

Graduate handbook
for graduate studies in Linguistics
at the University at Buffalo
(Version 5.1)

September 12, 2020

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Chapter 1

Requirements

The department of Linguistics at the University at Buffalo offers both an M.A., an M.S., and a Ph.D. in Linguistics

1.1 Terminal M.A. in Linguistics

1.1.1 Course requirements for the terminal M.A.s in Linguistics

Students in the terminal M.A. in Linguistics must successfully complete 30 or 33 credit hours, depending on the particular M.A. specialization they choose.

M.A. specialization in General Linguistics (33 credit hours)

- *Core courses:* Syntax 1 (LIN515); Phonetics (LIN531); Phonology 1 (LIN532); Semantics 1 (LIN538);
- *Core Electives:* 5 out of the following courses (or any class substituted with approval of the Director of Graduate Studies): Comparative Syntactic Theories (LIN526); Construction Grammar (LIN623); Current Syntactic Theory (LIN614); Discourse Pragmatics (LIN504); Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (LIN552); Linguistic Anthropology (LIN521); Morphology (LIN510); Phonology 2 (LIN533); Psycholinguistics (LIN517); Role and Reference Grammar (LIN625); Typology and Universals (LIN525); Historical Linguistics (LIN539); Semantics 2 (LIN543); Sociolinguistics (LIN595).
- *Electives:* 2 other 500 or 600-level courses.

M.A. specialization in Sociolinguistics and Contact Linguistics (30 credit hours)

- *Core courses:* The following 7 classes (or any class substituted with approval of the Director of Graduate Studies): Bilingualism (LIN505), Morphology (LIN510); Syntax I (LIN515); Phonetics (LIN531); Phonology I (LIN532); Semantics I (LIN538); Sociolinguistics (LIN595);
- *Electives:* 3 courses out of the following (or any class substituted with approval of the Director of Graduate Studies):

1. *Electives from Linguistics*: Discourse Pragmatics (LIN504), Psycholinguistics (LIN517); Linguistic Anthropology (LIN521); Typology and Universals (LIN525); Child Language Development (LIN533); Historical Linguistics (LIN539); Introduction to Dialectology (LIN561); Dialectology Practicum (LIN569); Language and Cognition (LIN582); Language policy and language planning (621); Sociolinguistic Methods (LIN647); Japanese Language and Culture; German Language Contact;
2. *Electives from other departments*:
 - (a) *From Romance Language and Literature*: Second Language Acquisition; History of the French/German/Spanish Language; Language and Gender; Spanish Dialectology; Spanish Sociolinguistics;
 - (b) *From Learning And Instruction*: Language Teaching Methods

M.A. Specialization in Germanic Linguistics (30 credit hours)

(Entering students with little or no background in linguistics may also be required to take Phonology I (LIN532).)

- *Core courses*: History of the German Language (GER515) or History of the English Language (GER558); Structure of Modern German (GER608) or one 3-credit independent study on a Germanic topic; Phonetics (LIN531); Syntax I (LIN515); Semantics I (LIN538); Historical Linguistics (LIN539);
- *Electives*: 4 courses from among the following (or any class substituted with approval of the Director of Graduate Studies): Comparative Syntactic Theories (LIN526); Construction Grammar (LIN623); Current Syntactic Theory (LIN614); Discourse Pragmatics (LIN504); Morphology (LIN510); Typology and Universals (LIN525); Phonology II (LIN533); Role and Reference Grammar; Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (LIN552); Semantics II (LIN543); Psycholinguistics (LIN517); Sociolinguistics (LIN595); One 3-credit independent study on a Germanic topic.

1.1.2 MA Exam

Students who enter the Linguistics program as a Masters student additionally take the Comprehensive M.A. Exam or do a Capstone project under a faculty members supervision. The exam is given once each semester; the exact date will be fixed each year, but students can expect to take the exam at the end of the semester, usually after the end of classes (December in the Fall, and May in the Spring).

The exam consists of questions in the areas of linguistics represented by our basic 500-level courses: Syntax, Semantics, Phonetics, Phonology, Historical Linguistics, Linguistic Anthropology, Morphology, Psycholinguistics, Typology, Discourse-Pragmatics, and Sociolinguistics. (If a student wishes to answer a question in Neurolinguistics, or in Language Acquisition, or in some other area, s/he should see the Director of Graduate Studies to see if it is possible to arrange for such a question.) Students must answer three questions. The exam is a take-home exam and students have a couple of days to complete the exam.

The questions will be drawn from material covered in the corresponding 500-level course for example, the Morphology question will be based on topics covered Lin 510). The faculty who teach these courses will make up the question, and the faculty who has made up the question will also grade it.

The student must receive a passing grade on two of the three questions. If a student receives a "pass" on only one of the three questions, s/he will be given the opportunity to choose a fourth area and answer the question in that area.

In order to count in lieu of the Comprehensive Exam, the Capstone Project should meet the following criteria:

- It should reflect at least one semester of frequent interactions on it between the student and the faculty member supervising the project;
- It should result in an article-length written paper;
- It should be strongly encouraged or perhaps even required that this paper be the elaboration of a previous term paper;
- The paper should be approved by a committee consisting of the faculty advisor plus one faculty reader. It is understood that these guidelines should be applied flexibly based on what the student is aiming to do with the resulting paper.

