

# UNT Linguistics

## Handbook for Master's students

version: August 2025

A. <a href="#">Overview</a>	1
B. <a href="#">Advising</a>	2
C. <a href="#">Guidelines for qualifying paper option</a>	3
D. <a href="#">Guidelines for the thesis option</a>	5
E. <a href="#">IRB instructions</a>	7

### Important contact information:

- *Graduate faculty advisor for Linguistics and Graduate Academic Certificate in TESOL:* Dr. Xian Zhang ([xian.zhang@unt.edu](mailto:xian.zhang@unt.edu)) - for *LING MS* and *LING MS with ESL concentration*, Dr. Xian Zhang should be the first point of contact for determining your degree plan and course sequence.
- *Graduate faculty advisor for Linguistics with a concentration in Language Documentation:* Dr. Sadaf Munshi ([sadaf.munshi@unt.edu](mailto:sadaf.munshi@unt.edu)) - for *LING MS with LD concentration*, Dr. Sadaf Munshi should be the first point of contact for determining your degree plan and course sequence.
- *Graduate faculty advisor for Linguistics with a concentration in Computational Linguistics:* Dr. Frederik Hartmann ([frederik.hartmann@unt.edu](mailto:frederik.hartmann@unt.edu)) - for *LING MS with CL concentration*, Dr. Hartmann is the person to talk to about degree plans and course sequences.
- *Faculty advisor for students in the Information Science PhD with Linguistics Concentration program:* Dr. Xian Zhang ([xian.zhang@unt.edu](mailto:xian.zhang@unt.edu)).
- *Chair of Linguistics:* Dr. William Salmon ([william.salmon@unt.edu](mailto:william.salmon@unt.edu)) - Dr. Salmon is the person to contact about general questions about the department.
- *Administrative coordinator for Linguistics:* Crystal Salazar ([crystal.salazar@unt.edu](mailto:crystal.salazar@unt.edu)) can help with all sorts of administrative and logistical issues and questions.
- *College of Information graduate advising:* Rachel Hall ([rachel.hall@unt.edu](mailto:rachel.hall@unt.edu)) - once you've met with the relevant faculty advisor, see Ms. Hall to file your official degree plan. Ms. Hall can also help with all sorts of administrative questions about graduation requirements, deadlines, paperwork, etc.

## A. Overview: Requirements for MS degree in the Linguistics Dept.

In order to be granted an MS in Linguistics you must:

1. Complete course work with a minimum GPA of 3.0 for:
  - a. **Five** core courses (15 credit hours)
    - LING 5070 - Research Design in Linguistics
    - LING 5300 - Phonology I
    - LING 5310 - Syntax I
    - LING 5530 - Semantics and Pragmatics I
    - LING 5990 - Graduate Capstone Seminar
  - b. **Seven** foundation courses (21 credit hours) decided in consultation with the graduate advisor and faculty mentor.
2. Submit either (a) or (b):
  - a. Qualifying paper (research paper) or scholarly product (refer to Section C)
  - b. Thesis (refer to Section D)

The following pages provide information on:

- [Advising timeline and guidelines](#)
- [The qualifying paper or scholarly product option](#)
- [The MS thesis option](#)
- [Guidelines for submitting an IRB application](#)

### 3. Suggested course sequencing

Fall Semester Start	Spring Semester Start
1 <sup>st</sup> semester [Fall] LING 5070 - Research Design in Linguistics LING 5300 - Phonology I One FOUNDATION course	1 <sup>st</sup> semester [Spring] LING 5310 - Syntax I Two FOUNDATION courses
2 <sup>nd</sup> semester [Spring] LING 5310 - Syntax I Two FOUNDATION courses	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester [Fall] LING 5070 - Research Design in Linguistics LING 5300 - Phonology I LING 5990 - Graduate Capstone Seminar
3 <sup>rd</sup> semester [Fall] LING 5530 - Semantics and Pragmatics I LING 5990 - Graduate Capstone Seminar One FOUNDATION course	3 <sup>rd</sup> semester [Spring] Three FOUNDATION courses
4 <sup>th</sup> semester [Spring] Three FOUNDATION courses	4 <sup>th</sup> semester [Fall] LING 5530 - Semantics and Pragmatics I Two FOUNDATION courses

**\* Please be reminded that some courses have prerequisites. You must consult the Graduate Advisor before determining your degree plan and course sequencing.**

4. Some knowledge of a second language, e.g., two semesters of second language study, is strongly recommended.

## **B. Advising timeline and guidelines**

When you enter the Linguistics department as a graduate student, your first step is to meet with the Graduate Advisor, Dr. Xian Zhang. You will discuss your interests with him, the concentration you want to pursue, and the courses you need to take for that concentration.

