

# Linguistics Honors Thesis Guidelines

*Revised 31-January 2024*

1. The Linguistics Honors Committee oversees the thesis proposal process, the Fall Semester Report, and the Mid Year Review the appointment of a Supervisor and Thesis Committee for each accepted proposal. The honors committee will assess student proposals with regards to the following criteria:

- Question/plan is centered in Linguistics/Language
- Project is feasible for the timeline
- A large component is student-driven
- Project has the ability to generate new knowledge
- Feasible that the work will get honors

2. Thesis proposal: guidelines and deadline

i. A polished, clear, informative, “professional” research proposal (2pps. max), including timeline

ii. A personal statement (approx. 1 page): explaining

- the student’s goals in doing this research;
- student’s academic preparation: i.e., in Linguistics and other relevant courses
- how proposed research fits with student’s academic program

iii. A current transcript

iv. A recommendation from the proposed thesis supervisor (150 words approx.), including itemized expectations for the thesis process and schedule of deadlines.

The proposal will be submitted to the Director of the Linguistics Honors Committee via email to Prof. Iyabo Osiapem ([ifosiapem@wm.edu](mailto:ifosiapem@wm.edu)).

There are two deadlines:

1. For those applying for Charles Center Summer Research funding please submit it 3 weeks before the Charles Center deadline. Student's applying for Charles Center Summer Research funding must submit proposals to the Linguistics Honors Committee (email Prof Osiapem) three weeks prior to the CC deadline, which changes annually
  2. If you’re not applying for funding, the final deadline for submission of thesis proposal is 1<sup>st</sup> week after graduation (although earlier submission is strongly encouraged, given Charles Center’s February application deadline for funding).
- Committee will ordinarily respond within 2 weeks of receiving the proposal. The committee may reach out to students to clarify their proposal or to respond to specific questions the

committee has. This is more of a dialog between the student and committee about the research process and should not be viewed as a critique. Decisions will be communicated to the student via email.

3. In evaluating the proposal, the Honors Committee will look for the following:

- Evidence of strong performance in Linguistics courses relevant to the thesis.
- Strong thesis proposal, personal statement, and current transcript
- Strong recommendation from proposed thesis supervisor
- Evidence that the proposed project is feasible in the time allotted.

4. On the basis of its evaluation the Honors Committee may accept the proposal, reject it outright, or request revision and resubmission. If the latter, the Committee will send the student and proposed Thesis Supervisor an explanation.

5. A Thesis Supervisor must be a continuing member of the Linguistics Faculty.

- In appropriate circumstances, joint supervision may be allowed with a faculty member from outside the Linguistics Program

6. Fall Break Update

- Before Fall Break, the student should submit a 2-3 page statement of progress that contains the following information via email Ccing the Thesis Director:
  - An expected section outline of thesis and remaining timeline
  - An explanation of any significant revisions or updates to the project as originally proposed
  - A list of anticipated Committee Members
- A statement from the supervisor stating whether that they support the student's report.
- Submit this report to the Director of the Linguistics Honors Committee via email (Prof. Osiapem, [ifosiapem@wm.edu](mailto:ifosiapem@wm.edu)). A copy of the report should be also sent to the members of the thesis committee, if the committee has been selected at this point.

Winter Break Update/Mid year review

- A week before the first day of class in the spring semester, the student should submit a 2-3 page statement of progress since the Fall Break Update

- An updated timeline that includes the intended Defense date and the date for the final draft submission to the committee
- An explanation of any significant revisions or updates to the project since the Fall Break update
- The names of committee members of thesis committee (made in consultation with supervisor) including a statement that expectations for the thesis have been discussed with members of Thesis Committee (see #7 below)
- The Supervisor submits letter stating whether he or she supports the student's statement and whether he or she recommends continuation for the final semester.
- The Chair of Honors Committee asks Thesis Committee members of any concerns.
- If Honors Committee approves continuation, a message to this effect is sent to student, Supervisor, and Thesis Committee

Submit this report to the Director of the Linguistics Honors Committee via email (Prof. Osiapem, [ifosiapem@wm.edu](mailto:ifosiapem@wm.edu)). A copy of the report should be also sent to the members of the thesis committee, which has been selected and confirmed by this point.

#### 7. Constitution of Thesis Committee

- 4 faculty: 2 continuing members of the Linguistics faculty, 1 faculty member from another department/program, and the Thesis Supervisor (non-voting).

#### 9. Thesis

- Maximum length 70pps -- not including (e.g.) data presentation, appendix(ces), figures, tables, bibliography
- The format of thesis is to be determined in consultation with the Supervisor and may vary according to the topic and methodology

#### 10. Defense

- Opening presentation and oral defense (20-30 mins)
- Audience may be present for opening presentation if student and supervisor wish, but must withdraw for oral defense

#### 11. Thesis committee deliberation

- Following the oral defense, the student withdraws. The Thesis Supervisor makes a statement to Committee, providing information on the research and writing process. The Supervisor remains

in room during the Committee's deliberation and final vote but does not participate except in response to questions from the Committee.

## 12. Final decision

- The Thesis Committee bases its decision on (i) the written thesis, (ii) the presentation, (iii) the oral defense
- The Thesis Committee (not including the Supervisor) votes for or against the award of Honors.