Guidelines on the Independent Work Requirement for the LIN Certificate

Princeton Program in Linguistics

*Updated September 7, 2022*

LIN Certificate students are required to complete an independent work requirement, involving linguistic research. This requirement can be fulfilled in one of two ways:

1. by incorporating some linguistic research/work into other independent work (e.g., a JP or ST written for another department), or
2. by writing an independent paper.

Details about these two options, as well as other information about meetings and deadlines can be found below.

**Working With Faculty**

- You must contact the LIN Director of Undergraduate Studies (currently Prof. Florian Lionnet) to discuss your intentions for completing the independent work requirement.
  - Get in contact during or before Fall semester of your Senior year.

- **Before reaching out to the DUS:**
  1. Read the entirety of this guidelines document on independent work for the LIN certificate.
  2. Write 1-3 sentences (or bullet points) about a possible independent work project and any relevant hopes/plans/goals.
  3. Identify some readings, course materials, or other resources that have inspired you and that you think might be relevant for your potential projects.
  4. Write up a (informal) sketch of a plan for an independent work project and/or a set of questions you have about creating a plan (based on the work done for points 2 and 3 above).

- After completing these steps, send the sketch of a plan to the DUS, to get started.
- The DUS may then advise you to work with a member of the LIN-affiliated faculty, to have appropriate guidance in your independent work.
  - In this case, you and this faculty member should meet to discuss your plan, with an appropriate number of subsequent check-in meetings during the research process.
Finally, upon completion of the work, you should email it to the DUS (and your LIN-affiliated faculty supervisor, if applicable).

- They will review the work and determine whether or not it satisfies the requirement.

**Independent Work Options**

**Option 1: Portion of Other Independent Work**

- You may fulfill this requirement by incorporating linguistics into the independent work that you will complete for your concentration (e.g., some Junior Independent Work or a Senior Thesis).
- To count towards this requirement, your independent work should...
  - ...involve application of tools and information that you have gained in the course of your progression through your LIN certificate (by analyzing linguistic data, invoking linguistic concepts, and/or do analysis using linguistic theories).
  - ...make multiple citations to relevant works published in the domain of linguistics.
- You must submit your completed independent work to the DUS and/or your LIN-affiliated supervisor, who will determine whether it meets the requirements outlined above.

**Option 2: Independent Paper**

- If you choose an independent paper, the topic is up to you, in consultation with the LIN DUS and/or a LIN-affiliated faculty member.
- The work can build on ideas, facts, skills, and concepts that you learned in your course history, or it can even be based on an existing assignment/final paper from a previous course.
  - (In the case that you build on an existing assignment/paper, there must be significant improvement and/or expansion upon the original assignment.)
- When getting started on a topic, you may find it helpful to contact people who can help direct you to good starting points
  - (Google is usually rather bad at helping find starting points)
  - **Consider contacting Princeton faculty, Princeton research librarians (see this website: [library.princeton.edu/staff/specialists](library.princeton.edu/staff/specialists)), and even linguists and researchers beyond Princeton who have worked on topics that interest you.**
- The research work involved in your project may take on any number of forms, including: synthesizing/critiquing existing research, gathering data with experiments/surveys, measuring/quantifying/analyzing (existing) data, etc., etc.
  - The specific expectations of your research are at the discretion of the LIN-affiliated faculty member who is supervising your research.
- There is no length requirement that applies across to all cases.
The DUS or faculty supervisor will help determine a target length that will be appropriate for the project, given the work and its goals.

(For reference, a common target length may be around 10-15 pages, double-spaced.)

Submitting your Completed Work

- Submit your completed work via email to the DUS (currently Prof. Florian Lionnet), the Program Manager (currently Ms. Marie Basso), as well as any faculty member supervising the work.
- The due date for submission is at the discretion of the LIN-affiliated faculty member you are working with. Discuss this with them.
  - The latest that the deadline can be is one week before Dean’s Date of Senior year Spring.
- For both options, (the linguistic aspect of) your independent work does not receive a grade from LIN, and will not itself appear on your transcript.
  - However, it must be completed to the satisfaction of your advisor in order for you to receive your LIN Certificate.
- To avoid a situation where you submit a paper too close to the deadline and it is deemed not to be satisfactory, you are strongly encouraged to...
  - ...submit a completed draft of your independent work well ahead of the deadline and/or
  - ...be working closely with your faculty advisor to get continual feedback to ensure that your project will meet expectations.