



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
*Where leaders learn*

**2021**



**Postgraduate programme in Linguistics  
and Applied Language Studies**

**Postgraduate Handbook**

## **Welcome to the Postgraduate Programme in Linguistics!**

We sincerely hope this year will be a happy and productive year for you and that you will grow and benefit from the programme that we have put together for you. What follows is general information about the programme, the coursework modules and important dates for you to bear in mind. You should also consult the following:

- the RULearning guide from CHERTL
- the Rhodes University Calendar and
- the Higher Degrees Guide.

These are all available online. The Higher Degrees Guide is particularly important for details on the proposal and the submission process.

### **Contact Details:**

Please contact any member of staff, or specifically the course coordinator, if you have any questions.

General Departmental Telephone: +27 (0)46 603 8105

<https://www.ru.ac.za/linguisticsandappliedlanguageandliteraturestudies/studying/postgraduatestudies/>

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The Department of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Rhodes University prides itself on providing a high-quality, well-rounded, yet flexible postgraduate programme. Indeed our departmental mission statement explicitly mentions this as one of its goals:

*Building a strong post-graduate tradition by enhancing our postgraduate programme and encouraging high quality research, particularly that which has relevance in South Africa.*

We view this handbook as playing a vital part in achieving this goal in that it attempts to provide prospective and currently registered postgraduate students with information that is both necessary and useful to them. As such, suggestions for inclusions and changes to this booklet are always welcome.

More detailed information on the department and its offerings can be found on the departmental website at the following address:

<https://www.ru.ac.za/linguisticsandappliedlanguagestudies/>

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## 1. Meet the academic staff

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## 2. First steps and registration

Note that the closing date for applications for any particular year is usually 1 November, although this is subject to change. All full-time and part-time candidates, both distance and in attendance, should apply in the year prior to the commencement of their studies and report to the department a week or two prior to the beginning of the undergraduate academic year, usually at the end of January. The specific date each year is conveyed to accepted students via email before classes begin. Attendance at the department's Postgraduate Orientation Week (PG O Week) is compulsory for all students who are new to the department, or new to PG studies. If for some reason a student cannot attend the required initial meeting, we would advise them to defer their registration to the following year.

Please note that it is very important to re-register timeously in each subsequent year. The Higher Degrees Guide has the following to say:

Failure to re-register before 15 February in a given year will result in the cancellation of registration and a candidate's studies deemed to be discontinued. Such a defaulter may be required to re-apply for admission as a candidate for the degree *de novo*.

Note that for 2021, postgraduate registration begins on 18 January.

## 3. Postgraduate coursework requirements

All postgraduate students are required to do coursework in Linguistics, in addition to their research project. Only in exceptional circumstances may students who have done all their linguistic training at Rhodes be allowed to register for a thesis-only degree. Requirements for the various postgraduate degrees in Linguistics at Rhodes are the successful completion of the following:

<b>Honours:</b>	4 coursework modules PLUS the research report (Module 11) which culminates in a research report
<b>Master's</b>	4 coursework modules PLUS the research report (Module 11) which culminates in a half-thesis
<b>PhD</b>	4 coursework modules PLUS the research report (Module 11) which culminates in a full PhD thesis

All Honours students must attend and pass four coursework modules and the compulsory research report (Module 11) by the end of their Honours year.

A MA student will typically complete and pass four coursework modules, in addition to the research report module, over a period of two years. Of these modules, normally two are completed in the first year of registration; the final two in the second year. Failure to do so will result in deregistration. Module 11 is compulsory and four other modules are selected in addition. A student's performance in a module will be assessed by written work during the year and/or an examination to be written in that academic year. During the first year, the MA student will also be required to submit their research proposal for the half-thesis to the Humanities Higher Degrees Committee and possibly the University Ethics Committee. These are university committees that decide whether you can pursue your research project. During the second year, the research report will be developed into a half thesis.

PhD students will go through the same steps as a MA student, but have an additional two years to complete their theses. Failure to complete four modules in the first two years of PhD study will result in deregistration.

In addition to the modules, students are required to visit Grahamstown for two events. The PG O Week at the beginning of the academic year is compulsory for all students new to the Rhodes PG linguistics programme, but does NOT count as a module. Then usually in September of each year, all postgraduate students meet at the Postgraduate Conference to present their research to the department. These gatherings are seen as part of Module 11: the Research Project and thus do not count towards your minimum of two modules for the year as they are not completed until the end of the degree. There are also opportunities built into these gatherings for students to meet with others in the same research group, and with their supervisor(s), which is particularly useful for off-campus students. Although we appreciate that these visits add to the costs borne by students from outside Grahamstown, the value of these points of contact between staff and students is immeasurable in terms of individual progress and community building, and for these reasons they are compulsory.

We recommend that new full-time students attend at least two modules in their first year, and complete the remaining coursework in their second year. All students must tell the department in writing in February which modules they intend to take and when. Only in exceptional circumstances will deviation from this plan be allowed, as firm numbers are required for module planning. Also note that **all** postgraduate students are required to present their work at the Postgrad Conference annually for the duration of their registration. See Table 1 below for typical study structures.

### **3.1 Putting together your postgraduate study curriculum**

When you register for postgraduate studies in linguistics at Rhodes, you will be required to choose a number of study modules. Depending on your background and interests, you should carefully choose the modules that will consolidate your academic strengths, develop your weaknesses and provide you with the intellectual challenge that will carry you through your postgraduate studies. Although you won't be allocated a supervisor until after you've decided on your research area, you will have an advisor from the very beginning. This will be a member of staff who will be available to guide through the period of integration into the department, advise on practical matters and talk through the decisions you need to make. It is advisable that you choose your modules in close consultation with your advisor and/or supervisor.

Some students will be present on campus for the whole year. Others will be based off-campus and will travel to Rhodes periodically to undertake coursework. It is important to realize, however, that both on-campus and off-campus (distance) students are considered **full-time students**. The Rhodes Linguistics Department generally does not accept part-time students except in exceptional circumstances. Whether you are on or off campus, it is your responsibility to maintain contact with your advisor, your supervisor(s) and your lecturers.

Honours, Master's and PhD students attend the same seminars for their chosen coursework modules but their performance is assessed at different levels in assignments and examinations. A student who has passed a specific module for a previous degree at Rhodes may not repeat that module for credit in a later degree.

	Year 1			Year 2		Years 3 & 4
	Semester 1		Semester 2	Semester 1	Semester 2	
Hono urs stud ents	4 x Coursework modules					
	Research report					
Mast ers stud ents	4 x Coursework modules OR 2 x Coursework modules (recommended for off-campus students employed full time)			Remaining coursework modules		
	Develop a MA research proposal for half-thesis and submit it to the HCD	Present research report on pilot project at Postgrad Conference		Present results of thesis research at Postgrad Conference Write the half-thesis		
PhD stud ents	4 x Coursework modules OR 2 x Coursework modules (recommended for off-campus students working full time)			Remaining coursework modules		
	Develop a PhD research proposal for thesis and submit it to the HDC	Present research report on pilot project at Postgrad Conference		Present results of thesis research at Postgrad Conference annually Write a full thesis		

**Table 1: Typical PG Degree Structures**

### **3.1.1 Extended Modules**

For extended modules, students attend one afternoon seminar per week for 12 weeks. Teaching, preparation and assessment are distributed over these weeks. They run with the academic semesters, so the first semester modules start in February and continue until the end of May and the second semester modules run from July until the end of October. Typically, initial reading lists are supplied a week before the beginning of the module and lists for the following week are supplied at each class meeting. Written work is completed during the module.

### **3.2 Postgraduate Programme for the year**

The modules on offer are tabulated below. For more details on each, please consult the descriptions in 3.3. Note that while we will make every effort to offer the programme as is, changes may be unavoidable and the outline is thus provisional.

### **3.3 Descriptions of Coursework modules**

Students enrolled in the coursework programmes may choose from the following list of modules. Which modules are available in any given year depends on staff availability and other factors. Please confirm with the lecturer concerned or the postgraduate coordinator that a module is available before assuming that you can do it. This booklet is updated and printed only once a year; the most up-to-date information will be available online on the department's webpage and on RUConnected.

#### **3.3.1 Module 1: Introduction to Linguistics at Rhodes**

This module is compulsory for all of our postgraduate (PG) students, as it is an introduction to PG studies at Rhodes university. During this module you will be taken through our PG curriculum, which includes the requirements of your degree whether that be honours, masters or PhD. Depending on the type of degree you have registered for you will need to complete a certain amount of coursework offered in the form of our PG modules. You will be introduced to these modules by each of the lecturers at which point you will also have the opportunity to ask questions and really determine which of them would be best suited to your own research. You will attend eight sessions with our PG lecturers to discuss different aspects of your PG experience as well as what we expect from you at this level. These sessions include instruction and discussion on topics such as critical reading, managing sources, plagiarism, writing with voice and authority, research questions and research topics, proposal writing, and then the more logistical information like the function of the Higher degrees committee and applying for ethical clearance. During this module you will also have the chance to meet the staff and the other PG students beginning their degrees at the same time. Forming a good working relationship with your colleagues is very important and can provide you with the support you need to complete your degree within the designated time frame.

