

RHD DEVELOPMENT ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

Successful research candidates require an excellent command of the English language in order to clearly communicate their findings. This is a challenge for all students, particularly for students from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB) or those who are using English as a Second Language (ESL). The University recognises that language skills continue to develop throughout a program of study, and so there is support to help students build increasing proficiency. This document outlines several types of ESL support that are available for Research students. Any of these services may change through the year, so please contact the relevant provider to obtain up-to-date information before attending.

All students are able to access any of this support, regardless of your nationality or whether you are enrolled as international or domestic. As this language support is largely targeted at graduate students, it is assumed that basic English proficiency has already been attained as a condition of enrolment. Therefore, most workshops will be at an advanced level. Individual sessions such as the Speech Intelligibility Clinics (details below) will operate at the level of individual students. All of these services are *completely free of charge*.

1. HOW DO I KNOW WHAT SUPPORT I NEED?

We recommend that all NESB students take the *Diagnostic Academic English Language Tool* (DAELT). You may have a clear awareness of your existing strengths and weaknesses, however the DAELT will give you an objective report to help you target your efforts most effectively. The DAELT assessment is offered at the start of each trimester and semester, and involves computer-based assessment of reading, writing and listening, as well as a face-to-face speaking session. You will receive immediate feedback on your performance, and we do not report your results to anybody.

Timetables for the DAELT assessment sessions are published on the Learning Development blackboard pages, and registration is via the online Registration System. See the final page for instructions about using Blackboard and the Registration System.



2. DAELT FOLLOW-UP WORKSHOPS

After you have done the initial DAELT assessment, you can attend the follow-up workshops. These workshops are organised according to the four main language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The DAELT workshops are open to any NESB student, whatever degree they are studying. You can choose which workshops to attend, so you don't have to go to all of them. The timetables are found on the Learning Development Blackboard pages and registration is via the online Registration System. See the final page for step-by-step instructions for both these systems.

3. RHD GRAMMAR WORKSHOPS

These workshops are specifically for research students, so they are not open to undergraduates. The focus is on grammar rules and sentence construction. They are designed for NESB students, but native English speaking students can also attend to develop their knowledge of advanced grammar. As of Semester 1, 2012 these sessions are with Nicholas Collier, and you can register by emailing him (Nicholas.Collier@newcastle.edu.au). See Learning Development on Blackboard for current timetables and more information.

4. ENGLISH LANGUAGE WORKSHOPS

These workshops are open to all students. They run in the first six weeks of each semester. There are two series of workshops, for Grammar and for Pronunciation, and each series is delivered at two levels (essential and advanced). Registration is via the online Registration System. See Learning Development on Blackboard for current timetables and more information.

5. RHD SPEAKING WORKSHOPS

These 'hands-on' sessions are also designed especially for research students. You can practice your speaking skills at an advanced level, and benefit from feedback and advice from an ESL specialist teacher. This is not a fixed sequence of lessons; the teacher will respond to students' needs. As of Semester 1, 2012 these sessions are with Helen Thursby on Monday afternoons, and you do not need to register. For up-to-date information and timetables, see Learning Development on Blackboard.

6. SPEECH INTELLIGIBILITY CLINIC

This is a special service offered by the Speech Pathology unit. It helps NESB students to develop their English speaking in terms of sound production, speed of speech, and intonation. You can have a free assessment of your speech intelligibility, and up to 12 weeks of individual support. There are also group programs focusing on rate of speech, body language and intonation. The clinic is open from Monday to Thursday, 08:30 to 17:00. For more information use the University home page's search engine to search for 'Speech Intelligibility Clinic'.

7. RHD LANGUAGE CLINIC

This clinic is open twice a week, and is an opportunity for students to pop in and chat to Erika Spray or Jaime Hunt about quick ESL questions. Erika and Jaime are both qualified ESL teachers. There is no registration, and no planned 'lesson' - we will be available to talk to you about any ESL problems you encounter. This can be as simple as "Should I use 'in' or 'on'?" or you may want a quick recap on use of articles or present perfect grammar. As of Semester 1, 2012, the RHD Language Clinic is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 1-2pm, in the Office of Graduate Studies in the Chancellery.

8. INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS

This is separate from the RHD consultations, which are for research students to develop their academic skills for research. Individual consultations (ICs) are available to any student of the university to discuss any concerns they may have about general academic skills, which can include English Language concerns. It is best to find out which Learning Advisers are ESL specialists, then you can make an appointment with the most appropriate person – call us on 02 4921 5350 to ask about this. Appointments are made using the online Registration System, see the final page for instructions.

9. SELF STUDY

As well as learning all about your chosen topic, methodology, statistics, etc, you will need to dedicate some time to maintaining and developing your English Language skills.

There is a wealth of material you can use to help you develop your English Language skills. Online resources are available on the Learning Development Blackboard pages, as well as links to external sites. The library also has many books about post-graduate research, some of which are specifically for NESB students.

CONTACT INFORMATION

We hope that this information is clear and useful. If you have any questions, please contact us:

Learning Development
Centre for Teaching and Learning
T: 02 4921 5350
E: ctl-ld@newcastle.edu.au

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

LEARNING DEVELOPMENT ON BLACKBOARD

You can use these pages to find up-to-date information about what workshops are available.

1. From the University home page, click [Quick Links](#) (at the top right) and select [Blackboard](#).
2. Log in with your University username and password.
3. On the first page, in the 'My Other Sites' box, select [Learning Development](#).
4. From the Learning Development home page, click on the [My Campus](#) link and select the campus that you want to find out about. Most ESL activities are based at Callaghan or City campuses in Newcastle.
5. It will ask you 'What level are you studying?'. Click [RHD \(Research Higher Degree\) Students](#).

You should now see a complete list of all Learning Development support for RHD students. You can download the timetables for the Pre-confirmation workshops, the DAELT sessions, and the RHD Speaking and Grammar workshops. There are also links to online resources.

USING THE REGISTRATION SYSTEM TO BOOK CONSULTATIONS OR DAELT WORKSHOPS

All research students are encouraged to make use of these free services.

1. From the University home page, click [Quick Links](#) (at the top right) and select [Online Services](#).
2. Select [Registration System](#) and log in with your University username and password.
3. On the left you will see a menu, select [Other Registrations](#).
Find the section for Learning Development Activities, and find the activity you are interested in, such as 'Individual Consultations' or 'DAELT Workshops'.
4. Click on the [Register](#) link on the right of the page next to the activity title.
You will see a list of possible dates and times.
5. Find a suitable date and time which is showing as **Available**, then click [Book](#).
Available will then change to **Full**. This means you have booked your place in the workshop or consultation. A confirmation e-mail will be sent to you with the details of your booking.

You must **cancel bookings you do not need**, so that other students can use them. We have a very limited capacity and we want to help as many people as possible. To cancel, follow steps 1-3 above, select [Change](#) then use the [Remove](#) link next to your booking. When you click [Remove](#), the system will ask you to confirm your request to unregister. If you wish to unregister, click [Yes, unregister me](#). The space will immediately become available for another student.

If you have difficulty using these systems, please call us on 02 4921 5350. We will be happy to help.