CHAPTER 3

The Selected Programmes of Study: An Overview

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents some background information about the programmes that will hopefully help in shedding light on the specific issues and contexts relating to distance ELT programme design and delivery. In other words, this chapter attempts to give a bird’s eye view of each selected programme and institution besides giving a justification for the selection of some programmes/institutions over others. It includes general information about the selected institutions and programmes, the organization of syllabi and content in each programme, the nature of contact programmes, the assessment procedures and other learner support services.

3.2 The selection of institutions and programmes

Though there are relatively few distance English Language Teaching programmes in India, not all of them could be included in the study. While shortlisting programmes for the purpose of the study, three criteria were considered:

- the programmes had to be recognized by the (then) Distance Education Council
- they had to be of at least one year duration; and
- they had to have been running for at least five years, so that the programme delivery mechanisms had stabilized.

Only programmes of study fulfilling the above criteria were chosen for the study because there had to be common grounds for study; i.e. the programmes had to be homogenous in terms of duration, programme delivery and learner support systems as far as possible, for the comparison to be valid.
The first criterion for selection was formulated because until its dissolution in 2013, the Distance Education Council (DEC) had been functioning as an apex body for ODL programme recognition. As stated in the 2009 Handbook for Recognition of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Institutions, the DEC was given the authority to recognize institutions on the basis of their preparedness to offer programmes through distance mode; this preparedness was measured in terms of their infrastructure, human and other resources, learner support systems, and teaching learning processes. The programme requirements for recognition of DEC included the following:

- An Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution should offer programmes as per the objectives of the University/Institution, the national and regional needs, and norms of the concerned statutory bodies.
- At least 50% of the study material should be in Self Instructional format.
- The university / institution should have bodies like Planning Board / Academic Council /School Boards etc. for taking academic and administrative decisions.

In addition, the DEC had specific guidelines for staff recruitment and training, teaching-learning strategies, evaluation system, delivery system, infrastructural facilities, library and resource centre, audio-visual production facility and ICT facilities.

The second criterion - that the programmes should be of one year duration to be considered for analysis – was formulated because the length of a teacher training programme can have an important role in shaping the beliefs and attitudes of a learner towards the programme and in the development of teacher beliefs and perceptions about the efficacy of such a programme (see, for example, Simon Borg 2006). Since the present study deals with the beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders (including learners), it was important to select programmes with a certain minimum duration so that differences in the duration of the programmes did not affect the evaluative comments made on the effectiveness of the programmes. A
programme with the duration of one year allows a reasonable amount of time to the learners to shape their own beliefs and attitudes. This is also supported by a variety of research studies. The following is a statement from such a study:

‘…..approaches to teaching and self-efficacy beliefs change slowly. It takes at least a 1 year long training process until positive effects emerge. In fact, shorter training seems to make teachers more uncertain about themselves as teachers.’ (Postareff et al, 2007: 568)

The third criterion for selection of programmes was that the programmes should have been running for at least five years. There is a strong justification for this criterion: it is often seen that a newly launched programme undergoes some changes or modifications before it takes a suitable shape and gains a certain amount of stability. Sometimes a programme may even stop running due to problems of implementation.

In short, only those institutions offering distance ELT programmes that met the above-mentioned criteria were selected for this study.

3.3 The selected institutions: General information

With the above criteria in mind, four institutions were selected for the study – Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU), West Bengal, Potti Sriramulu Telugu University (PSTU), Hyderabad, Osmania University (OU), Hyderabad and the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad. Among the selected institutions, Netaji Subhas Open University is the only single mode university: it offers all programmes through distance mode. The university offers two ELT programmes through distance mode - an MA in English Language Teaching, and a PG Diploma in English Language Teaching. The university, which is situated in the Woodburn Park area of Kolkata in West Bengal state, started functioning with effect from July 1998. The ELT programmes are run by the Centre for Language
Studies, NSOU. After the recent formation of the School of Humanities in the University in 2015, the programmes are now run by the School.