#### **3.3.2 Module 2: Phonetics and Phonology: descriptive and field approaches**

(Will Bennett)

South(ern) African languages are tremendously under-documented and under-described. As scientists studying Language, There's surely a lot that these languages can teach us; but in order to know what questions to ask, someone needs to do the work of establishing the basic facts first. We will contribute to this in our own small but definitive way. The overall goal of this module is to undertake a detailed description of the phonetic system of an under-studied language of Southern Africa. We will collect data from L1 speaker(s), analyze it, and assemble recordings and quantitative measurements as hard evidence for our observations. The intended aim is to, as a group, co-author a short but comprehensive description of the phonetic and phonological structures for scholars unfamiliar with the target language. Since this approach is very much data-driven, we can't be sure precisely what we'll find. But, some background knowledge of phonetics and phonology will surely serve us well, and more formalish lectures on various topics will be incorporated as we encounter a need for them.

#### **3.3.3 Module 3: Introduction to Minimalist Syntax**

(Mark de Vos)

If you are interested in the mechanics of how languages actually work at the level of the sentence, then this module is for you. At first glance, the languages of the world seem chaotic and random, filled with exceptions. So an important question to ask is whether there is anything in common between them all. After all, the entire human species has the same brain, so surely languages should have something in common? Minimalism offers a way of dealing with this problem, focusing on what all languages have in common and deriving the immense diversity from simple, elegant principles that all human languages share. As such, in a world where language is often used to differentiate people and to exclude outsiders,

Minimalism is an exploration of what unites us. The module focuses on analytical skills, puzzle solving, theory formation, testing of hypotheses and argumentation skills.

### **3.3.4 Module 4: Debates in Language Change**

Not offered in 2021.

This module explores some of the implications of Minimalism for the study of language, mind and biolinguistics. The specific topics covered are tailored to the needs of students, but topics covered may include the following: (a) The evolution of language: when did early hominids start to speak?; what did they sound like?; what were the biological prerequisites for this communicative leap?; what aspects of language are innate, and what aspects are socially learned?; what aspects of language are shared by other species? (b) The Minimalism wars: Is Minimalism a better theory? Why do so many people disagree with it?; Is linguistics 'scientific'?; what is 'science'? (c) Diachronic change: Is English really just "French with a bad accent?" How similar or different is English from the languages that were important in its development, Old French and Old Norse? How do languages change and why? Are there constraints on the ways languages change or is change simply random?

### **3.3.5 Module 5: The Acquisition of Grammar**

(Ron Simango)

This module explores the language acquisition process in normal children, including the development of morphology, syntax, and phonology. The module explores the universal characteristics which underlie the grammar of human language(s) as reflected in child language development. We will examine a variety of topics ranging from the Boot-Strapping Hypothesis, argument structure, through Structure-Dependency to the Poverty of the Stimulus (i.e. the Input Problem); and the debate surrounding the acquisition of grammatical categories in natural language.

### **3.3.6 Module 6: Optimality Theory**

(Will

Bennett)

This course will introduce students to Optimality Theory (commonly called 'OT'), a constraint-based theory of grammar that is widely used in phonology. We will cover the basic history and structure of the framework, how to define constraints and understand their interactions, and how to determine constraint rankings, and how to construct and support an analysis. Special emphasis will be placed on typologies (including multiple, diverse, languages) as the basic unit of analysis and understanding. Students will also practice using OT software to help with building and testing analyses. In particular, we will likely focus on OT approaches to phenomena common in African languages, such as vowel harmony, tone spreading, hiatus resolution, and reduplication.

### **3.3.7 Module 7**

Not offered in 2021.

### **3.3.8 Module 8: Contact Linguistics: Bilingualism and Related Phenomena**

(Ron Simango)

This module, designed around Myers-Scotton's (2006) *Multiple Voices*, provides students with an overview of bilingualism, first as a linguistic phenomenon and, second, as a socio-political phenomenon impacting on language policy, language in education, and language and identity. The module also explores cognitive aspects of bilingualism such as bilingual language processing, development of bilingualism in individuals (children and adults), bilingual speech production and code-switching. It also explores the wider linguistic issues such as borrowing, language attrition and language shift.

### **3.3.9 Module 9: The Psycholinguistics and Linguistics of Literacy**

(Tracy Probert and Mark de Vos)

Reading and literacies are essential in negotiating the complexities of modern life and integrating oneself in the economy. Regrettably, the continuing crisis in South African education has impacted negatively on reading proficiency levels. In a recent study on literacy, South Africa came last out of all countries polled – and not only last but very badly last. One problem is that there are no established reading norms for languages other than English. A teacher can refer to established norms to see if a child reads the required number of words per minute in English. However, no such standard exists for the indigenous languages. Part of the issue is that the notion of what constitutes a “word” in an agglutinating language like Zulu or Xhosa does not correspond to a “word” in English. To complicate the matter still further, some languages, like Venda, use a disjunctive orthography while others, like Xhosa, use a conjunctive orthography. The purpose of this course will be to explore these issues in more detail and consider how linguists could provide solutions. Other topics will be considered as they arise and students are welcome to contribute issues for discussion.

### **3.3.10 Module 10: The Investigation of Interpersonal Meaning**

(Ian Siebörger)

This module concentrates on Systemic Functional Linguistic accounts of interpersonal meaning. After first exploring the Interpersonal Metafunction (and associated resources) outlined in Halliday & Matthiessen (1999), it moves on to the APPRAISAL framework and its various systems as described in Martin and White (2005). Apart from core reading there is a focus on recent APPRAISAL research studies and on publications that prompt critical reflection on the APPRAISAL framework itself. Students work consistently with data and so develop skills in coding and interpreting data of different kinds. They write three syntheses and produce a research proposal. This module is useful for any students planning research in discourse analysis, and is a useful complement to Module 16: Language and Knowledge for students wanting to investigate the role of values in knowledge-building.

### **3.3.11 Module 11: Research Report**

(All staff members)

This module applies to all Honours students, all Master’s students and all PhD students. The main output of Module 11 is the research report or thesis which fulfils different criteria at the various levels, and at each an appropriate length, depth and scope is specified. There are more details supplied below in Section 6. Students' progress in this module is also supported through, for example, sessions in the PG O Week on the writing of literature reviews, the design of research questions and so on, the feedback received during the Postgrad Conference in September, and close collaboration with their supervisor(s) throughout the course of their studies.

For MA and PhD students, a pilot project in the proposed area of study is required in the first year. The purpose of this task, which takes the form of a research report, is to test the feasibility of the project, to provide a degree of formative assessment and to allow students to engage with research in a low-stakes pilot project. In addition, this pilot project serves as an excellent basis on which to prepare a research proposal for the larger project. Students conduct small scale research, typically on some aspect of the envisaged thesis topic, and write a research paper on it. It should be no more than 10 000 words (i.e. around 30-35 pages) and is equivalent to an Honours level research report. You need to consult with your supervisor prior to embarking on your research project.

### **3.3.12 Module 12: Corpus Linguistics**

(Kelly Kilian)

Corpus linguistics is a field of study which is rapidly increasing in scope and importance. As computing power becomes more and more readily available and digital storage cheaper, so more applications are found which benefit from the computer-assisted analysis of language. This module traces the development of corpus linguistics, offers tasters of various applications of the method (e.g. lexicography, diachronic analysis, CDA), covers the various decisions facing corpus builders and affords students the opportunity to develop their own corpus, and analyse it, using a variety of software for a purpose of their choice. Please note that computer literacy is essential if you are considering this module.

### **3.3.13 Module 13: Sign Language Linguistics**

Not offered in 2021.

### **3.3.14 Module 14: Psycho- and Neurolinguistics**

Not offered in 2021.

### **3.3.15 Module 15: External Language Credit**

(Outside the department)

It is acknowledged that linguistics students at postgraduate level may be enriched by appropriate modules in language offered by other departments. Ideally the language in question must be one which the student has not studied before and in which she or he is not already fluent. The content language course in question should also be amenable to linguistic analysis appropriate to the level of proficiency of the student. For these reasons, students may do a language credit at the discretion of their supervisor. This decision must be ratified by the HOD at a subsequent staff meeting. A student will not be allowed to do a language credit if by so doing, their Honours degree is "taken out" of the department (i.e. if it results in a joint Honours as opposed to a Linguistics Honours). It is incumbent on the supervisor to ensure this in advance. The language credit will count as a postgraduate module in Linguistics and cannot count toward credit in another degree. The language credit must be focused on the learning/mastery of a language. The language-oriented part of the credit must not be less than 34 contact hours (i.e. equivalent to the teaching contact hours for an Honours degree). Topics in literature, culture, translation etc. do not count toward this total. The language credit could indeed be a first year credit but doesn't have to be. At Rhodes, this means a student may do French 1P, German 1, Greek and Latin 1, Xhosa 1 (Non-Mother Tongue) or Mandarin. Students may not study English 1 because this is a literary subject at Rhodes. If a student wants to study a language at second or third-year levels then they must provide a course outline (or communication from the relevant HOD) which indicates that the student will have at least 34 contact hours of language/grammar lessons (i.e. equivalent to the teaching contact hours for an Honours degree); there is no upper limit specified. The language credit should be supplemented in the department by having the student write additional, linguistically oriented assignments. The student should do one additional assignment per term or alternatively, one, slightly larger, assignment per semester, subject to negotiation with the supervisor. The length of the assignments may not be cumulatively greater than for any other postgraduate module. The staff members responsible for these should be nominated in consultation with the supervisor before the student commences study. The assignments will necessarily cover areas covered in the language course focusing on linguistic analysis. Staff members should be allocated accordingly. Care should be taken to ensure critical alignment of the objectives of the language course in question and the linguistic assignments.

