

Graduate Handbook

Linguistics Program

For Students Admitted Academic year 2020-2021 and later
Last Revised March 28, 2023

The Linguistics Program Graduate Handbook supplements The Graduate School's policies and procedures. The following pages contain information about program-specific policies, procedures, and regulations. Students are subject to the regulations in effect at the time of matriculation. It is your responsibility as a student to be aware of these and The Graduate School's regulations.

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Nondiscrimination Statement

Northwestern University does not discriminate or permit discrimination by any member of its community against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship status, veteran status, genetic information, reproductive health decision making, or any other classification protected by law in matters of admissions, employment, housing, or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates. Harassment, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based on any of these characteristics is a form of discrimination. Further prohibited by law is discrimination against any employee and/or job applicant who chooses to inquire about, discuss, or disclose their own compensation or the compensation of another employee or applicant.

Northwestern University complies with federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination based on the protected categories listed above, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX requires educational institutions, such as Northwestern, to prohibit discrimination based on sex (including sexual harassment) in the University's educational programs and activities, including in matters of employment and admissions. In addition, Northwestern provides reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants, students, and employees with disabilities and to individuals who are pregnant.

Any alleged violations of this policy or questions with respect to nondiscrimination or reasonable accommodations should be directed to Northwestern's Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4-500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165, equity@northwestern.edu.

Questions specific to sex discrimination (including sexual misconduct and sexual harassment) should be directed to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4-500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165, TitleIXCoordinator@northwestern.edu.

A person may also file a complaint with the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights regarding an alleged violation of Title IX by visiting www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html or calling 800-421-3481. Inquiries about the application of Title IX to Northwestern may be referred to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator, the United States Department of Education's Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, or both.

Program Administration

The primary responsibilities of each administrative office are given below. A list of current individuals filling each of the offices listed below is available on the Department's website (<http://www.linguistics.northwestern.edu>).

- Director of Graduate Studies: Any academic issues (curriculum, advising, department policy, record keeping); advising of first-year students in the graduate program.
- Department Assistant: Financial issues.
- Graduate Program's Assistant: Other administrative issues (e.g., filing of TGS forms, event scheduling)
- Admissions Officer: Graduate program admissions.

Required Courses

PhD program

Coursework requirements	Means of meeting requirements
Fundamental Properties of Language (4 quarters)	LING 420: Sociolinguistics LING 450-1: Laboratory Phonology 1 LING 460-1: Syntactic Analysis 1 LING 470-1: Semantic Analysis 1
Advanced Competency (4 quarters)	Any 4 400-level LING courses excepting independent study and other required courses and any 300-level LING courses with instructor's permission.
Computational analysis (1 quarter)	LING 331: Introduction to Programming and Text Processing for Linguists <i>or</i> LING 334: Introduction to Computational Linguistics
Statistics (1 quarter)	STAT 330: Applied Statistics for Research <i>or</i> LING 430: Advanced Statistics for Language Science

MA program

Coursework requirements	Means of meeting requirements
Fundamental Properties of Language (4 quarters)	LING 420: Sociolinguistics LING 450-1: Laboratory Phonology 1 LING 460-1: Syntactic Analysis 1 LING 470: Semantic Analysis 1
Computational analysis (1 quarter)	LING 331: Introduction to Programming and Text Processing for Linguists <i>or</i> LING 334: Introduction to Computational Linguistics
Statistics (1 quarter)	STAT 330: Applied Statistics for Research <i>or</i> LING 430: Advanced Statistics for Language Science
Electives (3 quarters)	Any 3 LING courses offered for graduate credit.

PhD Program: Qualifying Paper

A research project on which the PhD student is the lead or sole researcher must be presented to the Department before the end of the spring quarter of Year 2. A first- or single-authored manuscript reporting this project (the Qualifying Paper) must be approved by the student's Qualifying Paper committee (the student's primary research advisor for the project, along with a second reader) before the start of the fall quarter of Year 3. It must be completed by the end of the second year in the program. This can be used to satisfy the requirements for an MA Thesis.

Language Requirement

PhD Program

Prior to advancing to candidacy, students must demonstrate deep engagement with a second natural language. (For nonnative English speakers, advanced competence in English satisfies this requirement.) Examples of how deep engagement can be demonstrated include:

- two years of college study with a grade of B or better;
- home language or immersion experiences;
- completing a graduate-level, department-approved course (e.g., Structure of Various Languages) on a specific language with a grade of B or better;
- fieldwork on a language;
- or an alternative approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

MA Program

Students must demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English, at a level equivalent to two years of college study, with an average grade of at least B.

PhD Program: Advancing to Candidacy/The Dissertation Prospectus

By the end of the summer quarter of Year 3, students must be admitted to candidacy. In addition to completing the course requirements, language requirements, and qualifying papers, they must complete and successfully defend (in a closed oral defense) a Dissertation Prospectus.