The other three selected institutions are dual-mode institutions.

Potti Sriramulu Telugu University (PSTU) offers an MA in English Language Teaching through Distance Mode. Potti Sriramulu Telugu University (PSTU) is one of the few language universities in India. It was established as “Telugu University” in 1985 and was renamed Potti Sriramulu Telugu University in the year 1998. The Centre for Distance Education in the university was established in the year 2001 ‘to accommodate the educational needs of large numbers of students all over the State’ (The home website).

Osmania University (OU) offers a PG Diploma in English Language Teaching through distance mode. Osmania University, established in 1918, started the Institute of Correspondence Courses in 1977. The centre changed its name to Prof. G. Ram Reddy Centre for Distance Education in 1989. In its home website, the institute has mentioned its functions (objectives) as below:

- To provide a system of learner-centred self-paced studies;
- To provide flexible, diversified and need based courses;
- To provide access to all, in order to realize Higher Education For All (HEFA); and
- To facilitate knowledge acquisition throughout one’s life and be an active member in a knowledge society.

The English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU) offers two distance programmes in English Language Teaching – a Post Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of English (PGCTE) and a Post Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English (PGDTE). Initially, when it was established in 1958 to train teachers of English, the university was called the Central Institute of English (CIE). It was renamed the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL) in 1972, when it included teaching of several foreign languages. Subsequently in July 1973, the Institute was given the status of a deemed university by the
University Grants Commission. After one year of this deemed university status, i.e. in 1974, the Centre for Distance Education was set up in the institution. In 2006, the university became a central university, and it changed its name to English and Foreign Languages University (EFL-U) in 2007.

3.4 The selected programmes of study: General information

Among the selected programmes of study, two are Master’s programmes, three are postgraduate diploma programmes, and one is a postgraduate certificate programme. The two Master’s programmes are of two years’ duration, while the others are of one year duration. The oldest of them is the Post Graduate Certificate of the Teaching of English (PGCTE) launched by EFL-U in 1973, while the most recent one is the Post Graduate Diploma in English Language Teaching (PGDELT) launched by the Netaji Subhas Open University in 2005. The following table gives some general information about each selected programme of study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Programme &amp; institution</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Year of inception</th>
<th>Eligibility criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSOU</td>
<td>MA in English Language Teaching (MAELT)</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Graduate (Three-year Course) with English/ Linguistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PG Diploma in ELT (PGDELT)</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Graduate of any recognized university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSTU</td>
<td>MA in English Language teaching (MAELT)</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>Any graduate from a recognized university (must have studied English as a subject)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OU</td>
<td>PG Diploma in ELT (PGDELT)</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Graduate of any discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFLU</td>
<td>Post Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of English (PGCTE)</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>M. A. in English or in an allied subject (Linguistics, Education, Mass Communication or Psychology) Or An M.A. (in any discipline) with at least a second class along with 5 years of experience of teaching &quot;Methods of Teaching English&quot; at the M. Ed/B. Ed. level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching of English (PGDTE)</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>PGCTE from EFLU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: The selected programmes of study
All are programmes recognized by the erstwhile Distance Education Council and the present Distance Education Bureau, University Grants Commission. ([http://www.ugc.ac.in/deb/pdf/Final_list_for_website_2014-15.pdf](http://www.ugc.ac.in/deb/pdf/Final_list_for_website_2014-15.pdf))

The PGDTE of English and Foreign Languages University has been recognized by the UGC as a desirable qualification for appointment to the posts of Lecturers in colleges and universities. Moreover, it is considered equivalent to two UGC refresher courses in English, while the PGCTE is recognized as equivalent to one UGC refresher course in English.

3.5 Organization of syllabi and content

Since syllabi and contents of materials are important pedagogical components of course delivery, this section attempts to give a brief introduction to the syllabi and content of each selected programme.

