

2024–2025 Linguistics MA Internal Guide

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Welcome to UCSC! This internal guide contains information specific to the MA program in Linguistics. For information about general campus procedures and policies, see the [Graduate Student Handbook](#).

Linguistics Department Directory

Chair:	Matt Wagers, mwagers@ucsc.edu
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MA Requirements

Coursework Requirements

A minimum of 45 credits, including:

(1) Three foundation courses

Phonology A (211)*
Syntax A (221)*
Semantics A (231)*

(2) Two core courses from among

Phonology B (212)**
Syntax B (222)**
Semantics B (232)**

(3) One course from among

Phonetics (Ling 214)**
Psycholinguistics & Linguistic Theory (Ling 257)**
Experimental Methods (Ling 280)
Field Methods (Ling 282)
The remaining “B” course not taken under (2)**

(4) Three electives that form a coherent plan of study (determined in consultation with the student’s advisor).

These electives are typically drawn from graduate courses offered by linguistics and other related disciplines and independent study courses with linguistics faculty.

Note: The classes listed above must be 5.0 units each.

Course load: The normal course load for a first-year MA student is 3 Linguistics courses (15 units) per quarter. In year two, students should take and pass 2 Linguistics courses (10 units) each quarter. In addition, all students should register for Ling 296 (Linguistics Colloquium, 2 units); first and second year students should register for Ling 240 (The Pedagogy of Linguistics, 1 unit) in Fall and Winter. All other course loads require Departmental approval. Please consult your advisor.

BA/MA Coursework Requirements

Students admitted into the BA/MA pathway must complete a minimum of 35 units as an MA student, regardless of the number of graduate courses completed as an undergraduate. (This is a requirement imposed by the Division of Graduate Studies.) If a student completes the core MA requirements as an undergraduate, they should speak with the Graduate Program Director (or their faculty advisor) to create an academic course plan consisting of independent study and graduate seminar courses, sufficient to meet the 35-unit threshold.

Independent Studies

An independent study is a course involving intensive one-on-one work with a faculty member organized around concrete, deliverable goals. Independent studies will not normally be approved for students in their first year of the program, but may be taken in year two. An independent study takes the place of a graduate course: if you enroll in an independent study in the spring quarter of your second year, for example, you would only need to enroll in one other graduate course that quarter.

To request an independent study, you must first receive permission from the instructor. You will then complete a [request form](#) and email a draft syllabus to the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Director, with the instructor copied.

Please note that faculty are under no obligation to agree to supervise independent studies. Supervising an independent study involves an additional time commitment on the part of faculty, and there are many reasons why a faculty member might be unable or unwilling to supervise a particular independent study at any given time.

Please consult the [official department policy on independent studies](#) for more information. Please note that milestone-related independent studies are not available to MA students. However, MA students will be able to enroll in Thesis Research (LING 299) to make progress on their thesis once they have completed coursework requirements (which are normally finished by the end of the student's 4th quarter of enrollment).

Language Exam

The department requires that reading competence in one foreign language be demonstrated by examination. The function of the exam is to test reading comprehension at a level which will allow effective use of the language in reading linguistic material.

Language exams are offered by the department once a year, during the 4th or 5th week of Spring quarter. Students are advised to take and pass the language exam in year one, if possible. The Graduate Coordinator, James Funk, coordinates the language exams, which are offered in the following languages: Chinese, Cantonese, French, German, Hebrew, Irish, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish. Any other languages need pre-approval at least one quarter in advance. Students with a native language other than English may be exempt; please contact James if you feel this applies

to you.

Students are advised to take and pass the language exam as early in their graduate careers as possible, ideally by the end of year 1. Students should discuss the timing of the language exam with their advisor.

Master's Thesis

Students in the Master's program complete a Master's thesis in linguistics. This thesis often grows out of a promising term paper written by the student, and is read by a committee composed of three faculty members in linguistics.

Preparation for research projects should begin far in advance. In general, a good goal for those working on their MA thesis is to approach a possible thesis chair by the end of their first academic year.

