

# **Graduate programs in linguistics: roadmap for current students**

Maintained by the Graduate Supervisor in Linguistics

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# 1. General information

## 1.1. Terminology

In this document, the term *Graduate Supervisor* refers to the person who oversees LING graduate programs in SLALS. The term *advisor* or *primary advisor* refers to the faculty member guiding a particular student's academic work, such as their QP, MA, or PhD thesis. The use of these terms outside of this document may be different.

## 1.2. Where to find information

This guide is specifically written for students in the linguistics (LING) graduate programs. General information about course offerings and regulations for graduate students is found in the Graduate Calendar. It is the first go-to place for question about how something works.

<https://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/>

General graduate forms and policies:

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/resources-page/forms-policies/>

Information on awards and funding:

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/awards-and-funding/>

Linguistics-specific questions can be addressed to the Graduate Supervisor, and to the Program Administrator. Their contact information is found on the School website:

<https://carleton.ca/slals/>

International students should be familiar with the International Students Support office:

<https://carleton.ca/isso/>

## 1.3. Program duration and extensions

The duration of the MA program is two years (six terms, including summers). Many students are able to finish in five terms, without the final summer, defending in May of Year 2. Extensions beyond six terms are possible in extenuating circumstances, but there is a hard limit of 3 terms for MA program extensions.

The duration of the PhD program is now set at six years. This means that taking six years does not count as an 'extension', but most funding and TAsip packages are shorter than that, typically four years for scholarships or five years for TAsips. Therefore it may be in the student's best interest to finish earlier than the maximum possible time. Extensions are also possible in special circumstances.

If a need for an extension arises, students should contact their primary advisor and the Graduate Supervisor as soon as possible.

## **1.4. TASHips**

As part of their admissions offer, some students receive TASHips, called “Priority TASHips” (PTA). These TASHips run in Fall and Winter semesters. The Associate Director of SLALS assigns TAs to courses based on preferences and needs. Our students TA courses both within and outside of linguistics.

Students without a PTA may also apply for “out-of-priority TASHips” (OPTA). These are given based on need and funding available to students who do not otherwise have a TASHip, or have exhausted their priority TASHips. In very rare cases students with a PTA can receive an OPTA in the Summer term. Applications for OPTA are made on Carleton Central.

## **1.5. Grading in graduate classes**

In our graduate programs, a passing grade is a B-. Any lower grade will result in the course not counting toward the degree, similar to receiving an F in an undergraduate course. From the graduate calendar:

A grade of B- or better must normally be obtained in each course credited towards the master's degree. A candidate may, with the support of the departmental Graduate Supervisor/associate chair (graduate affairs) and the approval of the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, be allowed a grade of C+ in 1.0 credit. Some programs do not permit the C+ option and apply a B- minimum rule.

Additionally, students in both the PhD and MA programs must maintain a 10.0 GPA.

## **1.6. Primary academic advisor**

Even though we do not at this time require students to establish a formal relationship with a primary academic advisor prior to admission, we encourage students who have not done so to start working with a primary advisor as soon as possible. That faculty member not only guides the thesis research, but also serves as an academic guide more generally, and a first point of contact for questions and concerns about the program.

Students should be familiar with all the faculty members in the program, with respect to their research interests and expertise. If unsure who to work with, students should approach several faculty members and the Graduate Supervisor and ask for advice.

## **1.7. Committees**

There are two kinds of entities called “committees”. An *advisory committee* is an optional and informal group of faculty members who assist the primary advisor in guiding the student’s research throughout its progress. Advisory committees can be formed by the student in consultation with their primary advisor. It is the student’s and/or the primary advisor's responsibility to contact potential members and ask them to participate on such committees. The Graduate Supervisor can provide input when needed. The Graduate Supervisor should be informed of the committee

membership when it is finalized, but does not formally approve it. Advisory committees, especially for PhD students, can easily change membership over time and from one stage of the student's progress to the next, though it would make sense to continue with the same group if things are working well.

The second, more formal kind of committee, is an *examination committee*. This is a group of internal and external faculty members who participate in thesis defences. There are regulations about the composition of these committees, especially for the PhD. See details under specific programs. Examinations committees do not need to be established until relatively close to the defence.