3.5.1 Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU)

3.5.1.1 Overview

MA ELT

The MA ELT programme of NSOU divides the course contents into eight papers, each paper containing three or four modules. The last two modules require students to write a research paper and give a seminar presentation. Other modules are theoretical.

The syllabus of this programme, showing the names of the papers, is outlined below.

Paper - I: Introduction to Linguistics, ELT and Literary Theory (*4 modules*)

Paper - II: Applied Linguistics (*4 modules*)

Paper - III: The Phonetics and Phonology of English & Modern English Grammar (*4 modules*)

Paper - IV: Language Teaching and Testing Techniques and Resources (*3 modules*)
Paper - V: Trends in Critical Theories (4 modules)

Paper - VI: Literary Materials Exploitation and Classroom Application (4 modules)

Paper - VII: Course Design (4 modules)

Paper - VIII: Research Methodology and Academic Study Skills (4 modules)

**PGDELT**

The syllabus of PGDELT programme consists of six papers. Each paper consists of one or two modules.

Paper 1: Introduction to Linguistics, History of English Education and Communication

Paper 2: About Language – Modern English Grammar and its Use

Paper 3: Language Proficiency Development


Paper 5: Language Teaching Methods, Materials, Techniques and Media Resources

Paper 6: Introduction to Testing and Evaluation

**3.5.1.2 Brief description of contents**

**MA ELT**

Within the papers, the assignment of titles to modules is not consistent. Some modules have no titles; these start directly with the unit names. Below is a brief overview of the contents of each paper:

Paper 1 presents an introduction to linguistic and literary theory, history of English Language Teaching and English education in India. The last unit of the last module (Module 4) considers the practical applications of ELT in English classes in India.
Paper 2 presents Applied Linguistics, application in ELT, information and communication theory, philosophy and sociology of communication, scope and definition of psycholinguistics and bilingualism, second language acquisition and child language acquisition.

Paper 3 contains grammar, morphology and morphophonemics, structural syntax and implications of general phonetics and phonology for ELT, production of speech, structural phonology, standards of pronunciation and teaching implications, discourse, discourse analysis, pragmatics, register, style, semantics and genre analysis.

Paper 4 presents skill development principles of testing and evaluation.

Paper 5 presents criticism, critical theories, literature teaching and testing of literature.

Paper 6 deals with tragedy, novel, short story, biography and essay.

Paper 7 presents course design, syllabus survey and syllabus evaluation.

Paper 8 contains research, review of literature, plagiarism, second language research – stages, data collection, primary data, questionnaire design and data presentation, report writing and presentation, contextualization of research, components of research and documentation, writing a research proposal and thesis, and presenting a research proposal.

The scope of the syllabus is quite broad. It includes components of literature (Paper 5 and 6), core Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, ELT and research.

PGDELT

Paper 1 presents a brief historical and current overview of English language teaching in India, an introduction to linguistics and theories of communication.

Paper 2 discusses topics of phonetics and grammar, and deliberates on issues relating to teaching of pronunciation and grammar.
Paper 3 is about language proficiency development, which presents modules on language proficiency, teacher proficiency and project work.

Paper 4 gives an introduction to Applied Linguistics, and then goes on to discuss implications of Second Language Acquisition for English Language Teaching and components of language pedagogy.

Paper 5 begins with a discussion of early and recent approaches and methods of English language teaching. It then explores the basic language skills and discusses techniques and strategies of teaching the receptive and productive language skills.

The first module of Paper 6 discusses the basic issues relating to evaluation and testing, and the second module presents topics relating to teaching practice and workshop.