A copy of the completed MA thesis, formatted according to UCSC specifications, should be electronically submitted to the Graduate Division office (see *Dissertation & Thesis Submission Guidelines*, here: <https://graduate.ucsc.edu/files/2024/09/dissertation-thesis-guidelines.pdf>) and a signed cover sheet should be submitted to the Graduate Division office as well. In addition, an electronic (pdf) copy of the Master's thesis and a copy of the cover sheet should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator, along with the signed QP/MA Thesis Defense Evaluation Form.

The Master's Thesis and the Research Seminar

Many MA students elect to enroll in Linguistics 290, The Research Seminar, in the Winter quarter of their second year. The two most important functions of 290 are to help students to make significant progress on a qualifying paper and to prepare them to present this research at the annual research symposium in the Spring. In addition, students develop various professional skills such as abstract writing and paper reviewing. MA students are encouraged to ask their thesis chair for advice on whether enrolling in 290 is to their benefit.

During the Research Seminar students are expected to make substantial progress on the content of their research projects. It is a requirement of the course that a student submit a final paper that has undergone substantial revision during the quarter.

A project will benefit from the Research Seminar only if the student has already made sufficient initial progress on it. Students interested in enrolling in 290 in Winter quarter are required to participate in a series of Pre-290 preview meetings in Fall quarter, where students present their on-going projects and receive feedback from the larger department community.

Enrolling in the Research Seminar: Enrollment in the Research Seminar is by instructor permission. To enroll, students must present the following to the instructor by the instructor's appointed deadline:

- a. The names of the MA thesis chair and two other faculty members who have already agreed to be on the MA committee. (See previous section on forming the committee.)
- b. A paper on the research project that includes original results and is judged by the thesis

chair and the Research Seminar instructor to be sufficiently advanced to lead to a Spring symposium presentation by the end of Winter quarter.

Fourth Quarter Review

The Linguistics faculty meets annually, at the end of the Fall or early Winter quarter, to review the progress of students who have completed 4 quarters in the graduate program. It is expected that by this time each student will have an original research paper of some substance that demonstrates that they are capable of carrying out independent research. After the fourth quarter review, each student receives a letter from the Department that summarizes the faculty's discussion of their progress.

Academic Progress Review

The Linguistics faculty meet at the end of spring quarter each year to ensure that all graduate students are making timely progress in the program. Students may receive letters from the faculty based on this discussion.

Advising

Incoming students are assigned an advisor when they first enter the program. Traditionally, the default advisor for entering students is the Graduate Director. As you enter the second year, you should choose an individual faculty advisor who can guide you in your particular area of interest and work with you on the MA thesis. You should aim to have an advisor in place by the start of the 4th quarter.

How does one “get” an advisor? You should first approach the faculty member that you'd like to work with and ask them if they are willing to act in that capacity. If the faculty member agrees, you should then follow up by informing the Graduate Coordinator (via an email message cc-ed to the faculty member and the Graduate Director) that you have a new advisor.

You may decide that you wish to change advisors; that is fine and it is not unusual. All interested parties should be informed of such changes (Graduate Coordinator, the Graduate Director, the former advisor, and the new advisor) via email.

The most important thing of all in this is that at every point, if asked the question: “Who is your advisor?”, the answer should be completely and instantly clear to you (and the answer should be one that the faculty member in question would not be surprised by). This result can be best achieved if you are proactive in approaching faculty members, staying in touch with them, and (almost as important) making sure that the Graduate Coordinator is kept informed as advising relations shift.

Student Financial Support

Resources permitting, Teaching Assistantships (TAship) may be available through the Linguistics Department. A TAship involves the graduate student in teaching in one of various undergraduate courses. Teaching Assistants lead sections, hold office hours, grade assignments

and exams, and may have other duties identified by the instructor at the beginning of the quarter. Teaching assistantships outside the Linguistics Department are available in a range of disciplines.

TUITION AND FEE COVERAGE

A TAship covers most [tuition and fees](#) (including health insurance) for the quarter(s) in which it is awarded. It does not cover nonresident tuition (\$15,102 per year).

HEALTH INSURANCE

The campus Student Health Insurance Program ([UC SHIP](#)) includes medical, optional dental, and optional vision. UC SHIP can be waived by completing the required paperwork through the campus Health Center. Please be advised that waiving insurance will not result in an increase in TA salary/fellowship stipend and may result in a decrease in financial aid.

