

Linguistics Graduate Student Handbook

2024-2025

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How to Find Information

- For questions about academic policies and progress:
 - ask the **Departmental Program Specialist** (Zoe Lo zhaolo@usc.edu)
 - ask the **Director of Graduate Studies** (Mary Byram Washburn byram@usc.edu)
 - check the Graduate School Graduate Student Handbook
 - <https://graduateschool.usc.edu/current-students/guidelines-and-forms/>
- For questions about your stipend and funding from awards and travel funding:
 - Ask the Departmental Program Specialist
- For questions about room scheduling and reimbursements:
 - ask the **Office Manager** Guillermo Ruiz gruiz@usc.edu
- Forms
 - department website > research > forms
 - <https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/graduate-student-resources/>
 - Graduate School
 - Most Qualls and Dissertation paperwork is through the Graduate School.
 - <https://graduateschool.usc.edu/current-students/guidelines-and-forms/>
- Policies come from three sources:
 - Department of Linguistics (<https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/>)
 - Your representation: GSIL
 - President: Metehan Oguz (moguz@usc.edu)
 - Graduate School (<https://graduateschool.usc.edu/>)
 - Your representation: GSG (<https://gsg.usc.edu/>)
 - *Deadlines from the Graduate School cannot be missed or extended!*
 - USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences
 - https://catalogue.usc.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=20&ent_oid=4314&returno=8428
 - Also: the USC Graduate Student Union
 - Lead Steward in the Social Sciences: Kyle Hulburd khulburd@usc.edu
 - Graduate Students are members of the Union when RAing or TAing only (not while on Fellowship). Union contracts pertain to TAing and RAing policies. Academic policies, including criteria for progress in the program or dismissals, are not included.

Structure of the Program

Year 1: Choose an Advisor

- Deadline: last day of classes of the first year.
 - The student has the option of selecting a faculty advisor anytime during the first year.
 - The Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) will serve as a provisional advisor until the student makes a selection.
- Co-advisors are possible. It's possible to change your advisor later.
- https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2023/09/Appointment-Change_of_Advisor_form.pdf

Year 2 and 3: The Screening Process

“Before a doctoral guidance committee can be established for applicants to the Ph.D. program, a student must pass a screening procedure. This procedure consists of a review of the student's graduate work at USC by the Linguistics department faculty. The review will be based on the following criteria: course work completed, including grades and papers; faculty recommendations; and evaluation of both the M.A. research paper and a Ph.D. screening paper.” https://catalogue.usc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=20&poid=28434&returnto=8428

- The Paperwork
 - *It is the student's responsibility to hand in all forms to the Program Specialist and DGS by the deadline.*
 - *All papers and abstracts should additionally be given to the committee.*
 - *Deadlines are typically 5pm if hardcopy, midnight if electronic.*
 - Screening Guidance Committee Form
 - <https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2023/09/ScreeningCommittee-editable.pdf>
 - Human subjects/IRB
 - Note that this approval can take 4-6 weeks or longer, and required revisions will take at least 3 days to be approved. Start early, and stay in touch with your advisor as requirements and processing time can change throughout the semester.
 - <https://istar.usc.edu>
 - Report your committee members will sign for the 1st Screening (MA Screening):
 - https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2023/09/MA_screening_report-fillable-final.pdf
 - Report your committee members will sign for the 2nd Screening (PhD Screening):
 - https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2023/09/PhD_screening_report-fillable.pdf