3.5.2 Potti Sri Ramulu Telugu University (PSTU)

3.5.2.1 Overview

The MA ELT programme in PSTU offers eight courses in total. Each course contains a number of units. In the first year, each paper consists of five units and within each unit there are a few ‘lessons’. However, the use of titles for the units and lessons is inconsistent. In some papers, titles are used only for the lessons, and not for the units. Below is an outline of the syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Year</th>
<th>2nd Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1: Phonetics</td>
<td>Paper 1: English Literature and Thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2: Applied Linguistics</td>
<td>Paper 2: Literary Criticism and Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 3: Introduction to English Literature</td>
<td>Paper 3: English Language Teaching: Approaches &amp; methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 4: Introduction to English Language Teaching</td>
<td>Paper 4: English Language Teaching: Material production &amp; testing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.2.2 Brief description of contents

In the first year, Paper 1 (Phonetics) includes lessons on relevance, concept and branches of phonetics, vowels, diphthongs, consonants, syllable, word accent, phonemic transcription, accent and rhythm in speech, intonation and practice exercises respectively.

Paper 2 (Applied Linguistics) presents units on introduction to Linguistics, structure of modern English including syntax, morphology, phonology and semantics.

Paper 3 (Introduction to English Literature) is about the growth and development of English literature, Commonwealth literature, American literature, English non-fictional writing, English fiction, English poetry and English drama. The relevance of this paper in an ELT programme has been justified in the foreword as follows.

‘Although you will be trained, during the two-year MA ELT program, to be an expert in English Language Teaching, it will be immensely useful if you are exposed to the developments in English literature since its first appearance as Anglo-Saxon literature as well as to the contributions from Commonwealth nations and America.’

Paper 4 (Introduction to English Language Teaching) presents units on historical survey of ELT, Linguistics and language teaching, psychology of language teaching, sociolinguistics, curriculum and lesson planning.

All the papers except Paper-1 include an introduction to the course by the course coordinator. Paper 2 includes a note from the course editor as well.

In the second year, Paper 1 (English Literature and Thought) contains units on world literature (a synoptic view, analyses of certain world famous popular tales and poems), American literature, new literatures in English (South Asian, Australian, Canadian literature), Indian English novel (pioneers, women novelists, and recent novels) and literatures in translation.
Paper 2 is about literary criticism and theory. It contains the nature, scope and development of literary criticism, criticism from the romantic period to the end of the 19th century, contemporary criticism, literary criticism from its beginnings to the end of 19th century, contemporary literary theory, theories of translation and comparative literature, and Indian literary criticism.

Paper 3 (Approaches and Methods) dwells on methods of teaching English, language acquisition, script versus structure teaching, teaching of writing skills and comprehension, teaching of reading comprehension, teaching of grammar, prose and poetry.

Paper 4 (Material Production and Testing) presents units on material production and evaluation, adaptation of materials, testing and evaluation, English for specific purposes, classroom dynamics and e-learning.

3.5.3 Osmania University (OU)

3.5.3.1 Overview

The PG Diploma course in ELT programme offered by Osmania University offers four papers in all. Each paper is presented in the form of a book containing 25 lessons.

Below is the outline of the syllabus:

Paper-I: Language as Communication and Structure of Modern English

Paper-II: Methods and Techniques of English Language Teaching

Paper-III: Syllabus Design and Materials Production

Paper-IV: Testing

3.5.3.2 Brief description of contents

Each paper of the programme presents a syllabus consolidating the major contents of the paper and a model question paper before the contents page.
The first paper (Language as Communication and Structure of Modern English) presents lessons on language as communication, properties, sounds and grammar of language, meaning in language, description of parts of speech, word formation, words often confused, tense formation in English, passivization, reported speech, paragraph and essay writing, and spoken English.

The second paper (Methods and Techniques of English Language Teaching) deliberates on the concepts of method, approach and technique, the search for the right method, behaviourism and mentalism, different methods (grammar translation, structural, direct, situational, audiolingual, reading, communicative, and lecturing and traditional methods), dialogue and discussion, classroom interaction, and teaching of different texts and skills (grammar, prose, poetry, composition, oral skills and study skills).