The specific requirements for the Dissertation Prospectus are developed in consultation with the Dissertation committee (consisting of the primary research advisor as chair and at least two other committee members). The Prospectus and Prospectus defense must demonstrate to the Dissertation committee that the student has a well-defined area of research, has identified a problem to investigate within this area, knows the relevant literature, and has developed a clear research strategy. The oral Prospectus defense will provide the student with an opportunity to receive feedback from the committee on the direction of their research. The Prospectus defense is closed.

PhD Program: Dissertation Completion

A Dissertation must be completed by the end of the 5th year of study. Students must first pass a public oral defense. A meeting of the full committee with the student two weeks before the public oral defense is strongly encouraged. A full draft of the dissertation must be submitted to the members of the Dissertation committee at least two weeks before the defense or committee meeting. Following the defense, the student must make any revisions required by the committee. The full committee must then approve the final document prior to filing.

MA Program: MA Thesis

Students must demonstrate their research skills by having a thesis approved by a committee (consisting of a primary advisor and a second reader). It must be an original research contribution to the field, suitable for a conference presentation or publication. It must demonstrate the student's ability to conduct independent research, corresponding to the level of first author of a potentially multi-authored work.

Responsible Conduct of Research Requirement

Students must complete Responsible Conduct of Research Training during their first year of study.

Advising and Committee Membership

Advising timeline: PhD Students

Year 1, Q1-Q3: Director of Graduate Studies advises all students.

Year 1, Q4 – Year 2, Q8: Qualifying Paper research is advised by a primary research advisor and a second reader.

Years 3-5: Work on the student's dissertation is supervised by a committee chair, who serves as the student's primary research advisor, along with two additional committee members.

Advising timeline: MA Students

Year 1, Q1-Q3: Director of Graduate Studies advises all students.

Year 1, Q4 – Year 2, Q8: Master's thesis research is advised by a primary research advisor and a second reader.

In addition to regularly consulting with their primary research advisor, students should arrange for some form of annual update for their entire committee.

Advising eligibility

- Primary research advisor (Qualifying Paper, MA Thesis, or Dissertation): A faculty member of the Department of Linguistics and on the Graduate School Faculty. The Qualifying Paper advisor and Dissertation advisor need not be the same individual. Two faculty members may serve as co-advisors.
- Second reader of the Qualifying Paper or MA Thesis: A member of the Northwestern Faculty or another qualified researcher approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. For an MA Thesis (or a Qualifying Paper used to satisfy the requirements for a Master's Degree), the second reader must be on the Graduate School Faculty.
- Dissertation committee member: A member of the Northwestern Faculty or another qualified researcher approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. The committee must have in total at least 3 members (including the chair or co-chairs). At least 2 of these 3 members must be on the Graduate School Faculty.

Students identify the faculty members that will advise their research using the Graduate Student Tracking System (<http://gsts.northwestern.edu>). Approval of advising arrangements by program staff will be recorded by this system.

If the student and/or primary research advisor believe at any point that the student would be better served by a different advisor, the student must identify another advisor or be subject to possible exclusion from the graduate program. In such a situation, the student must immediately contact the Director of Graduate Studies, who will consult with the faculty to determine a deadline by which the student must identify a new advisor.

Changes to second readers and committee members may be made at the discretion of the student and primary advisor. Faculty that can no longer serve in these roles must promptly notify the affected student(s).

Students should notify all faculty affected by any changes to advising (including anyone who will no longer be advising the student), and promptly update records in the Graduate Student Tracking System.

Progressing Through Program: Timeline overview

Note: Each deadline is at the conclusion of the listed quarter (e.g., Q4 means at the end of the fourth quarter of study, the summer following the first academic year)

PhD Program

Year One Milestones

- Q3: Identification of Qualifying Paper advisor.
- Q4: Completion of Responsible Conduct of Research Training.

Year Two Milestones

- Q5: Identification of Qualifying Paper second reader.
- Q7: Presentation of Qualifying Paper research to Department.
- Q8:
 - Approval of complete Qualifying Paper by Qualifying Paper committee.
 - Identification of dissertation advisor.

Year Three Milestones

- Q11: Identification of complete dissertation committee.
- Q12: Advance to candidacy
 - Completion of all course requirements.
 - Satisfaction of Foreign Language requirement.
 - Complete and successfully defend (in a closed oral defense) a Dissertation Prospectus

Year Five Milestones

- Q20: Successful oral defense of approved Dissertation.

MA Program

Year One Milestones

- Q4: Completion of Responsible Conduct of Research Training.

Year Two Milestones

- Q8: Completion of Program
 - Approval of MA thesis by committee.
 - Completion of all course requirements.
 - Satisfaction of Foreign Language requirement.

Graduate Student Responsibilities

PhD Program: Department positions

Students in Year 1 of the program are not assigned TA or GA roles (as described below), but are assigned responsibility for assisting department staff with setup and cleanup for the refreshments served at department colloquia.

