Second Language Acquisition, Ph.D.

Second language acquisition (SLA) is the systematic study of learning, using, and sometimes losing any form of language beyond the mother tongue. SLA is a burgeoning research field because today there are more people on the planet who use at least two languages than there are monolinguals. For individual learners and for every community in diaspora, second language acquisition is an experience that challenges their knowledge of language, their understanding of different cultures, and their personal identities. The experiences and challenges surrounding SLA are studied by scholars whose training is in a variety of fields—linguistics, psychology, sociology, education, anthropology, and communication arts—a variety that makes the study of SLA richly interdisciplinary.

The Ph.D. Program in Second Language Acquisition at the University of Wisconsin–Madison is a rigorous interdisciplinary academic program that embodies the university’s mission to foster the study of globally important issues. In their coursework, students in the program learn from and collaborate with experienced and distinguished faculty in many departments and, through their original dissertation research, students generate and contribute new knowledge to the field. Students develop a thorough understanding of the scope of SLA as a field of inquiry, and develop and refine research skills that will serve them as they define and pursue their own research agenda. A Ph.D. in SLA opens the door to scholarly and professional careers as university faculty, directors of foreign language programs, educational policy makers, and multilingual specialists.

Admissions

The Ph.D. Program in SLA requires a master’s degree in a foreign language, English, applied linguistics, linguistics, or education. It also requires applicants to submit GRE scores from an exam administration within five years before application to the SLA program. Please refer to the SLA website (https://sla.wisc.edu/admissions) for application deadlines, required application materials, and required modes of submitting these materials. In addition, general requirements for admission stipulated by the graduate school (e.g., evidence of English proficiency for certain international students) apply.

Graduate School Admissions

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic degree programs and the Graduate School. Applicants must meet requirements of both the program(s) and the Graduate School. Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (https://grad.wisc.edu/admissions).

Funding

Graduate School Resources

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (https://grad.wisc.edu/funding) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and processes related to funding.

Program Resources

Students in the SLA program, depending on their qualifications, may receive financial support through several departments, programs, and institutes. Students with a background in foreign language or English teaching may work as graduate teaching assistants (TAs) in departments in which those languages are taught. Other students work as graduate project assistants (PA) for the Language Institute or other units on campus. In addition to these TA and PA positions, select SLA students receive university fellowships (including the Advanced Opportunity Fellowships) upon entry into the program or when working on their dissertations. If they meet the specific eligibility criteria, students may also compete, with the program’s support, in other grant and fellowship competitions, such as Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships. Additional funding opportunities are included in the information for current students on the SLA website (https://sla.wisc.edu/content/funding-resources).

Requirements

Minimum Graduate School Requirements

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

Major Requirements

Mode of Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face to Face</th>
<th>Evening/Weekend</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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</table>

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Evening/Weekend: These programs are offered in an evening and/or weekend format to accommodate working schedules. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses and personal connections, while keeping your day job. For more information about the meeting schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

Online: These programs are offered primarily online. Many available online programs can be completed almost entirely online with all online programs offering at least 50 percent or more of the program work online. Some online programs have an on-campus component that is often designed to accommodate working schedules. Take advantage of the convenience of online learning while participating in a rich, interactive learning environment. For more information about the online nature of a specific program, contact the program.

Hybrid: These programs have innovative curricula that combine on-campus and online formats. Most hybrid programs are completed on-campus with a partial or completely online semester. For more information about the hybrid schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

Accelerated: These on-campus programs are offered in an accelerated format that allows you to complete your program in a condensed time-frame. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses with minimal disruption to your career. For more information about the accelerated nature of a specific program, contact the program.
CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Minimum Credit Requirement 51 credits

Minimum Residence Credit Requirement 36 coursework credits plus 9 dissertation credits, for a total of 45 credits.

Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement Half of degree coursework (26 credits out of 51 total credits) must be completed graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

Overall Graduate GPA Requirement 3.00 GPA required.

Other Grade Requirements Incompletes must be resolved by the end of the next fall or spring term in which the student is enrolled. In addition, all incompletes must be resolved before students may take any portion of the preliminary examination.

Assessments and Examinations Students must take preliminary exams within one semester of completing coursework.

The dissertation proposal must be approved by the student’s dissertation proposal committee no later than one calendar year after the student becomes a dissertator.

The last step in completing the Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition is the successful defense of a doctoral thesis or dissertation, followed by its deposit with the Graduate School.