Paper 3 (Syllabus Design and Material Production) presents discussions on different types of syllabi (traditional, structural, situational, task-based, notional, functional, ESP and communicative), teaching reading skills, production of materials for intensive reading, writing and testing, testing in a course, and audio-visual aids (their uses, some easily available aids, technology-based aids).

Paper 4 (Testing) deliberates on the concept of testing, testing in India, characteristics of a good test, validity, reliability, kinds of tests (diagnostic, achievement, placement), methods of testing, testing of various skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, spelling, pronunciation, and vocabulary), testing of materials and literature, organising question banks, marking, technology and testing, and testing scenario.

Paper 1 and 4 include a concluding lesson as well at the end. In Paper 1, the lesson attempts to help learners recapitulate what they have learnt in the previous lessons and takes up a few
additional issues, while in Paper 4 it attempts to help learners apply the insights gained from the other lessons in practical situations.

3.5.4 English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU)

3.5.4.1 Overview

PGCTE: There are seven courses (papers) in PGCTE. All the courses are compulsory. Each course except ‘Practice Teaching’ consists of five blocks. The course Practice Teaching consists of three blocks. Each block is further subdivided into a number of units. The names of the courses are given below. (The sequence is as given in the programme information in the website in 2013)

Course 1: Phonetics and Spoken English
Course 2: Methods of Teaching English
Course 3: Introduction to Linguistics
Course 4: Modern English Grammar and Usage
Course 5: Interpretation of Literature
Course 6: Materials for the Teaching of English
Course 7: Practice Teaching

PGDTE: PGDTE offers eight courses/papers in total, each of which comprises three or four blocks. Learners are allowed to choose any five out of these eight courses. They also have the option of working on a project on a topic from a list of given topics. Students who opt for a project need only take four out of the five courses.

The Courses are: (The sequence is as given in the programme information in the website in 2013)

Course 1: Principles of Language Teaching (Block I – III)
Course 2: The Use of English (Block I – III)
Course 3: Testing Language and Literature (Block I – IV)
Course 4: Stylistics (Block I – III)
Course 5: Indian Writing in English – I (Block I – III)
Course 6: Indian Writing in English – II (Block I – III)
Course 7: General and English Linguistics (Block I – III)
Course 8: The Phonetics of English (Block I – III)

3.5.4.2 Brief description of contents

PGCTE: Course 1 (Phonetics and Spoken English) begins with an introduction to the need for teaching pronunciation and discussion of the production of speech. It then deals with word stress, rhythm and intonation patterns of spoken English, analysis of the English syllable and its structure, criteria for describing English consonants and vowels, and finally morphophonemics. This course is accompanied by a practice book and two audio cassettes.

Course 2 (Introduction to Linguistics) begins with a general introduction to Linguistics that considers the nature and history of this branch of study. Then it goes on to discuss various aspects of phonology and morphology, and teaches learners to analyze a language phonologically and morphologically. Next, it introduces learners to issues of syntax, specifically transformational (generative) syntax. After that, it deals with issues related to meaning including semantics, pragmatics, text and discourse. Finally the course takes up areas of application of Linguistics to language teaching along with a discussion of the relationship between language and society and between language and mind.

Starting with a justification to study grammar, a discussion of criteria for acceptability, and presentation of tools for grammatical analysis, Course 3 (Modern English Grammar and Usage) discusses units like word and sentence, the verbal, noun phrase, and the relationals.

Course 4 (Interpretation of Literature) begins with a discussion of the definition of literature and the major 20th century approaches to the interpretation of literature. It then deals with interpretation of drama, poetry, the short story, and the novel (narrative fiction), respectively.
Course 5 (Methods of Teaching English) starts with an introduction to the area of English Language Teaching with detailed discussions on the classroom, the teacher and the learner. It then considers theoretical concerns including psychological, linguistic, sociolinguistic and historical perspectives on language teaching. Next, it discusses different language skills and sub-skills in relation to classroom teaching and learning and how to teach them. Finally, the block considers the issue of testing.