### **3.3.16 Module 16: Language and Knowledge**

(Ian Siebörger)



In recent years, knowledge has become a buzzword. We speak about “the knowledge economy” and “knowledge workers”, but surprisingly little research focuses on knowledge itself: how it is structured and transmitted, and how it relates to knowers. Language is the primary means by which knowledge is built and shared, but few people have studied the relationship between language and knowledge. This module is a basic introduction to Legitimation Code Theory (LCT), a rapidly developing theoretical framework based on Bernstein’s sociology of education which is increasingly being used in linguistic study (particularly with Systemic Functional Linguistics) to investigate how language is used to build and share knowledge. This module will be particularly helpful for those interested in educational linguistics and analysing classroom discourse. It will also be valuable for those interested in analysing discourses in any context to understand how texts are used to build and package knowledge in ideologically-biased ways. The emphasis will be on how LCT can be combined with linguistic study to offer a new perspective on students’ research areas, and students will be introduced to many examples of LCT in action in linguistic research.

### **1. 3.3.17 Module 17: Critical Discourse Analysis (Online Course)**

Not offered in 2021.

This course is designed to equip you with the theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) effectively in your postgraduate work and is currently the only linguistic postgraduate course to be administered entirely online. Through weekly facilitated online group discussions, this interdisciplinary course encourages theoretical debate on the underpinnings of CDA and general approaches to ideology, language and power and provides a structured programme of practical critical discourse analysis (the nitty gritty of how language choices reflect and perpetuate ideological meaning). Throughout the course, students are required to make constant links back to their home department and their own research, and will engage with exciting Southern African research (especially research from Rhodes) in the field. While this course is extensive and requires a significant commitment, it will ensure a deep and well-theorised understanding of the use of Critical Discourse Analysis and its application to your own research.

## i. Provisional Postgraduate programme 2021

Week	Week beginning	Terms	Compulsory modules	Modules taught			
6	1-Feb						
7	8-Feb						
8	15-Feb		PG O-week				
9	22-Feb						
10	1-Mar						
11	8-Mar						
12	15-Mar	Term 1, week 1		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
13	22-Mar	week 2		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
14	29-Mar	week 3		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
15	5-Apr	week 4		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
16	12-Apr	week 5		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
17	19-Apr	week 6		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
18	26-Apr	VAC, Grad					
19	3-May	Term 2, week 1		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
20	10-May	week 2		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
21	17-May	week 3		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
22	24-May	week 4		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
23	31-May	week 5		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
24	7-Jun	week 6		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
25	14-Jun	week 7		Syntax	Literacy	AoG	Lg & Knowldg
26	21-Jun	Exams begin					
27	28-Jun	Exams					
28	5-Jul	Exams end					
29	12-Jul	VAC					
30	19-Jul	VAC					
31	26-Jul	Term 3, week 1		Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
32	2-Aug	week 2		Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
33	9-Aug	week 3		Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
34	16-Aug	week 4		Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
35	23-Aug	week 5		Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
36	30-Aug	week 6		Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
37	6-Sep	VAC					
38	13-Sep	Term 4, week 1	PG Conference?	Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
39	20-Sep	week 2		Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
40	27-Sep	week 3		Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
41	4-Oct	week 4		Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
42	11-Oct	week 5		Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
43	18-Oct	week 6		Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
44	25-Oct	week 7		Corpus	P&P	Contact Ling	SFL
45	1-Nov	Exams begin					
46	8-Nov	Exams					
47	15-Nov	Exams					
48	22-Nov	Exams					
49	29-Nov	Exams end					
50	6-Dec	VAC					
51	13-Dec	VAC					
52	20-Dec	VAC					

## 4. The Guide to Writing Assignments

### 4.1 Why assignments are important

Apart from the fact that assignments count 50% towards your final coursework mark, there are several good academic reasons for writing assignments and for writing them well. One not only learns a lot from reading for the assignments but also from the practical process of organizing your thoughts and the

competing or complementary arguments of other authors into a coherent whole. The comments of the marker are also part of the learning process in that they are intended to help you write a better assignment next time.

How you approach your assignment depends on the kind of topic that you are working on. Broadly there are two main types: the *academic essay assignment* and the *analysis assignment*. As these are distinctly different types of assignment, it follows that the preparation work needed for each is quite different and distinctly different styles of writing and structure are also appropriate to each.

## **4.2 How do I tell which type of assignment I am being asked to do?**

An *academic essay assignment* usually asks you to read several authors' work on a particular topic, and then to combine them into a logical discussion of the topic. You may often be asked to compare two or more views on the given topic, or to make a choice between them, arguing their relative academic merits. Sometimes the assignment sheet may supply you with some information relevant to the topic which is meant to get you thinking about the topic, for example a quotation from the literature, but usually this material is not central to the essay. Instead, the comparison of views on the topic is the main emphasis. Words to look out for in the topic which may signal that an academic essay assignment is called for include "**review**", "**compare**" and "**discuss**".

An *analysis assignment* is quite different from an academic essay in that you are asked to collect your own data or to analyse data which is given to you. In this kind of assignment the main focus is your interpretation of the data and the views of other authors are not emphasized as much, although you will need to use their terminology or their findings to interpret and justify your analysis. Words to look out for in the topic which may signal that you are dealing with a research or analysis type of assignment include "**analyse**" and "**interpret**".

At PG level, it is common to have an assignment which incorporates both these tasks in one: some data, which you may have to collect, which you should analyse in terms of one or more models of analysis and interpret according to a theory or two. You may be asked to assess the theories or methods of analysis in the light of your experience of working with them. Again, pay careful attention to the words which signal the tasks included in the assignment.

### **4.2.1 Academic essay assignments**

The aim of this kind of essay is for you to acquire some knowledge on the topic you have been set, but also, and this is very important, for you to get practice in thinking and writing about the ideas of other authors and how they relate to other ideas – both your own, based on your experience, and those that you have become familiar with in the rest of your academic training. This process of "wrestling" with ideas is an important one because, if done properly, it requires you to process the information in an active way so that it becomes part of your own body of internal knowledge: in other words, you really learn in a meaningful way.

This approach obviously affects the kind of preparation that is required as well as the way you write your essay and these aspects are described below.

#### **(a) Preparation**

Usually an academic essay topic is presented along with suggested readings and these readings may be available online or placed on Short Loan in the Library. Making notes from these readings is often a very

satisfying experience in itself, but don't think that is the end of your preparation. The most important part is how you read those readings. It is important to read actively – to ask yourself constantly how each new piece of information relates to those which came before and also relates to information you have read in other sources. Make notes about each major point that relates to your topic and about arguments that contradict those of other authors. (This is especially important in essays where you are asked to compare the views of two or more authors.) If the writer makes an important point in a particularly succinct or eloquent way, you could make a note to yourself to consider using that author's words in a quotation (but see "Acknowledging other authors and sources" below). It is crucial, however, that you use the ideas of other authors in context – in other words, be very careful that the author was intending his or her ideas to come across in the same way that you use them.

It is important, especially at PG level, that you do not rely too heavily on the ideas of one or two authors. A paragraph or section that is dominated by a limited range of voices indicates that you haven't engaged adequately with any debates in the area, and haven't integrated the various viewpoints that exist on a particular topic. Using the ideas of a range of authors allows you to 'bounce' their ideas off each other, and demonstrate to the marker that you are able to argue a point with insight into the implications of the viewpoints you discuss. This means that it is essential when preparing to write your essay that you make notes on competing views in the readings, and your responses to them, so that you can use these to build a strong argument in the writing phase.

*(b) Structuring*

These notes will help you in the next stage of essay-writing in which you decide how to structure the points you wish to make in your essay. It is often helpful initially to make a list of these points, without much detail, so that you can see them all at a glance and rearrange them until you have a logical structure where each point leads to the next and builds into a strong argument. This will make the writing up stage much easier. You need to bear in mind that the reader is not only looking for evidence that you have read the relevant authors' work, but also that you can structure the information clearly.