1.2 M.A. program in East Asian Languages and Linguistics (30 credit hours)

The M.A. program in East Asian Languages and Linguistics combines training in the most relevant courses in Linguistics and language acquisition/pedagogy in Chinese, Japanese or Korean to train students for the teaching of one of these languages at college-level.

Required Core Courses (12 credits)

1. CHI521/JPN521/KOR521 (Chinese/Japanese/Korean Language and Culture)
2. CHI510/JPN511/KOR511 (Introduction to Chinese/Japanese/Korean Linguistics)
3. LAI582 (Principles of Language Acquisition and Teaching)
4. LIN 550 (Teaching Chinese/Japanese/Korean as a Foreign Language)

Core Electives (15 credits)

1. TWO core linguistics courses (6 credits): LIN531 (Phonetics) or LIN532 (Phonology); LIN515 (Syntax I) or LIN538 (Semantics I)
2. TWO 500/600-level courses in linguistics (6 credits): These courses may include one or two core linguistics courses above (Note: taking all four core linguistics courses satisfies "Core Electives I and II).
3. ONE course from the following in Learning & Instruction (3 credits): LAI581 (Linguistics for L2 Education); LAI590 (Technologies in L2 classroom); LAI681 (Understanding L2 language and culture); LAI682 (Assessing second language proficiency);

Teaching practicum (2 credits)

LIN599 (Supervised Teaching), including teaching of a course for at least one semester

Portfolio Guidance (1 credit)

LIN600 (Masters Project/Thesis Guidance)

1.3 M.S. in Computational Linguistics (36 credit hours)

The Departments of Linguistics and Computer Science and Engineering jointly participate in a Master of Science in Computational Linguistics. The mission of the program is to prepare students for a career in the Human Language Technologies industry. This program is on the STEM OPT extension list (CIP number 30.1801).

Requirements:

Twelve courses and a master's project (36 credit hours). Required courses can be waived if a corresponding course has already been taken. (For Information on Computer Science courses, visit the CSE website.)

- *Required Linguistics courses:* LIN 531: Phonetics; LIN 515: Syntax 1; Advanced Syntax (currently, Comparative Syntactic Theories, Construction Grammar, Current Syntactic Theory, or Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar); LIN 538: Semantics 1; LIN 543: Semantics 2
- *Required Computer Science courses:* CSE 503: Introduction to Computer Science for non-majors; CSE 535: Information Retrieval; CSE 574: Machine Learning; LIN/CSE 567: Computational Linguistics LIN/CSE 667: Advanced Topics in Computational Linguistics
- *Electives:* (to be chosen in agreement with each students advisor; other classes may be taken with approval of the Director of Graduate Studies in the concentration for Computational Linguistics, Professor Rui P. Chaves): Statistics (such as LIN 623: Quantitative Methods in Linguistics, PSC 508: Basic Statistics for Social Sciences, or COM 504: Quantitative Foundations of Communication); CDS 687: Disorders of Memory; CSE 674: Advanced Machine Learning; CSE 505: Fundamentals of Programming Languages; CSE 531: Analysis of Algorithms; CSE 555: Introduction to pattern recognition; CSE 563: Knowledge Representation; CSE 566: Topics in visualization; CSE 573: Introduction to Computer Vision and Image Processing; CSE 574: Machine Learning; CSE 596: Introduction to the Theory of Computation; CSE 601: Data mining and bioinformatics; CSE 635: NLP and Text Mining; LIN 504: Discourse pragmatics; LIN 514: Corpus Linguistics; LIN 552: Head-driven Phrase-Structure Grammar; PSY 642: Psycholinguistics

1.4 Ph.D. in Linguistics**1.4.1 Course requirements for the Ph.D. in Linguistics**

Ph.D. students are required to successfully complete 72 credit hours.¹ These credits may be distributed across the categories listed below in the remainder of this section (core courses, methods courses, etc.) subject to the constraints spelled out in the individual subsections:

- *'Core' courses*: a small set of courses designed such that all students complete four or six of these (depending on their level of preparation);
- *'Methods' courses*: as with the core courses, these are drawn from a very small set; the difference is that methods courses put more emphasis on research methods and less on theory;
- *'Elective' courses*: these are drawn from a larger set of graduate courses that divide across different areas of specialization;
- *'Research credit' courses*: in these courses, students earn credit while working on research projects under faculty supervision.

Core courses

Core courses are courses students are strictly required to take (in the sense mentioned above, i.e., as a selection out of a narrow range of choices) in order to complete the program unless they can waive them or use transferred courses to satisfy the requirement (see the policies on waivers and transfers in Section 1.5). Core courses for the Ph.D. program are distributed across three areas:

- *Phonetics and phonology*: Phonology 1 (LIN532); Phonetics (LIN531);
- *Morphosyntax*: Syntax 1 (LIN515); Syntax 2, currently instantiated by any of the following: Comparative Syntactic Theories (LIN526), Construction Grammar (LIN623), Current Syntactic Theory (LIN614), Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (LIN552), Role and Reference Grammar (LIN625);
- *Semantics and pragmatics*: Semantics 1 (LIN538); Semantics 2 (LIN543).

The core course requirements depend on the student's level of preparation at entry into the program:

- Students with substantial prior preparation in linguistics take one course in each of the three areas plus one more in their desired area of specialization. Students in the Psycholinguistics track (cf. Section 1.6) choose their fourth core course depending on their research interests in consultation with the DGS.
- Students without substantial prior preparation in linguistics take two courses in each of the three areas.