This first meeting must be before you start your first semester so that you can discuss which courses to take. Some entering students will need to take LING 5040 in the Summer prior to the first semester or during their first semester; the Graduate Advisor can help you determine whether you are one of those students. This meeting can be virtual or in-person.

At the beginning of the first semester, the department will assign an advisor to you based on your research interests. The advisor will help you to refine your degree plan (that is, your schedule of courses) and also potential research directions you could pursue.

Finally, you will meet with Rachel Hall (College of Information Advising) to file your official degree plan before the end of your first semester. As you update your degree plan, make sure a copy is filed with the COI Advising Office.

## C. Qualifying paper or scholarly product option

### 1. Expectations

To graduate, you will need to submit either a qualifying paper or scholarly product. From the beginning of your program, you should be thinking about topics you might like to work on. It often works well to do preliminary work in a course term paper and then expand on that for your qualifying paper/scholarly product.

The **qualifying paper** should be written according to the conventions and in a format that is widely used in the relevant subfield. If you are not familiar with the conventions, formats, and stylistic particularities of the subfield you're working in, don't guess, ask the professor with whom you are working on this paper. You can also check in relevant publication venues within the subfield.

The particulars of the qualifying paper are likely to vary from one subfield to another, but at a minimum it should include a literature review and some preliminary data and analysis. For example, a paper in Second Language Acquisition or Sociolinguistics would consist of an introduction, a literature review of relevant published research, a statement of purpose of the study, a methods section, results, an analysis, a discussion/conclusion, and a bibliography.

The **scholarly product** should be prepared according to guidelines for submission to a relevant online repository (such as a language archive or GitHub). It should meet the subdiscipline standards for curation, collection, analysis, formatting, completeness, and originality. An example of a scholarly product for Language Documentation could be a collection of interlinear glossed texts with an introduction and glossary; for Second Language Acquisition, this could be a collection of annotated original child language data recordings and transcriptions.

### 2. Committee

The committee of the qualifying paper consists of at least two members: the committee chair and one faculty member. The professor advising the qualifying paper will serve as the chair and must be a full-time faculty member who holds a PhD degree. The selection of the second committee member should be made in consultation with the committee chair by the conclusion of the second semester at the latest. Only in exceptional circumstances (e.g., the faculty member is unable to serve) can adjunct faculty with a PhD serve in this capacity (provided they are willing and there is compensation).

### 3. Suggested schedule

The following schedule is put together with a Fall start date in mind. Discuss with your advisor how to modify these dates for a Spring start date.

FALL: First semester

- Explore different ideas and subfields and discuss with your peers and professors topics which may be of interest to you.
- As you think about possible topics, remember that this is an MS, not a PhD. Talk to professors to understand what kind of project would be a reasonable size for the MS.

- Most professors have a lot of ideas about potential research topics, many of which come from their current projects. Listen to their suggestions!

SPRING: Second semester

- Decide on the subfield of linguistics for your qualifying paper/scholarly product. Discuss appropriate topics with any of the Linguistics professors; the topics should fit with the professor's current research interests.
- With your supervising advisor (who will serve as the Chair of your qualifying paper committee), determine an additional faculty member interested in and knowledgeable about the topic and who is willing to assist you and serve on your committee. They must also be available for the two consecutive semesters when you will be writing the qualifying paper. The faculty member may be from another department or from outside of UNT, but must be approved by the committee chair, and if not from UNT, by the Toulouse Graduate School in the spring semester of the second year or at least two semesters prior to graduating.
- Determine with your supervising professor how often you will meet with them. More often, regularly, is better!
- Begin to draft a proposal for your paper that includes background information about your topic in the form of a short literature review. The proposal should also have plan of work for the methods, data collection (try to use or build on existing data sets), and analysis procedures. Once completed, you will submit the proposal to your committee chair for approval. You should be able to use most, if not all, of what you've written in the proposal in your final paper.
- 

FALL: Third Semester

- Beginning of the semester: complete an IRB application if you need IRB approval for your project. (See instructions about how to submit an IRB application in section E below). It is very important to submit the IRB application as soon as possible because approval typically takes a minimum of 30 days.
- Beginning of the semester, submit a research proposal to the committee that outlines the research questions and methodology. Prepare a draft of your paper or begin compiling data for your scholarly product either as part of LING 5990 or outside of a class, but in both cases under the supervision of your committee chair. You should be having regular meetings (minimum: once per month) with your chair.
- End of the semester: finalize the annotations/analysis and/or experiments for your paper/scholarly product.

