

# LINGUISTICS, PHD

Language Sciences at UW–Madison is an interdisciplinary hub that houses the PhD program in Linguistics. Students in this program earn a master of arts degree along the way to the PhD—no stand-alone MA program is offered.

The Linguistics PhD program focuses on research in formal theories of language (encompassing cross-linguistic studies in syntax, phonology, and morphology) and the documentation and revitalization of American Indian languages. Our program combines strong theoretical groundwork with opportunities in a diverse range of experimental and innovative research methodologies. Participating faculty come from Language Sciences itself as well as from related cognitive science and language departments across campus. In addition to core areas of linguistic theory, our faculty have expertise in first and second language acquisition, psycholinguistics, historical linguistics, dialect studies, and the linguistics of particular languages or cultural areas, such as signed languages, Spanish and Latin American, East Asian, and Germanic. Students have access to courses, faculty advising, and research opportunities in all of these areas. Students work closely with their graduate advisors in establishing their own areas of specialization and in working out a coherent program within this larger framework.

The ideal candidate will have a Bachelor's degree in Linguistics, a language, or a related cognitive science, and a strong desire to use scientific methods of inquiry to push the boundaries of our understanding of how human language works.

Visit the Language Sciences Research page (<https://langsci.wisc.edu/research/>) for more information about the diverse linguistics research labs at UW–Madison.

## ADMISSIONS

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Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program's admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program's website.

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

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	December 23
Spring Deadline	The program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	The program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required.

English Proficiency Test	Every applicant whose native language is not English, or whose undergraduate instruction was not exclusively in English, must provide an English proficiency test score earned within two years of the anticipated term of enrollment. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Requirements for Admission policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/</a>
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Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	3

The department admits only students whose goal is the PhD degree in linguistics. Admission to the PhD program does not require an undergraduate degree in linguistics. Admission is based on the applicant's personal statement, three letters of recommendation, English proficiency scores if applicable, and transcripts of prior academic work. The personal statement is considered carefully to ensure that the applicant's goals are compatible with the program offered by the department.

## FUNDING

### FUNDING

#### GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

[The Bursar's Office provides information about tuition and fees associated with being a graduate student. Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information is available from the Graduate School.](#)

Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

#### PROGRAM RESOURCES

All students admitted to the Linguistics PhD program are offered a full funding package, which typically consists a fellowship for the first year, and some combination of teaching, project, or research assistantships in subsequent years. Students who enter the program with a Master's degree and relevant teaching experience may be eligible for teaching assistantships in the first year of graduate study. Fellowships and assistantships include tuition remission as well as a stipend, and access to benefits including health insurance.

##### Fellowships

Fellowships are administered through the Graduate School, and all new applicants to the Linguistics PhD program are automatically considered, including both domestic and international applicants. Advanced Opportunity Fellowships are also available for students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

##### Teaching Assistantships

Language Sciences currently supports teaching assistantships for LINGUIS 101 Human Language, usually awarded to graduate students after their first year of study. Our students frequently serve as teaching assistants in other departments as well, such as English or language departments, depending on the student's academic experience and particular skill set.

## Project and Research Assistantships

Students awarded a project or research assistantship work closely with a particular professor to aid in their research. The availability of these positions varies from year to year, and will typically be most appropriate for students who are more advanced in the program.

## Outside Grants and Scholarships

Graduate students may apply for their own funding directly as well, such as Foreign Languages & Areas Studies (FLAS) Fellowships (<https://flas.wisc.edu/languages/>) and National Science Foundation Grants ([https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=5408&org=SBE&sel\\_org=SBE&from=fund](https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5408&org=SBE&sel_org=SBE&from=fund)). These programs are most appropriate for students who are advanced in the program. The student's faculty advisor will work with the student to determine whether an outside grant is available that matches the student's research program.