¹A student who is admitted to the Ph.D. program may decide, some time during the first or second year, that they do not wish to get a Ph.D., in which case they can complete the course requirements of the M.A. specialization they choose and take the M.A. exam.

Both groups of students can of course apply for waivers for core courses from the instructors on record for these courses. This includes students without substantial preparation who believe they have mastered the relevant material autodidactically.

For this purpose, substantial prior preparation involves some amount of training in all three of the above areas at the advanced undergraduate or beginning graduate level. The assessment of whether a given student's level of preparation qualifies is made by the DGS who may consult with other faculty members in the process as needed.

Methods courses

Students take at least two methods courses. For this purpose, they choose from among three options depending on their desired area of specialization, in consultation with the DGS:

- *Option 1:* Fields Methods 1 (LIN527) and 2 (LIN528). This is the traditional default methods package for students aiming to specialize in any of the three core areas of morphosyntax, semantics/pragmatics, and phonetics/phonology.
- *Option 2:* two out of the following three courses: Computational Linguistics (LIN567); Corpus Linguistics (LIN514); Quantitative Methods (LIN624). This option is recommended for students whose research interests involve a significant amount of quantitative and/or computational methods but who do not fall into the target group of Option 3. Suitable courses offered by the Computer Science department may be substituted in consultation with the DGS.
- *Option 3:* Advanced Statistics Methods 1 (PSY607) and 2 (PSY608). This is the methods package of choice for students preparing to specialize in experimental research especially in psycholinguistics.

It is important to notice that the above defines the *minimum* of methods courses students should take. There is no reason why students who go with Option 1 cannot in addition also take Quantitative Methods (LIN624); given the rapidly increasing role of methods of quantitative analysis across all areas of linguistic research, doing so may in fact be advisable for many if not most students. Similarly, students who select Option 2 may elect to in addition take Field Methods 1 (LIN527).²

Electives (specialization and breadth courses)

In addition to the core and methods courses, students take at least another 10 elective courses from the list of specialization courses in Section 1.6 below. In addition, Linguistics Forum (LIN519) may be one of the 10 electives. At least three of the 10 electives should be chosen from tracks other than the student's area of specialization. Overall (i.e., including core and methods courses), at least four courses should fall in the student's desired area of specialization. It is possible to use transferred courses to satisfy part of the Elective requirement. However, a minimum of 36 credit hours (or half of the 72 credits) used to satisfy the Ph.D. requirements must be earned in core, elective, or methods courses offered

²It is however currently not possible to satisfy the Methods requirement by combining Field Methods 1 (LIN527) and any of the courses specified for Options 2 and 3.

by UB Linguistics (research credit courses as discussed below do not satisfy this requirement). For students acquiring a concurrent interdisciplinary Masters of Science degree or the Ph.D. Certificate awarded by the UB Cognitive Science Center, this number may be adjusted to 24 in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. This adjustment is made in view of the external coursework requirements of these degrees.

Research credit and courses from other UB departments

Up to 24 of the 72 credits required for the Ph.D. may be earned through research credit courses (see below) and/or courses offered by other UB graduate programs. However, the maximum number of credit earned from other UB departments that can be applied to the Ph.D. directly, without transfer, is 12, although this cap may be raised in consultation with the DGS where the student's research needs require it. The following options are available for research credit:

- *Masters Project/Thesis Guidance (LIN600)*: non-repeatable, to be taken optionally during the student's work on their Qualifying Paper project;
- *Graduate Research (LIN620)*: repeatable, for a semester-long project carried out under the supervision of a faculty advisor (who does not have to be identical to the faculty member advising the student on their Qualifying Paper project or Dissertation);
- *Work in Progress (LIN624)*: repeatable, designed for a group of students to work for the duration of a semester under faculty-supervision on individual projects, providing feedback to one another in the process;
- *Doctoral Dissertation Guidance (LIN700)*: repeatable, reserved to students who have completed their coursework, but are required by UB to enroll for one credit per semester until their conferral.

1.4.2 Qualifying paper

The qualifying paper is required of students who have been admitted to the Doctoral program in the Department of Linguistics, and it must be completed *before* the student can be passed onto Phase 2 of the program (i.e., the phase during which students conduct their Ph.D. thesis research).

The QP is intended to give the student experience in carrying out a research project that goes beyond what is normally required of a course paper; however the project certainly can evolve out of a course paper. The paper should have the format, basically, of a journal submission. The paper should be about 9,000-12,000 words in length.

Early in their second year of graduate study, the student should choose a faculty member who will advise the student while he or she is working on the QP. (The faculty member may be, but does not have to be, the same faculty who will direct the student's dissertation.) The role of the advisor is to guide the student as he or she is carrying out the research and the writing. The student and the advisor jointly invite two further committee members (or readers), who will read and comment on the QP once it has been approved by the advisor. If the student and/or the advisor so desire, they may call on the Director of Graduate Studies to facilitate this process. The readers will then read the QP and provide feedback or simply approve the paper if no additional revisions are necessary.

