Assessment Review Report  
Ph.D. Program in Linguistics

Assessment: Second Examination

1. Description: The Program’s Second Exam consists of a written Qualifying Paper and critically includes an oral defense. It is designed to evaluate students’ ability to conceptualize and conduct original research and empirical studies in any area of linguistics chosen by the student, and to present and defend this research to an audience including non-specialists.

2. Learning Goals of the Second Exam: The Second Exam is designed to assess the following objectives stated in the Program Learning Goals: “Students must be able to conceptualize and design research projects and, in the case of experimental and large-scale data analysis studies, demonstrate mastery of a range of methods and analytical procedures. They should demonstrate the ability to construct linguistic arguments in line with scientific principles of hypothesis testing, present original research to an audience at professional conferences and write research papers for submission to peer-reviewed journals.”

The purpose of the Second Exam is to ensure that the student has achieved the necessary competence in his/her focus of specialization to carry out dissertation research. The Second Exam consists of a Qualifying Paper (QP) in any area of linguistics. In line with the Program Learning Goals, the student must show the ability to formulate hypotheses and design and conduct a feasible research project based on these hypotheses. The Second Exam includes an oral presentation of the QP and a question period. The outcome of the Second Exam is the Dissertation Proposal to be defended in the following semester.

3. Assessment Procedure

Last year the Program conducted a survey of students who were at Level 2, that is, who had passed the first exam, but not yet the second exam. Of the 26 students so identified, 17 (65%) were past the 9th semester and 11 (42%) had received a SAT PROG report. It was determined that too much time lapses between passing the first exam and taking the second exam (average: 4 semesters). The Curriculum and Examination committee, which includes 4 student members, met to suggest measures to shorten this time. Student feedback indicated that additional structure and scaffolding of the preparation and writing of the QP2 might prove beneficial. The addition of a statement of objectives, including a checklist and a suggested timeline for QP2 completion were recommended. The following guidelines are now in place:

a. a statement of objectives approved by the 2nd exam committee and handed in to the EO 5 weeks after the last day of classes of the semester following satisfactory completion of the 1st exam. (This effectively encourages the student to develop ideas for the QP2 in the semester following the passing of the QP1)

b. monthly meetings with the primary advisor
c. independent study credit with primary advisor to write the QP2
d. timeline to prepare statement of objectives (see below)

Below are the checklist and timeline as they appear on our website

**Checklist**
1. Develop ideas for QP2.
2. Select primary advisor.
3. Consult with primary advisor to select other Advisory Committee members and have Executive Officer approve Advisory Committee.
4. Write draft of Statement of Objectives.
5. Get Statement of Objectives approved by Advisory Committee.
6. Submit Statement to Executive Officer one month after exam period of the semester following satisfactory completion of QP1.
7. Meet with primary advisor on a monthly basis.
8. Meet at least once with full Advisory Committee.
9. Schedule QP2 defense and submit final draft to Advisory Committee at least 3 weeks before defense.

**Timeline**
*(Semester After Passing QP1)*

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<th>Passed</th>
<th>QP1 month after Exam Period</th>
<th>Exam Period</th>
<th>Submit one</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passed</th>
<th>Develop ideas for QP2</th>
<th>Select primary advisor</th>
<th>Select Committee to EO via APO</th>
<th>Write draft Statement of Objectives</th>
<th>Get Statement approved by Committee</th>
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4. Outcome:
Since the implementation of the new guidelines, 8 students have taken and passed the second exam. The average time elapsed between first and second exams for this group is 2.7 semesters, reduced from the 4-semester average observed prior to the new guidelines. We thus consider this assessment exercise to have been successful.