- Coursework for each subfield:
 - <https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2024/08/screening-guide-lines.docx.pdf>
 - It is your responsibility to plan ahead to complete your coursework.
 - The chair can usually let you know whether courses will be offered next semester/year.
 - Substitutions of coursework require the approval of your committee, the GSC, and the faculty.
- Choosing a subfield
 - The M.A. research paper (screening #1) and Ph.D. screening paper (screening #2) must be in two different sub-areas of linguistics, for example: syntax and psycholinguistics, or phonology and semantics
 - Students are highly encouraged to continue working on these papers after the defense to turn them into publishable manuscripts. This is a factor to keep in mind when choosing a topic.
- Committees
 - A minimum of three screening committee members must be listed.
 - A student's Academic Advisor serves on both the first and the second screening committees (unless they are on leave), and usually chairs one of them.
 - Guidance Committee members are subject to the approval of the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC).
 - Meet with your committee during the process of writing your paper!
- Defense
 - Begin arranging the time/place for your defense *immediately* once you've submitted the paper (or before...)
 - The Office Manager can help with classroom scheduling.
 - Outcomes for the defense:
 - *Pass*: Your paper and overall progress recommend that you continue in the program.
 - For the MA screening, you will be automatically awarded an Masters degree.
 - *No Pass, With Option to Resubmit*: Your paper and overall progress do not currently recommend that you continue in the program, but the committee feels that you might be able to improve the paper enough that it is satisfactory. The committee will determine the deadline for when the revision should be submitted.
 - Note that this is NOT an extension. It doesn't affect any other deadlines. For instance, the second screening or quals would be due on schedule.
 - *No Pass*: Your paper and overall performance do not recommend that further progress is possible.
 - *Terminal MA*: This option is only available for the MA screening. The committee recommends that you have earned a Masters

degree, but further progress is not possible. If this option is not selected for the MA screening, then a Masters degree will not be awarded.

- Extensions for any of the screening deadlines (abstract, paper, or defense):
 - Talk to your committee members asap if you think an extension is needed!
 - Complete the Screening Extension Request and Completion Form and email it to the GSC, with your advisor CC'ed:
https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2023/09/Screening_Extension_Request_and_Completion_Plan.pdf
 - Completion Plan and new Screening Due Date are approved by:
 - For extensions less than one week: by the Screening Committee
 - For extensions more than one week but less than the end of the original semester (for spring- May 15th): by the Screening Committee
 - mandatory consultative meeting with the GSC
 - If the new date would be after the end of the semester of the original due date and for all further extensions once the project is beyond the semester of the original due date: by the Screening Committee and a majority of the primary appointed full faculty
 - Extensions on one part of screening do not extend to other parts.
 - *ex: A 2 week extension on the abstract doesn't make the screening paper due 2 weeks later. OR A one semester extension on Screening1 doesn't make Screening2 due a semester later.*

Second Year timeline: [First Screening Paper \('MA Screening'\)](#)

- Fall 2nd year
 - First Screening Guidance Committee Form due in November
 - *Meet with your committee regularly throughout the process.*
 - First Screening Abstract due in December.
- Spring 2nd year
 - **LING 610**
 - IRB forms, it is *highly recommended*, should be submitted by the end of the 3rd week of classes. Approval can take 4 weeks.
 - **First Screening Paper Due in March.**
 - Second Screening Guidance Committee Form due in May.
 - First Screening Defended by Friday before the last week of classes.

Third Year timeline: [Second Screening Paper \('PhD Screening'\)](#)

- Fall 3rd year
 - **LING 610**
 - *It is possible to submit your 2nd Screening Paper during the Fall.*
 - Second Screening Abstract due in September.
- Spring 3rd year
 - IRB forms, it is *highly recommended*, should be submitted by the end of the 1st week of classes. Approval can take 4 weeks.

- o **Second Screening Paper due in March**, the Friday before Spring Break.
- o Second Screening Defended by the Friday before the last week of classes.