The readers will notify the advisor of any revisions they recommend or require. In doing so, they will distinguish among three types of revisions:

- A. Revisions without which the reader cannot pass the QP;
- B. Revisions the reader deems necessary to possible future uses of the QP (publication and/or incorporation into the students dissertation);
- C. Revisions the reader recommends (e.g., for training purposes), but does not consider to be strictly necessary in the sense of A or B.

Passage of the QP should be made contingent exclusively on the execution of revisions in Category A, which should be construed as a proper subset of B. In other words, passage of the QP should not be made contingent on changes only considered necessary to certain future uses of the text. Revisions in Categories B and C should be recommended to the student, but it should be made clear that passage of the QP will not depend on their implementation. However, in case relevant future uses of the text are indeed pursued, the advisor is urged to ensure that the B-type revisions anticipated by the committee for this case are indeed realized.

The advisor consolidates the recommended changes into a draft plan for the revisions and, after ensuring that the readers are satisfied with this plan, passes it on to the student, along with a deadline by which the A-type revisions are to be carried out. The A-type revisions must be carried out before the committee can pass the QP, and thus before the faculty can advance the student to the Dissertation Phase of the program (by default, advancement decisions are made during the last faculty meeting of the academic year). If an unavoidable significant delay in the QP timeline occurs, and not all A-type revisions can be carried out in time for the advancement decision, the committee may pass the QP conditionally only in case all members feel confident that the student will be able to carry out the revisions to an extent that renders the QP passable. If one or more committee members lack this confidence, the QP should be rejected. In case of conditional passage, the student should be informed that their advancement to the Dissertation Phase may be rescinded in case they fail to carry out the revisions to the committees satisfaction within the time frame they have been given.

When the committee has approved the QP, the committee members sign the approval form. Return the form to the DGS after all three faculty have signed the form, and (s)he will also sign it. Then the form goes to the graduate secretary, so that she can enter the information into our student database and file the form in the student's file. See section 2.2.1 for deadlines that pertain to the QP project.

Upon completion of a student's QP, the faculty as a whole will determine whether (s)he should be passed onto the Ph.D. phase of the program. If a student is not passed onto the Ph.D. phase of the program, (s)he will earn a terminal M.A. and will leave the program.

1.4.3 Responsible Conduct of Research

All graduate students who wish to be advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. are required to document successful completion of "Responsible Conduct of Research" (RCR) training. Several courses or on-line tutorials can be used to demonstrate successful completion of this training. A popular on-line training program can be found at <http://www.citiprogram.org>.

Students should ask the DGS for more information about this program or other courses that will satisfy the RCR requirement.

1.4.4 Dissertation committee

A dissertation committee comprises three or more members of the University at Buffalo Graduate Faculty, of whom at least two must hold appointments in the Department of Linguistics. (This includes faculty holding adjunct appointments in the department.) The Major Professor should normally hold their primary appointment in the Department of Linguistics, but an exception can be made with approval of the Graduate Committee.

1.4.5 Dissertation proposal and dissertation defense

The dissertation proposal is not intended to be a “paper” in the sense that the QP is. Rather, the dissertation proposal should be viewed as a very long abstract. It should include a statement of the topic (or hypothesis, or claim), the context for the research (why should other linguists be interested in the research; how does it fit into previous research), the methodology and nature of the data or evidence that the student hopes to collect or find, and, perhaps, a preview of the conclusions the student hopes to present or the contribution the dissertation will make. Generally, the proposal should not be any longer than 20 pages; however the dissertation advisor ultimately determines the form of the proposal.

The proposal defense is simply a meeting of the committee members and the student so that everyone is clear about the nature of the topic, the scope of the research, and the methodology. Typically, no one “fails” a proposal defense, since the primary goal is to clarify and comment on the research before the research is begun. The student should be aware, however, that the proposal defense *may* result in significant changes in the research plan.

The proposal defense should also clarify the role of the readers. In particular, readers should state whether they wish to or are willing to play any role in the candidate's project beyond (and prior to) the review and evaluation of the dissertation manuscript. It should be established that the committee and the candidate agree on these roles. Furthermore, if readers anticipate a non-trivial probability of being unavailable during parts of the completion of the project, including the defense, they must make this clear before or during the proposal defense and it must be established that the candidate and the advisor are still willing to go forward with the committee's configuration knowing about these restrictions. This policy specifically applies (but is not restricted to) to readers who anticipate not being available for a potential exceptional defense during summer or winter breaks.

Once the proposal defense has taken place, the committee members sign the form, the form is returned to the DGS so that he or she can sign it, and then, as usual, the form goes to the graduate secretary. By signing this form, advisor and readers accept the proposal (with any revisions agreed upon during the proposal defense) as a mutually binding agreement for them and the candidate. Any non-trivial deviations from this agreement should be discussed and agreed upon by all parties involved (i.e., the full committee and the candidate) before they take effect.

Advising responsibilities are part of faculty obligations, which are strictly confined to the semester. Faculty is expected to devote the time between semesters to their research. As a result, advising activities are by default on hold during the summer and winter breaks. This critically includes the participation in doctoral defenses. Candidates and committees

are therefore asked to schedule defenses during the semester. Exceptions to this policy should be considered exclusively when the following conditions are **all** met:

- The candidate submits a written request to the committee;
- Junior committee members consult with their faculty mentor or the Chair;
- The candidate submits a first draft of minimally the body of the dissertation by the end of faculty obligations (one week after the last week of exams);
- All members of the committee are able and willing to participate in the proposed extracurricular defense;
- Not holding the defense during the break would demonstrably result in a probable significant negative impact on the candidate's career.