SPRING: Fourth semester

- 1<sup>st</sup> week, submit the first draft of your paper to your committee chair for review and comments. Save the comments. Revise the paper according to the comments.
- At all stages, all drafts of the paper should only be sent to the second committee member with the permission of the committee chair.
- 6<sup>th</sup> week, once your final draft has been approved by your committee chair you should submit the paper, along with an abstract and all drafts as a package to the second committee member.

\* The recommended schedule above is designed to offer sufficient time for comment and revision. For the final submission deadline, please see the submission section below.

### 3. Submission

**You must submit the final draft of your qualifying paper/scholarly product to the committee on or before Sep 31<sup>st</sup> (Fall semester) or Feb 28<sup>th</sup> (Spring semester).** Once you submit your paper/project, the committee will then evaluate it and let you know of any required revisions. Once your paper has been approved your advisor/committee chair will submit the results (approval) of the paper/project to the graduate school.

**-Qualifying paper option:** The package should include drafts of the paper with comments from the committee chair. The final draft of the paper should also be included.

**-Scholarly product option:** The package should include links to versions of the product along with comments from your committee chair on earlier versions. A link to the final draft of the scholarly product should be included.

## D. Guidelines for the MS thesis option

You may choose to write a thesis, but the thesis option should not be chosen lightly. Students wishing to write a thesis must have a specific research question that they wish to explore. We strongly suggest that students work with faculty who have existing projects underway.

Sample theses are available via the UNT digital library. Here are some examples from recent students, with links to the documents:

- Alexander Smith, [Burushaski Case Marking, Agreement and Implications: An Analysis of the Hunza Dialect](#)
- Lisa Jeon, [Drawing Boundaries and Revealing Language Attitudes: Mapping Perceptions of Dialects in Korea](#)
- María Teresa Martínez García, [A Corpus-Based Approach to Gerundial and Infinitival Complementation in Spanish ESL Writing](#)
- Melissa Robinson, [A Man Needs a Female Like a Fish Needs a Lobotomy: The Role of Adjectival Nominalization in Pejorative Meaning](#)
- Jennifer Seale, [An Analysis of the Syntactic and Lexical Features of an Indian English Oral Narrative: A Pear Story Study](#)

The following schedule must be followed. This schedule is put together with a Fall start date. Discuss with your advisor how to modify these dates for a Spring start date.

FALL: First semester

- Survey courses and discuss with peers and professors topics which may be of interest.

SPRING: Second semester

## UNT Linguistics, Handbook for Master's Students

- Discuss an appropriate topic with any of the Linguistics professors; the topics should fit with the professor's current research interests.
- Attend a Master's Thesis orientation session. Orientation sessions are offered during approximately the sixth week of every semester by the Toulouse Graduate School.
- Last week or earlier: submit to your thesis advisor a 5-page prospectus with your research question and bibliography. File an "Intent to Do a Master's Thesis" form once your professor has approved your prospectus.
- With your thesis advisor (who will serve as the Chair of your thesis committee), determine two additional faculty members interested in and knowledgeable about the topic and willing to assist you and serve on your committee. They must also be available for the two consecutive semesters when you will be writing the thesis. One of these two faculty members may be from another department or from outside of UNT, but they must be approved by the thesis committee chair, and if not from UNT, by the Toulouse Graduate School in the spring semester of the second year or at least two semesters prior to graduating. The thesis committee chair will then confer with the members of the proposed thesis committee to see if they feel that the thesis proposal is viable and compelling enough for you to pursue.