Course 6 (Materials for the Teaching of English) begins with a discussion on the role of materials in language classrooms and an overview of different perspectives on material construction. It then introduces learners to different types of syllabi and materials, followed by guidance to choose, adapt, and analyze materials for developing and testing the language skills. Finally it deals with the selection and adaptation of materials and tasks for evaluating teaching/learning and English language ability.

Course 7 (Practice Teaching) discusses what goes into good teaching, ways of observing classroom practice, and what and how to plan for language teaching besides a discussion on how to write a lesson plan.

PGDTE

The seven courses in this syllabus, out of which students need to choose five, are discussed in brief below:

The course ‘The Use of English’ deals with writing skills. It presents a discussion on the characteristics of good or effective writing and ways to spot errors in writing. Then it goes on to give learners insights on writing for practical purposes as well as academic purposes.

The course ‘General and English Linguistics’ deals with phonology, morphology and syntax. The course ‘Testing Language and Literature’ talks about general principles of language testing, techniques of testing in various language areas and language skills, testing language
through literature, testing literature, and statistical measures for evaluating class performance and test item validity.

The course ‘The Phonetics of English’ deliberates on allophonic variants of English speech sounds, word accent, and rhythm and intonation.

‘Principles of Language Teaching’ discusses methods and approaches in language teaching, psychology for language teachers, and classroom interaction.

‘Stylistics’ dwells on the history of stylistics, theories and definitions of style, stylistic analysis of different genres, and language in different contexts, specifically in relation to society, culture and ideology.

‘Indian Writing in English – Course I’ starts with a discussion on English in India with special reference to Macaulay’s Minutes on Indian Education and the domain of English in India, and its relation to Indian writing in English. Then it goes on to discuss the kinds of plays and poetry written in English with specific examples.

‘Indian Writing in English – Course II’ also starts with a discussion on English in India with special reference to Macaulay’s Minutes on Indian Education, the domain of English in India, and its relation to Indian writing in English. This is followed by a deliberation on Indian fiction in English with specific examples and Indian English prose from a Dalit perspective.

3.6 Nature of contact programmes

Contact programmes are conducted for distance learners usually to give them an opportunity to meet counsellors face-to-face and clarify doubts on the study materials. All the selected programmes of study conduct contact programmes of different durations for the learners. The following table presents some information relating to contact programmes in each selected programmes of study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>No. of contact programmes</th>
<th>Duration of each contact programme</th>
<th>Compulsory /optional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MA in ELT, Netaji Subhas Open University</td>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>Only on Sundays (4Sundays for each paper)</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 1: 4 (1 for each paper)</td>
<td>Tentative time of the year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2: 4(1 for each paper)</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jan-Feb: Paper 5, Feb-March: Paper 6, April-May: Paper 7 and May-June: Paper 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tentative time of the year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG Diploma in ELT, Netaji Subhas Open University</td>
<td>Six</td>
<td>Three Sundays for each theory paper and five for practical</td>
<td>Compulsory (Practical included)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tentative time of the year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May-June: Practical classes (Five Sundays – two hours each day)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA in ELT, Potti Sriramulu Telugu University</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate Diploma in ELT, Osmania University</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of English, EFL University</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>28 days</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English, EFL University</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>21 days</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Description of contact and counseling programmes (Information as collected during the field visits)
In NSOU, this learner-counsellor interaction is called personal contact programme (PCP). For the MAELT programme, NSOU conducts eight PCPs in total – four for the first year (Part 1) learners and four for the second year (Part 2) learners. Each PCP consists of four days of classes. They are held only on Sundays between the months of November and June. Each PCP is devoted to one paper/course of the programme. The classes are conducted through lectures, workshops and practical sessions. Though there is no provision for practice teaching, some workshops are conducted on task design, lesson planning, etc. Sometimes, a few ‘special classes’ are also conducted. These special classes are held for a variety of reasons such as discussions on the syllabus, topics suggested by students and counsellors of the current batch or to revise some of the topics.