There is a useful structure which is often used when presenting an argument. If, for example, you are asked to argue whether or not a particular theory is valid, your essay is more likely to succeed in convincing the reader if the way you structure the information builds a strong argument for your case. It might look something like this, with each bullet below representing a paragraph or more:

- Introduction
- Points which support the argument (arranged carefully so that they lead from one to the next)
- Points which do not support the argument, together with reasons why these points can be discarded, or are less important than the points which supports the argument
- Conclusion (in which you summarize the main points for your argument and mention briefly why you have rejected the counter-argument)

If you are asked to compare two authors' views (or two competing theories, etc.) then this structure would effectively be double:

- Introduction (in which you usually state which author/theory you agree with)
- Points which support the views of Author A
- Points which do not support the views of Author A
- Points which support the views of Author B
- Points which do not support the views of Author B

- Conclusion (in which you weigh up the points for and against A and B and state clearly again which author's view you support)

Sometimes it may happen that you think both views are equally valid or invalid and you should then say so and provide a synthesis of the two or an alternative explanation, as the case may be. This is not recommended unless you are very sure of yourself and your grasp of the issues, however. You should bear in mind that the authors you will be writing about are professional people who, while quite capable of making mistakes like any other human, have usually been working and reading and writing in the field for a lot longer than you have. It is a good habit to question constantly while reading, to decide for yourself whether the arguments put forward are valid or not and whether the approach taken by the author applies equally to the context you are considering. For example, an article written in America might not apply to South African conditions. However, one should be realistic and remember that it is unlikely for a professional author's viewpoint to be entirely without merit.

Also remember that the marker wants to see if you understand the issues involved in the topic, so it is important that you express most of the points in your own words, and only use short quotations and only when the author has phrased an idea in a particularly original and useful way.

#### (c) *Writing*

Once you have structured your essay you can begin to write. It's usually a good idea to write a rough draft of your essay first and then re-read it and alter it before printing it out in its final form. For more details on technical requirements and guidelines for style, see the separate sections below.

### **4.2.2 Analysis assignments**

In analysis assignments you are asked to collect your own data or to analyse data which is given to you. As mentioned above, therefore, the main focus is your interpretation of the data but this does not mean you do not need the views of other authors. The aim of an analysis assignment is to give you practice working with the real "nuts and bolts" of linguistics – real language. The reader will be looking for evidence that you are able to see trends and tendencies in the data and link them, tentatively, to their causes, using the previous research you have read about and the theories used to understand the context from which your data come.

#### (a) *Preparation*

Detailed instructions for the collection of data are usually given on the assignment sheet. It is important that you follow these carefully as they have been designed to make your task easier and more successful. Once you have done the required reading and have your data (either your own or that given to you on the assignment sheet), you can begin to analyse. Exactly how you would go about this would depend on the method of analyse used in that particular module.

#### (b) *Structuring*

The structure of the write-up of a research or analysis essay is very important, and some people find it difficult because it is different to that required for an academic essay. Your job in writing up is not to focus on the ideas of other authors, as it would be in an academic essay, but to describe and interpret the patterns and trends you have found in the data in such a way that it forms a coherent whole, a "picture" of the data, supported by evidence from the data. You would use existing research, and theory, to help you interpret the data.

(c) *Writing Up*

Once you have structured your assignment you can begin to write. It's usually a good idea to write a rough draft of your essay first and then re-read it and alter it before writing or printing it out in its final form. For more details on technical considerations and guidelines for style, see the separate sections below.

### 4.3 Paragraph Structure

In this department we recommend using a PEDAL paragraph structure, especially if you are new to academic writing or feel uncertain about your experience in this genre. It has the advantage of making it easier to build a strong argument by virtue of what information goes where in the paragraph.

Each letter in PEDAL stands for a different element of the paragraph:

- P = point
- E = evidence
- D = description of evidence
- A = analysis of evidence
- L = link

The following table explains the composition and function of each part.

	<b>Knowledge structure</b>	<b>Paragraph structure</b>
Point	Main point you want to make (Knowledge claim)	Topic sentence
Evidence	Evidence to support your point	Stats, references, data etc.
Describe	Describe the bits of evidence that are important to the argument	Description
Analysis	Interpret the evidence with theoretical tools	Personal viewpoint, theoretical interpretation etc.
Link	Link to the next part of your argument	Concluding or linking sentence. This may summarise the whole paragraph, or link to some other element of the whole e.g. the next paragraph, previously cited research that is similar or contrasts, or the essay question.

As you get more experienced with PEDAL, and with PG writing in general, you can adapt this structure somewhat to suit the subject matter or argument. For instance, it might be simpler to combine the E, D and A elements to avoid repeating yourself. However we suggest that you follow the full PEDAL structure until you have developed your skills substantially and are able to construct a sophisticated argument.

## 4.4 Technical considerations

### 4.4.1 Authority in writing

It is a basic rule in academic writing that every statement you make must be supported, unless it refers to a fact that is very widely known (e.g. *English is an official language in South Africa.*). Support for statements can come from various sources:

- Personal observation: one would usually make this type of statement in the interpretation section of an analysis assignment – but do make sure that your data does in fact support your statement. You would also make statements based on personal observations when your topic tells you to relate theories to your own experience.
- Relevant authorities: these include books and journals. In some cases you may want to reference websites, but many websites are a bit dodgy, so don't believe everything you read on the Internet. For example, Wikipedia is not considered a legitimate academic authority. A website should only be cited if its author (either a person or organization) and date is clearly displayed, and if this person or organization is a reputable authority in the field. For example, Statistics SA would be considered a reputable source of statistics on how many people in South Africa speak a particular language. Ask.com would not be considered a reputable source of information on anything linguistic.

All sources other than yourself must be acknowledged, that is, referenced. The reason for this and how to do it are discussed below.

### 4.4.2 Acknowledging other authors and sources

As was mentioned above, quotations can be very useful when an author has expressed a concept or idea in a particularly clear or original way but you should be careful not to fill your essay with so many quotations that the reader cannot see whether or not you understand the issue yourself. When you do use the ideas or words of another author it is very important to give that person the credit for thinking them up in the first place. If you were to take an artist's painting and pretend that you had done it, that would be stealing. In just the same way it is theft when you use, without acknowledgement, the ideas or words of a person whose life's work is thinking and writing. Academic theft is called plagiarism and is taken very seriously.

It is important to remember that while you must obviously acknowledge the authors' *words* when you quote directly from their work, you also should acknowledge their *ideas* when you use them, even if you phrase those ideas in your own words.

How to reference quotations and ideas is explained below, in the section labelled "Referencing", and in the Quick Referencing Guide at the back of this booklet (Appendix 2).



#### 4.4.3 Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

You will find the university's policy on plagiarism at [www.ru.ac.za/static/policies/plagiarism\\_policy.pdf](http://www.ru.ac.za/static/policies/plagiarism_policy.pdf). The department's Plagiarism Protocol is included at the end of this booklet as Appendix 1. What follows is a simplified explanation of what plagiarism is and how it is handled, tailored to this department.

##### What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism refers to the practice of presenting material which has been written by someone else as your own work. Any use of material that is derived from the work of another person constitutes plagiarism if you hand in an assignment under your own name which, either in part or as a whole,

- Is copied from an essay or research report written by another student
- Is copied from a document downloaded from a website
- Is copied from a published article or book chapter
- Has been written for you by someone else.

It is also considered bad academic practice to copy your own work, for example, to copy and paste parts of an essay into a research report - attempting to get double credit for your work, essentially.

##### Disciplinary action in response to plagiarism

Where staff members have evidence that students have plagiarized work, the matter will normally be referred to the course lecturer and head of department, who will set up a Departmental Plagiarism Committee to review the evidence if the allegations are serious. If they conclude that plagiarism has occurred, they will make a ruling on disciplinary steps, which may include:

- imposing a mark penalty for minor infringements (e.g. -30%)
- awarding an essay '0' and placing the case of plagiarism on the student's record for more serious infringements
- giving the student a DPWP (DP Withdrawn for Plagiarism) for blatant cases of plagiarism
- reporting the matter to the Senate Plagiarism Tribunal (exclusion from the university may result).

**Warning!** Please be careful. Many students think that there is no harm in copying sentences from books and articles when writing essays and reports. However, in terms of the policy stated above, the use of even one sentence without full referencing, as described below, constitutes plagiarism and is not acceptable. As a university student you are being trained to understand and observe the highest standards of ethics and integrity in the writing of essays and reports. The Department expects these high standards to be observed as a matter of course.<sup>1</sup>

As a safeguard, we require you to include a signed declaration on the front page of all your essays, confirming that the work is your own. This statement should read as follows:

I recognize that plagiarism is academic theft. I hereby declare that I have not stolen another person's
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<sup>1</sup> With acknowledgement to the Department of Psychology

ideas, and that this assignment is my own work. I have acknowledged all other authors' ideas and referenced direct quotations from their work. I have not allowed anyone else to borrow or copy my work, nor have I presented any group work as my own individual work. I acknowledge that if I have plagiarized in this assignment, I will be punished for it and may lose my DP as a result. The case of plagiarism may also be placed on my academic record, damaging my reputation.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4.4.4 Referencing

Typically, each department specifies a different way of acknowledging sources and you may well be unfamiliar with ours. This is understandable because different methods of referencing have arisen in different disciplines. Within disciplines too, there will be differences between the various academic journals, which you may notice when you read articles from them. This is simply a fact of life and one that you will need to accommodate. Our standard form for referencing is set out below. Referencing refers here to two interlinked processes: acknowledging sources within the body of your assignment and providing a list of these sources at the end of your essay. Each of these will be dealt with in turn below.