The prototypical example of a significant negative career impact is a position the candidate has been offered, which requires conferral by the next available date following the break. Faculty members who are often or regularly unable to participate in defenses during academic breaks are urged to make the candidate and the fellow committee members aware of this fact at the time the committee is constituted.

1.5 Transfer Credit and Course waivers

1.5.1 Transfer Credit

Students who come into our graduate program in Linguistics having taken graduate courses previously at another institution may ask to have certain credits TRANSFERRED to UB. The procedure for transferring credits involves submitting a letter specifying which courses they wish to receive credits for. Usually a syllabus and transcript is also required. The number of credits which can be transferred is determined by a departmental committee whose chair is currently Dr. Dryer and the DGS. Once each year, Dr. Dryer will circulate a memo asking students to submit materials for consideration as transfer credit. Students should observe this request at the first opportunity after entering our program, ideally in the first semester.

1.5.2 Course waivers

Students who come into our graduate program in Linguistics having taken graduate courses previously at another institution may ask to have some of the *Core Courses* WAIVED. Students should request to have core courses waived as soon as possible after entering our program, ideally in the first semester. In order to waive a core course, a student must consult the faculty member teaching the equivalent course at UB that semester, or if the course is not being offered that semester, the faculty who most recently taught the course. The instructor may ask the student for a syllabus of the previous course in order to determine what topics were covered, the textbooks and readings required, how the student was evaluated, and discuss some of the topics covered with the student. Once a student has consulted with the relevant faculty, the student should ask the faculty to sign the Course Waiver Form. Then the student should return the signed form to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will also sign it and place it in the student's file in the main office.

1.6 Areas of specialization

Ph.D. students are required to take 4 courses in their main specialty aside from the relevant core courses and are expected to choose their two methods courses in accordance with their specialization. Students *need not* choose their area of specialization early in their graduate career. The faculty only expects students to have taken these four additional courses by the time students finish their course work (i.e., complete their 72 credit hours). Below is a list of specializations and current courses that fall within each area. Note that this list of courses is intended only as *guidelines*, and additional classes may be added to these lists upon approval by the DGS. Note also that some courses are more frequently taught than others. Students should ask the DGS when courses can be expected to be taught next.

1.6.1 Phonetics and Phonology

LIN502 Phonology practicum
LIN531 Phonetics
LIN532 Phonology 1
LIN533 Phonology 2
LIN539 Historical Linguistics
LIN556 Acquisition of Phonology
LIN558 Prosodic analysis of natural discourse
LIN612 Advanced seminar in Phonology
LIN670 Advanced Phonetics

1.6.2 Morphosyntax

LIN510 Morphology
LIN515 Syntax 1
LIN525 Typology and Universals
LIN535 **Syntax 2**
LIN537 The Syntax of Romance
LIN604 Discourse and Syntax
LIN608 Approaches to the Lexicon
LIN614 Current syntactic theory
LIN616 Advanced Morphology
LIN625 Role and Reference grammar
LIN626 Functional morphosyntax
LIN630 Structure of a non-Indo-european language
LIN631-633 Linguistic description of an American language

1.6.3 Semantics and Pragmatics

LIN504 Discourse pragmatics
LIN506 Meaning and communicative behaviors
LIN507 Conversational analysis
LIN521 Linguistic Anthropology
LIN538 Semantics 1

LIN543 Semantics 2
LIN548 Formal semantics
LIN580 Introduction to cognitive linguistics
LIN581 Cognitive foundations of language
LIN582 Language and cognition
LIN606 Empirical semantics
LIN636 Semantics of space, time, and force
LIN637 Cognitive structure of language
LIN723 Advanced discourse analysis

The last two areas of specialization are interdisciplinary and may involve substantial work in other departments.

1.6.4 Psycho/Neurolinguistics

LIN514 Corpus linguistics
LIN517 Psycholinguistics
LIN555 Language acquisition
LIN592 Neurolinguistics
LIN603 Cross-linguistic study of language development
LIN641 Topics in psycholinguistics

Chapter 2

Graduate Policies

2.1 Grades for courses

- The passing grade for all strictly *required* classes (the *Core courses* for both MA and Ph.D. students and the *Methods courses* for Ph.D. students) is **B**. The overall GPA of *all* graduate students must be at least 3.0.
- All final papers for incomplete grades must be handed in before the first day of classes of the Fall semester. This applies regardless of whether the incomplete is for a Fall or Spring semester course.¹ **The student must turn in his/her paper to both the instructor *and* to the Graduate Secretary (Jodi Reiner).**

2.2 Deadlines

The target time for completing a Ph.D. is between 5 and 7 years for students who enter the program without an M.A. from another department. Our new requirements are designed to help students graduate within that time frame. Note that the UB-wide mandated maximum number of years to complete an MA/MS is 4 years and 7 years to complete a Ph.D. The Graduate School is willing to consider petitions for an extension of the time limit to complete an MA/MS or Ph.D., but there is no absolute guarantee they will grant what you ask for, although they have been quite reasonable in the past.

To help students along the way, we have set up additional deadlines.