## REQUIREMENTS

## MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum degree requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#requirements-text>) and policies (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policies-text>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

## MAJOR REQUIREMENTS MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

### Mode of Instruction Definitions

**Accelerated:** Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

**Evening/Weekend:** Courses meet on the UW-Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

**Face-to-Face:** Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW-Madison Campus.

**Hybrid:** These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

**Online:** These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

## CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

### Requirement Detail

Minimum 54 credits  
Credit Requirement

Minimum 32 credits  
Residence Credit Requirement

Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	42 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/</a> ).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required. Refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/</a> ).
Other Grade Requirements	Students must maintain a GPA of 3.67 in required Linguistics courses after the third semester.
Assessments and Examinations	Submit and defend on two prelim papers. One by the end of the fourth semester and the other by the end of the eighth semester. Contact the program for further details.
Language Requirements	Knowledge of three languages is required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English</li> <li>a non-Indo-European language or a modern Indic language</li> <li>Third language determined in consultation with the advisor according to the student's research goals.</li> </ul>

Students must complete their language requirements before their second prelim exam. The language requirements can be satisfied in multiple ways and the program should be contacted directly for further details.

Graduate School Breadth Requirements	All doctoral students are required to complete a doctoral minor or graduate/professional certificate. Refer to the Graduate School: Breadth Requirement in Doctoral Training policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1200">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1200</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1200/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1200/</a> ).
	A 12-credit or more minor or graduate/professional certificate that is approved by the student's advisor is required.

## REQUIRED COURSES

Code	Title	Credits
LINGUIS 310	Phonology	3
LINGUIS 322	Morphology	3
LINGUIS 330	Syntax	3
LINGUIS 340	Semantics	3
LINGUIS 510	Phonological Theories	3
LINGUIS 522	Advanced Morphology	3
LINGUIS 530	Syntactic Theories	3
LINGUIS 800	Research Methods and Materials	3

### Seminars

Take 3 seminars (must be 3 credits each) from the following (may repeat the same course number for credit):	9
LINGUIS 977	Seminar

### Thesis

Take at least 3 semesters of Thesis (must be 3 credits each) as a dissertator:	9
LINGUIS 990	Thesis

<b>Breadth</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>54</b>

## POLICIES

### GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) serve as the official document of record for Graduate School academic and administrative policies and procedures and are updated continuously. Note some policies redirect to entries in the official UW-Madison Policy Library (<https://policy.wisc.edu/>). Programs may set more stringent policies than the Graduate School. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

### MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

#### PRIOR COURSEWORK

##### Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions

With program approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 9 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

##### Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

No credits from a UW-Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to transfer toward the degree.

##### Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

##### Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW-Madison

With program approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 9 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW-Madison Special student. Coursework earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

#### PROBATION

Probation is a warning to a student who is not making satisfactory progress in the Linguistics graduate program. Departmental probation for grades or failure to make satisfactory progress lasts for one academic year (two consecutive semesters), while probation for an unsatisfactory prelim paper or unfinished Incompletes lasts for one semester.

If a student on probation clears up the problem that led to probation within the time period allotted, nothing else happens, and the student can continue with the program.

If the student does not resolve the problem (e.g., raise the GPA or successfully complete a prelim), the student is dropped from the program at the end of the probationary period.

#### ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Every graduate student must have an official faculty advisor. New students are assigned to the program director by default. By the end of the first year, students must decide whom they would like to work with and must ask that person if they are willing to serve as advisor. If the faculty member agrees, the student is responsible for having the faculty member sign the advisor agreement form, and for making sure that it is placed in the student's file. All permanent faculty members in the Language Sciences

program (including affiliated faculty but excluding visiting faculty) may serve as advisors. Faculty from outside Language Sciences may not serve as official advisors, although they may co-chair committees.

Every faculty member has the right to refuse to become a student's advisor. Every graduate student has the right to choose any faculty member as advisor, so long as the faculty member agrees. Students should also feel free to change advisors at any time, without fear of offending a faculty member. If a student changes advisors, a new advisor agreement form must be signed and filed, and the previous advisor must be notified by the student in writing.

