

PhD

Timeline (48 months)

Year 1, September – April (Fall and Winter semesters)

- Coursework (7000, 7001, plus three other graduate courses).
- Select a supervisor. (The Department assigns your supervisor(s) when you are admitted to the program.)

By the end of August

- The topic of the first Comprehensive paper must be approved before the end of the third semester.
- An ideal situation is to have work already completed on this research by the end of the third semester.

Year 2, Comprehensive examinations (2)

- Both Comprehensive examinations must be complete by the end of the 6th semester. Typically, however, Comprehensive examinations should take no more than 2 semesters each to research, write, and submit for examination.
- Each Comprehensive examination will have a supervisor, determined by your thesis supervisor-in consultation with you.
- There is an oral defence at the end of both Comprehensive examinations.
- The first Comprehensive examination (literature review) typically takes the form of a state of the art paper about a theoretical question and related observations and implications for linguistic theory. Your supervisor will help you to determine the appropriate length, depth, and scope of the review. This should be completed within 1-2 semesters.
- The second Comprehensive examination involves problem formulation and a summary of the state of the art concerning this problem, key steps in all research, as well as analysis within a current theoretical framework in linguistics. The goal of this work is to write a paper that is ready (or near-ready) for submission to a scientific journal in the field. This should be completed within 1-2 semesters.
- For both Comprehensive examinations, a reasonable amount of overlap with the intended thesis topic is possible. The amount of 'reasonable overlap' will be determined ahead of time by your supervisor.

Year 3

- Write and submit the thesis Research Proposal (20 pages double spaced).
- Proposal presentation (20 minutes), generally scheduled 3 weeks after submitting the written proposal (pass/fail).
- Ideally, the proposal and presentation should be completed by the end of the 7th or 8th semester (the 1st or 2nd semester of your 3rd year).
- Research, thesis writing, ICEHR approval (if needed).

Year 4

- Thesis writing, initial submission, revisions (if needed), and final submission.

Additional information

Application for ICEHR (ethics) approval

- Generally will require the equivalent of 2 weeks full time work to prepare for submission.
- Allow at least 2-3 weeks for the committee to review the application (it can take longer). If research is dependent on funding, the money will not be released until ethics approval has been granted.

Research design

- Longitudinal studies are usually lengthy but not intensive, and should ideally start as early as possible after the project is approved (by the department, and by ICEHR).
- Group/cross-sectional studies can take place over much shorter periods of time, and at higher intensity.
- Studies that are mostly within the conceptual/theoretical realm are typically easier to plan and/or to conduct, although they may be the most challenging at times, always depending on the topic and related background within the relevant literature.

Thesis writing

The research proposal offers an opportunity to address at least parts of the literature background and methodology, and most of this writing is typically used as part of the thesis. Methodology should be updated each time decisions have to be made about research design and implementation. In total, a PhD thesis generally corresponds to 12-24 months of work, full time. During this period you will meet regularly with your supervisor(s). PhD dissertations can vary widely in length, from 150 to 400 pages in most cases, depending on the topic area, the amount of up-front data preparation, and the level of analysis.

Thesis submission

This is a relatively simple process, all done electronically, once the thesis is complete and ready for examination. The thesis submission requires approvals (on signed forms) from your supervisor(s) and the Head of the Department, who will forward the electronic documents to higher administration. There are two examiners, two internal examiners, who will be chosen from within the Department of Linguistics (or cognate department) at Memorial University, and an external examiner, who will be a specialist in the relevant field at a different institution. The identity of the examiners is kept confidential until the examination process is complete.

Revisions and final submission

Examiners commonly recommend a number of revisions be made to a thesis. The supervisor reviews these and provides the student with guidance as to which recommendations are required before the thesis will be approved for final submission. Generally, revisions are relatively minor and can be completed within days or weeks. With the supervisor's approval that the necessary revisions have been made, and the relevant paperwork completed to that effect, the final submission is made electronically.