
This document describes the Berkeley Linguistics program as it is planned for the incoming class of Fall, 2014. It is a copy of the description that was posted on the Department of Linguistics web site in 2014, and is retained here as an archival copy of the program description. Students who joined the department in 2014 may pursue the program as outlined here (and may need to remind their advisor of this scheme).

M.A. Program

The M.A. is a degree that all students must earn en route to the Ph.D. It can under certain circumstances be a terminal degree. The M.A. requires two years of coursework, a qualifying paper, and an oral examination, normally taken at the end of the first year. Even students who already have an M.A. when they enroll in the graduate program are required to earn the Berkeley Linguistics M.A.

Two Plans

The M.A. in Linguistics may be obtained under "Plan I" or "Plan II". Plan I requires 25 semester units plus a thesis. Plan II requires 30 semester units. The vast majority of students follow Plan II. All candidates for the M.A., whether following Plan I or Plan II (including those students who will be granted a second M.A.), must pass a 2-hour comprehensive oral examination, to be administered by their M.A. Committee.

M.A. Course Requirements

The required courses for the M.A., designed to provide the broad foundation necessary for advanced work in Linguistics, are as follows:

- Proseminars: Ling 200 (1st yr students) and Ling 201A (2nd yr students)
- Fundamentals: Each of Ling 110, Ling 211A, Ling 220A, Ling 230
- Structures: One of these: Linguistics 211B, 215, 220B
- Ecologies: One of these: Ling C105, Ling 123, Ling 181, Ling 205, Ling 210, Ling 250A-E, Ling. 255
- Advanced Analysis*: One additional course, which can be selected from Structures, Ecologies, or this set: Linguistics: 231, 234, 245, 270, 275, 290A-R.
- *Note: Although Field Methods (Ling 240A-B) is required only for the Ph.D., not for the M.A. degree, students sometimes wish to take Field Methods in their first or second year, prior to receiving the M.A. degree. This can create a busy schedule. Therefore, students who choose to take, and who pass, Field Methods in years 1 or 2 have the option of postponing satisfaction of the Advanced Analysis requirement until their third year. Students who pass the M.A. exam and are recommended to continue into the Ph.D. program are required to satisfy both of these requirements by the end of Year 3.

In the two years that it generally takes to complete the M.A. program in Linguistics, it will be possible to take several other courses beyond those required for the degree. In addition to the required courses listed above, students are expected to fill out their program with other courses in Linguistics or related
areas, as approved by their advisor.

**The M.A. Committee**

The Graduate Advisor acts as advisor to new students. By the end of the first year, students should choose a research advisor, with whose help the M.A. Committee can be constituted. This committee will have three members. One member, the chair, is the student's advisor. Normally, the other two members are also faculty in the Linguistics Department. However, as appropriate and with the permission of the Graduate Advisor, students may select one of the other two members from a department other than Linguistics. The M.A. Committee administers the oral M.A. examination.

**The M.A.-level Qualifying Paper**

Among the requirements for the M.A. degree is an M.A.-level Qualifying Paper. The M.A. QP is a written paper equivalent (in length, quality, style, and subject matter) to a good published conference paper in a volume such as the proceedings of BLS, CLS, NELS, SALT, WCCFL, etc. The M.A. QP must be approved by a committee of two readers. (The second-year proseminar will be partly devoted to work toward this QP.)

**NOTE:** The readers of the M.A. QP and the 3rd year QP will be four different faculty members. (This promotes diversity in subject matter and approach.)

**The Oral M.A. Examination**

To receive the M.A., all students must take a two-hour oral examination. The M.A. oral exam is ordinarily taken at the end of the 1st year in the program. Its goals are to show (a) a good knowledge of the topics examined, appropriate for exposition in classes for our majors, and (b) a good ability to think creatively and speak articulately about matters of linguistic analysis and the relation between linguistic data and models or theories. The level of the exam is that of the first-year graduate courses. Each oral exam will cover three areas, chosen by the student taking the exam from the following list of six areas:

- Historical Linguistics
- Language and Cognition
- Language in Social Context
- Phonetics, Phonology, and Morphology
- Psycholinguistics
- Semantics, Syntax, and Morphology

Each member of a student's M.A. Committee is responsible for one of the three areas selected by the student. The three areas to be covered must be apportioned among committee members prior to the scheduling of the exam.

Students who enter with minimal preparation in linguistics may need to defer the exam to late fall of the 2nd year, but at the end of the 1st year they will still have a meeting with their M.A. oral exam committee to talk about their work in the first year and to make summer study plans. Students who take and fail the exam at the end of the 1st year will ordinarily retake the exam in late fall of the 2nd year.