Year 4: Qualifying

- Paperwork
 - *These are graduate school deadlines so they are not negotiable at all!*
 - The linguistics Post Code for this paperwork is 425.
 - Appointment of Committee
 - *An accurate form needs to be turned in 1 month before the defense.*
 - *The chair and the dean need to sign it BEFORE your defense!*
 - https://graduateschool.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Appointm ent_Change_of_Committee_Form_Qualifying.pdf
 - Report on Qualifying Exam
 - Your committee will sign this after your defense.
 - Generated by the program specialist (you can't touch it) so she needs to know your defense date 1 month before!
- Register for GRSC 800a,b,z
 - Needed to maintain continuous enrollment during quals (It's worth 6 units.)
 - not otherwise required
 - The expectation is that you will need *at most* 2 semesters of GRSC 800 (a,b).
 - If you need to take a third semester of GRSC 800 (GRSC 800z), you will receive a warning letter. This is required by the Graduate School.
- Timeline: **8 week process!**
 - *Ex: if you defend on May 1st, you'd need to submit your prospectus by March 1st.*
 - Which means your committee should have a draft by mid February.
 - At the latest, March 16th (60 days prior to May 15th): Dissertation Prospectus
 - The Dissertation Prospectus will be expected to have preliminary results/a preliminary analysis/data to be analyzed.
 - It's helpful to think of it like a grant proposal.
 - Individual sub-disciplines and advisers will have different formatting expectations for the Dissertation Prospectus. *Be sure that you talk to your adviser and committee members about what they are expecting!*
 - A draft of this should be given to your committee at least 2 weeks before your official submission.
 - 2 weeks later: Committee Questions to Student
 - Based on the topics in the Prospectus
 - 30 days later: Student Response to Questions
 - By May 15th and 2 weeks after student responds: Oral Defense
 - Start scheduling this at least a month in advance!

Student submits prospectus		Day 1
Committee reads prospectus	Committee has max 2 weeks to write questions	Day 1-Day 14

Questions sent to student	Student has 30 days to answer questions (cannot be less!)	Day 14
Answers sent to committee	Committee has max 2 weeks to read answers before defense	Day 14-Day 44
Defense		Day 58 (cannot be over 60)

- Quals committee
 - Exactly 5 people
 - A remote defense is allowed; no special permissions/paperwork is required.
 - Inside Members: joint or full appointment in linguistics dept.
 - The committee chair and at least two additional members must be.
 - If joint appointment, this person cannot be switched to be an Outside Member if they are included on your Dissertation Committee.
 - External Member: Not part of USC [external members are not required]
 - You **need** an Outside Member (Joint appointment in ling or fully outside linguistics dept).
 - If joint appointment, this person cannot be switched to be an Inside Member if they are included on your Dissertation Committee.

Year 5: Dissertation

- Paperwork
 - *These are graduate school requirements so they are not negotiable at all!*
 - *Everything is through the Thesis Center:* <http://grad.usc.edu/ThesisCenter>
 - The General Linguistics PhD POST Code for this paperwork is 425.
 - All forms, steps of the process, and deadlines: <https://graduateschool.usc.edu/current-students/thesis-dissertation-submission/>
 - The Checklist consists of:
 - Appointment of Committee
 - https://graduateschool.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Appointment_Change_of_Committee_Form_Doctoral.pdf
 - This PDF is first given to the program specialist.
 - You'll then enter this information manually into the Thesis Center, but what you enter must match the PDF you submitted.
 - Certificate of Completion of Survey of Earned Doctorates
 - <https://sed-ncses.org/login.aspx>
 - Once you complete the survey, you'll be emailed a pdf saying so. Upload this pdf to the Thesis Center.
 - Approval to Submit
 - Student will create this form when registering with the Thesis Center. You'll need the names, emails, and appointment type (ex: associate professor) of your committee members.
- LING 794a,b,c,z