ESTABLISHING CALIFORNIA RESIDENCY FOR TUITION PURPOSES

If you are an out-of-state domestic student, you must establish and maintain California residency in year 1 (366 days) to avoid paying the annual cost of \$15,102 for nonresident tuition beginning in year two.

Opening a bank account, registering to vote, and obtaining a state-issued license or ID are steps a nonresident student should take in the fall of the first year to begin establishing California residency. You may consult the following resources to understand all the relevant requirements for requesting reclassification as a California resident for tuition purposes:

[10 Things Graduate Students Need to Know](#)

[Process: Determining Residency](#)

[UC Residence Policy and Guidelines](#)

You may contact the Residence Deputies at reg-residency@ucsc.edu or consult their [Zoom Drop-In Advising Calendar](#).

In general, international students are not eligible for California residency.

Research and Travel Funds

The Linguistics Department has limited funds to be used for graduate student research and travel in years 1-5. Every graduate student is invited to apply for these funds. Priority is given to expenses incurred in carrying out and presenting primary research (e.g. experimental subject payments, fieldwork, travel to conferences to present work).

Reimbursement requests for any activity not related to carrying out and presenting primary research will require substantial justification and must be made *prior* to incurring expenses. We urge you to discuss this sort of reimbursement with the grad team well in advance.

Awards are made on a rolling basis, subject to the availability of funds, and are capped at \$1000

per academic year (with a \$2000 career max award). To apply for research or travel funding, submit the following [form](#), which outlines more detailed requirements. **Reimbursement requests for travel must be submitted within 14 days of returning; the department reserves the right to deny your request after 14 days. Reimbursement requests for payments to experimental subjects or language consultants should be submitted in a timely manner (i.e. as soon as possible after research has been completed).**

External Funding: Fellowships and Grants

There are many external sources of funding to support you and your research, but you have to actively pursue them throughout your graduate career, starting from day one. You should keep track of relevant competition deadlines, many of which can recur yearly, semi-annually, or even monthly. For these, even if you decide not to apply in one year, you should automatically put it down in your calendar for the following year (the deadline will often be around the same time). You should have a strategic plan, made in consultation with your advisor or the Graduate Director, for when you will apply for research grants and fellowships.

The Graduate Coordinator includes calls and deadlines for fellowships [here](#). Within UC, there are several important sources of funding to keep in your sights:

- UC Humanities Research Institute (UCHRI; <https://uchri.org/grants/>)
- The Humanities Institute (THI; <https://thi.ucsc.edu/graduate-student-support/>)
- UC Mexus (<https://alianzmx.universityofcalifornia.edu/history/#ucmex>) - **currently suspended**

In addition, some information about funding sources can be found on the LSA website (<https://www.linguisticsociety.org>; available only to members of the LSA) and on Linguist List (<http://www.linguistlist.org>).

Summer Job Opportunities

In the past, Linguistics students have found summer employment with companies such as Apple, Google, and H-5. Graduate students can also teach or TA in UCSC's Summer Session. Students who teach in summer are hired by the Summer Session Office, and hired at the "Associate In" level (please consult with the Graduate Coordinator if you have questions).

In recent years, the Department has been able to provide some funding for summer research assistantships.

Part-Time Status, *In Absentia* Status and Leave of Absence

Part-time status. Graduate students will be permitted to pursue part-time study when the faculty believes there is clear justification for part-time status based on the student's academic progress, career employment, family responsibilities, or health conditions. Part-time status is granted only once during a student's graduate career. If a graduate student registers for full-time study after having been on part-time status, they must remain a full-time student for the remainder of their

graduate career.

All petitions for part-time status must be recommended by the Department and approved by the Graduate Dean. See the Graduate Student Handbook (link at end of document) for further details.

In *Absentia Status*. Graduate students will be permitted to register *in absentia* when the faculty believes there is clear justification for *in absentia* status based upon research or coursework the student is pursuing outside of the university or local area. To register *in absentia*, students must not require significant interaction with Department faculty.

All petitions for *in absentia* status must be recommended by the Department and approved by the Graduate Dean at least one month prior to the start of the *in absentia* term. See the Graduate Student Handbook for further details.