The advisor guides the student in the choice of appropriate courses, in the planning of prelims and the dissertation, in choosing prelim committees and the dissertation committee, and in other professional matters. Students are reminded, however, that the fulfillment of departmental requirements is ultimately the student's responsibility.

Each semester, the student must consult in person with the advisor about courses for the following semester. Registration is blocked until this is done and is only unblocked when the student turns in the relevant form to the department, signed by the advisor.

#### CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

#### TIME LIMITS

The first prelim paper must be completed by the fourth semester, the second prelim paper must be completed by the eighth semester, all language and course requirements must be completed by the end of the semester in which the second prelim paper is defended, and a dissertation proposal must be submitted and defended within two weeks of the defense of the second prelim paper.

#### GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
  - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employee disabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (<https://osas.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)

- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

## L&S POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC APPEALS

Graduate students have the right to appeal an academic decision related to an L&S graduate program if the student believes that the decision is inconsistent with published policy.

Academic decisions that may be appealed include:

- Dismissal from the graduate program
- Failure to pass a qualifying or preliminary examination
- Failure to achieve satisfactory academic progress
- Academic disciplinary action related to failure to meet professional conduct standards

Issues such as the following cannot be appealed using this process:

- A faculty member declining to serve as a graduate student's advisor.
- Decisions regarding the student's disciplinary knowledge, evaluation of the quality of work, or similar judgements. These are the domain of the department faculty.
- Course grades. These can be appealed instead using the L&S Policy for Grade Appeal (<https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/22258/>).
- Incidents of bias or hate, hostile and intimidating behavior (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>), or discrimination (Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>), Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/eo-complaint/formal-investigations/>)). Direct these to the linked campus offices appropriate for the incident(s).

### Appeal Process for Graduate Students

A graduate student wishing to appeal an academic decision must follow the process in the order listed below. Note time limits within each step.

1. The student should first seek informal resolution, if possible, by discussing the concern with their academic advisor, the department's Director of Graduate Studies, and/or the department chair.
2. If the program has an appeal policy listed in their graduate program handbook, the student should follow the policy as written, including adhering to any indicated deadlines. In the absence of a specific departmental process, the chair or designee will be the reviewer and decision maker, and the student should submit a written appeal to the chair within 15 business days of the academic decision. The chair or designee will notify the student in writing of their decision.
3. If the departmental process upholds the original decision, the graduate student may next initiate an appeal to L&S. To do so, the student must submit a written appeal to the L&S Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Academic Affairs within 15 business days of notification of the department's decision.
  - a. To the fullest extent possible, the written appeal should include, in a single document: a clear and concise statement of the academic decision being appealed, any relevant background on what led to the decision, the specific policies involved, the relief sought, any relevant documentation related to the departmental appeal, and

the names and titles of any individuals contributing to or involved in the decision.

- b. The Assistant Dean will work with the Academic Associate Dean of the appropriate division to consider the appeal. They may seek additional information and/or meetings related to the case.
  - c. The Assistant Dean and Academic Associate Dean will provide a written decision within 20 business days.
4. If L&S upholds the original decision, the graduate student may appeal to the Graduate School. More information can be found on their website: Grievances and Appeals (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/>) (see: Graduate School Appeal Process).

## OTHER

Full-time enrollment is assumed in order to satisfy requirements on satisfactory progress as defined in the graduate student handbook.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### 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

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Articulates research problems, potentials, and limits with respect to theory, knowledge, or practice within the field of linguistics.
2. Formulates ideas, concepts, designs, and/or techniques beyond the current boundaries of knowledge within linguistics.
3. Creates research that makes a substantive contribution to the understanding of human language.
4. Demonstrates breadth within their learning experiences.
5. Advances contributions of the field of linguistics to society.
6. Communicates complex ideas in a clear and understandable manner.
7. Fosters ethical and professional conduct.