- You must enroll for this twice (794a and b) before you are eligible to submit your dissertation.
- The graduate school requires the department to send students in their 7th+ year a letter of warning.
- Dissertation committee
 - 3-5 people
 - Inside Members: joint or full appointment in linguistics dept.
 - The committee chair and the majority of the committee must be inside.
 - Inside Members from *your* quals must remain Inside if included
 - External Member: Not part of USC [external members are not required]
 - You **need** an Outside Member (primary appointment outside linguistics dept).
 - Joint appointed faculty (less than half appointment in ling) can be outside
 - Outside Members from *your* quals committee must remain Outside
 - Dissertation chair and student must be physically present for the Defense.
 - Fully virtual defenses are only possible with permission- talk to the GSC.
- Dissertation Formatting
 - Look here:
 - https://graduateschool.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Manuscript_Form_atting_and_Documentation_Styles.pdf
 - Linguistics does not require a signature page.
- Process
 - Read through this before beginning the process of dissertation submission:
 - <https://graduateschool.usc.edu/current-students/thesis-dissertation-submission/guidelines-to-submission/>
 - 1) Send drafts of each chapter to your advisor (and committee members) as you work on them. You are ready to schedule your defense when your advisor and you think the manuscript is ready.
 - 2) Confer with your committee to schedule your defense.
 - a. The process from manuscript submission to diploma has been taking about 8 weeks so the Graduate School recommends that you schedule your defense no later than Oct. 1 for a Fall semester conferral, March 1 for the Spring semester, and June 1 for Summer.
 - b. It's alright, though, if your diploma is not issued in the semester that you submit. Your dissertation will be processed as soon as it's received anytime of the year, and when the submission is received, you'll be able to request a Certificate of Completion that demonstrates that you have a Doctorate Degree while waiting for the diploma itself to be issued.
 - 3) Give your dissertation to your committee at least 2 weeks before the defense.
 - 4) Checklist (see Forms above) and register with the Thesis Center.
 - a. On the day of the defense (not before), student clicks a button in Thesis Center that sends the form to their committee members. Student will get an email every time one of the committee members approves. They should monitor the approvals to ensure that everyone has signed.
 - 5) Manuscript Submission

- a. This can only be done once the committee has signed the Approval to Submit Form. This form usually takes about a week to process once the committee signs it.
- b. The Manuscript will be checked for formatting and errors, and you'll be sent an email telling you to check your Thesis Center account for any changes that need to be made. There may be multiple rounds.
- c. Library submission is done automatically once the document is in its final form. This is the Degree Conferral Date.
- d. Diplomas are conferred only at the end of a semester, but you can request a Certificate of Completion (that demonstrates your degree the same as a diploma) as soon as your dissertation has been accepted.
 - We recommend that you register with ProQuest as well, but this is up to you.
- Dissertation filing fee:
 - Filing a dissertation involves a fee (around \$115). We have made arrangements for the department to pay this on the behalf of the students filing their dissertations. Write the Office Manager when you are submitting the Checklist to request that this be paid. Otherwise, you will be charged.
- Deadlines for degree conferral can be found here:
 - <https://graduateschool.usc.edu/current-students/thesis-dissertation-submission/submission-deadlines/>

Keeping Track of Your Progress

- *Meet with your advisor regularly!*
 - How is your publication and presentation record shaping up? What have you accomplished this semester? Are you on track with your screening and quals papers? Are there any concerns your advisor would like to make you aware of? How can you and your advisor work together to make sure that you get the most out of your grad school experience?
- The Student Progress Meeting is always held on the Monday of the last day of classes, in every semester. This is when the faculty discuss among themselves every student in the program and how they are doing.
 - Before then, schedule a meeting with your advisor to take place during the last week of classes so that you can discuss what was said during the Student Progress Meeting. It's a good idea to bring your CV as well when you meet with your advisor.
 - You will receive an email after the meeting that documents the general feedback on your progress. There are only two versions of this email: the "satisfactory progress" version and the "cause for concern" version. For more detailed feedback, the GSC recommends meeting with your advisor.

