As a culminating experience, M.A. candidates in the Department of Linguistics and Language Development may elect either to take the Comprehensive Examination (Plan B) or to write a Master's Thesis (Plan A), not both. The thesis option should not be chosen lightly. Students wishing to write a thesis must:

1) Have a specific research question that they wish to explore.

2) Have demonstrated the capacity to write well and complete projects on time, and have received adequate preparation to do effective research.

3) Find an LLD tenured or tenure track faculty member who is interested in and knowledgeable on that topic, willing to guide the student, and available for three consecutive semesters (not counting summer and winter) in order to help the student develop a viable proposal and chair their committee.

4) Register for from one to three units of LLD 298 or LING 298: Individual Studies in order to explore the feasibility of the research question. This work should be guided by the faculty member who will be the student's thesis chair if the student decides to submit a thesis proposal. (298 units count as elective credit whether a thesis proposal is submitted or not.) (This step may not be necessary if the student has already worked on the research question as part of a term paper for a class and the thesis chair agrees that the student can work independently to develop the proposal.)

5) Find at least two other faculty members to build a thesis committee. These can be from LLD or another department depending on the topic, who are also interested in and knowledgeable on the topic, willing to assist the student, and available for the two consecutive semesters during which the student will be writing the thesis. According to University guidelines, 50% of the committee, that is TWO members, must consist of tenured or tenure-track faculty; the third member may be part-time faculty. Committee members must be approved by the chair of your committee.

6) File an "Intent to Submit a Thesis Proposal" form in the LLD office by the intent deadline (the same as the Comps petition deadline).

7) Read the Thesis Guidelines from the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs (http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/gradstudies/thesis/index.html)

8) Submit to the chair of the thesis committee three copies of a thesis proposal five pages in length (double-spaced) plus a bibliography. Proposals should follow the following format:

   0. Cover sheet with the proposed title, your name, and the date
   1. Need for the study
   2. Overview of the literature
   3. Research question(s) or hypothesis(es)
   4. Research design (method of data collection and method of data analysis)
   5. Timeline for completion
   6. Bibliography (of books, chapters, and journal articles) – in two parts:
      a. References already read
      b. Potentially relevant references

Proposals are due to the thesis committee chair during the semester in which the student is taking LLD/LING 298 or the semester s/he filed the “Intent to Do a Master’s Thesis” form if the student is not taking 298 units. The thesis committee chair will then confer with the members of the proposed thesis committee to see if they feel that the thesis proposal is viable and compelling enough for the student to pursue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 1: Student submits draft proposal to committee</td>
<td>April 1: Student submits draft proposal to committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 15: Committee members provide feedback to student</td>
<td>April 15: Committee members provide feedback to student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 30: Student submits final proposal to committee</td>
<td>April 30: Student submits final proposal to committee</td>
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**Note:** In case the methodology of the proposed thesis requires use of human subjects, then approval must be obtained from the Human Subject Review Board. When the thesis proposal is submitted to the chair of the thesis committee, the student must attach a note stating whether or not Human Subject approval will be necessary for the thesis research and, if so, when the protocol will be submitted to the Human Subject Review Board. (Within two weeks...
of submitting the thesis proposal to the chair of the thesis committee would be an appropriate time frame.) Also note that the student and the chair of the thesis committee must take an on-line short course and test in order to be certified by IRB prior to submitting the protocol for review by IRB. The “Human Subjects – Institutional Review Board Packet for Investigators” is available in Graduate Studies, Student Services Center, or on-line at http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/Research/irb.html.

9) If the proposal is accepted, register for one to three units of LING/LLD 299: Master's Thesis in the semester after doing LING/LLD 298. Please note that (a) students may take a total of six units of 298/299 in their university career, and (b) 299 units will count as elective credits after the Master's Thesis has officially been accepted; until that time, students will receive a RP (Report Pending) grade in 299.

10) Develop a draft thesis and share it with all committee members, allowing enough time for them to provide feedback and for the student to make substantive as well as editorial changes before the deadline for the final thesis.

11) Submit a completed thesis to the Graduate Studies office in the required format and by the deadlines. A copy of “Master’s Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation Guidelines” can be obtained here and on this link http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/docs/2016_Thesis_Guidelines.pdf

A typical timeline for thesis completion would be the following:

**Semester A:** Locate a potential thesis chair; sign up for from 1 to 3 units of LING/LLD 298: Special Studies (Credit/No Credit); explore the feasibility of the research question; locate at least two other committee members and obtain approval for them; file an "Intent to submit a Thesis Proposal"; read the Master’s Thesis Guidelines; submit a thesis proposal by November 1st (for Fall) or April 1st (for Spring) of the 298 semester.

**Semester B:** Sign up for from 1 to 3 units of LING/LLD 299: Master's Thesis (Credit/No Credit); do data collection and analysis; begin writing.

**Semester C:** If you had not taken up to 3 units of 298, sign up for from 1 to 3 units of LING/LLD 299; finish writing; submit draft to thesis chair; revise draft; submit revised draft to all committee members, allowing at least 2 weeks for them to review and provide feedback; do final revisions based on their feedback; submit final copy to Graduate Studies by the university deadline (ca. April 1st for Spring semester and Nov. 1st for Fall semester. Check the Graduate Studies website for more information on guidelines and submission dates by visiting: http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/gradstudies/thesis/thesis_deadlines/index.html

**Additional Information**

Sample theses may be found at the SJSJ Scholarworks site at this link http://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/do/search?q=linguistics%20theses&start=0<context=1551039. Students are urged to look at several theses during the 298 semester in order to gain an idea of the quality and quantity of work required.

The LLD-approved style guide is American Psychological Association (APA). The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association is available in the Spartan Bookstore as a reasonable price.

Thesis work must be original. Please consult the university website on academic integrity and the Catalog at: http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-14656.14936.14940.html

A thesis is in the public domain. The completed thesis will be filed in the university library and must reflect current research on the topic. The fact that the San José State University library may not have certain references will not excuse thesis writers from including those references in the thesis; that is, thesis writers must be prepared to use interlibrary loan or to visit other libraries in the area for research purposes, as they will inevitably need to do so.

In case the thesis is not completed and approved by Graduate Studies within the semester that the student is enrolled in a 299 course, the student will receive an RP grade and would need to register for 1 unit of LING/LLD 290 through special sessions during the following semester if the student is not enrolled in any other course during that semester. For more information see the Catalog at: http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-14656.14815.14850.html

_Last revised: 11/2016_