLearn. Both internal, on-campus and external students are expected to participate in online discussion of the topics and post their questions and reflections in the general “Forum”. They are also urged to use “Glossary” to post and share concise definitions of key terms and concepts related to language testing and assessment.

## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic\\_honesty/policy.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html)

**New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016** [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy\\_2016.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html). For more information visit [http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new\\_assessment\\_policy\\_in\\_place\\_from\\_session\\_2/](http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/)

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public <http://www.mq.edu.a>

[u/policy/docs/complaint\\_management/procedure.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html)

Disruption to Studies Policy [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption\\_studies/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html) *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: [https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student\\_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

## Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au).

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

## Graduate Capabilities

### PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

#### Learning outcome

- Define and describe key terms and concepts in language testing and assessment
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- Describe steps in constructing language tests and design a language test
- Evaluate test usefulness using available frameworks by applying critical thinking

#### Assessment tasks

- Essay: Literature Review
- Test Review

### PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

#### Learning outcome

- Define and describe key terms and concepts in language testing and assessment
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## **Assessment tasks**

- Essay: Literature Review
- Test Review

## **PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking**

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcome**

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## **Assessment tasks**

- Online Forum
- Test Review

## **PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability**

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcome

- Define and describe key terms and concepts in language testing and assessment
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## Assessment tasks

- Essay: Literature Review
- Test Review

## PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcome

- Define and describe key terms and concepts in language testing and assessment
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## Assessment tasks

- Online Forum

- Test Review

## PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcome

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### Assessment tasks

- Online Forum
- Test Review

## Changes since First Published

Date	Description
26/07/2016	Due dates for assignments reset to a week later.