2.2.1 Qualifying paper

Students who started in our Ph.D. program

- Students will choose an advisor in their *third* semester of study;
- Students will make a presentation of their Qualifying Paper research in their *fourth* semester of study

¹In certain cases, *the instructor* may additionally request the student to sit in the next time the course is offered and therefore waive the deadline for completion of the incomplete until the end of the semester in which the class is next taught.

- Students will get a first draft to their advisor by the beginning of their sixth semester *at the latest*
- Students will finish their Qualifying Paper during their sixth semester of study *at the latest*
- Students must submit the first draft of their QP sufficiently early to allow for significant changes in response to their advisor's comments. By default, this should happen at the beginning of the semester in which the QP is to be completed. Students and advisors may negotiate an adjusted deadline if their schedules and advising process permit it
- The deadline for a Qualifying Paper draft to go to readers (after approval by the advisor) is the last Friday in March of the sixth semester for students who started in the PhD program

Failure to complete the QP within sixth semesters will result in the student's inability to continue in the Ph.D. program.

Students who started in our terminal M.A. program and then became students in our Ph.D. program

- Students will choose an advisor in their *fourth* semester of study
- Students will make a presentation of their Qualifying Paper research in their *fifth* semester of study
- Students will get a first draft to their advisor by the beginning of their seventh semester *at the latest*
- Students will finish their Qualifying Paper during their seventh semester of study *at the latest*
- Students must submit the first draft of their QP sufficiently early to allow for significant changes in response to their advisor's comments. By default, this should happen at the beginning of the semester in which the QP is to be completed. Students and advisors may negotiate an adjusted deadline if their schedules and advising process permit it
- The deadline for a Qualifying Paper draft to go to readers (after approval by the advisor) is the last Friday in October for MA transfers

Failure to complete the QP within seven semesters will result in the student's inability to continue in the Ph.D. program.

2.2.2 Thesis proposal

Students who started in our Ph.D. program

- Students will defend their Thesis proposal by the end of the eighth semester of study *at the latest*

- The deadline for the Dissertation Proposal draft to go to committee members (after approval by the advisor) is the last Friday in April of the eighth semester for students who started in the PhD program

Failure to defend the proposal within eighth semesters will result in the student's inability to continue in the Ph.D. program.

Students who started in our terminal M.A. program and then became students in our Ph.D. program

- Students will defend their Thesis proposal by the end of the ninth semester of study *at the latest* semester of study *at the latest*
- The deadline for the Dissertation Proposal draft to go to committee members (after approval by the advisor) is the Monday after Thanksgiving for MA transfers

Failure to defend the proposal within nine semesters will result in the student's inability to continue in the Ph.D. program.

2.2.3 Annual progress report

Students who have successfully defended their thesis proposal must each May 1 submit to their graduate committee an update of their dissertation work and their progress towards completion of their Ph.D. (around two pages long).

2.2.4 Please be advised!

In planning the completion of the Qualifying Paper and Thesis, it is also important for students to:

1. Let the committee members know by the beginning of the semester during which they intend to graduate the approximate date by which they will hand them the QP or Thesis, as they might have deadlines of their own and need to plan the time to read and comment on the QP or thesis;
2. Keep in mind that it can take from 2 to 4 weeks for faculty members to read a QP and from 4 to 6 weeks to read a thesis.
3. In order to comply with the submission deadline, QP and Dissertation manuscripts must be complete at the time of submission to the committee and in the version in which they are to be evaluated by the committee members. No additional or revised chapters or appendices shall be considered by the committee during the evaluation process unless the addition or revision is necessitated by extreme circumstances and agreed upon by the committee members.
4. When the candidate's principal advisor says that their thesis is ready to go to the other members of the committee, they must file a copy of their thesis with the Graduate Secretary.
 - (a) There must be *at least four weeks* between the time students file their thesis with the Graduate Secretary and the date of the thesis defense;

- (b) It is typical for members of the committee to request significant changes at the defense before the thesis can be filed with the graduate school. There must be *at least* two weeks between the thesis defense and when the final version of the thesis is filed with the graduate school.

2.3 Accommodations

Students may need program- or course-related accommodations due to disability, religion, medical situations, pregnancy/parenting-related circumstances, or other life circumstances. Requests for accommodation may be directed to a students advisor (if applicable), the DGS, or the Department Chair. Accommodations that involve adjusting department policies are considered by the faculty's Graduate Committee. Accommodation requests of this kind are normally initiated by the student or their advisor, who contacts the DGS or the Chair.

Students seeking accommodations for reasons related to accessibility or for a medical concern can contact the university's Office of Accessibility Resources directly to request accommodation, or, if they prefer, through another member of the department such as their advisor, the DGS, or the Chair. Students are not required to disclose private medical information, such as a diagnosis, to faculty or staff outside of Accessibility Resources.

If a student is concerned that they are being treated unfairly or inequitably within the program, they are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their advisor, the DGS, the Chair, or the UB Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

In all cases, students seeking accommodation can designate another individual (whether a faculty member, student, or staff member) to represent them when making their request. They should also feel free to bypass any level of the departmental hierarchy if they feel that this will be more effective for them. Please refer to the following policies:

<http://www.buffalo.edu/administrative-services/policy1/ub-policy-lib/reasonable-accommodation.html>

<http://www.buffalo.edu/administrative-services/policy1/ub-policy-lib/religious-accommodation-expression.html>

2.4 Leaves of absence and maintenance of funding

Students seeking a leave of absence should contact the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as possible once they determine that that they would like to make a leave request. The Graduate School has policies and procedures for granting a leave, which are followed by the department. Normally, leaves are granted for a maximum of one year, but may be extended for up to one additional year if circumstances warrant. Leaves can be requested both for situations where students are unable to maintain their studies for a specific period of time (e.g., due to medical or family concerns, or military obligations) or when temporary research or employment opportunities arise that cannot easily be postponed.