## 2. MA in Linguistics

The MA in Linguistics is available in two versions, the **thesis** and the **research essay** pathway. Most students are admitted into the thesis stream. Switching into the essay stream is possible, on consultation with the main advisor and the Graduate Supervisor. The main difference between the thesis and essay is in the scope and depth of research. Due to the course requirements, switching from the thesis to the essay pathway is most practically achievable if done prior to the fall of year 2.

### 2.1. Roadmap

Thesis stream:

Consult with Graduate Supervisor on course selection, if needed	Summer before Year 1
Meet with Graduate Supervisor and thesis advisor, if already selected	September – October of Year 1
Apply for external funding	Early fall of Year 1
Complete required coursework (2.5 credits)	Year 1, including Summer, with one course possibly delayed until Year 2
Select thesis advisor	Winter of Year 1 at the latest; students are encouraged to select thesis advisor earlier
Form thesis advisory committee	Summer between Year 1 and Year 2
Write thesis proposal	Winter-Summer of Year 1, due Aug. 31st
Defend thesis proposal	By Sept. 30th of Year 2
Research and write thesis	Year 2
Defend thesis	Summer of Year 2

### Essay stream:

Consult with Graduate Supervisor on course selection, if needed	Summer before Year 1
Meet with Graduate Supervisor and essay advisor, if already selected	September – October of Year 1
Apply for external funding	Early fall of Year 1
Complete required coursework (4.0 credits)	Years 1 and 2
Select essay advisor	End of Year 1 at the latest; students are encouraged to select essay advisor earlier
Complete essay	Year 2

## 2.2.Explanations: thesis stream

These explanations apply to the thesis stream. For the essay stream, see below.

### Initial meeting

Students who are admitted to the program do not need to formally have a thesis advisor finalized. In many cases, students have a clear study plan and an advisor lined up. Early in the program, in September or October of Year 1, students will meet with the Graduate Supervisor to discuss their study plans and possible thesis advisor selection.

### Coursework

Students will be enrolled in courses mainly in Year 1 Fall & Winter, although they may continue to take courses in Year 2 if a desired course is not offered in Year 1, or they wish to take only 2.0 credits of courses in Year 1. It is not advised to postpone more than 1 course until the second year.

### External funding

Students are generally expected to apply for external funding, even if they already have a funding package. External funding deadlines (OGS, SSHRC) are in the fall. Watch for communication from FGPA and/or the Graduate Supervisor about deadlines.

## **Advisor and advisory committee**

After the thesis advisor is selected, students may form an advisory committee that will provide guidance on their research program. The committee would typically consist of an advisor (a faculty member), possibly a co-advisor (a faculty member or adjunct research professor), and other faculty members or outside experts. It is up to the student and supervisor to decide whether, when, and how to involve the other committee members in the work. Ideally, such a committee should be formed in the summer after year 1, so that it would be available for the thesis proposal defence early fall of year 2.

On the examination committee, see below.

## **Thesis proposal**

When the student has a comprehensive research plan, they will write a thesis proposal, submit it to the Thesis Committee, and defend the proposal at a meeting that will be similar in format to the thesis defence. The thesis proposal contains a concrete statement of the research plans and methodology of the thesis, and possibly a literature review, and certainly a bibliography. The exact length and format of the thesis proposal varies depending on the specifics of the project. Expectations will be articulated by the primary thesis advisor, in consultation with the Graduate Supervisor if needed.

The student should start working on the proposal as soon as the research plans are clear and an advisor is selected, and continue working over the summer between years 1 and 2. The proposal is due to the advisor and advisory committee on August 31st. The proposal will be defended at a meeting of the thesis advisory committee, to take place by Sept. 30th of Year 2.

## **Thesis, defence, and examination committee**

Once the proposal is approved, the student can proceed with their research activities as stated in the proposal, although it is understood that the plans may need to be modified as the research progresses. The student will work closely with the thesis advisor, and consult with other advisory committee members and other faculty as needed.