Like the MAELT (NSOU) programme, the PGDELT (NSOU) also holds the personal contact programmes only on Sundays. Usually three Sundays are allotted for each paper and six Sundays are allotted for the practical. However, for the July 2012 batch (who were part of the subjects of this study), three Sundays were devoted to each of the first three papers and five Sundays were allotted for the other three papers. As part of the practical sessions, learners are supposed to conduct peer teaching in the sessions. Thus the personal contact programme of this PG Diploma programme comprises lectures and practice teaching. There is no provision of any special classes in this programme.

PSTU also conducts a ten day contact programme for the MA ELT programme, usually in the month of May, a few months before the annual examination that is held in September-October. Attendance in contact classes is optional, not compulsory. However, a note is added in the circular for contact classes, ‘Though the attendance to contact classes is only desirable, it would help the students to gain practical approach in the learning process.’ It is also made clear that students are supposed to make their own arrangements for the stay and travel for attending the contact classes. Students are informed about the contact classes through
newspapers, electronic media and the university website; information about the programme is not sent to candidates individually.

In Osmania University, the contact-cum-counselling programme for the PGDELT programme is held for a period of ten days, though it is not compulsory for learners to attend it. It is conducted at the end of the academic year and prior to the annual examinations. The venue of the classes, exact dates and timings of the commencement of contact classes are intimated to the candidates by posting a letter to individual addresses. The Centre does not make any arrangement for accommodation for the students who come to attend these contact classes.

In EFLU, a contact programme is held for four weeks for PGCTE learners at its campuses in Shillong, Lucknow and Hyderabad. The purpose of the contact programme, as written in the handout meant for the students, is primarily to focus on practical aspects (practice teaching and spoken English) of the programme which cannot be taught effectively through correspondence. The handout also states, ‘During the contact programme, we will also go through the blocks in all the courses to clear up your points in each unit.’ For completion of the programme, attendance in the contact programme is compulsory.

For PGDTE students in EFLU, the contact-cum-examination programme is held for three weeks, and is usually held in the month of November in Hyderabad. Learners are allowed to attend the contact programme only if they have submitted all the assignments and the project report (if they have opted for a project) by the stipulated date. Attendance in the contact programme is compulsory.

3.7 Teaching practicum

There is no teaching practicum in the MAELT programme in NSOU and PSTU. The PG Diploma in OU also does not require learners to engage in any kind of teaching practicum. In
the PGDELT (NSOU) programme, however, learners are required to do peer teaching in the practical sessions of the personal contact programme.

In EFLU, practice teaching is a compulsory component of the PGCTE programme. The participants are divided into batches, and each batch is further divided into groups. A group may comprise four or five participants, and each group is assigned a particular date for teaching. Every participant in a group takes up a different language skill to teach in a one hour session. While one group is teaching, another group is assigned the task of observing the teaching and giving comments. After the learners finish their teaching, they are required to submit self-observation reports. The target students for the practice teaching classes are intermediate and BA level students of a neighbouring Engineering college who are also enrolled for a certificate in language proficiency course in EFLU.

3.8 Assessment procedures

The major part of assessment of the above programmes is done through a term-end examination that is held towards the end of the session/s.

In NSOU, assignments carry 20 per cent of the total weight of marks in the MAELT programme and 30 per cent of the total weight of marks in the PGDELT programme. In the PGDELT (NSOU) programme, Paper I and II has home assignments, while Paper III has class assignments. The term-end examination consists of theory questions based on Paper IV, V and the first half of Paper VI. The second half of Paper VI consists of a practical exam (Practice teaching).