To the extent that budgetary conditions allow, the department will allow students to pause funding already committed to them while on leave. That is, they will be funded for the same total number of semesters as was the case for their original funding commitment. The department cannot guarantee that the student will not lose other sources of funding as a result of their leave, such as Deans or Presidential fellowships. However, when a student

requests a leave, the Director of Graduate Studies can contact other offices to determine what the consequences of the leave will be for those other sources of funding and inform the student accordingly.

Under normal circumstances, the department will minimally allow students to pause their funding for one year of medical, family, or military leave and one year of leave taken for other reasons. If funding constraints do not allow the department to guarantee funding for all students whose funding has been paused, funding for those taking leave for medical, family, or military reasons will be prioritized over those taking leave for other reasons. Students are encouraged to speak with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Chair before taking a leave to be made aware of the whether any difficulties maintaining their funding commitments would be anticipated.

Circumstances requiring medical, family, or military leave should meet one or more of the following:

- the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;
- the placement with the student of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;
- to care for the students partner, child, parent, sibling, or other close family member who has a serious health condition;
- a disability-related or medical condition that makes the student unable to perform academic, teaching, or research functions; or
- the fulfillment of military service obligations.

All leave requests must be supported by adequate documentation. Students requesting a leave for medical or disability-related reasons are encouraged to contact the Office of Accessibility Resources to provide the relevant documentation, which will allow them to maintain their privacy to the extent possible.

Chapter 3

Funding

The faculty is fully aware of how stressful the lack of long-term funding support is for many students and we wish there were more Teaching Assistantships or Lectureships available. You can also be sure that we take pains to accommodate students' requests for particular classes or semesters and that our decisions are carefully thought through (despite occasional mistakes).

3.1 TA-ships

The department has at its disposal only a limited number of TA ships and lectureships. Normally, unless needs dictate otherwise, there are about 18 TA-ships across the linguistics and language programs. The department also has a certain number of lectureships in both linguistics and the language programs (the number of lectureships varies more than the number of TA-ships, which is quite stable).

TA-ships and lectureships differ in many ways. Basically, the former comes with tuition waiver (until a student has completed 72 credit hours at UB or has been funded for 8 semesters, whichever comes first), health insurance, and higher pay. Finally, many TA-ships are not available for two reasons: (1) the University requires us to use free lines for recruitment (this is why we cannot make decisions on TA-ships and Lectureships until we know how many Dean's or Presidential fellows will accept our offers (April 15)), (2) students already on presidentials or Dean's fellowships continue on these lines until their four-year commitments are up. As a consequence of the fact that TA-lines are used for recruitment by the University, we cannot guarantee TA-ships or lectureships in Linguistics to (non-Dean or presidential fellows) continuing students for more than one year at a time (something which we do realize is nerve racking, but we have no control over that).

Decisions regarding funding of *all* TA-ships and lectureships, be they in Linguistics or in the various language programs are done collectively by the faculty as a whole, after much agonizing. Because it is a collective decision, not a decision that rests with any particular faculty member, questions about TA-ships and lecturers should be addressed to the Chair. Two main considerations go into our funding choices: performance in the program and teaching abilities. Academic excellence, including timely progress through the program, is the most important criterion, but it must be tempered by our responsibility towards undergraduate education (the need for all non-native speakers to successfully pass the speak test is but one example of this responsibility).

Note that all non-US citizens who are not native speakers of English from countries that

belong to the United Kingdom that are granted a TA-ship or RA-ship must pass the SPEAK test *prior* to the beginning of their teaching or research duties. To quote the Graduate School's *Policies and Procedures Manual*:

'all international students who have been awarded graduate, research, or teaching, assistantships (including Presidential Fellowships) must take the Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit (SPEAK) test upon arrival on campus. Registration for classes will only be possible after taking the SPEAK test.'

Tuition waiver forms are sent out during the late Spring semester before you are supported. At that time you are asked to provide the number of credit hours you will be taking during the next Fall and Spring semesters. It is very important that you contact the graduate secretary to correct the tuition waiver if you decide to take more credits or less credits than you originally listed on your tuition waiver form. Otherwise, billing problems will ensue.

3.2 Occasional awards

The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences also hands out occasional awards. Some are top-off awards, i.e. money that is added to the student's TA-ship stipend and that will be added any time the student receives a TA-ship. We have several students who have received the award in recent years. Sometimes, it is a one-time award that is not added to the TA-ship stipend and will not recur. This is the case with the so-called *Retention awards* that started in the academic year 2006-2007. For these awards, the Dean asks the Department to select the best students *who fit the criteria for the award*. The Chair and DGS consults with the rest of the faculty to decide on the awardees.

3.3 Research funds

Every year the department makes available to students ad hoc funds for research projects that involve primary data collection (e.g., field research, psycholinguistics studies with subjects). A call for proposals is sent to students typically in the later part of the spring semester and awards (which, typically, range between \$50 and \$600) are made at the very end of the spring semester. Funds must be expended by the end of the next academic year, that is by June 30 of the academic year following the spring semester when the funds are awarded.