The thesis examination committee should consist, minimally, of the primary advisor and (co)advisors, at least one other faculty member, typically a member of the advisory committee, and one additional *external* member. The external member should be at arms-length from the thesis research, i.e. should not have participated in the advisory committee. The student should not be in contact with the external member about the thesis; it is the primary advisor's responsibility to contact them. The Graduate Supervisor should be informed of the selection. Ideally, the external member should come from outside of the student's home unit (LING), but in some cases, with the approval of the Graduate Supervisor, may be in LING.

A defence copy of the thesis should be submitted to the examination committee three weeks in advance of the defence.

The thesis defence will take place by the Summer of Year 2. Students are encouraged to defend earlier rather than later, in case revisions are required by the committee.

### **2.3.Essay stream**

The Research Essay option is designed for students whose career goals lead them to prefer coursework over the in-depth research experience provided by the Thesis pathway.

Similar to the thesis stream, students in the essay stream will consult with the Graduate Supervisor at the beginning of their program, in September or October of Year 1.

Students in the Research Essay option will take four full terms of courses (years 1 and 2): 1.0 credit in core theoretical linguistics, 1.0 credit in theoretical linguistics or language and cognition, and 2.0 credits in LING electives or CGSC, ALDS, or FREN courses related to language, cognition and research methods. The electives that are selected will depend on the strength of the students' linguistics background and individual interests.

Students are generally expected to apply for external funding, even if they already have a funding package. External funding deadlines (OGS, SSHRC) are in the fall. Watch for communication from FGPA and/or the Graduate Supervisor about deadlines.

The essay advisor should be selected by the end of Year 1. Students are expected to start their research essay in Year 1 Summer or Year 2 Fall. It should normally take two terms to complete. While there is no formal committee providing guidance to the students, they are encouraged to consult with other faculty members in Linguistics and other academic units. A member of the Graduate Studies Committee will be a second reader for the essay, with the decision on the final grade made by both the supervisor and second reader.

## 2.4. Course requirements

MA Linguistics Requirements – Thesis Pathway (5.0 credits)		
<b>1. 0.5 credit from:</b>		<b>0.5</b>
LING 5007 [0.5]	Phonology	
LING 5077 [0.5]	Phonetics	
<b>2. 0.5 credit from:</b>		<b>0.5</b>
LING 5004 [0.5]	Syntax	
LING 5005 [0.5]	Morphology	
LING 5505 [0.5]	Semantics	
<b>3. 0.5 credit from:</b>		<b>0.5</b>
LING 5004 [0.5]	Syntax	
LING 5005 [0.5]	Morphology	
LING 5007 [0.5]	Phonology	
LING 5077 [0.5]	Phonetics	
LING 5608 [0.5]	Language and Cognition	
LING 5704 [0.5]	Linguistic Analysis, Culture & Cognition	
LING 5505 [0.5]	Semantics	
<b>4. 1.0 credit from any 5000-level LING course, or chosen from the list of optional courses:</b>		<b>1.0</b>
CGSC 5005 [0.5]	Cognition and Neuroscience	
CGSC 5101 [0.5]	Experimental Methods and Statistics	
FREN 5100 [0.5]	Le monde francophone: linguistique et littérature	
FREN 5300 [0.5]	Méthodologie de la recherche	
<b>5. 2.5 credits in:</b>		<b>2.5</b>
LING 5909 [2.5]	MA Thesis	
<b>Total credits</b>		<b>5.0</b>



**MA Linguistics  
Requirements – Research Essay Pathway (5.0 credits)**

<b>1. 0.5 credit from:</b>		<b>0.5</b>
LING 5007 [0.5]	Phonology	
LING 5077 [0.5]	Phonetics	
<b>2. 0.5 credit from:</b>		<b>0.5</b>
LING 5004 [0.5]	Syntax	
LING 5005 [0.5]	Morphology	
LING 5505 [0.5]	Semantics	
<b>3. 1.0 credit from:</b>		<b>1.0</b>
LING 5004 [0.5]	Syntax	
LING 5005 [0.5]	Morphology	
LING 5007 [0.5]	Phonology	
LING 5077 [0.5]	Phonetics	
LING 5608 [0.5]	Language and Cognition	
LING 5704 [0.5]	Linguistic Analysis, Culture & Cognition	
LING 5505 [0.5]	Semantics	
<b>4. 2.0 credits from any 5000-level LING course, or chosen from the list of optional courses:</b>		<b>2.0</b>
CGSC 5005 [0.5]	Cognition and Neuroscience	
CGSC 5101 [0.5]	Experimental Methods and Statistics	
FREN 5100 [0.5]	Le monde francophone: linguistique et littérature	
FREN 5300 [0.5]	Méthodologie de la recherche	
<b>5. 1.0 credit in:</b>		<b>1.0</b>
LING 5908 [1.0]	Research Essay	
<b>Total credits</b>		<b>5.0</b>