Eligible students in Years 2, 3, 4 and 6 will be assigned positions by the department. A student is eligible for a department position in a given quarter if they do not have an ELP position or other position funded outside the Department. Two kinds of positions will be assigned by the Department:

- TA positions for 200- and 300-level courses
- GA positions

GA positions

Students assigned to GA positions assume responsibility for the planning and execution of the work for their position. While the work schedule will vary across GA positions, the expectation is that there will be approximately an equal amount of work across positions. One graduate student is assigned to each of the following four GA positions:

- Admissions and Outreach
 - Assist faculty member who is Director of Admissions with outreach, communications and admitted student visit.
 - Support staff in updating content on department website
- Colloquia and Events
 - Assist faculty member in charge of Departmental colloquia and colloquium hosts with all aspects of colloquium planning, including logistics and activities on day of event
 - Coordinate with grad students to plan and schedule Noon Colloquia
 - Assist faculty or staff with department special events
- Graduate Liaisons
 - Graduate liaison to first-year students
 - Plan and carry out meetings or other events to help Y1 students transition in the graduate program
 - Graduate liaison to Linguistics undergrads (majors & minors);
 - Coordinate with and support the work of NULSA officers
 - Graduate representative to Department
 - Graduate representative is elected for one year term and attends monthly Departmental Meetings and facilitates communications between faculty and grad students
- Subject Pool
 - Assist faculty member in charge of Subject Pool; Responsible for Sona administration; communicate with instructors and investigators (student or faculty)
 - Select and schedule videos for the experiment option on Sona

Duration and TA-equivalences of GA positions

- Eligible students in Years 2,3,4 who are not assigned to a GA position will be assigned to TA for one course in each of Fall, Winter and Spring quarters, i.e., 3 courses per academic year.
- GA positions involve tasks to support essential departmental activities that span some or all of the academic year, and which may also include work during summer quarter. These positions will be assigned to students on a yearly basis since many of the tasks need to be carried out on schedules that span across quarters. The year-long GA positions will count as equivalent to 2 TA positions, and students assigned to a GA position will also be assigned as TA for one course in any one of the Fall, Winter, or Spring quarters.

General Expectations for Graduate Students

Students are expected to participate in the intellectual life of the department through participation in department events including (but not limited to):

- the departmental colloquium series;
- other (inter)departmental speaker series;
- new student recruitment;
- faculty searches;
- a weekly graduate-student brownbag series ('noon colloquium');
- departmental discussion groups and lab meetings.

In addition to the above activities that all students are engaged in, the Department requests that one graduate student volunteer to serve as the Linguistics Department representative to the NU Graduate Student Association (GSA) for a term of one academic year. If more than one student shows interest, the graduate students will vote to select one person for this volunteer position.

Students are expected to maintain a personal web page for dissemination of their academic work.

Students must consult, in advance, with their primary research advisor regarding:

Any academic submission (including but not limited to applications for internal or external fellowships, submissions to conferences, and submissions for publication); vacation plans.

Satisfactory Academic Progress; Conflict Resolution and Appeals Processes

Satisfactory progress in the program depends on many factors, including following the timeline for successful completion of the milestones outlined above (e.g., coursework, language requirements, qualifying papers, MA thesis), a minimum quantity and quality of research productivity, fulfilling all program responsibilities (e.g., teaching or research assistantship duties), full participation in the intellectual life of the program, and respectful and responsible conduct within the department. If the faculty has any concerns about a student's progress, these concerns will be brought to the student's attention. In cases where a student's performance is inadequate, they may be put on probation. If the student fails to make sufficient improvement they may be excluded from the program by the faculty.

Annual assessment letters for PhD students are written at the end of spring quarter on the basis of input from all the faculty in the department, as well as qualifying paper and thesis committee members outside the department. The assessment letters for first-year students who have not identified the research advisor will be written by the Director of Graduate Studies. The assessment letters for pre-candidacy students will be written by each student's research advisor. The assessments for post-candidacy students will be written by the chair of the student's Ph.D. committee.

In the event that a student is in a dispute with their primary research advisor (including but not limited to approval of qualifying papers, assessment of prospectus or thesis defense, assessment of the dissertation or MA thesis) or any other supervisor (including but not limited to a research assistant advisor or instructor), they should contact the Director of Graduate Studies or the Department Chair to discuss the issues. If they do not feel comfortable contacting someone within the department, they should contact the Graduate School's Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

If a student wishes to appeal a probation decision, they should contact the Director of Graduate Studies or the Department Chair to discuss the issues. If you do not feel comfortable contacting someone within the department or feel that this route has not produced acceptable results, you may file a petition through the Graduate School's regular petition process.

Students may appeal an exclusion decision to The Graduate School. Students should submit a request in writing to the attention of the Director of Student Services within ten days of the date of the program's final written determination of exclusion to the student and include any supporting materials at that time.