Choosing Classes

Students pursuing the Ph.D. in Linguistics are required to complete a minimum of 60 units of course work beyond the baccalaureate. Students are also required to take three 600-level seminars in Linguistics (610 doesn't count starting with the 2019 cohort) and a minimum of 4 units of 794 Doctoral Dissertation (2 classes).

https://catalogue.usc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=16&poid=21056&returnto=6417

- Be sure to always register by the end of the previous semester so that your stipend is never delayed, and you don't incur any late fees (which you'd be responsible for).
 - *Remember that you need to fill out the **Advisor Approval** form for your classes!*
 - https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2023/09/Advisor_Approval_Form-Fillable.pdf
- Continuous Enrollment/Full Time Status is 6 units in the Fall and 6 in the Spring; or GRSC 800 or LING 794. This is especially important for International Students.
- **Courses outside the Department**
 - *Tell the program specialist whenever you take a course outside the department!*
 - These often have more units, so you will be charged unless you do this.
 - You'll need to write to that department to get D-clearance.
- **Tuition refund insurance:** You don't need it, so waive it.
- Check your STARS report often; tell the program specialist *immediately* if something's off.
- You have access to 12 units each semester automatically. Additional units and summer units are possible, but contact your advisor and the program specialist well before class begins.
 - Undergraduate courses can be taken, but credit cannot be applied to the PhD.
- Semester 1
 - LING 530 – Syntax 3 Units
 - LING 531a – Phonology 3 Units
 - LING 505a 1 Unit
 - Students should also enroll in two or three additional courses selected in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee or the faculty advisor.
- By end of year 3: Semesters 2-6
 - LING 534 – Semantics 3 Units
 - LING 576 – Psycholinguistics 3 Units
 - LING 580 – General Phonetics 3 Units
- Lab Classes
 - LING 506–PhonLunch (Phonology and Phonetics) 2 Units
 - LING 507–S-Side Story (Syntax and Semantics) 2 Units
 - LING 508–Psycholinguistics Lab 2 Units
 - Students must register for at least one of these each semester. (Unless you are already taking 12 units' worth of other regularly-scheduled classes, which does not include credits from Directed Reading/Directed Research classes.)
 - Students are encouraged to register for as many lab classes as they regularly attend, but students may also attend (regularly or drop-in) labs they aren't registered for..

- Special Classes
 - LING 505a Intro to the ling. professional world semester 1
 - LING 593x Teaching practicum semester 3
 - LING 505b Advice about looking for a job Year 4 or 5
 - LING 610 Support during screening semesters 4,5
 - GRSC 800a,b,z Qualifying semesters 7, 8
 - LING 794a,b,c,z Dissertation semesters 9, 10
 - LING 590/595/790 Directed Reading/Research (590&790: P/NP)
 - GRSC 802 for students on campus over the summer

Funding

Check your financial account regularly, let the program specialist know immediately if you see anything odd.

Typical Funding Schedule:

- Year 1: Fellowship provided by the department
- Year 2-4: TAship
- Year 5: Fellowship provided by the department

TAships

- If you are in Year 2-4, you receive your TAship by responding to the email asking for your schedule and then accepting your TA offer letter in a timely manner when it is emailed to your USC account (usually June).
- *TAs/RAs are paid on a 9-month schedule (½ Aug, Sept-April, ½ May) so be sure to **save for summer!** You will not receive a payment in June or July and only half in Aug and May!*
 - Fellowships are a 12 month schedule. (Fellowships come from the Graduate School while TA/RAships are distributed by Dornsife.)
- LING 593x will help teach you what to do.
 - Also more experienced TAs in your class and the professor you are TAing for.
- On average, this work should not exceed 20 hrs/week.
- Note that you are taxed differently when TAing than when on Fellowship.
- You are responsible for certain University fees during TAships. (These are covered when you are on Fellowship.)
- If you are an international student, you will need to check with the business office before beginning to TA to make sure that you are cleared to work.
 - Note: the Social Security Administration requires that you set up an appointment to receive a Social Security Number within 3 months of the date on your offer letter. (Offer letters are dated for June so this needs to be done before Sept.)

