

The Graduate Field of Linguistics

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Please direct email inquiries to: lingfield@cornell.edu

The online application: <http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu>

The Graduate Program

The curriculum is designed to assure that Ph.D. students receive an adequate grounding in all of the fundamental areas of linguistics, while leaving them the freedom they need to become independent researchers. The first year is devoted to course-work, to give students a strong foundation, and to enable them to quickly begin contributing to the research life of the department. Beyond the core, students are relatively free to design their own program of study both within the discipline and across disciplines, within a framework of requirements set by the field and the graduate school. This program is organized in consultation with a Special Committee of the student's own choosing. Committee members represent the student's major and minor subjects. Minors may be chosen from disciplines other than linguistics, so that it is possible, for example, for a Ph.D. student to major in General Linguistics and minor in such areas as Computer Science, Latin American Studies, or Cognitive Studies. The Special Committee system makes the Ph.D. program maximally flexible and allows students to avail themselves of the entire university's resources.

Progress towards the degree is attained by (1) completing the core course requirements, (2) passing the Admission to Candidacy Exam, (3) completing and defending dissertation.

Core Requirements

Students normally complete courses equivalent to the following:

Phonology II (LING 402)

Syntax II (LING 404)

Semantics I (LING 421)

Field Methods (LING 600)

A course in linguistic structure (e.g. morphology, phonetics) or language use (sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics)

Research workshop (LING 604)

The Research Workshop provides students with an opportunity to develop an original research paper through a number of revisions, some of which are presented to an audience of fellow students. The final version is presented at a year-end conference.

Language Requirements

A) Ph.D. students are required to demonstrate a reading knowledge of a language other than English with a significant scholarly literature relevant to their research interest.

B) In addition, the Field has an in-depth language study, which may be satisfied by two semesters of formal language study of a single language (e.g. Thai 101/102), or Structure of Language X (e.g. LING 430, Structure of Korean), or Language Typology (LING 400).

Admission to Candidacy Examination (A-Exam)

This exam is taken between the 4th and 6th semesters in residence. The format of the exam may vary, but the Field of Linguistics requires that the candidate submit in advance of the exam 2 research papers in distinct areas and a dissertation prospectus. In addition, the special committee will normally ask the candidate to prepare written answers to two questions.

M.A. Program

We do not offer a Master's program. The exception is through the Employee Degree Program (a benefit for Cornell employees).

Contact the Graduate Field Assistant for more information (lingfield@cornell.edu or 255-1105).

Teaching and Research Assistantships

Admitted graduate students are supported with a combination of fellowship and teaching assistantship support. Prospective students should make every effort to investigate other potential sources of aid (see the Funding and Career Placement page).

After the first year, most students are supported with a teaching assistantship of some kind. A linguistics teaching assistantship involves the student in one of various undergraduate courses in the basic areas, and entails leading sections, holding office hours, and grading assignments and exams. We also have teaching assistantships in language courses. All of these positions provide not only financial support, but also valuable teaching experience. Applicants who feel that they may qualify for a teaching assistantship in a commonly-taught language (Spanish, French, Italian, German, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, etc.) should indicate this on their application and describe their language background in detail in their application letter.

Financial Assistance

Applicants and continuing students nominated by the Field of Linguistics are eligible for a variety of fellowships offered by the Graduate School. Since the number of awards is limited, however, prospective students should make every effort to investigate other potential sources of aid, such as the National Science Foundation fellowship program, the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships of the U.S. Office of Education, and the Social Science Research Council Fellowships.

Many graduate students in linguistics support themselves through Teaching Assistantships in linguistics and language courses. These positions provide not only financial support, but also valuable teaching experience. Applicants who feel that they may qualify for a Teaching Assistantship in a commonly-taught language (Spanish, French, Italian, German, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, etc.) should indicate this on their application and describe their language background in detail in their application letter.

Einaudi Center grants

<http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu> [Cornell's Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS), Fulbright-Hayes Awards, Fulbright Program, International Research Travel Grants] The Mario Einaudi Center

and its associated Programs offer a wide range of support and assistance to graduate students in search of funding for their international research, study, and scholarship.

Jacob Javits fellowships

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits/applicant.html>[Jacob K. Javits] This program provides fellowships to students to undertake study at the doctoral level.

Cornell Social Science Research Council fellowships

<http://www.ssrc.org> [Social Science Research Council] Most support from the Council goes to predissertation, dissertation, and postdoctoral fellowships, offered through annual, peer-reviewed competitions.

NSF grants

<http://www.nsf.gov> [National Science Foundation] The National Science Foundation funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering.

Mellon fellowships

Nearly all students in the Humanities and Humanistic Social Sciences who apply to Cornell's doctoral programs are eligible for Mellon Fellowships which provide a first-year stipend of \$17,500 and tuition. For information on the Mellon Fellowships see www.woodrow.org/mellon/.

Graduate School Fellowship Database

<http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/index.php?p=132> .

Admissions Procedures

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- Application form (on-line)
- Statement of purpose
- Transcripts
- Recommendations (3)
- Optional writing sample
- Tests: GRE general test
 - TOEFL: Graduate School minimums:
 - iBT:
 - Writing: 20
 - Listening: 15
 - Reading: 20
 - Speaking: 22
 - cBT: 250
 - TSE: 600

Please note that the cBT and TSE are being phased out.

FALL ADMISSION ONLY.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: January 15.

If material is missing from your application, you will be notified by e-mail (preferred) or a postcard will be sent to your current address.

On-line application: www.gradschool.cornell.edu/index.php?p=102

Please send all supplemental materials to:

Linguistics Program
203 Morrill Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14853-4701

E-mail : lingfield@cornell.edu
Phone : (607) 255-1105

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What are the strengths of your program?**

A careful exploration of our website will uncover a great deal, but in a nutshell: We have excellent faculty in all the core theoretical areas of Linguistics. We also have strengths at the “interfaces” – phonology/phonetics, syntax/phonology, and syntax/semantics. We have faculty doing fieldwork in a number of language areas, and excellent lab facilities in phonetics and computational linguistics.

2. **What are the research interests and theoretical orientation of your faculty?**

Take a look at our faculty webpages! Our faculty cover a wide range of interests within the field of linguistics.

3. **What does the admissions committee look for when reviewing applications?**

Simply stated, we are looking for talented students who are a good match for our program.

4. **How long does it take to complete the Ph.D. in Linguistics?**

Most students take five years. Finishing in this amount of time is contingent on timely completion of the required coursework and the A-exam.

5. **Can I study a Masters in Linguistics at Cornell University?**

No. Our program is designed to train students for the Ph.D.

6. **What financial aid is available?**

Two types of financial support are available through Cornell: merit-based (fellowships, assistantships, and tuition awards) and need-based (loans). Unless you choose otherwise, students are considered for merit-based aid as part of the admissions process-no special application is required. Applicants are typically notified of merit-based awards no later than April 1. You must notify the Graduate School by April 15 if you plan to accept the offer.

7. **What do my GRE scores have to be?**

We do not set a minimum or maximum GRE score. GRE's are only one consideration in evaluating applications for admission.

8. **What should I include in my personal statement?**

There is no set answer to this question. Your personal statement should tell us why you wish to pursue graduate study in Linguistics and what you hope to accomplish.

9. **Can I start the program in the Spring semester?**

No. Our program's coursework is designed to start in the fall semester.

10. **What kinds of jobs do students who receive the Ph.D. in Linguistics have?**

Our students are quite successful. See our alumni page for information on the placement of our Ph.D graduates.