### FALL: Third Semester

- 1<sup>st</sup> week: submit a proposal for the thesis (minimum of 15 pages, double-spaced, plus a bibliography).
- Attend an orientation session at the Toulouse Graduate School for MS thesis candidates.
- IRB: In case the methodology of the proposed thesis requires use of human subjects, approval must be obtained from the Human Subject Review Board (see instructions about how to submit an IRB application in section E below). When the thesis proposal is submitted to the chair of the thesis committee, the student must attach a note stating whether or not Human Subject approval will be necessary for the thesis research, and, if so, when the application will be submitted to the Human Subject Review Board. It typically takes a minimum of 30 days to get IRB approval, so the application should be submitted prior to submitting the proposal.
- You must meet periodically with your committee and document those meetings. This documentation will be needed for appeals, extensions and the like. You need to meet regularly with all the members of the committee.

### SPRING: Fourth semester

- 1<sup>st</sup> week: turn in full draft: you should have prepared a draft over the fall semester.
- 6<sup>th</sup> week: your defense can be scheduled if your committee members feel you are ready. You must submit the final draft to your committee members at least three weeks before the defense date to allow all members adequate time to read and make comments on the draft. Students must consult the [Toulouse Graduate School](#) for all information related to graduation, including [deadlines](#) for submission of the final defended copy of the thesis.
- Submit a completed thesis to the Toulouse Graduate School in the required format by the relevant deadline.

### SUMMER or FALL, Fifth Semester (if necessary)

- Students may request one additional semester to complete their MS requirements. This extension requires approval from both the committee chair and department chair.

## E. IRB application instructions

When conducting research with human subjects, your research study must comply with ethical research requirements and must be approved by the Institutional Review Board.

“The UNT Institutional Review Board, by action of the President, is responsible for ensuring the rights and welfare of all research participants in accordance with regulatory and ethical principles established by the ‘Belmont Report’ and by the regulations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) found in 45 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46”.

Faculty and student investigators should complete the following steps:

- 1) Request access to Cayuse (the online submission system for IRB applications) by completing [the online request form](#).
- 2) Complete the CITI online training course

To register for a Human Subjects Research course through CITI, follow these steps:

1. Go to <https://www.citiprogram.org>
2. Click “Register” (top right-hand corner of website)
3. Complete Step 1 - Under “Select Your Organization Affiliation” begin typing University of North Texas and when the list is presented, click “University of North Texas (Denton, TX)”
  - a. Click the checkbox “I AGREE to the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy for accessing CITI Program materials.”
  - b. Click the checkbox “I affirm that I am an affiliate of the University of North Texas (Denton, TX).”
  - c. Click “Continue to Create Your CITI Program Username/Password”
4. Complete Step 2 – Personal Information (\*Important Note: Use your University issued email address. The Secondary email address can be a personal email account.\*)
5. Complete Step 3 – Create your Username and Password
6. Complete Step 4 – Country of Residence
7. Complete Step 5 - Are you interested in the option of receiving Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credit for completed CITI Program courses?
8. Complete Step 6 - Please provide the following information requested by University of North Texas (Denton, TX).
9. In Step 7, Question 1, you must choose Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher or Biomedical Research - Basic/Refresher depending on which is applicable to your study.



- a. Completing UNT RCR Basic course or the UNT RCR Refresher course will NOT satisfy human subjects training requirements.
    - b. Answer "No" to the other course offerings unless you have been instructed to register for other courses.
  10. After all questions to Step 7 are completed, click "Complete Registration"
  11. After registration is complete, select "Finalize Registration" on the next page to continue.
  12. The UNT Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher course and/or Biomedical Research - Basic/Refresher you selected should now appear on your "Main Menu" page. You may need to expand the drop-down box for them to appear. You may enter the course (by clicking the name of the course) and complete individual modules at your convenience, re-entering the course as needed. You will receive a "Completion Certificate" upon successful completion of all required modules.
- 
- 3) Visit UNT's IRB page for information and frequently asked questions regarding the use of humans in research and different types of application forms: <https://research.unt.edu>
  - 4) Select the appropriate Template for the Informed Consent Form that fits your research study and fill out all the different sections providing information about your research. You can find the different templates in the following page: <https://research.unt.edu>
  - 5) Log in to Cayuse IRB Online Submission System to fill out your application: [Log in to Cayuse Human Ethics](#)
  - 6) Your faculty advisor should initiate the online application for you by creating a new study and adding you as a student investigator. After you fill out all sections of the application, ask your faculty advisor to review it and provide you with feedback in case revisions/corrections/changes should be made. Your faculty advisor will submit the application, once all revisions are made.