

Department of Linguistics  
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes  
The University of New Mexico

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**A. College, Department and Date**

1. College: College of Arts and Sciences
2. Department: Linguistics
3. Date: May 23, 2008

**B. Academic Program of Study**

M.A. in Linguistics

**C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan**

Sherman Wilcox, Chair

**D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes**

**Goal A: Breadth of Basic Knowledge**

*To be able to compare and evaluate linguistic theories in several core areas of linguistics*

- A.1. Students will demonstrate familiarity with leading functional, cognitive and typological linguistic theories in phonology, morphosyntax, semantics or discourse and language change.
- A.2. Students will be able to compare competing theories in any one of the aforementioned areas and identify how the theories are similar or different in their assumptions and predictions.

**Goal B: Critical Understanding of the Field**

*To be able to critically analyze advanced, state-of-the-art research*

- B.1. Students will be able to read and critically understand the hypotheses, arguments and evidence presented in current research publications in core areas of linguistics.
- B.2. Students will be able to identify what sort of evidence would test a linguistic hypothesis and confirm or disconfirm it.

**Goal C: Original Data Analysis**

*To develop the ability to collect and analyze naturally occurring linguistic data*

- C.1. Students will demonstrate familiarity with the methods for collecting certain kinds of naturally occurring linguistic data
- C.2. Students will demonstrate competency in the use of ethical guidelines for research with human subjects as outlined by the university IRB.
- C.3. Students will demonstrate the ability to collect and analyze a novel set of naturally occurring data following principles of a linguistic theory.

## E. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

### 1. Student Learning Outcomes

University of New Mexico Student Learning Goals				
Program SLOs	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility	Program SLO is conceptually different from university goals
<i>A.1. Students will demonstrate familiarity with leading functional, cognitive and typological linguistic theories in phonology, morphosyntax, semantics or discourse and language change.</i>	X			
<i>B.1. Students will be able to read and critically understand the hypotheses, arguments and evidence presented in current research publications in core areas of linguistics.</i>	X	X		
<i>C.3. Students will demonstrate the ability to collect and analyze a novel set of naturally occurring data following principles of a linguistic theory</i>		X		

### 2. How will learning outcomes be assessed?

*A.1. Students will demonstrate familiarity with leading functional, cognitive and typological linguistic theories in phonology, morphosyntax, semantics or discourse and language change.*

(i) *Means of assessment:* The comprehensive examinations completed by MA students in the relevant year will be assessed for SLO A.1 on a 4-point rubric: 1=fail, 2=low pass, 3=pass, 4=pass with distinction.

(ii) This is a *direct* measure of this SLO.

(iii) The *criterion for success* is that at least 75% of the comprehensive examination papers will receive a score of either 2 or 3.

*B.1. Students will be able to read and critically understand the hypotheses, arguments and evidence presented in current research publications in core areas of linguistics.*

(i) *Means of assessment:* Critical analytical essays submitted as term papers by MA students in linguistics courses in the relevant year will be assessed for SLO B.1 on a 4-point rubric: 1=fail, 2=low pass, 3=pass, 4=pass with distinction.

(ii) This is a *direct* measure of this SLO.

(iii) The *criterion for success* is that at least 75% of the doctoral dissertation proposals will receive a score of either 2 or 3.

*C.3. Students will demonstrate the ability to collect and analyze a novel set of naturally occurring data following principles of a linguistic theory.*

(i) *Means of assessment:* Essays using naturally-occurring data submitted as term papers by MA students in linguistics courses in the relevant year will be assessed for SLO B.1 on a 4-point rubric: 1=fail, 2=low pass, 3=pass, 4=pass with distinction.

(ii) This is a *direct* measure of this SLO.

(iii) The *criterion for success* is that at least 75% of the papers assessed will receive a score of either 2 or 3.

### **3. When will learning outcomes be assessed? When and in what forum will the results of the assessment be discussed?**

Our plan for developing assessment of these student learning outcomes, in terms of timetable and forums for discussion, is as follows:

*2008-2009:*

Assessment of A.1 will begin by review of the comprehensive exams taken in 2008-2009 by the entire faculty. Assessment will take place late in Spring Semester. The faculty will discuss the need for revisions, if any, to the comprehensive examinations system.

*2009-2010:*

Revisions to the comprehensive examination system based on the previous year's assessment results, if any, will be implemented (see 4 below for a description of the process).

Assessment of B.1 will begin by review of the term papers on critical analytical topics received in 2009-2010, by the entire faculty. Assessment will take place late in Spring Semester. The faculty will discuss the need for revisions, if any, to the preparation of students for critical analysis of linguistic research.

Assessment of A.2 will continue by review of the comprehensive exams taken in 2009-2010, by the entire faculty. The faculty will review the results in the light of revisions, if any, made to the comprehensive examination system in 2009-10.

*2010-2011:*

Further revisions to the comprehensive examination system based on the previous year's assessment results, if any, will be implemented (see 4 below).

Revisions to the analytical essay preparation process, if any, will be implemented (see 4 below).

Assessment of C.3 will begin by review of the term papers on critical analytical topics received in 2010-2011, by the entire faculty. Assessment will take place late in Spring Semester. The faculty

will discuss the need for revisions, if any, to the preparation of students for the analysis of linguistic data.

Assessment of B.1 will continue by review of the term papers on critical analytical topics received in 2009-2010, by the entire faculty. The faculty will review the results in the light of revisions, if any, made to the analytical essay preparation process in 2010-11.

Assessment of A.2 will continue by review of the comprehensive exams taken in 2010-2011, by the faculty whose specializations are represented in the exams for that year. The faculty will review the results in the light of revisions, if any, made to the comprehensive examination system in 2010-11.

#### **4. What is the unit's process to analyze/interpret assessment data and use results to improve student learning?**

The faculty as a whole will discuss their assessment in a meeting of the faculty at the end of the Spring Semester of the academic year. The faculty as a whole will discuss the result of the assessment process, and whether revision, if any, is necessary to the assessment instrument, the curriculum, or to pedagogy. If minor revisions only are necessary, they may be resolved at the initial faculty meeting. If major revisions appear necessary, then the faculty will charge the Graduate Committee to develop recommendations for revisions. The Graduate Committee will present the recommendation to the faculty in the Fall Semester of the following year. The faculty will discuss the recommendations and adopt or amend them. The adopted recommendations will be implemented in the same year, and reviewed again at the end of the Spring Semester.