Travel and Research Funding

- From the department: each student is eligible for \$1700/year to use for professional travel or research expenses.
 - *All forms and questions should be directed to the Program Specialist.*
 - *For Travel Expenses:*
 - *You are required to apply for any grants offered by the conference/school.*
 - At least 3 weeks before you go: Fill out the Pre-Travel Approval Form, and have your advisor sign it.
 - <https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2024/09/Pre-Travel-Form.pdf>

- While you're traveling: Put expenses on credit/debit card (for GSG) and keep receipts for eligible expenses.
 - Eligible expenses include: airfare, gas, hotel, meals (no alcohol), conference registration, poster printing (for LING, not GSG)
 - As soon as you get back: Fill out the Travel Expense Report
 - <https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2023/09/dc-travel-expense-042513.pdf>
 - Include your receipts, taped to a piece of paper. Make a copy for yourself!
 - o For Research Expenses:
 - Before you need the funds: Fill out the Pre-Research Approval Form, have your advisor sign it, and submit it to the Chair. Once approved, submit it to the Program Specialist.
 - <https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2024/09/Pre-Research-Form.pdf>
 - Research funds are distributed at the discretion of the Chair and GSC.
 - Eligible expenses include: participant fees, language consultant fees, cloud storage, computing fees, purchase of specialized equipment (ex: speakers), and software. A student may use these funds to partially/fully cover the cost of a new computer once while in the program.
 - Please note: It is required by federal laws as well as USC policies that all researchers obtain the relevant approvals before conducting human subjects research. This can be relevant for many subfields, including psycholinguistics, phonetics and fieldwork/work with language consultants. Your advisor and/or screening chair can provide guidance on whether this applies to your work and, if applicable, how to obtain approval. Approvals are not granted retroactively.
- USC Linguistics Department Research Development Award
 - o At the end of every academic year, if there's leftover funds in the account, students can apply for up to \$1000 to cover any expenses beyond \$1700.
 - o Expenses must be incurred between Aug. 1st of the previous year and July 31st of the current year.
 - If student has not reached the \$1700 cap, they should use the normal pre-travel and pre-research forms, even for summer expenses.
- From the Graduate Student Government (GSG)
 - o Look here for forms and policies: <https://gsg.usc.edu/student-resources/>
 - o Only after student has exhausted their departmental funds
 - Office Manager can give you a letter saying this.
 - o Each student is eligible for up to \$500/year for travel or other professional activities through the *Professional Development Fund* <https://gsg.knack.com/gsg-academic#program-information/>
 - Submit receipts from up to 6 mths ago or for future expenses anticipated within the next 6 mths in September or March only.
 - o GSIL can help with the process.

- **For travel outside the US:** USC requires the *Independent Student Travel Registration* form. Allow 4 weeks for processing. (Not required for domestic and personal travel.)
 - <https://studenttravelabroad.usc.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.ViewProgramAngular&id=10161>
 - Zoe Lo is the Department Staff Advisor for purposes of the form.
 - USC can prohibit certain travel. Travel restrictions are determined by looking at the US State Department Travel Advisories. Countries at a Level 4 are generally prohibited. Level 3 requires a conversation with USC admin demonstrating the necessity of the trip. Level 1 and 2 are generally allowed.
 - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

Other Funding Opportunities

RAships

- RAships are determined by the lab director. It's based on the lab's funding. They usually hire from within the set of students already doing research with the lab.
- A note on time off: As per Article 17 of the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with Local 872 (the union representing USC's graduate student workers), graduate student workers are entitled to take off those university holidays noted in the [academic calendar](#). Only those days explicitly noted as university holidays are covered under this provision. (Aka: it must say "holiday." Spring break, for ex, is not included.) Where graduate student workers are not able to observe a holiday due to the obligations of their appointment, they will be provided another day off in lieu during the same semester with the advance agreement of their designated faculty supervisor, and as needed, the Director of Graduate Studies. Please consult the CBA for additional information regarding leaves and requests for time off. Students not represented by the unit should discuss holidays with their designated faculty supervisor, and as needed, the Director of Graduate Studies.
 - This applies to TAs and ALships as well.

Other USC Fellowships (ex: Advanced Fellowships and Summer Funding)

- There will be periodic emails informing you of fellowship opportunities. These range from \$1000 for a specific project to a full year's funding. Each of these will have their own requirements.
 - It's recommended that you have an updated CV and a 1-2 page description of your research ready by the end of January for applying to any of these fellowships. The deadlines for these can be very fast!
 - *Do not wait* for the official announcement to start working on this.
 - Remember that these should be accessible to non-linguists.
 - Consult with your advisor when writing these applications!