Leave of Absence. While students are encouraged to maintain continuous registration so as to make steady progress toward the MA, Leaves of Absence will be granted for sound educational purposes, health reasons, financial problems, and family responsibilities. The maximum term for an approved Leave of Absence is three academic quarters. Students on Leave of Absence are required to report their plans to the Department and the Graduate Division. A request to renew a Leave of Absence must be submitted in advance to the Graduate Dean; substantial justification and Department approval will be required to obtain renewal.

University regulations require that a student who is on Leave of Absence not use University facilities or resources.

TA Training

The Linguistics Department runs a workshop on issues relating to teaching in the Fall and Winter quarters. The workshop (known as TATr) is coordinated by a graduate student and consists of approximately three meetings each quarter. All first and second year students, including MA students, are expected to attend. Students attending the workshops should enroll in a one-unit course, Linguistics 240, The Pedagogy of Linguistics, for both Fall and Winter quarters.

Additionally, a new teaching assistant will be automatically enrolled in the online course *Teaching as an Ethical Practice: A Guide for Teaching Assistants*, which covers professional ethics for the teaching assistant role with special attention to educational equity and accessibility. It was created at the request of the Division of Graduate Studies by the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) and Online Education, a partnership that allows for new graduate students to have a more robust, thorough introduction to teaching at UC Santa Cruz than ever before.

The online course, which is foundational and introductory in nature, does not replace, but rather complements, TATr. This course provides teaching assistants with an overview of the essential foundations of the TA role, guidance about compliance with campus and national policies, and information about campus resources to support student learning and well-being.

Completing the course will be an expectation of overall TA duties and will be included as part of the overall assigned workload during the first quarter of TA'ing (220-hour maximum for 50% appointments).

Colloquia

The Linguistics Department sponsors a Friday colloquium series that meets several times a quarter throughout the academic year. Graduate students are expected to attend all Linguistics colloquia, and should enroll in a two-unit course, Linguistics 296, Linguistics Colloquium. Please obtain the enrollment number from the Graduate Coordinator.

The colloquium series is run by a Colloquium Committee consisting of all the second-year graduate students and chaired by a third-year or fourth-year student selected by the graduate students. The chair of the Colloquium Committee works closely with a faculty member who serves as the faculty coordinator of the series. The Colloquium Committee consults with the Department Manager, Sarah Amador, on logistics and finances.

Graduate Student Representative

Each Spring, the graduate students in linguistics elect a graduate student representative whose term begins in the Fall quarter and continues through the Spring quarter of that academic year. The graduate student representative is the official liaison between the graduate students and the Department. They attend bi-weekly faculty meetings and provide input on issues relating to graduate students. They also serve as the graduate student representative on any Linguistics Department search committees constituted that year, and as the graduate student coordinator for (student) activities relating to graduate student recruitment. Although the role of the graduate student representative is limited to PhD students, the representative reports back to all graduate students (MA and PhD).

More Information

- To find more information about general campus procedures and policies, see the Graduate Division's [Graduate Student Handbook](#).
- For Announcement of Candidacy dates, see the Registrar's [Academic Calendar](#).
- The [Linguistics Program Statement](#) in the 2024-25 Catalog is the official statement of program requirements.

MA Student Progress Checklist

Name: _____

Year Entered: _____

Advisor: _____

I. Coursework

___ Lx 296-Colloquia

___ Complete **all** of:

Lx 211 Phonology A

Lx 221 Syntax A

Lx 231 Semantics A

___ Complete **two** of:

Lx 212 Phonology B

Lx 222 Syntax B

Lx 232 Semantics B

___ Complete **one additional** from:

Lx 212 Phonology B

Lx 222 Syntax B

Lx 232 Semantics B

Lx 214 Phonetics

Lx 257 Psycholinguistics & Ling Theory

Lx 280 Experimental Methods

Lx 282 Field Methods

___ Complete three additional electives:

Lx _____

Lx _____

Lx _____

___ Language Exam (language: _____)

II. MA Thesis

___ Defense of MA Thesis (target: Spring, 2nd year)

Title: _____

Date defended: _____

Committee chair: _____

NOTES