Passing the M.A. examination, fulfilling the coursework requirements, and approval of the M.A.-level Qualifying Paper qualifies a student to receive the M.A. degree. After all requirements have been satisfactorily completed, normally at the end of the second year, the Department will then recommend
the degree of Master of Arts in Linguistics be awarded. (Under Plan I, the Application for Candidacy for the Master's Degree must be submitted by the 5th week of the semester in which a student will take the M.A. oral exam. There are also some special requirements on preparing and filing the thesis; see the Graduate Division's 'Guidelines for Preparing a Doctoral Dissertation or Master's Thesis' on their policies & procedures page.)

**Terminal M.A. degree**

Not all students continue on to pursue a Ph.D. When the M.A. degree is awarded, the Department will separately recommend for or against the student's continuation into the [Ph.D. program](https://www.division.berkeley.edu/graduate/policies-procedures). If the Department recommends against, the student will have a terminal M.A.

It sometimes happens that a student fails the initial oral M.A. exam. In this case, an ad hoc committee of department faculty is appointed to decide whether the student can retake the exam. Only one re-take will be permitted; it is normally scheduled for the following semester. If a retake is not recommended, the student can, with departmental permission, elect to take a written M.A. exam. If this exam is passed, the student can be awarded a terminal M.A. degree. A failed second M.A. exam means that the student must leave the program without a degree.

**Ph.D. Program**

All students wishing a Ph.D. in Linguistics must first earn an M.A. in the Berkeley Linguistics program in order to continue into the Ph.D. program as described on the [M.A. program page](https://www.division.berkeley.edu/graduate/policies-procedures).

Soon after recommendation to continue in the Ph.D. program has been made, students should seek out a faculty member who will agree to serve as the doctoral advisor. This is the faculty member who will guide the student's work through the doctoral program, including the dissertation. In many cases, the Ph.D. Advisor will be the same person as the M.A. Advisor. It is possible to change advisors.

The requirements for the Ph.D. can be divided into two sets: those which a student must satisfy before advancing to candidacy, and those which they must satisfy afterwards. Advancing to candidacy is a very important milestone, since students who advance within 'normative time' (6 semesters since beginning the graduate program) are entitled to a year of funding from the university, which they can use to support either their 4th or 5th years in the program.

To advance to candidacy, students must complete three requirements (a foreign language requirement, some specific coursework, a qualifying paper) and then pass a qualifying exam. To receive the Ph.D., students must complete a dissertation prospectus and associated review, and must complete a Ph.D. dissertation.

**A. Requirements for advancing to candidacy**

1. **The Foreign Language Requirement (Year 3 or Before)**

   In accordance with the rules of the Graduate Division, the Department has a Foreign Language Requirement. Students should satisfy the requirement as early as possible in their graduate careers; it
must be satisfied before they are eligible to take the Ph.D. qualifying examination. This requirement can be satisfied by either of two options, both laid out in much fuller detail in the Graduate Division's Guide to Graduate Policy, which students are advised to consult. Simply put, Option 1 requires a reading knowledge of two foreign languages. Knowledge may be demonstrated in various ways, detailed in the Guide: by completing a two-year course of study at UC Berkeley; by petitioning to have a recent two-year course of study at another institution fulfill the requirement; or by taking an examination which involves translating a passage of at least 300 words into English within 90 minutes, with or without a dictionary. Option 2 requires demonstration of an exceptionally thorough reading knowledge and an adequate knowledge of the grammatical structure of a single language, via a translation exercise involving a passage of at least 1,000 words in a subject related to the student's specialization, in a time frame of 3 hours without the aid of a dictionary. Native ability in a foreign language can fulfill the requirements of Option 2 so long as there is linguistic literature published in the language and the student can provide evidence to the Department - which in turn petitions the Graduate Council - of significant prior schooling conducted in that language. Full details are given in the Guide.

2. Courses (Year 3)

In Year 3, students complete their course requirements. If the yearlong 'Field Methods' course (Ling 240A-B) was not taken in Year 2, students must complete it in Year 3. Students must also satisfy the 'Advanced Analysis' requirement, if they did not already do so in Year 2. Normally, students will complete one of the 'Field Methods' and 'Advanced Analysis' requirements in year 2 and will complete the other one in Year 3. Ling 201B ('Proseminar') is required of all students in Year 3. Taken in the first semester of the third year, Ling 201B is the course which launches students into the process of writing the Qualifying Paper.

3. Qualifying Paper (Year 3)

By the end of Year 3, students must complete a Qualifying Paper (QP) of a quality suitable for submission to a linguistics journal. A QP must conform to the style sheet of Language, the journal of the Linguistic Society of America, or to that of another journal appropriate to its contents.

The QP must be approved by a reading committee consisting of two faculty members selected by the student in consultation with the Graduate Advisor. The members of a QP Committee are ordinarily regular faculty in Linguistics, but one member of a committee may be from elsewhere if approved by the Graduate Advisor. The QP Committee is usually chosen at the beginning of the semester in which the student plans to complete the QP, and it should meet with the student to discuss the course of revisions promptly after the completion of a first draft. For a QP to be accepted, the QP Committee must decide unanimously that the QP is of publishable quality and shows a readiness for research at a doctoral level.