### 3. PhD in Linguistics, Language Documentation, and Revitalization

#### 3.1. Roadmap

Consult with Graduate Supervisor on course selection, if needed	August before Year 1
Meet with Graduate Supervisor and Advisor, if already selected	September – October Year 1
Apply for external funding	Early fall of Year 1 (and subsequent years)
Complete LING 6801, ALDS 6407, and 1.5 credits of other coursework	Year 1
Select advisor	End of Year 1 at the latest; students are encouraged to select advisor earlier
Form QP advisory committee	Year 1 Summer
Defend QP	Year 2 Fall
Complete and defend comp exam	Year 2 Winter
Write thesis prospectus	Year 2 Winter – Year 3 Fall
Defend thesis prospectus	Year 3 Fall
Defend thesis	Year 6 Summer, or earlier
Submit final thesis	Year 6 Summer, or earlier

#### 3.2. Explanations

##### Initial meeting and advisor selection

Students who are admitted to the program do not need to formally have a thesis advisor finalized. In many cases, students have a clear study plan and an advisor lined up. Early in the program, in September or October of Year 1, students will meet with the Graduate Supervisor to discuss their study plans and possible thesis advisor selection. An advisor should be selected by the end of Year 1; students are encouraged to do so earlier.

##### External funding

Students are generally expected to apply for external funding, even if they already have a funding package. External funding deadlines (OGS, SSHRC) are in the fall. Watch for communication from FGPA and/or the Graduate Supervisor about deadlines. Funding is especially important for PhD students whose research plans involve documentation. Students who are not successful in a given year are expected to re-apply in subsequent years. Students are also expected to apply for funding from organizations such as the Canadian Studies Network, Endangered Languages Fund, and SOAS (University of London), which all provide grants for field research.

### **Coursework**

The two core courses for this program are LING 6801 [1.0 credit] (Language Documentation) and ALDS 6407 [0.5 credit] (Revitalization Policy). These will be taken in the student's first year of study. Another 1.5 credits in electives will be selected from LING courses or ALDS, CGSC and ANTH courses related to language, linguistics, cognition, or research methodology. The electives that are selected will depend on the strength of the students' linguistics background and individual interests. All coursework should normally be completed by the end of Year 1 Winter, although in some cases a course can be postponed until the second year.

### **Advisory committee**

After the primary advisor is selected, students may form an advisory committee that will provide guidance on their research program, starting with the QP. The committee would typically consist of an advisor (a faculty member), possibly a co-advisor (a faculty member or adjunct research professor), and other faculty members or outside experts. It is up to the student and supervisor to decide whether, when, and how to involve the other committee members in the work. Advisory committees for PhD students may need to change over time as the research topics change between the QP and the Thesis.

On the examination committee, see below.

### **Qualifying Paper (QP) and QP defence**

Students will be required to write a Qualifying Paper (QP) that will assess their potential for conducting original research and/or demonstrate an application of linguistic theory to language documentation or revitalization. Once the student has decided on a topic for their QP, they may form an advisory committee in consultation with their thesis advisor and Graduate Supervisor (see above).

Students will defend their QP orally, and the defence should take place by the end of Year 2 Fall. A QP defence committee will normally be identical to the advisory committee, or will be similarly constituted if an advisory committee had not been formed. There is no formal requirement of an

external member at the QP defence stage, but students and primary advisory may involve outside experts if warranted. QP defences are not formally regulated by the University; they are an opportunity for students to experience defence-like procedures before their actual Thesis defence.

