

Extension courses

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An update from the TDA

To help ITT providers recruit to their Modern Languages courses, the TDA is funding pre-ITT extension courses in French and German. These courses are suitable for anyone interested in teaching languages, but who have only one language in addition to English. They will give participants the subject knowledge needed to teach a second language to Key Stage 3.

The courses take place prior to the ITT course and last for fourteen weeks. This includes a two-week structured study visit to a French- or German-speaking country, enabling participants to immerse themselves in the language and culture of the country. Participants who have no previous experience of the language are given extra tuition and support for up to three weeks prior to the start of the course.

Participants pay no fees and receive a tax-free bursary of £150 a week for the duration of the course. Once participants complete the course they can progress straight to ITT.

ITT providers can refer applicants who need to develop a second language in order to commence ITT. Providers should contact the institution running the extension course directly to discuss the applicant and to ensure a place is available. The referral should also go through the Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR). The ITT provider should then offer the applicant an ITT place conditional upon satisfactory completion of the extension course. After the course, participants will return to the ITT provider where they made their original application.

If participants are already aware of the extension courses when they make their GTTR application,

they can add it to their application form as second choice below their chosen ITT course. They can also mention it in their personal statement. This will help ITT providers to identify those who would benefit from the course. Courses start in May 2006 and providers are recruiting participants now.

Providers of courses in French

Region	Institution	Contact
London	London Metropolitan University	Sue Hyde 020 7133 2493 s.hyde@londonmet.ac.uk
North East	University of Hull	Janet Cuthbertson 01482 465 406 j.cuthbertson@hull.ac.uk
North West	Liverpool John Moores University	Sheila Wood 0151 231 3836 s.s.wood@livjm.ac.uk
East	University of Portsmouth	Sabrea Oughton 023 9284 6165 sabrea.oughton@port.ac.uk

A fifth course in the Eastern region may also be offered.

Providers of pilot courses in German

Region	Institution	Contact
North West	Liverpool John Moores University	Sheila Wood 0151 231 3836 s.s.wood@livjm.ac.uk
South East	University of Portsmouth	Janet Blaikie 023 9284 6060 janet.blaikie@port.ac.uk

If you would like more information about these courses, please e-mail the TDA at ehandextcourses@tda.gov.uk, or contact the providers direct. Interested participants can also contact the TDA's Teaching Information Line on 0845 600 0991. You can also visit the TDA website: www.tda.gov.uk/enhancement.

The French extension course: A new initiative to widen recruitment to ITE

The new London-area French extension course, which will be based at London Metropolitan University, begins in May 2006. It is fully funded by the TDA and offers fourteen weeks intensive tuition in French *ab initio*. It is designed for ITE recruits whose conditional offer requires them to learn a second language before embarking on their ITE course, whether SCITT, GTP or PGCE.

However, my own interest in this project dates back over three years to when a conference was held by the then Teacher Training Agency (now Training and Development Agency for Schools) to consult interested parties across the country. Issues around the development of subject knowledge were of much relevance to me as a new PGCE course tutor faced with either applicants at interview who lacked a

combination of languages suitable for London schools or single linguists for whom placements were impossible to find.

So, from this first expression of interest, I joined a committee set up by the TTA to work under the leadership of CILT on the development of a pilot extension course. It was very enjoyable to collaborate with colleagues from a variety of providers on a practical, creative project of mutual interest.

The early focus was on the elaboration of a scheme of work to provide guidance for those HEIs wishing to develop an extension course. Metalinguistic knowledge was highlighted as an important aspect of language for teachers to reflect on. For example, in English the possessor in the third person singular defines the gender of the possessive adjective, whereas in French, of course, the gender is derived from the object possessed. Further work from the committee developed a strong cultural component for the scheme of work now known as the 'indicative content'. This template served as a model for the subsequent development of the German extension course.

The current PGCE cohort at London Metropolitan University includes three students who have just completed the German extension course at Portsmouth. It is clear from meeting them at the beginning of the year that such a pre-PGCE commitment gives students an added confidence and sense of vocation.

At London Metropolitan, we are fortunate to have a university-wide programme of language tuition from *ab initio* level known as the OLP which allows students to consolidate their language skills during the course of the PGCE. However, I was less familiar with the commercial branch, European Language Services (ELS), where I eventually found the support I was seeking to put in a bid for the extension course. Perhaps ELS is best known for its work in teaching French to the Eurostar train drivers which was celebrated at the ALL conference at York in 1995 with a wonderful reception in the train museum.

Much of the detail of the course

is now in place. There is a staggered entry with real beginners benefiting from a three-week course before the remaining participants join. Clearly, there will need to be close collaboration between the London ITE provider concerned and the extension course director in assessing the precise needs of each candidate. A referral form is available to use at the point of interview. We have adopted a team approach to ensure a range of skills and expertise. A Senior Admissions Officer is available to deal with the GTTR on the issue of codes.

All trainees accepted on the extension course will receive a bursary of £150 per week from the TDA and the two-week study visit to France is fully funded. Providers can start recommending students for this course from now onwards. Hopefully, this initiative will allow all of us involved in ITE recruitment to accept those candidates whom we judge to have the potential to become successful teachers of MFL, yet in the past we might have rejected on the grounds that they lacked a second language.

The German extension course at the University of Portsmouth

Nineteen participants successfully completed the fourteen- to seventeen-week German extension course taught between May and August 2005 at the School of Languages and Area Studies, University of Portsmouth, eighteen of whom have now embarked on their PGCE courses at a variety of regional ITT providers.

The course has enabled these trainee teachers to revise or, for some, learn from scratch German subject knowledge to AS level. This will allow them to teach two languages and to teach German at Key Stage 3, and in some cases at Key Stage 4. It has given them the confidence to use the target language in the classroom.

The course, taught by native speakers, covered activities in all four skills. It offered opportunities to explore and to use teaching methodology and strategies. It accorded them knowledge and

practice of grammar, syntax and phonetics. Participants also had experience of learning a language from a learner perspective.

The participants had the luxury of spending two weeks in Germany, all expenses paid, at two prestigious German universities in Bremen and Bielefeld. The study trip included language tuition, communicative interaction and field trips. The aim was to immerse them in German culture and they were housed with German families.

The course was assessed using the Common European Framework (CEF) as a guideline and the *European Language Portfolio* for set tasks.

The participants came from a variety of backgrounds: Ghana, Algeria, India, the Côte d'Ivoire, France, Italy, Ireland and the UK.

In their evaluations, the participants were particularly complimentary about the course with such comments as: 'Teaching has been of a consistently high quality and the weekly individual tutorials were invaluable, helping me to recognise my weaknesses. Additionally, I was impressed with the cultural, historical and political lectures which broadened my general knowledge and will ensure that I speak with more authority in the classroom.'

Following a successful first-year evaluation by Chris Clarke HMI – 'The standard of teaching on the course is exceptionally high ... The course has been structured with great attention to detail and energetically implemented. Participants declare that they have been made to work consistently hard and they are well informed of assessment procedures' (August 2005) – we are now fully prepared to accept twenty new applicants to the German extension course. We will also run a French extension course from May 2006. For further information visit www.port.ac.uk/germanextensioncourse.

