1) Diagnostic Exam (First year oral exam)

PhD students will be tested on three of the core theoretical areas of linguistics that they have taken courses in during their first year, in an oral exam format. These exams will be taken at the end of the 2nd semester in the program. 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.

Questions will be distributed within the last three weeks of classes, with the exam scheduled one week after distribution. Students will have one week from the date that exam questions are handed out to prepare an oral presentation of their solution to the exam questions.

For each area in which the student is being examined, the oral presentation will consist of a 5-10-minute presentation where the student orally walks through how he or she solved the problem, followed by 10 minutes of questions from the student's committee. No written responses are required and no electronic presentation should be prepared, but students may (and are encouraged) to bring a 1-page handout for each of the evaluators for each exam question on which they will be presenting.

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 has selected to 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 chooses to be tested in the areas of Sound, SLA, and Meaning, then their committee will consist of one faculty member from the Sound area, one from the SLA area, and one from the Meaning area).
2) Qualifying Paper (Second year written milestone)

PhD students must submit and defend a qualifying paper (QP) after successfully passing their first-year diagnostic exams. This paper should be submitted and defended during the 4th or 5th semester in the PhD program. It 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.

A Qualifying Paper Committee Form should be submitted to the PhD advisor by Friday of the 7th week of the 3rd semester. On this form, the student should obtain signatures from the committee members indicating their unanimous approval of the QP topic.

At the end of the 3rd 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 3rd semester based on this report and the committee members’ evaluation of the student’s progress. A second assessment will take place at the end of the 4th semester, which again will be based on the committee members’ evaluation of the student’s progress. It is the student’s responsibility to discuss specific expectations for demonstrating sufficient progress on this paper with each of the committee members. (The second assessment may be waived if the student successfully submits and defends the QP during the 4th semester.) If a student’s committee determines that insufficient progress has been made by the end of the 4th semester, the student will not be considered to be making acceptable progress toward the degree, and funding may be suspended until acceptable progress is made. The QP must be submitted (again, to the PhD advisor) and defended before the end of the student’s 5th semester of doctoral studies.

The QP and defense will be graded as High Pass (HP), Pass (P), Low Pass (LP), and Fail (F). In order to successfully pass the QP, students must receive a grade of LP or higher from each committee member. (Students with grades of LP may be required to complete additional work on the paper within a reasonable amount of time.) Any student who has not completed the QP requirements by the end of the 5th semester may have their funding suspended or may be dismissed from the PhD program.