Guide to Tandem Language Exchange at Queen's University Belfast



The Language Centre at Queen's

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1. What is Tandem Language Exchange and why is it useful?

Tandem language exchange (TLE) is a programme that helps you to find a native (or near-native) speaker of your target language in exchange for your native language(s). It offers you the chance to do more than learn a language – by talking with the people who speak the language about their culture, their region and many aspects of communication which you cannot easily learn about from books and classrooms. You may also form a lasting friendship as a consequence of this scheme.

As a way of informal learning, TLE is particularly useful to complement your language learning in classrooms. It brings you the following benefits:

- It is flexible;
- It is friendly;
- It is fun;
- It is free.

2. Who can participate?

The TLE programme is free of charge and is for all Queen's students and staff. You do not have to be registered for a language class in order to participate. It does not have prerequisite regarding your language level, either. All you need is the willingness to learn a foreign language and to meet people from across the world at Queen's, with due respect.

The Language Centre encourages you to develop autonomous learning through participate in the TLE in addition to the range of language courses on offer already. It is designed to help you meet people and learn languages in a fun, relaxed, social environment without tutors, lectures or exams. Please note that this may complement but does not replace a language class.

3. How does TLE work?

TLE can take place through different channels – mainly face-to-face or online. At Queen's, we would like to encourage you to meet in person on campus, although you can meet online (e.g. via Teams) as an alternative.

Through registration (see Section 4 below) your request will be entered into a TLE database so that your language exchange needs will be shared with the other participants. You will need to contact each other to check your availability and suitability. Once mutually available to each other, it is highly recommended that you **arrange an initial meeting in person** the soonest to negotiate the time, place, frequency and duration. You will also need to discuss what topics you are both interested in, what materials you want to share, and what support you wish to get from each other, etc. to ensure that the upcoming meetings are **mutually beneficial**.

Please be aware that TLE encourages you to develop your learner autonomy to manage your own language learning at a sociable environment, without receiving instructions from a tutor. In principle, each of you will take equal portion of the slot to learn their own part. For example, in a one-hour slot, for the first 30 minutes you practise Language X with the help of your partner and in the second half you help your Language X-speaking partner practise Language Y at their wish.

For beginner-level partners, English can be the working language but please try to use it at a reduced level. While the main purpose for meetings is to practise speaking, you can also include other activities that contribute to your language learning. To support your exchange, we are happy to provide you with some learning tools (See Appendices) to record your learning experience and reflection.

4. How do I register?

The TLE has its webpage (https://go.qub.ac.uk/QUBTLE) for registration and information. It also uses a blog (https://blogs.qub.ac.uk/lc/learning-support/tle/) for accessing activities and the participant list. Once we receive your registration form, we'll update the database and send you an email of confirmation.

Please Note:

1. This list is password-protected and contains participants' personal information. Participants MUST NOT share the password or disclose any other participant's information to anyone who is not a registered member of the Tandem Language Exchange (TLE), under any circumstances.

2. While it is possible to contact multiple partners (separately) at one time for potential TLE partnerships, please use this list responsibly and respectfully when contacting them. The accuracy and validity of the contact information have not been independently verified, as the details were provided by participants themselves.

3. Participants are responsible for keeping their own information up to date. Any changes should be reported to the moderator by email at Liang.Wang

4. TLE programme joins the University's Future-Ready Award Scheme via the Combined Route. Participants who would like to consider applying for the award (Combined Route) using TLE should email Liang.Wang for consultation.

To discontinue or de-register your exchange, you will need to inform us so that we can update the database regularly. On completion or discontinuation, we would appreciate if you would send us a feedback form in order to help us enhance our programme.

5. How do I prepare?

Like all forms of learning, you do have to work at it, and develop a way of working together with your partner that suits you both. Here are some points to bear in mind for good tandem language exchanges:

- Prepare your initial meeting carefully, discussing your language needs, plans and agreed actions. Take notes of what you agree for meetings and any follow-ups.
- Try to meet at regular times, and try to plan your activities so you can prepare in between meetings. Contact your partner in advance if you cannot keep an appointment.
- Choose a topic you are going to talk about beforehand, it might be just practising the sentences learnt in a lesson or agreeing to watch a certain programme on TV, etc. Always agree on what you are going to talk about in your next meeting, you can each read a different article or watch a different programme and present it to your partner.
- If you are a beginner or near beginner and cannot hold a proper conversation, you can use a book and follow the topics presented in the chapter.
- Make sure you do not end up speaking the same language all the time. This means one of you is not learning, and is likely to reduce their motivation.
- You may need to adjust your speech and speaking speed to your partner's level of ability. Respect your partner and their wishes at all times.
- Do not forget that part of learning is to have you errors corrected. It is very easy to forget this when you are communicating well. Make notes of any points that will help you learn from this exchange. You are welcome to use the Learning Diary form or develop one which suits you most. It will be useful to share the notes between you and your partner to ensure equal access to information.

