

University at Buffalo Linguistics Ph.D. program
Guidelines for the Statement of Purpose

The following questionnaire spells out the kinds of information that inform the UB Linguistics faculty's funding and admissions decisions above all others. We recommend that applicants aim to answer them in their statement of purpose (SoP) specifically though succinctly (including as much relevant detail as can be fitted into a document of a total length of 2-3 pages for the entire SoP). It is not necessary (but could be helpful) to identify the questions individually.

1. Please identify the areas and subfields of linguistics that you are most interested in and most eager to receive training in. We would encourage you to be specific here: if you are interested not only in an area or subfield, but also in a particular approach, school, or research tradition within an area or subfield, we'd encourage you to mention it.
2. Can you identify for us one or two works in linguistics that have particularly impressed or inspired you, and can you talk about why they had that impact on you?
3. Do you have any prior research or work experience that has prepared you for PhD study (e.g., a research assistantship, work in a lab, or something similar)?
4. 'Research aptitude' is the ability to design and carry out research projects. It is perhaps the most important qualification for doctoral studies. If you have carried out original research in linguistics, for example as part of coursework, a capstone project, or work experience, please provide a brief summary. Please be detailed and specific here to the extent that you think your description will help the UB Linguistics faculty assess your research aptitude. If you have not carried out research in linguistics, but have done so in another field, please discuss this work instead (again keeping in mind the goal of providing evidence of your research aptitude). If the research has resulted in a writeup, that document would be ideal as a writing sample to accompany your application. The summary in your statement could then highlight those aspects of the work that you consider most relevant as an illustration of your research aptitude. If the work has not resulted in a writeup, your statement of purpose should then provide sufficient information about the study for the faculty to be able to evaluate it.
5. As part of your statement of purpose, please feel free to provide us with a short sketch (between a few lines and not more than one page) of a possible research project within linguistics that you might be interested in pursuing. Please note that it is *not* a

requirement for admission that you have a plan for research, and you will *not* be expected to carry out the research you outline in your statement (while you would of course be welcome to pursue it, provided it is feasible). The objective of this research idea sketch is exclusively to further inform the assessment of your research aptitude. It may in particular be used as a possible way of compensating for lack of research experience.

6. Can you name some active UB Linguistics faculty members whom you'd like to work with, and can you tell us why you'd like to work with them? (Please note that the following members of the faculty have retired and no longer accept advisees: Matthew S. Dryer, Jeri Jaeger, Leonard Talmy, Robert Van Valin, Jr., Wolfgang Wölck, David Zubin.)