##### (a) Referencing within your essay

Lunsford & Connors (1992: 577-578) provide the following guidelines on using material from other sources:

##### Material not requiring acknowledgement:

- **Common knowledge:** when you state something that is common knowledge to most readers – e.g. *Nelson Mandela became president of South Africa in 1994* – you do not need to credit the source of this information.
- **Facts available in a wide variety of sources:** A fact that appears in a number of textbooks, yearbooks, and encyclopedias does not need to be cited by reference to a specific source.
- **Your own findings from field research:** If you conduct research, just report your findings as your own.

##### Material requiring acknowledgement:

- **Direct quotations:** Whenever you use another person's words directly you must cite the source.
- **Facts that are not widely known or assertions that are arguable:** If the facts are unlikely to be known to your readers, or if an author makes claims that may or may not be true, cite the source.
- **Judgements, opinions, and claims of others:** Whenever you summarize or paraphrase someone else's opinion, give the source of that summary or paraphrase – it does not matter that the wording is completely your own, you need to acknowledge the source.
- **Statistics, charts, tables, and graphs from any source:** Credit all statistical and graphical material that is not derived from your own research, even if you yourself created the graph from data in another source.

- **Help provided by others:** Personal communication with a friend, tutor, lecturer, etc., may give you an idea to clinch an argument, or help you refine the questionnaire and conduct the survey. Give credit to anyone who provides you with necessary help.

### **Quoting directly**

When you use words from another source, mark them off with quotation marks, e.g.

These structured sequences are known as “adjacency pairs” (Brown 1983: 51).

Even a single quoted word should be put into quotation marks if it represents a new concept – but only the first time you use it:

Sacks (1969:120) called these signals “backchannels”. There are several backchannels....

If you are quoting from a book or a journal, add in brackets, near the quotation, the author’s surname, the book or journal’s publication date, a colon and the relevant page number. This is done in different ways depending on whether or not the author’s name is part of the sentence:

**If the author’s name IS part of the sentence** it should look as follows:

Bhatia (1993:20) claims that this highlights the “tactical aspect of conventional language use”.

**If the author’s name is NOT part of the sentence:**

This part of linguistic analysis highlights the “tactical aspect of conventional language use” (Bhatia 1993:26).

Note that the full stop to end the sentence comes after the brackets.

**If the quotation is long** (i.e. 40 words or more) then it is not enclosed in quotation marks but, instead, is double indented (i.e. the left and right margins are moved in) as a separate paragraph and the reference appears immediately after the quotation on a new line, against the right margin:

English, across Africa as a whole, enjoys positive stereotypes and high international prestige. It would appear from this study that speakers of English, particularly those who are mother-tongue speakers, are warmly regarded, and people are predisposed to think highly of them.

(Schmiedt 1991:27)

Note that there is no full stop after the reference.

If the author’s name is part of the sentence introducing the quotation, then the reference should not be put after the quotation, but should be included as follows:

Schmiedt (1991:27) reports that English, across Africa as a whole, enjoys positive stereotypes and high international prestige. It would appear from this study that speakers of English, particularly those who are mother-tongue speakers, are warmly regarded, and peoples are predisposed to think highly of them.

### **Acknowledging ideas**

As mentioned above, it is important to acknowledge an author’s ideas, even if you do not quote his or her words directly.

**When an author’s name is introduced,** the date of the work should follow immediately in brackets:

Widdowson (1979) did research into textualization.

Notice that no page number is given if there is no direct quotation.

**If the author's name is re-introduced** after a few intervening paragraphs or if another author has been mentioned in between, then the year should be given again:

Widdowson (1979) did research into textualization. An excellent example comes from Swales (1974) who analysed data from chemistry textbooks. Widdowson's (1979) own work showed that .....

**If the author's name does not form part of the sentence**, but you are using his or her ideas, you should acknowledge the source (name and year) in brackets at the end of the sentence:

Attribution is an important convention in science (Bhatia 1993).

Note that the full stop to end the sentence comes after the brackets.

If you discuss an author's ideas for an extended length (for more than one sentence), it is not necessary to reference the source in each sentence unless you mention another author in between. Just make it clear that the entire discussion is based on the ideas of this author.

Swales (1974) was studying the function of past participles. Pre-modifying en-participles, he found, textualize two different aspects of the text. He claims that attribution.....

**If Author A cites Author B** and you want to discuss Author B's ideas but you haven't read their original work, you need to tell the reader where you read about them. So if you read about Foucault (2002) in Fairclough (2005), you would reference it as follows:

Discourse is an important vehicle for ideology (Foucault 2002, cited in Fairclough 2005).

If you quote from Foucault, you will need to supply the page number of the original Foucault quotation, and the page number in Fairclough's book, e.g.

"Economic discourse has never been a common discourse" (Foucault 2002:76, cited in Fairclough 2005:32).

In the list of references at the end of the essay, you only list Fairclough (2005) and not Foucault (2002).

### **Multiple authors:**

#### **(a) Two authors**

If there are two authors, use both the authors' last names in the citation all the time.

(Smith & Wesson 1999:67)

#### **(b) Three or more authors**

If there are three or more authors use all the authors' last names when you refer to the work for the first time.

(Smith, Jones & Wesson 1999:68)

When you make subsequent reference to this work, only use the name of the first author and add the Latin phase: "et al.". Note the full stop at the end of the phrase.

(Smith et al. 1999:68)

### **List of references:**

Some call it a reference list, others call it a bibliography, but the fact remains that somewhere you have to provide the reader with a list of the sources you have consulted so that they can find them for themselves if they want to. A reference list is strictly a list of only those sources which you have

explicitly mentioned in the body of your work, while a bibliography is a list of everything that you read that influenced your thinking, including all the sources you referred to in the body of your work. But seeing as you will be acknowledging all the ideas in your assignment which come from other sources, there isn't much difference between them. This list is attached at the end of your assignment and should be set out carefully according to the instructions below.

List all works in alphabetical order of (first) authors' last names.

**If your reference is a book:**

Langacker, R.W. 1997. *Language and its Structure*. London: Harcourt Brace.  
Lunsford, A. & R. Connors. 1992. *The St. Martin's Handbook*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

**If your reference is a chapter in a book:**

Barr, H.J. & P. Henderson. 1995. "Linguistics for South African students". In T. Johnson, ed. *Linguistics for the Language Professions*, 122-134. Johannesburg: Sundown Press.

Note that the second and subsequent lines of the reference are indented (a 'hanging' indent) and that the page numbers of the chapter are given after the title of the book.

**If your reference is an article in a journal:**

Greenback, P. 1994. "The language of dancehall dancers in Jamaica". *Journal of West Indian Language Varieties*, 6(2), 167-174.

**If your reference is a website:**

Department of English Language and Linguistics, Rhodes University. 2017. "Linguistics at Rhodes University". <http://www.ru.ac.za/englishlanguageandlinguistics>. 20 January 2018.

Note that the date of download, i.e. the date on which you accessed the website, is given at the end because websites change.

If you use more than one source by a particular author from the same year, you should label them "a", "b" and so on. The ordering of the labelling is based on the alphabetical position of the first word(s) of the title of the work:

Smith, A. 1998a. *How I won the Wild West*. Dordrecht: Foris.  
Smith, A. 1998b. *The Wild West*. Dordrecht: Foris.

Note that the book called *The Wild West* is labelled "b" because T (as in The) comes after H (as in How) alphabetically. Do not insert the title of the book into the body of your essay; just insert the letter you have assigned to that book after the date, e.g.

For direct quotation:  
Smith (1998a:26)

For referencing ideas:  
Smith (1998a)

#### **4.4.5 Style**

Although writing style is often something of a personal choice, you should bear in mind that an essay or assignment in an academic context requires a certain formality. That said, you may use the first person pronouns (“I” “me”, “my”) to refer to yourself and your ideas. This is particularly relevant when you are giving your opinion or interpretation. Phrases such as “the present author” to refer to yourself should not be used. Some students feel that using very long sentences and big words will make their essay more impressive but this is seldom true. More often long sentences lead to grammatical errors and meaning that is not clear. Similarly, using words that one is not really familiar with can lead to all sorts of confusion. In both cases it may be difficult for the reader to see whether or not you really understand the issues in the assignment. The use of relevant terminology is obviously required for the sake of efficiency and clarity, but do make sure you understand it and use it correctly.