External Nationally Competitive Scholarships

- USC offers a bootcamp every August for incoming and 2nd year students for applying to the NSF, GRFP, Ford, and Soros Fellowships. Sign-ups will happen in June. You'll be sent an email when it's available.

- This bootcamp is *highly* recommended!

Summer

- See “Other USC Fellowships” above for grant opportunities information
- A note on working over the summer:
 - Students receiving support as Graduate Assistants (RA, TA, and ALs) with a 50% appointment and PhD students with fellowships may work additional hours beyond the 20-hour maximum, up to an average of 40 hours per week in other on-campus or off-campus roles.
 - Students who have received offers of full-time employment off-campus during the summer semester may not simultaneously hold positions as Graduate Assistants or PhD Fellows. Students who wish to decline summer support from USC in favor of full-time off-campus employment or internships will be asked to confirm their decision in writing. This information will be archived in the student’s Advise USC file.
 - International students should consult the Office of International Services website regarding summer employment options.

GSG (Graduate Student Government) opportunities

- Childcare subsidy
 - \$1800 per semester max to assist with daycare costs
 - Usually due about a month into the semester.
 - <https://gsg.knack.com/tg#policies/>
- Emergency Fund
 - \$1000/student/year
 - Example emergencies: DACA renewal fees, natural disasters, asylum seeking, travel expenses related to the White House travel ban, certain legal fees, certain medical expenses
 - <https://gsg.usc.edu/student-resources/>

Leaves of Absence

- Talk this over with the GSC and your advisor right away if you are considering leaving the program for a while.
 - Form: https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2023/09/Leave_of_Absence_Form_for_Linguistics.pdf
 - Health insurance is available for a fee.
 - There is a Health Leave of Absence that includes health insurance and a stipend (1 semester) in extreme health situations.
- Parental Leaves of Absence:
 - Let the DGS (Mary) and the program specialist know.
 - <https://gsg.usc.edu/grad-student-parents-resources/>

Advising and TAing Expectations

Advising Expectations

- Advisers and their Student Advisee should:
 - Be in regular communication (ex: meet every other week for an hour and/or exchange detailed email updates once a week)
 - Students should ask their advisor(s) and committee members what their expectations are for how often and by which method they will be communicating
 - Choose the student's classes together each semester
 - The advisor must give approval for the student's classes:
https://dornsife.usc.edu/ling/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2023/09/Advisor_Approval_Form-Fillable.pdf
 - Consult during the development of every major paper for the department: MA screening, PhD screening, Quas prospectus, Dissertation.
 - The student should seek feedback about these manuscripts from their advisor and then respond to that feedback through multiple drafts.
 - Consult during the development of conference presentations and journal articles
 - Like with department papers, the student should seek feedback about these submissions from their advisor and then respond to that feedback through multiple drafts.
- The Student can expect that their Advisor:
 - Will provide personalized feedback and advice about the student's progress in the program during relevant meetings
 - Will arrange a time when the student requests a meeting
 - Remember though that the meeting might need to be scheduled a week or more after when it was requested so the student should give as much notice as possible.
 - Will respond to email communications from the student
 - Within a week is usually a reasonable time period, but, depending on schedules and the detail of the response required, more time might be needed.
 - Will read drafts and provide feedback for all major department papers (not term papers), conference presentation submissions, and journal article submissions.
 - The student should remind the advisor of any deadlines when requesting feedback and ask when feedback might be available.
 - Within two weeks is usually a reasonable time period but this varies widely and, depending on schedules and the length of the draft, more time might be required.
 - Will guide the student through the conference and journal submission process
 - Will provide feedback on any funding application
- The Advisor can expect that their Student Advisee:
 - Will initiate meetings to discuss classes for the following semester before the conclusion of the current semester (so before December for Spring selections and

before April for Fall Selections: class registration should happen before the last week of classes of the previous semester. See Choosing Classes)