6. TLE Safety Advice

Everyone taking part in the TLE is a Queen's student or staff, but there are a few things you should bear in mind when you first meet up with your partner:

- Always arrange to meet in a place suitable for learning on campus e.g. library studies, common rooms, etc. Do not arrange to meet in your own accommodation. A cafeteria or a pub may look sociable but it may result in extra cost and the environment can be distracting.

- Avoid giving away too much personal information, such as your home address, your personal identification and bank information.

- Use your common sense and instinct during these first few meetings. Do not meet again if you have any doubts. Naturally, after a time, we hope you'll get to know and trust each other and you'll have a relationship like any other friend.

- If you have any problems with your tandem partner, which you think ought to be reported, please contact the Language Centre.

Appendix A

Tandem Language Exchange Learning Diary

***Note**: This form can be reproduced for each time you have an exchange. Please save them carefully to your own folder as your TLE participation evidence. It will be useful if you want to seek advice from the Language Support Team with such evidence. Also please save them in consistent format so that you can locate them easily, e.g. TLE-LD1-[your name or initials].*

My name (in full)	
My partner's name (in full)	
Languages for exchange	
Date	
Time slot	
Venue (or tools, if online)	
Proposed topic(s)	
Materials used (if any)	
What have I learned from this exchange? (e.g. vocabulary, useful expressions, language skills, cultural awareness, understanding, etc.)	
What support have I given to my partner?	
How do I feel about this experience? Anything positive or negative?	
How does my partner feel about this experience? Anything positive or negative?	
What action shall I take to make the next exchange better?	

Appendix B

TLE Engagement and Participation Log

About You			
Full Name		Native Language(s)	
Academic School		Student Number	
About Your Partner(s) – please insert rows to include all the language partners that you have paired with over the time			
Partner's Name & ID		Partner's language	
Academic School			
Partnership Period			
Partner's Name & ID		Partner's language	
Academic School			
Partnership Period			

TLE Activities	**Date(s)**	**Evidence**	**Completion Check**
Online enrolment and registration		• LC Registration form • Online biography • Introductory post in the native language forum • Online interaction with the other members	
TLE Workshops (Oct /Jan / May)		• Attendance sheet	
TLE Drop-in Sessions (Insert rows for the sessions that you have attended)			
Session 1		• Attendance sheet	
Session 2		• Attendance sheet	
…		• Attendance sheet	
TLE Self-directed Practice (Insert rows for the sessions that you have attended)			
Practice 1		• TLE learning journal	
Practice 2		• TLE learning journal	
Practice 3		• TLE learning journal	
Practice 4		• TLE learning journal	
Practice 5		• TLE learning journal	
Practice 6		• TLE learning journal	
…		• TLE learning journal	
TLE Survey Form (Submit only when you leave/end TLE)		• Collection via LC SurveyMonkey account	
TLE Reflective Report (Submit only when you leave/end TLE, together with TLE learning journals in **ONE** Word document **via Canvas Inbox**)		• TLE reflective report based on participation records and evidence (suggested length: 300 words)	

**** Please note that you will be recommended for Future-Ready Award (Combined Route) application only when you have engaged with your language partner(s) in TLE self-directed practice.***

Appendix C

TLE Meeting Preparation Sheet

Below are some guidance questions to help you make preparation for your TLE pair work with your partners. You can make changes where necessary to suit your own needs.

Q1: What topic(s) for this TLE practice?

My topic(s)

My partner's topic(s)

Q2: What outcomes to be achieved after this TLE practice?

My aims:

- ***Cultural understanding***:
- ***Language skills***: S / L / R / W
- ***Language functions***:
- ***Grammar***:
- ***Vocabulary***:
- ***Others***:

My partner's aims:

- ***Cultural understanding***:
- ***Language skills***: S / L / R / W
- ***Language functions***:
- ***Grammar***:
- ***Vocabulary***:
- ***Others***:

Q3: What learning resources to be used for this TLE practice?

My resources (if needed):

- ***Textual/Graphic/Audio-visual***:
- ***Online Tools / Mobile Apps:***
- ***Notes / Learning Journals***
- ***Others***

My partner's resources (if required):

- ***Textual/Graphic/Audio-visual***:
- ***Online Tools / Mobile Apps:***
- ***Notes / Learning Journals***
- ***Others***

Q4: What dates/slots would be good for TLE meetings?

DATES IN OCT	DATES IN NOV	DATES IN DEC
DATES IN JAN	DATES IN FEB	DATES IN MAR
DATES IN APR	DATES IN MAY	DATES IN JUN

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Morning							
Noon							
Afternoon							
Evening							

We wish you have a pleasant tandem journey with your language partner!