#### **4.4.6 Information structuring**

An important part of writing well is writing clearly and much of this clarity can be attributed to the way in which the information is structured. You should follow the PEDAL guidelines suggested above and also bear in mind that how you arrange your paragraphs is important too. It is often helpful to use headings when drafting your essay and make sure that each paragraph under a particular heading does in fact relate to it in some way. You might even like to write a short paragraph introducing each headed section. This will also help you to avoid straying from the topic of the essay. You can choose whether or not to keep your headings or to remove them when preparing the final version for submission. Headings are not necessary in linguistics assignments.

Avoid very long paragraphs. A paragraph is a unit of meaning and signals to the reader that everything in it is connected. A paragraph that takes up a whole page, for instance, needs to be subdivided or cut shorter. Using a PEDAL structure will help you avoid long rambling paragraphs.

Various discourse markers (such as “but”, “however”, “therefore”) are very useful in structuring the information in your assignment and showing the relationship between different statements but again it is essential that you use these words accurately e.g. if you use the word “*thus*”, make sure that the following sentences does in fact follow logically from the previous one.

#### **4.4.7 Grammar and spelling**

Grammar and spelling make an impression. Careless editing and proofreading can indicate to the reader a general sloppiness and detract from the quality of the intellectual work that went into the assignment. Being very careful about spelling, punctuation and grammar is also good practice for later life when people may judge you and your suitability for a job at least partly on the basis of your use of language. In a department of English language and linguistics in particular, we feel we would be failing in our duty if we didn’t alert you to the importance of language use. While we don’t explicitly teach you how to write grammatically, we hope to encourage you to maintain a useful awareness of your own language use.

#### **4.4.8 General impression**

*All assignments must be typed.* Unless otherwise specified, they should use 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with margins somewhere in the range of 1-3cm. Use only one side of the page if printing and leave a line between paragraphs.

#### **4.4.9 The front page**

It is important to set out your front page correctly. It should include the following information:

- The name of the module e.g. Module 12 Corpus Linguistics and the particular assignment which follows e.g. Theoretical Essay OR Glossary Entry
- Your student number
- The plagiarism declaration
- The date.

On the following page is a template showing how your front page could be laid out:



PG Studies in Linguistics

Lecturer's name

Student number

Date

Module Number: Assignment type

**DECLARATION**

I recognize that plagiarism is academic theft. I hereby declare that I have not stolen another person's ideas, and that this assignment is my own work. I have acknowledged all other authors' ideas and referenced direct quotations from their work. I have not allowed anyone else to borrow or copy my work, nor have I presented any group work as my own individual work. I acknowledge that if I have plagiarized in this assignment, I will be punished for it and may lose my DP as a result. The case of plagiarism may also be placed on my academic record, damaging my reputation.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **4.4.10 Space limit**

Each essay will be given a specific space limit or word limit. This should be carefully noted. Such limits are in the interests of both students and staff. For the student they encourage brief and structured presentation, and for the staff they reduce the very considerable burden of reading which a large batch of assignments often entails, enabling us to give closer attention to papers of reasonable length. So please aim at submitting work which is economical, coherent and planned.

#### **4.5 Handing in**

All students are required to hand in or email their assignments on the due date. The lecturer concerned may well give you a specific time that they want the work in by. Requests for extensions will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, and late assignments without an extension will incur a penalty.

**Important:** Do not give essay to a friend to hand in for you. This often results in copying or essays not being handed in at all, and in such cases you will receive 0% for your essay.

#### **4.6 Returns**

We make every effort to return your work to you within three weeks of handing in. Please note that we regard the process of assignment writing and marking as a formative process, which means that the comments we make on your work are more important than the mark itself. The mark is an indication of how well you fulfilled the tasks of the work, but the comments will help you to learn how to 'do' academia, and paying close attention to those will mean that you can do better in future.

### **5. The Postgrad Conference**

NB: given the COVID-19 pandemic, the Postgrad Conference may follow different procedures than normal in 2021. The information below relates to how the conference would operate under normal circumstances, and is provided to help students understand the point and importance of the conference.

Toward the end of the year, often in September, **all** postgraduate students are required to present their work at the Postgrad Conference annually for the duration of their registration. The Postgrad Conference is a short, internal conference organized by our department where you will present your work to the staff and students. Please sign up for a slot closer to the time and organize your travel and accommodation accordingly.

#### **5.1 What is the function of the Postgrad Conference?**

There are a number of reasons why the department organizes this event. It is part of the support and scaffolding process that the department provides to its postgraduates to make the research process a little less isolating. It provides an opportunity for more advanced postgrads to model the research process to those postgrads who are just starting out. It provides an opportunity for supervisors and other staff to engage with students around their work. It provides an excellent indication of student progress in their research and their commitment to their studies more generally. It provides a tangible departure point from which MA and PhD postgrads entering their second year of study can start to develop a research proposal for subsequent evaluation by the Humanities Higher Degrees Committee.

## 5.2 What is expected of you at the Postgrad Conference?

Our postgraduates are often at different stages in their research. Some postgrads will have spent the year focussing on the pilot project which forms the basis of the proposal; others will have been busy on their theses. This pilot project or thesis will be the basis of your presentation:

- Honours Students: present the findings of your research projects
- First-year MA and PhD students: present the findings of your pilot projects
- Second (and subsequent) year MA and PhD students: present the current state of your thesis.

The aims of the presentation are to present your research, to inform others about what you are doing, to demonstrate your mastery of the subject matter, and to entertain and engage with other students in the marketplace of ideas. A matrix which is used to gather feedback for each student, both from staff and from their peers, is reproduced below, so that you can get an idea of the kinds of aspects that are focussed on. You should of course aim to meet the criteria for a Mastery rating on each dimension. Ask your supervisor(s) if you are unsure what is meant by any of the criteria. (See criteria on the next page)

Each presentation is usually 10 minutes long with 10 minutes afterwards for questions. You are welcome to use PowerPoint and/or handouts. Your presentation must include all the components of a successful research report: a brief discussion of the literature which forms the context of your study; research questions which develop out of and/or are informed by the theoretical context; discussion and justification of a methodology; presentation of results and analysis of the results demonstrating how each research question was answered. Note that it is vital that you include data presentation and analysis - your talk should not focus so heavily on the literature and method sections that you have no time for data.

It is also worth pointing out what is *not* expected of you. For MA and PhD students, you are not expected to present a full research proposal in your first year – although you may do so if you wish and if your supervisor thinks your research proposal is ready. For most students, the presentation will be on their pilot project which, for MA and PhD students, serves as the basis for their proposals which would then be submitted later that year or early the following year.

Development ->	1	2	3	4	5	6
Criteria	Emerging		Developing		Mastering	
<b>Voice:</b> the integration of sourced information and your own understanding	Little information from sources other than introductory texts or course reading lists, and little evidence of own voice. Typically reliant on a few sources	Some information from sources other than introductory texts or course reading lists, or little evidence of own voice. Some sections reliant on a few sources	A fair amount of information from a range of sources and a limited sense of authorial voice, but not integrated (e.g. list style)	Good amount of information from a good range of other sources and a fair sense of authorial voice, but not well integrated	Some integration of information and argument from many other sources, with some development of own voice	Expert integration of information and argument from many other sources with strong development of own voice
<b>Methodology and data collection:</b> the construction of a well justified, practicable and ethical research plan	Research questions are missing or unanswerable. Explanation of method shows widespread lack of understanding, little or no justification from other sources, and is problematic in terms of practicalities and/or ethics	Research questions are too many or too few, or mostly difficult to answer. Explanation of method shows some problems in understanding, OR little justification, OR is problematic in terms of practicalities or ethics	Research questions are difficult to answer or don't serve the overarching research aim. Explanation of method is thin, with insufficient reference to other sources, OR is problematic in terms of practicalities or ethics	Research questions are fair but some are mundane or don't link well to the overarching research aim. Explanation of method is adequate, with some reference to other sources, and is feasible in terms of	Research questions are very good, and go beyond description. Method is explained clearly, with fair justification, and shows consideration of practicalities and ethics	Research questions are excellent and the research will break new ground. Method is explained clearly, with ample justification, and reflects best practice in terms of practicalities and ethics