Appendices

Appendix A

Evaluation guidelines for Qualifying Papers

A.1 Preliminaries

Linguistic research is the gathering and/or analysis of linguistic data. A valid linguistic research project carries out research in pursuit of a live research question of one of the subdisciplines of linguistics, employing methods accepted as valid for discovering an answer to the question. A valid research project usually involves at least some element of analysis. Whether the project also usually involves data gathering depends very much on the (current practices of the) particular subfield. A research question is **live** if it is pursued in ongoing research or if researchers active in the subfield can be persuaded that it is worth pursuing. Questions concerning the properties of some linguistic phenomenon in a particular language that has not yet been described can be considered inherently live. A research question ceases to be considered live to the extent that it is considered to have been answered conclusively or if it is found to be unanswerable or obsolete, because it presupposes assumptions no longer considered warranted. The assessment of whether a particular study addresses a live question is up to the researchers peers for instance, the reviewers of journal submissions and grant proposals or, in the case of a Qualifying Paper, the students advisor. An **empirically viable answer** to a research question is an answer to the question that is consistent with all known relevant facts. A **competitive** answer to a research question is an empirically viable answer to the question that performs equally good or better than proposed competing answers on the metric of accounting for the maximal amount of data with the minimal set of assumptions. A **valid research project idea** is a plan for a research project that meets both of the following criteria:

- It addresses an established live research question or introduces a new one;
- It proposes a design for finding an answer to the question that is valid for the question, i.e., suitable for answering it.

A.2 Design features of the QP that remain outside the scope of evaluation

The Valid Project Idea Criterion should be met at the outset of the project, i.e., before the advisor agrees definitively to direct the QP. The Article Scope Criterion is a guideline; it should not affect acceptance of the QP by the committee.

A.2.1 Valid Project Idea Criterion

A QP must be based on a valid project idea (as judged by the student's advisor).

A.2.2 Article Scope Criterion

The QP is intended to have the approximate size of a full-length article in a leading journal of its subfield and provides approximately the same amount of information as such an article. The scope of the QP project should be that of a study publishable in a full-length journal article.

A.2.3 Professionalism Criterion

The student is expected to meet all departmental deadlines related to the QP; to make consistent progress during the writing period that is responsive to the advisor's comments; to stay in regular contact with the advisor, and respond promptly to any progress queries; to make revisions as requested by the advisor or provide justification as to why such revisions were not made; and to demonstrate the ability to undertake a significant research project independently without overreliance on the support of the advisor. While compliance with this criterion will not affect the evaluation, it is part of the professional ethos the Department aims to inspire in its students. The extent to which students demonstrate evidence of this ethos is likely to influence the readiness of faculty members to advise the students in the future.

A.3 Evaluation criteria

A.3.1 Innovation

A study is innovative to the extent that it does any of the following:

- Introduce a new live research question;
- Bring new data and/or methods to bear on an established research question;
- Offer a new analysis of a phenomenon that provides a competitive answer to a live research question.

A QP is considered satisfactory on Innovation if it meets at least one of these criteria.

A.3.2 Research Skills

One central objective of the QP project is to assess the student's ability and skill in designing and carrying out a valid research project. A QP is evaluated to be satisfactory on Research Skills if, and only if, it is not obviously and egregiously flawed on any of the following criteria:

- It addresses an established live research question or introduces a new one;
- It proposes a design for answering this question that is valid in all relevant components: the sources of evidence it draws on; the methods of data gathering (if any) it relies on; the methods of analysis it employs; the logical inferences involved in generalizing over the results and presenting the findings;
- It carries out this design comprehensively and flawlessly to the extent possible within the allotted time frame. Flaws that were not foreseeable for the committee until the student carried out the project up to a point where it was no longer possible to correct them within the allotted time frame will generally not impact the evaluation of the QP;
- It proposes an analysis of the data that provides an empirically viable and competitive answer to the research question empirically viable above all in that it is consistent with the data the QP is based on.

A.3.3 Presentation/Exposition

Another important goal of the QP project is to assess the students ability to write a major research paper. A QP is judged to be satisfactory on Presentation/Exposition if, and only if, it meets all of the following criteria:

- It clearly states the research question the study addresses;
- It succinctly summarizes the relevant previous literature;
- It lays out the methodological protocol of the study;
- It presents the data and analyses to the extent necessary;
- It discusses the findings so as to make it clear to what extent the proposed answer is empirically viable and competitive.

Meeting these criteria presupposes the ability to express oneself clearly, using the grammar and lexicon of English and the style conventions of contemporary English academic prose appropriately and effectively to this end.

A.4 Overall evaluation

The QP passes if it is evaluated to be satisfactory or better on all three evaluation criteria. A passing QP is one of two requirements for advancement to the Dissertation Phase, the other being the willingness of faculty members to serve on the committee, above all in the role of advisor.

If a QP is judged to be unsatisfactory on just one of the three criteria, the balance of the three criteria need to be considered in order to evaluate the QP as a whole. In this case, the three criteria are to be weighted in the order Research Skills <Presentation/Exposition <Innovation. An excellent performance on Research Skills or Presentation/Exposition, or a strong performance on both, can compensate for an unsatisfactory performance on innovation.