

**Linguistics and TESOL PhD Academic Milestones**  
**Effective for all doctoral students starting in Fall 2021 and later**

**1) Diagnostic Evaluation (First year evaluation)**

The Diagnostic Evaluation is an overall assessment of your work during your first year in the PhD program. It is comprised of multiple components, including the following:

- (i) evaluations from instructors whom you have taken courses with;
- (ii) evaluations from instructors whom you have worked with as a TA or RA (if applicable); and
- (iii) an evaluation based on your performance on a diagnostic oral exam (taken at the end of your second semester in the program).

For the diagnostic oral exam, PhD students will be tested in an oral exam format on three of the core theoretical areas of linguistics: Sound (Phonology, Lab Phonology), Syntax, Meaning (Semantics, Pragmatics), and Psycholinguistics. Which areas to be tested will be determined by the courses taken during their first year. Exam questions for each area will require analysis of a specific set of linguistic data and theoretically informed solution(s) to some specific problem(s) related to this data.

Diagnostic oral exams will typically be taken at the end of the 2nd semester in the program. The Graduate Studies Committee will schedule the exam and the PhD advisor will notify students of their expected exam date. Note that the results of the diagnostic evaluation must be filed in the Office of the Registrar by the time students have completed 18 semester hours of coursework while enrolled in a doctoral program at UT Arlington. Students who begin in the Spring semester or who are part-time students should work with the PhD advisor to ensure that their exam is taken in a timely manner. Questions for the exam will be distributed one week before the scheduled oral exam date, so that students have that week to prepare their response and handout. For each area in which the student is being examined, the oral presentation will consist of a 5-minute presentation where the student orally walks through the solution of the problem, followed by 10 minutes of questions from the student's committee. Students should bring a 1-page handout for each of the three evaluators for each exam question on which they will be presenting, but no additional written responses are required. In addition, no electronic presentations should be prepared.

Each student will have an exam committee consisting of 3 faculty members from the Dept. of Linguistics & TESOL. The exam committee will be determined on the basis of the 3 topics that the student will respond to--namely, each committee member will serve as the representative or expert for one of the three topic areas chosen by the student. (e.g., If a student is to be tested in

**Linguistics and TESOL PhD Academic Milestones**  
**Effective for all doctoral students starting in Fall 2021 and later**

the areas of Sound, Syntax, and Meaning, then their committee will consist of one faculty member from the Sound area, one from the Syntax area, and one from the Meaning area.)

**Linguistics and TESOL PhD Academic Milestones**  
**Effective for all doctoral students starting in Fall 2021 and later**

**2) Qualifying Paper (Second year written milestone)**

PhD students must submit and defend a qualifying paper (QP) in the year following successfully passing their first-year diagnostic evaluation. This paper should be developed by working closely with a committee of at least three faculty members from our department, one of whom will serve as the committee chair. The paper should be submitted and orally defended during the 4<sup>th</sup> semester in the PhD program.

A Qualifying Paper Committee Form should be submitted to the PhD advisor at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester (i.e., September 15<sup>th</sup> for Fall submissions and February 15<sup>th</sup> for Spring submissions). On this form, the student should obtain signatures from the committee members indicating their unanimous approval of the QP topic and agreement to serve on the committee.

At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester, a progress report of no more than 2 pages should be submitted to all of the committee members. A first assessment will take place at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester based on this report and the committee members' evaluation of the student's progress. The QP must be submitted and successfully defended before the end of the student's 4<sup>th</sup> semester of doctoral studies. The final draft of the QP must be submitted to the entire committee and copied to the PhD advisor. If the QP is not submitted and successfully defended by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester, the student may petition for an extension. The petition should be submitted to the PhD graduate advisor, and should include a statement of progress, an explanation of the reason for the extension, and a current draft of the paper. If the QP is not completed by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> semester, the student must petition to remain in the program, and may not be considered to be making sufficient progress in the degree for funding purposes. Again, this petition should be submitted to the PhD graduate advisor.

The QP and defense will be graded by each committee member as High Pass (HP), Pass (P), Low Pass (LP), and Required Revision or Remedial Work (R). In order to successfully pass the QP, students must receive a grade of LP or higher from each committee member. Students with grades of R will be required to complete additional work within a reasonable amount of time as determined by the committee.