				practicalities or ethics		
<b>Evidence:</b> the use of data to build an argument and explain linguistic phenomena	Data is presented baldly, with little, and often inaccurate, analysis and linguistic interpretation.	Data is presented with little, or inaccurate, analysis and linguistic interpretation	Data is presented with significant problems in analysis and linguistic interpretation	Data is presented clearly, but with some problems in analysis and linguistic interpretation	Data is presented clearly, with good amounts of mostly accurate analysis and integrative linguistic interpretation	Data is presented clearly, with significant amounts of accurate analysis and much integrative linguistic interpretation
<b>Language:</b> the use of language, including terminology, correctly in such a way that it bolsters your argument	Language use is very poor, with many spelling and/or grammatical errors; terminology is used with frequent misunderstanding, and verbs of argumentation often missing or misapplied	Language use is poor, with several spelling and/or grammatical errors; terminology is used but with some misunderstandings, and verbs of argumentation sometimes missing or misapplied	Language use is poor, with some spelling and/or grammatical errors; terminology is used but with occasional misunderstandings, and verbs of argumentation are present	Language use is adequate, with some spelling and/or grammatical errors, good use of terminology and verbs of argumentation	Language use is very good, with very few spelling and/or grammatical errors, including very good use of terminology and verbs of argumentation	Language use is excellent, with no spelling and/or grammatical errors, including sophisticated use of terminology and verbs of argumentation
<b>Academic literacy and presentation:</b> References, bibliography, structure and professional presentation	No references, no reference list. Presentation shows lack of structure, no or inappropriate use of audio-visual material, if required. Note: not all studies require the use of the audio or visual modes.	Referencing in-text is minimal or incorrect, or there is no reference list. Presentation shows little or problematic structure, little use of audio-visual material, if required. Note: not all studies require the use of the audio or visual modes.	Referencing has several errors in-text or in reference list. Presentation has some problems in terms of structure, insufficient use of audio-visual material, if required. Note: not all studies require the use of the audio or visual modes.	Adequate use of referencing technique. Some minor problems with the referencing of ideas and quotations, in-text and in the reference list. Presentation shows some structure, adequate use of audio-visual material. Note: not all studies require the use of the audio or visual modes.	Good use of referencing technique, integrated into the developing argument. Most ideas and quotations referenced according to the departmental guide, both in-text and in the reference list. Presentation shows clear structure, appropriate use of audio-visual material. Note: not all studies require the use of the audio or visual modes.	Expert use of referencing technique, well integrated into the developing argument. All ideas and quotations referenced according to the departmental guide, both in-text and in the reference list. Presentation shows clear structure, and use of audio-visual material which enhances the understanding of the material.

### 5.3 What happens if you choose not to participate in the Postgrad Conference?

Although you are not likely to deliberately choose not to participate, it is worthwhile considering what this might mean. This conference is essentially a DP requirement, i.e. a necessary step in order to complete the requirements for the year. This means you should participate and engage to the best of your ability. It is also important that you are there for the full time of the conference and that you do not leave prematurely or arrive late. Not participating, or participating without fully engaging, suggests that you have not made sufficient progress in your research or that there is some academic problem that we should consider. Not presenting is also a lost opportunity to obtain supervision, as well as valuable feedback from your peers. This is an opportunity for the department to intervene if there are problems and this omission will be taken into account during the annual evaluation of your progress.

## 6. Theses, research projects and the supervision process

Much of what follows has been paraphrased or taken verbatim from *The Higher Degrees Guide: A Short Handbook for Master's and Doctoral students at Rhodes University*, edited by the Research Office. If you

do not already have this booklet, you are strongly encouraged to collect a copy from the Research Office and to read it carefully. It is also available online at:

[https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/postgraduategateway/documents/HDG\\_Guide\\_2019.pdf](https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/postgraduategateway/documents/HDG_Guide_2019.pdf)

### **6.1The supervision relationship**

Supervision is an experience that you have very likely not experienced before, if you are registering as an Honours student. It is a relationship that is designed to challenge the way you relate to knowledge and learning. It is, at heart, a mentoring relationship where you, as a learner, come and work alongside an expert in the field. This means that supervision relationships are unique and tailored to the way you and your supervisor interact. You will be called on to take responsibility for your learning, to take initiative and to actively and enthusiastically seek regular supervision opportunities.

There are a number of rights and responsibilities within a supervisory relationship. You and your supervisor should negotiate these in the first few meetings. In addition, supervisors may choose to ask you to sign a supervision contract with them outlining rights and responsibilities. There are a lot of advantages to establishing a supervision contract of this type as it provides a measure of protection for both parties around various issues including plagiarism and authorship. If you would like to use such a contract, do not hesitate to ask your supervisor.

Students will normally be assigned supervisors close to the beginning of the year. In all cases we try our utmost to accommodate students' first choices in terms of topic and supervisor; however this is not always possible due to factors such as supervision load and availability. Deadlines for various parts of the proposal will be negotiated between student and supervisor, with the proviso that all students present their work in the Postgrad Conference regardless of any other arrangements with their supervisors.

In the unlikely event that the relationship between student and supervisor breaks down, or if there are issues that the student feels uncomfortable broaching with the supervisor, they are welcome to consult, confidentially, with the PG course co-ordinator via email or in person.

Read the Higher Degrees Guide very carefully. In addition to University policy, there are few extra departmental requirements that we have:

- a. 'In attendance' students must arrange regular meetings (fortnightly is ideal) with their supervisors. In addition, these students must meet with their advisors at least once a term. Distance students should make use of email to keep in touch with the department in addition to meeting with their supervisor(s) on every visit to Grahamstown.
- b. The student must write a short summary of each meeting, and both student and supervisor must keep copies of these records.
- c. Student and supervisor must agree on a reasonable timetable for submission of various sections of completed work. Ideally this schedule should be signed by both students and supervisor.
- d. It is the student's responsibility to maintain regular contact with the supervisor, to collect feedback timeously and to seek additional help if needed.
- e. The supervisor will read and comment critically on all written work within a reasonable period of time (normally within two weeks).

- f. At year-end, both students and supervisor are required to submit independent progress reports to the Registrar.
- g. In addition, regular meetings to monitor progress will be held between the student concerned, the head of the department, the PG co-ordinator, the advisor and supervisor. At these meetings, the students' progress will be discussed and such interventions as the staff deem necessary will be implemented. Distance students must schedule a meeting each time they visit the department, and in attendance students once a semester. These meetings are intended to support students in focussing on their studies and to provide them with the support they need to arrive at a successful outcome.

## **6.2The research project**

At Rhodes, we believe that students should receive top-quality supervision in order to produce an excellent thesis. To achieve this, supervisors must be experts in the discipline, students must have a thorough grounding in their chosen research area and students must actively pursue supervision opportunities.

For these reasons, the department includes sessions in PG O Week which contextualise linguistic study, and provide guidance on various aspects of the research process. In addition, all students attend the postgrad conference later in the year to support the writing of the research project.

During Honours or the first year of MA/PhD study, students must produce a research report of not more than 10 000 words (i.e. around 30-35 pages). For Honours students, this work is carefully scaffolded and supported, and constitutes one fifth of your final mark. The purpose of this research report for MA and PhD students is to test the feasibility of the larger project, to provide a degree of formative assessment and to allow students to engage with research in a low-stakes pilot project. You should choose a topic that fits the research areas available in the department. You will be assigned a supervision team (typically two supervisors) who have expertise in your research area. Although you may not be required to prepare a research proposal for Honours or MA/PhD pilot study work, all research projects do require ethical clearance, at least at departmental level, unless they are subsumed under an existing research project for which ethical clearance has already been obtained. Please talk to your supervisor(s) about this and see section 7.3.2 below for more information.

Toward the end of each year of postgraduate studies, all students present their research at the Postgrad Conference. This is an opportunity to take stock and evaluate the research project. In their first year of registration, MA and PhD candidates should use this research project as the basis of a research proposal, in preparation for the writing of the thesis proper.

## **6.3The research proposal: MA and PhD students only**

The week of class meetings for PG O Week is designed to help students at Master's and PhD level start thinking about their research projects. In structured sessions we will talk about reading for research, about generating research questions, and about referencing and acknowledging sources, amongst other topics. These have all been selected to help you as you embark on your own research project. In further preparation for the project, two documents must be constructed to obtain approval of two different kinds: a research proposal for academic approval, and an ethical research protocol for ethical clearance. In each case, the department supports these requirements by vetting all research proposals and protocols before they go to the relevant committees for university approval.

### **6.3.1 The Humanities Higher Degrees Committee (HHDC)**

Students will work with their allocated supervisors to prepare the proposal for readiness for approval by the department. Students are then required to present their work in hard copy and orally to the staff and other postgraduate students for advice and vetting. Supervisors will provide more information about how to prepare your presentation. After being approved by the department, it is submitted to the Humanities Higher Degrees Committee (HHDC) where it is carefully considered by expert researchers in terms of various criteria. The HHDC meets several times a year - meeting dates are listed in the University Calendar and on our postgraduate RUConnected site. Note that in most cases the proposal must be submitted to the committee at least three weeks before the meeting date. Only once the HHDC has accepted the proposal, may work begin in earnest on the main research project.

On the basis of your proposal, the HHDC consider whether the topic is suitable, whether it is a viable project that is neither too short nor too long, whether it is ethical and whether you, as a beginning researcher, have demonstrated that you have sufficient grasp of the topic and theory. The research proposal is important because it is the foundation of good research practice. Wide reading for the proposal and careful planning of the practical aspects of the research are essential to the success of the project, and thinking through each element in the detail required by the HDC is very helpful in designing a feasible, well-grounded project that will actually answer the questions it sets out to investigate. The scope of the research project is the main difference between the various levels of postgraduate study. Please consult the Higher Degrees Guide for the criteria for the award of these degrees and ask your supervisor for help if the requirements are not clear to you.