4. The Qualifying Examination and Advancement to Candidacy (End of Year 3)

The Qualifying Examination, which is required by the Graduate Council, is a three-hour oral examination. The examination committee consists of four members, one of whom is the student's advisor and one of whom must be a UC Berkeley faculty member from outside the Department of Linguistics. The outside member is a regular member of the examining committee but also represents the Dean of the Graduate Division. The person who chairs the Qualifying Examination committee cannot later be the director of the dissertation.

The Qualifying Examination covers the following: linguistics in general, including three subfields
specifically identified by the student in scheduling the examination; the broad area of the intended
dissertation; the QP; and possible dissertation plans. As a substantial portion of the examination will be
devoted to detailed discussion of the QP, it should be available to the members of the examination
committee at least three weeks before the examination. More information on what to expect in the
Qualifying Examination can be found here.

Should a student fail the Qualifying Examination, the advisor and student will meet to review the
committee's judgments, and the advisor will guide the student in taking a second examination. The
second examination may take place no sooner than three months (by Graduate Council ruling) and no
later than one year (by department policy) after the first.

Upon satisfactory completion of the Qualifying Examination, a student acquires the status known as
'Advanced to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.' If this occurs, by June 30, before the
beginning of the student's fourth year at Berkeley, the student receives a one-year Doctoral Completion
Fellowship; a student who advances later receives no DCF. The Graduate Council considers three years
'normative time' for advancement to candidacy.

B. Dissertation Preparation

1. Bibliography and Dissertation Prospectus (Year 4)

In the first semester in residence after advancing to candidacy for the Ph.D. a student must submit an
Annotated Bibliography and a Dissertation Prospectus to the members of the dissertation committee,
normally the same as the Qualifying Examination Committee.

The Annotated Bibliography and Dissertation Prospectus are due by the end of the tenth week of the
semester. The bibliography and prospectus must be approved by the dissertation committee, which
meets with the student for a one-hour Dissertation Prospectus Review, normally scheduled near the end
of the same semester.

Both the Bibliography and the Prospectus are on a topic assigned by the student's Dissertation
Committee, after discussion with the student about the intended dissertation area. The Annotated
Bibliography is a detailed overview of the literature in that area, including bibliographic details as well
as summaries and critical comments. The Dissertation Prospectus has two components: a general (5-10
page) overview laying out the material, problems, methods, and anticipated results of the dissertation,
together with a tentative outline; and a chapter-length discussion of a specific problem or problems
assigned for this purpose by the dissertation committee. Students should receive written instructions
from their committees by the beginning of the semester in which the Bibliography and Prospectus are
due.

2. The Dissertation (Years 4-6)

Upon successful completion of the Bibliography and Prospectus, students must write a doctoral
dissertation. Students are strongly encouraged to work closely with their advisor and committee
members throughout this process. The following activities are designed to guide students during this
stage of their graduate career:

- **Dissertation committee meetings.** Students in candidacy meet with their dissertation
  committee once a semester, starting in the semester after the one in which the Dissertation
  Prospectus Review takes place. Exceptions may be granted for students who are in the field.
  Meetings will focus on dissertation progress, publication strategies, and, for more advanced
students, job search readiness. The student will bring to each meeting a summary of the work completed since the last meeting (or, in the case of the first meeting, since the Prospectus Review) and an updated dissertation outline. After each meeting, the student's dissertation chair, in consultation with the other committee members, will prepare a brief written summary of the student's progress and the goals for the next semester. These summaries will form the basis of the Annual Report on student progress which the chair of each dissertation committee must file (via department staff) with Graduate Division. Annual reports should be submitted using this form: *Report on Progress in Candidacy in the Doctoral Program*.

- **Presentation of research.** Students are encouraged to present their ongoing dissertation research on a regular basis, at conferences as well as in appropriate departmental forums, including but not limited to Phonetics & Phonology Forum (*Phorum*), Fieldworkers Forum (*fForum*), Quantitative Methods Forum (Quorum), *Syntax Circle*, Group on American Indian Languages (GAIL), and Gesture Group.

- **Re-enrollment in Ling 201.** Students in candidacy are encouraged to re-enroll in Ling 201, a course taken by all third-year students in which participants receive regular, intensive advice on structuring, presenting and obtaining feedback on a complex piece of research. Students taking Ling 201 will also receive advice on presenting dissertation research at professional conferences and in job interviews.

- **Job placement advising.** The faculty-staffed Job Placement Committee prepares students for the academic job market, holding workshops to advise students on such matters as the solicitation of outside letters, dossier preparation, and practicing for job interviews.

**Human subjects research**

If dissertation research involves human subjects in any way - field data elicitation, psycholinguistic or phonetic experiments, sociolinguistic surveys, etc. - it is imperative to obtain permission from the Committee for Protection of Human Subjects before beginning the research. Research data obtained without CPHS approval cannot be used in the dissertation or publications. The [CPHS website](#) has full details.