In PGDELT (Osmania University) and in MAELT (PSTU), there is no provision for assignment submission. In PGDELT (OU), the final examination is held at the end of the academic session. The four papers carry 100 marks each.
The assignments of the PGCTE (EFLU) are considered an important component of the course. So much so, that for the 2012-13 batch, students were given the deadline for submission of all PGCTE assignments by February 28, 2013. Only those participants who submitted all the 33 assignments by the due date were provisionally eligible to attend the contact programme.

The assignments in PGDTE at EFLU count for internal assessment, which is 25% of the total marks. The remaining 75% is for the final examination that is held during the last week of the contact programme. Learners need to submit five assignments for each course. As in the PGCTE programme, submitting the assignments is compulsory for being eligible to attend the contact-cum-examination programme. Learners are given two deadlines for submitting the assignments and the project report. One deadline (for submitting the first two assignments) is around five months after they receive the materials and the other deadline (for submitting the remaining assignments and the project report) is around three months after they submit the first two assignments.

3.9 Other support services

Besides contact programmes and teaching practicum, the distance ELT programmes under study use other student support tools such as mass media, technology, handbook, etc.

The MAELT programme in NSOU used to broadcast live GyanVani programmes (with phone-in options) on issues like Statistics in Second Language Research (10th May, 2012, MAELT, Paper- 8). However, they have stopped broadcasting these programmes since 2014.

The Distance Education department responsible for PGCTE in EFLU uses a Google site (https://sites.google.com/site/eflupgte/) to keep students updated on information regarding assignments, contact programme, examination, etc. In the website, the names of the faculty members (who are also the monitors for the courses) are displayed, along with their contact
details. The site includes an introduction to each course with a brief description of each block, presented by the course monitor. For two courses (Phonetics and Interpretation of Literature), in addition to the introductions, a link has been provided which leads the students to a blog maintained by the respective monitors. The literature course blog also provides Twitter and Facebook links of the course monitor to help learners reach out to her. As of September 2016, however, the Google site has also been closed, though the blogs are still running.

The EFLU PGCTE participants are also provided with a handbook that contains a brief note on the programme, organization of the programme (duration, course organization, studying at a distance, how to study the blocks, role of assignments), the study schedule and deadlines, guidelines for writing assignments, points for clarification, additional facilities, contact-cum-examination programme, checklist for sending in an assignment and a table to help students chart their own progress through the assignments. After the admission, the PGCTE learners receive the following set of documents besides the handbook:

- Admission letter from the Dean, School of Distance Education: The admission letter of 2012, besides communicating the roll number of the learners, lists the materials to be received by the learners. It also clearly (in bold and in a box) mentions the deadlines for submitting the assignments and reiterates the importance of submitting them in time in the ‘important notes’ that follows. It clearly explains that without submission of the assignments in time, learners will not be invited to the compulsory contact-cum-examination programme. The letter also informs learners about the period of enrolment and matters such change of name or contact details. Some general guidelines in the letter list technical instructions for writing and sending assignment responses.
• There is also an acknowledgement letter attached to the admission letter where the learners need to declare that they have received all the materials, noted the deadlines for assignment submission and will follow the rules of the University. The admission letter says that no materials or assignments which might need replacement will be supplied unless learners returned the acknowledgement letter by the specified date.

• Course materials (33 blocks) and assignments (33)

• A play

• A novel

• Exercises in Spoken English Part I (practice book and audio cassettes)

• A sample cover sheet for the assignments

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter presents an overview of the selected programmes of study. Besides justifying the selection of the few programmes, it presents general information about the selected programmes and institutions. It then gives a brief description of the contents of syllabi of each selected programme. After that, it goes on to present information on the important components of distance education programmes, i.e. contact programmes, teaching practicum, assessment procedures and other learner support services in the specific contexts of the selected programmes. A bird’s eye view of the programmes is presented in this chapter to give a general idea about the diverse contexts in which the selected programmes are offered. It is hoped that an understanding of this diversity will help the research study to be more sensitive to the issues relating to effectiveness of the programmes, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.