

Department of Linguistics, MA Program

College of Arts and Humanities

Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (Soap)

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I. Mission Statement

The Department of Linguistics offers a Graduate Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and a Master of Arts degree with specializations in Linguistics or TESL. Toward these ends the Linguistics Department is dedicated to providing students in these programs with the highest level of educational experience possible.

Our graduate program aims to develop intellectual skills that are essential to professional careers or advanced degrees. They also help enhance critical thinking, satisfy broad intellectual interest, and enrich personal knowledge.

II. Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

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A. Goals and Objectives (and courses that meet objectives)

Core

Goal 1: Knowledge of How Language Works.

Objective 1 Demonstrate knowledge of language structure and use.

Objective 2 Show an understanding of current linguistic theories.

Objective 3 Demonstrate ability to apply this understanding to a theoretical problem.

Objective 4 Demonstrate ability to compare and evaluate different theoretical approaches.

(All graduate courses in general linguistics, including Ling 242, 243, 248, 249, and 239 cover the learning objectives listed above; Objectives 3 and 4 are also covered in Ling 241.)

Goal 2: Effective skills in the analysis of linguistic data.

Objective 1 Demonstrate skill in identifying related elements in a data set.

Objective 2 Demonstrate skill to formulate organizing principles that encompass a data set.

Objective 3 Demonstrate skill to recognize and evaluate alternative analyses of a data set.

(All graduate courses in general linguistics, including Ling 242, 243, 248, 249, and 239 cover the learning objectives listed above.)

MA in Linguistics (General Linguistics)

Goal 3: Ability to carry out independent empirical, experimental, or theoretical research.

Objective Produce a research paper which includes a literature review, appropriate methodology, data, interpretation of data, and a discussion of theoretical implications.

(All graduate courses in general linguistics, including Ling 242, 243, 248, 249, and 239 cover the learning objectives listed above; it is also covered in Ling 236, 241 and 237.)

MA Degree in Linguistics with Option in TESL

Goal 3 also applies to the Option in TESL. (Ling 241, 237, 236)

Goal 4: Ability to carry out curriculum preparation in TESL.

Objective Produce a curriculum for a language course which includes a focused literature review, needs assessment, goals and objectives, course design overview, sample lesson plans, and language assessments. (Ling 244)

Goal 5: Ability to write a pedagogical paper on an aspect of one or more language skills.

Objective Produce a paper which focuses on a pedagogical argument based upon the research. Include a literature review, language learning tasks, and an analysis of the tasks in light of TESL theory, research, and pedagogy. (Ling 237)

III. Curriculum Map (Matrix of Courses X Learning Outcomes)										
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Curriculum Map of goals and objectives covered in each of the Linguistics MA courses.										
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	2.1	2.2	2.3	3	4	5
242	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
243	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
248	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
249	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
239	X	X	X	X				X		
265	X	X	X	X				X		
241			X	X				X		X
236								X		X

237								X		X
244									X	
CompExam	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MA Thesis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		

Ling 242 Seminar in Phonology

Ling 243 Seminar in Syntax

Ling 248 Seminar in Sociolinguistics

Ling 249 Field Methods

Ling 239 Advanced Phonetics

Ling 265 Seminar in Language Acquisition

Ling 241 Seminar in TESL Theory and Methods

Ling 236 Teaching Listening and Speaking

Ling 237 Seminar in Teaching Reading and Writing

Ling 244 Seminar in Curriculum Design and Assessment

IV. Assessment Methods

A. Direct Measures

GOALS 1 AND 2: COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Assessment of the learning objectives of Goals 1 and 2 will be done by the MA Comprehensive Examination. This examination consists of problem sets that require analysis usually in terms of an essay style answer. The examination is three and a half hours long, and it is offered around the 10th week of each semester, with questions in each section of the exam changing each semester. When students register to take the examination, they are required to state three areas of preference.