Language Requirements Typically, the student must demonstrate an advanced level of academic oral and reading proficiency in two languages prior to taking preliminary exams. A plan for meeting this requirement is developed by the student and advisor during the student’s first semester in the Program. The plan must be approved by the advisor and the SLA steering committee by the end of the first academic year.

Doctoral Minor/Breadth Requirements Because of the broad, interdisciplinary nature of the SLA program course requirements, a minor is not required. A minor is optional, and, in some cases, may be strongly suggested. Students must submit a short statement (2-3 pages) at the end of their third semester, discussing how the courses that they have taken so far, as well as those that they plan to take in the future semester(s), inform their dissertation research and their envisioned career path.

REQUIRED COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 318</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 711</td>
<td>Research Methods in Applied Linguistics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Research Methods

Quantitative Methods (choose one):

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ED PSYCH 760</td>
<td>Statistical Methods Applied to Education I</td>
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</table>

Electives 30

Dissertation Credits 9

Total Credits 51

1 Students take a minimum of 9 dissertation credits (three semesters); in most cases four or more semesters of enrollment in dissertation credits is likely. Students enroll in dissertation credits in their advisor’s department and will likely need to obtain authorization from the department to register. An advisor, under certain circumstances, may permit the student to replace the 3 dissertation credits with another 3-credit graduate course that directly supports the dissertation.

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

The Graduate Program Handbook (https://sla.wisc.edu/content/policies-and-guidelines) is the repository for all of the program’s policies and requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Work from Other Institutions

With program approval, students are allowed to count up to 6 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions or the UW–Madison. Coursework earned ten years or more prior to admission to the SLA Program is not allowed to satisfy requirements.
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UW–Madison Undergraduate
Prior coursework from the UW–Madison undergraduate career may not be applied toward the program.

UW–Madison University Special
Prior coursework from the UW–Madison University Special student career may not be applied toward the program.

PROBATION
Those students not meeting satisfactory progress requirements may be put on probation for a semester.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE
Students are required to meet with their advisor at least once each semester to review their progress, select courses, and to discuss any outstanding issues or questions.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED
15 credits

TIME CONSTRAINTS
Students must submit plans for completing the emphasis requirement and the language requirement for approval by the steering committee within their first year of the program.

Students typically complete all of the coursework requirements within two years of enrolling in the Program. Students are required to complete all coursework and fulfill the language requirement before taking the preliminary examinations.

Students must take the preliminary examination within one semester of completing coursework.

Graduate School regulations require Ph.D. candidates to defend their dissertation five years from the date of passing their preliminary examinations.

OTHER
Students in the SLA program are typically funded through campus teaching assistantships, project assistantships or through fellowships. Contact the program for more details.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES
Take advantage of the Graduate School’s professional development resources (https://grad.wisc.edu/pd) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Demonstrate a strong overall understanding of the scope of the discipline of SLA (e.g., the theories on which research in the field is based; the types of questions that researchers in SLA address; and the variety of techniques used to answer these questions). Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of theories and research findings related to their focal areas of interest.

2. Develop an original research plan that advances a specific area of SLA. Retrieve, evaluate, and interpret academic publications, and use this information to identify a gap in the extant research and to develop theoretical frameworks and research designs for their own research projects. Learn to design realistic and feasible research projects and to prepare necessary protocols.

3. Collect data following relevant protocols and analyze/interpret the resulting data. Reflect on the procedures and results of their own projects to identify strengths, limitations, and implications.

4. Develop skills for disseminating their research in a variety of professional venues and domains through both presentations and manuscript preparation.

5. Participate in and communicate effectively as members of a professional community. Seek opportunities to engage in service to the program, the university and/or the wider community.

PEOPLE

SLA Core Faculty: Professors Chavez (German, Nordic, and Slavic), Evans-Romaine (German, Nordic, and Slavic), Frantzen (Spanish and Portuguese), Hawkins (Curriculum and Instruction), Mori (Asian Languages and Cultures), Thompson (African Cultural Studies), Tochon (Curriculum and Instruction), Young (English); Associate Professors Allen (French & Italian), Geyer (Asian Languages and Cultures; SLA minor advisor), Stafford (Spanish and Portuguese; SLA Director), Pacheco (Curriculum and Instruction) Vieira (English); Assistant Professors Cho (English) and Prasad (Curriculum and Instruction)

Staff: Wendy Johnson (SLA coordinator), Dianna Murphy (SLA core member), Malliga Somasundaram (Financial and Payroll Specialist)