- Will initiate meetings to discuss their progress in the program
 - After the student progress meeting at the end of each semester is a good time to ask for this meeting.
- Will ask for meetings during the drafting of any major departmental paper or conference/journal submission.
 - It's a good idea to provide your advisor with a range of possible meeting times over both the current week and the following week.
- Send their advisor regular drafts of any major departmental paper, conference/journal submission, or funding application
 - The student should generally anticipate that it will take the advisor at least 2 weeks to read any draft, but be sure to ask your advisor about when to anticipate feedback whenever requesting feedback.
- Send their advisor regular updates about their progress on any current project
- Keep current about journals, conferences, and workshops (Linguist List is a good source for this) and bring to their advisor's attention any of interest to their subject area.
 - The student is recommended to look at past issues/proceedings as well to see what kinds of work are generally accepted.
 - Advisors can provide recommendations.
- Ask for assistance whenever it is needed
 - Examples: time management, submission processes, course requirements, research methods, conference jitters, presentation design, etc
- The Advisor cannot:
 - Guarantee that a submission to a conference or journal will be accepted.
 - Guarantee that a major department paper will pass the defense.
 - Help with financial or administrative concerns (ex: fix a visa issue)
 - The student should contact the Office Manager, the Program Director or the GSC with these concerns.

TAing Expectations

- TAs and the Professor they assist should:
 - Both abide by all policies in the Teaching Assistant Handbook:
<https://graduateschool.usc.edu/current-students/guidelines-and-forms/>
 - Be in regular communication (ex: meet once a week, exchange emails before discussion/lab sections, etc)
 - TAs should ask their professor what their expectations are for how often and by which method they will be communicating. This can vary a great deal between different professors.
 - Work to ensure that the TA's workload—including lecture attendance, section attendance, meetings, and section preparation—does not, on average across the semester, exceed 20 hours a week.
 - If there is a danger of hitting this limit, the TA should keep records of when they are working and on what so that their time is documented.
- The TA can expect that the Professor they assist will:
 - *Create course syllabi, lecture the primary course material, provide grading*

standards, and bear ultimate responsibility for the content and grading of examinations -The TA Handbook

- Provide guidance about how lab/discussion sections should be structured
- Answer questions about the course material when asked
- Be a resource for the questions about teaching that the TA might have
- Provide feedback about section materials when requested
- Hold regular office hours each week
- Be solely responsible for any grade disputes
- The Professor can expect that the TA will:
 - *Be responsible for activities pertinent to the instruction and management of the course as determined by the supervising departmental faculty member.* -The TA Handbook
 - Attend the main lecture
 - And assist in supporting tasks such as handing out materials, making copies, or setting up the projector
 - Grade assignments/exams/essays/etc for the students in the TA's section in the manner that the professor specifies
 - Grade disputes should be referred to the professor.
 - Provide feedback about exams/assignments/etc when the professor requests it
 - Teach their sections to the best of their ability
 - This will often require that the TA prepare materials.
 - Answer student questions to the best of their ability
 - It's okay to not know the answer, in which case it's best that the TA refer the student to the professor.
 - Proctor exams
 - Hold regular office hours each week, as directed by the professor
 - At least one hour is required, though 2 is common
- The TA will not:
 - Create the main course syllabus or otherwise decide what material is to be taught
 - Make decisions about grade changes once a grade has been assigned
 - Grant exceptions or accommodations to students beyond what the professor has asked of them
 - Be required to teach the main lecture or create the teaching materials for it
 - Though this may optionally be offered, as a learning opportunity, in some classes
 - Be required to know more about the course material than was taught in the main lecture (ex: read additional textbooks or do research on the topic)
 - Be ultimately responsible for the content of the main lecture's exams/quizzes/etc
 - Perform tasks for the professor that are unrelated to the class

Support Systems

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-2500

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.