The current structure of the MA Comprehensive Examination is as follows:

General Linguistics students:

- 3 questions: 2 questions from the core areas,* and 1 question from the core or TESL areas**

TESL option students

- 3 questions: 2 questions from the TESL areas,** 1 question from the core areas*

* Four core areas:

- Phonology (142, 242)

- Syntax (143, 243)

- Phonetics (139, 239)

- Sociolinguistics (148, 248)

** Three TESL areas:

- General theory, method, and research (LING 141, 171, 241)

- Reading and writing (LING 237)

- Assessment and curriculum design (LING 244)

Evaluation System for Goals 1 and 2: The customary approach to evaluating student performance on the Comprehensive Examination has been to give either a High Pass, Pass, Conditional Pass, or Non-Pass for a student's answer to each question on the examination. Two faculty members do this. The results are cumulated and an overall evaluation with the same rubrics is given. A Conditional Pass means that while passing most of the examination, the student showed some deficiency in a particular area. The student is then required to make up this deficiency before they can graduate. A Non-Pass means the student's answers were judged to be generally so weak in most areas that they must re-take the whole examination and get at least a Pass before they can graduate. This evaluation system has proven to work well for judging individual student performance, and we will use the results of this to assess whether the objectives under Goals 1 and 2 are met.

GOAL 3: MA THESES

Every graduate course in linguistics requires that students carry out a project involving either empirical data collecting, experimental data collecting, or a theoretical investigation of an area covered by the course. Another instrument to evaluate Goal 3 will be a thesis, since the thesis option in the graduate program was approved for the program in 2011. For the purpose of program assessment, students will be required to submit one of these projects or thesis to the Department Assessment Committee for evaluation. Papers/theses will be evaluated according to

the objectives set forth in Goal 3.

GOALS 4 AND 5: COURSE PROJECTS

Graduate courses in TESL require that students carry out a project which exhibits ability to carry out curriculum preparation in TESL and to write a pedagogical paper on an aspect of one or more language skills. These skills are principally covered in Ling 244, 236, and 237. For the purpose of program assessment, students will be required to submit one of these projects to the Department Assessment Committee for evaluation. Papers will be evaluated according to the objectives set forth in Goals 4 and 5.

B. Indirect Measures

SURVEYS

The Linguistics Department plans to conduct two types of survey.

- a. Exit Survey. This survey will be given to students in their last semester of graduate work and will ask questions related to the extent to which students see themselves as achieving the learning goals and objectives of the program they were in.
- b. Alumni Survey. This survey will be given to former graduates of our MA programs to determine how well they feel that the program they were in gave them the background they needed for either the advanced schooling or the work they are currently engaged in.

V. Student Learning Outcomes X Assessment Methods Matrix [CTRL + CLICK TO VIEW EXAMPLE](#)

	GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5
COMPREHENSIVE EXAM	X	X			
MA PAPER THESIS			X		
COURSE PROJECTS (LING 244)				X	
COURSE PROJECTS (LING 237)					X

VI. Timeline for Implementation of Assessment Methods and Summary Evaluations

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Fall 2012: MA Program in Linguistics: Evaluation of Goal 3 using term papers

Spring 2013: MA Program in Linguistics: Evaluation of Goal 1 (Objectives 1 & 2) using term papers; Exit survey planned.

Fall 2013: MA Program in Linguistics: Evaluation of Goal 1 (Objectives 3 & 4) using Comprehensive Exam

Spring 2014: MA Program in Linguistics: Evaluation of Goal 2 (Objectives 1-3) using term papers in LING 242 and 243.

Fall 2014: MA program option in TESL: Evaluation of Goal 3 using MA Theses

Spring 2015: MA Program option in TESL: Evaluation of Goal 4 using course papers; alumni survey planned

Fall 2015: MA Program option in TESL: Evaluation of Goal 5 using course papers

Spring 2016: MA Program: Evaluation of Goal 3 using term papers

VII. Closing the Loop - Summary Evaluation, Curriculum Adjustment, and Reporting

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Assessment is coordinated by the Graduate program coordinator. He/she will determine whether the assessed goals and objectives are being met. The department faculty will be alerted to any deficiencies in the program which emerge from the assessment routines, and will determine corrective measures.