### **Comprehensive Examination (Comp Exam)**

After completing their coursework students must pass a Comp Exam. The exam will consist of 1-3 written questions asked by the student's advisor(s) in consultation with the advisory committee. The questions will relate to the student's intended topic of research and will test the breadth and depth of the background knowledge necessary for the PhD research. Students will also be provided with a reading list of literature that is relevant to the questions. A written response to the posed questions will be submitted within 10 weeks, and students will orally defend their responses at a meeting of the advisory committee. Students should complete the Comp Exam by the end of Year 2 Winter, which is after their QP defence and before their Prospectus defence.

### **Thesis Prospectus**

The thesis prospectus is a document that specifies the background, direction and content of the student's research program that will result in the PhD dissertation. Before beginning work on the prospectus, students will form a thesis advisory committee, in consultation with the primary advisor and Graduate Supervisor. This committee will oversee their dissertation research. In most cases the thesis advisory committee will be nearly identical to the committees used at prior stages (QP and Comp Exam). The committee will consist of the supervisor, an internal faculty member from linguistics, and an additional faculty member who may be from outside linguistics or Carleton. The prospectus should be between 40 and 60 double-spaced pages. It should contain a literature review, state the research questions, methodology for carrying out the research, and some preliminary results and/or analyses, if available. Students will be required to orally defend the prospectus in a prospectus defence similar in format to the QP and thesis defences. The prospectus defence should take place by the end of Year 3 Fall.

### **PhD Thesis**

After defending their prospectus in Year 3 Fall, students will have 2.5 years in which to complete their thesis, assuming they take the full 6 years in the program. The thesis will require a language documentation or revitalization component. Documentation could include the writing of a dictionary or grammar of an Indigenous or other minority language, and in the case where those already exist, the documentation research could focus on a particular aspect of the grammar such as phonology, morphology or syntax. A thesis centred on language revitalization would involve determining what can and needs to be done to prevent further loss in endangered languages. Both components require working closely with speakers of the language under study: in documentation, to record the

properties of their language, and in revitalization, to develop strategies and resources necessary to maintain and protect their language.

PhD thesis *examination committees* are regulated by the University. Details are found here:

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/wp-content/uploads/Thesis-Examination-Policy.pdf>

In the weeks prior to the planned defence, students and their primary advisors should consult with the Graduate supervisor regarding examination committee membership. In addition to the members of the advisory committee, the examination committee must include two *external* members, one from outside of the student's home unit, and another from outside of Carleton.

### 3.3.Requirements

PhD in Language Documentation and Revitalization (10.0 credits)		
<b>1. 1.0 credit in:</b>		1.0
LING 6801 [1.0]	Language Documentation	
<b>2. 0.5 credit in:</b>		0.5
ALDS 6407 [0.5]	Revitalization Policy	
<b>3. 1.5 credits from:</b>		1.5
ALDS 5202 [0.5]	Curriculum in Language Teaching	
ALDS 5302 [0.5]	Second Language Acquisition	
ALDS 5407 [0.5]	Language Policy and Planning	
ALDS 5501 [0.5]	Language Testing and Assessment	
ANTH 5106 [0.5]	North American Indigenous Peoples	
ANTH 5208 [0.5]	Anthropology of Indigeneity	
ANTH 5210 [0.5]	Special Topics in Indigenous Studies	
ANTH 5305 [0.5]	Special Topics in Ethnography	
CGSC 5101 [0.5]	Experimental Methods and Statistics	
LING 5004 [0.5]	Syntax	
LING 5005 [0.5]	Morphology	
LING 5007 [0.5]	Phonology	
LING 5077 [0.5]	Phonetics	
LING 5608 [0.5]	Language and Cognition	
LING 5704 [0.5]	Linguistic Analysis, Culture & Cognition	
LING 5505 [0.5]	Semantics	
<b>4. 0.0 credits in:</b>		
LING 6907 [0.0]	Doctoral Comprehensive Examination	0.0
LING 6908 [0.0]	Qualifying Paper	0.0
<b>5. 7.0 credits in:</b>		7.0
LING 6909 [7.0]	PhD Thesis	
<b>Total credits</b>		<b>10.0</b>