Ideally, students will submit their proposals at the first meeting of the HHDC in the second year of study. This timing is subject to negotiation with the supervisor and students may submit it earlier but preferably not later. Note that sometimes proposals are referred back for changes: if this happens then you may not officially start your research and this may result in delays. For this reason, it is better to attempt to submit as early as possible.

### **6.3.2 How should the HHDC research proposal be structured?**

The body of the proposal must be between 1800 and 2000 words, plus references, for MA proposals and from 2800 to 3000 words for PhDs. Do not even consider trying to get around the word limits by moving material to appendices - the HHDC members have seen this trick many times and your proposal will be sent back without being considered, resulting in a three-month delay.

The proposal must consist of the following sections:

- a. Provisional title.
- b. The field of research: the broad area into which the study falls.
- c. Context of research: a review (of about 2 pages) of relevant theory, demonstrating that you are up-to-date in your reading around the topic, and aware of the main theorists and researchers in the field.
- d. Research goals: a synopsis of your goals and hypotheses or research questions (about half a page). This is the crux of your proposal: being clear about what your research questions are will guide all the other sections of the proposal.
- e. Methodology: a description of exactly how you intend to collect data, analyse it, etc. in order to answer the questions you have listed. You may refer to possible limitations here. (about 1 page).



- f. References (usually 1 page). Note this is not intended to be a prospective bibliography of all the sources you intend to read, but a list of all the readings you have cited in the proposal.

### 6.3.3 Ethics approval

In addition to HHDC approval, each research project requires ethical clearance and you may well decide, with your supervisor, to apply for this before sending your proposal to the HHDC.

From the start of 2019, **all** ethics applications will be done through the centralised Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee (RUESC).

Applications are done online via an Ethical Review Application System (ERAS). You will use your Rhodes University login credentials to access the online ethics application. Once you have completed the application, it requires your supervisors' approval before it is submitted to RUESC.

Please be aware that it is quite common for applications for ethical clearance to be 'disapproved' i.e. referred back to you for changes to be made or additional detail to be added. The best way to avoid this extra work and potential delay is to engage deeply with the process from the beginning and give careful thought to the ethical dimension of your research.

During 2016, stringent laws came into effect with regard to ethical research practices and it is now required by law that you obtain approval for ALL research conducted at any level. For ANY work done on human subjects (e.g. interviews, experimental techniques) or on potentially taboo or offensive topics (e.g. HIV, sexuality, identity), an awareness of the potential for harm must be taken into account and certain safeguards must be built into your research, and approval obtained from RUESC.

No data collection may commence in any form until ethics approval has been granted in writing. Any data collected prior to ethics approval must be completely destroyed and verified to be destroyed by RUESC or otherwise agreed by that committee.

### 6.4The final thesis

For more details, please consult the Higher Degrees Guide. What follows are some of the more important things to remember:

- a. The thesis should be on A4 size paper and the text must be in 12pt font with one-and-a-half line spacing.
- b. The number of copies required for examination will depend on the number of examiners appointed (normally two copies will be required for a Master's degree and three for a PhD). The Registrar will advise the candidate of the number of copies required. These copies should be suitably bound (e.g. with ring binding). For studies within Corpus Linguistics, a CD of Appendices may be submitted in addition.
- c. Upon completion of the examination process, two or three loose-leaf copies are required by the library. Submission of an electronic copy on disk is also required and should be prepared in Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) – ensure that all fonts are embedded and that Type 1 fonts are used.
  - b. The normal upper limit for Master's degrees **by full thesis** is 50 000 words of text: approximately 150 A4 pages, in one-and-a-half spacing, excluding footnotes, illustrative material and appendices. The length of the thesis component of the Master's degree by coursework and **short thesis** is typically around 20 000 words and should normally not exceed 30 000 words i.e. from 60 to 90 pages for the body of the thesis.

- c. A candidate must follow a consistent and recognized style for the layout, footnotes, referencing method and bibliography. All thesis writers should ascertain what the requirements are in this regard from their supervisors at the start of the research project, so as to avoid unnecessary revision of work.
- d. It is usual to number preliminary pages (title page, abstract, table of contents, list of tables etc., and preface) with lower-case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.), counting the title page as the first page, even though this does not bear a number. The rest of the thesis should be numbered in Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3 etc.).
- e. The components of a thesis normally appear in the following order:

### **Title Page**

The recommended form is as follows:

- Title of the thesis
- A statement that the work is submitted in fulfilment/partial fulfilment (in the case of short theses) of the requirements of the appropriate degree of Rhodes University.
- The name of the department and University
- Full name of the candidate
- Month and year in which the thesis is submitted

### **Abstract**

Every thesis must be accompanied by a one-and a-half-spaced abstract of not more than 350 words. The abstract must be placed immediately after the title page.

### **Table of Contents**

List of tables, figures, illustrations, plates

Preface: this may include acknowledgements, if desired

### **Chapters**

Introductory chapter

The main body of the work, appropriately divided into three or more chapters e.g.

Literature review

Methodology

Findings and Analysis

Conclusion

### **Reference materials**

References

Appendices (on CD if very long)

#### **6.4.1 Submission and examination**

In general, candidates submit their thesis for examination once their supervisors agree to the submission. This is, however, not a strict requirement – although certainly advisable. A thesis may be submitted for examination only once, though in certain circumstances the examiners may invite a candidate to revise and resubmit the thesis, so it's important that the thesis is as good as you can make it when you do submit it for examination. It is usually wise to be guided by your supervisors' opinion. Candidates will be contacted immediately once the outcome of the examination process is known.

A thesis may be submitted at any time during the year, but candidates must indicate their intention to submit a thesis by writing to the Registrar at least two months prior to submission for Master's and for Doctoral theses, to allow the University sufficient time to appoint examiners. This is called 'intimating' that you intend to submit. Your email should be addressed to Dr Moodley at registrar@ru.ac.za .

Candidates who intend to submit a thesis for examination for consideration of the award of the degree at an April graduation ceremony must submit their thesis to the Registrar not later than 06 December.

In the case of Master's degree theses there will be two external examiners and in the case of Doctoral theses there will be three external examiners. Every attempt is made to complete the examination process in as short as time as possible and in time for the next set of graduation ceremonies. The University is, however, unable to guarantee that examiners will submit their reports by the recommended date.

## 7. Planning your studies: Outline of the general timeline for research projects and thesis

It is important to understand how your coursework modules and research report fit together. It is also essential that you grasp how the research project forms the basis of a thesis. The general process is as follows, but please note that the exact dates may vary from year to year. At the start of each year the course coordinator will provide you with the dates and deadlines that apply. Ultimately, however, the responsibility for planning your studies is up to you and must be negotiated with your supervisor.

**For Honours students, only Phases 1 and 2 apply.**

**For MA (coursework and short thesis) and PhD students, Phases 1-4 apply.**

Year 1		
Semester 1	Do coursework and build the foundation for your research. You may also start devising a <i>pilot research project</i> during this stage.	Phase 1: Coursework
Semester 2	Collect data in the June vac (if appropriate). Complete the (pilot) <i>research project</i> in Term 3 and write it up.	Phase 2: (Pilot) Research project
September/October	Present your <i>research project</i> at the Postgrad Conference.	
Rest of year 1	Use your research project to develop both a <i>research proposal for academic approval</i> and a <i>research protocol for ethical clearance</i>	Phase 3: Research Proposal
Year 2/3		
Semester 1	Submit your <i>research proposal</i> and your <i>research protocol</i> and get started on your thesis research.	Phase 4: Thesis research
September/October	Present your research project at the Postgrad Conference. Submit complete draft of thesis research.	
December	Submit complete thesis.	

### 7.1 Detailed specification of the process for Honours and MA students embarking on research projects

It is important to plan your studies well in advance. This is especially important if you are an off-campus student who is balancing career and family commitments in addition to your studies. This is a detailed, week-by-week indication of what you should be doing over the course of the year. The exact number of weeks per term and the dates, etc. may vary from year to year. However, this will give you an indication of the main phases of the research project: (a) Background reading, identifying themes and writing a literature review which supports your research questions, (b) developing a methodology to answer your research questions, (c) analysing the results and (d) writing the entire thesis as a coherent whole.

Week	Dates	Assignments etc.	In this week you should...	
1			Think about what research project you are most interested in and weigh your options	Term 1: Write the literature review
2				
3			Read up on the general topic a little. Meet your supervisor and identify a few likely research projects.	
4			Do more focused reading around your research project. Write out some research questions.	
5			Read on issues relating to your research questions. Start planning your literature review around common themes and concerns that arise in the literature.	
6		RESEARCH REPORT LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL OVERVIEW	Write your literature review.	
APRIL VAC			Think about how you are going to tackle/answer your research questions.	
1			Your supervisor will suggest an appropriate methodology and give you a paper in which a similar methodology has been carried out so that you can model your work accordingly.	Term 2: Write the methodology <u>and try it out</u> (if ethical clearance has been obtained)
2			Develop the details of your methodology, e.g. develop a questionnaire; an experiment; and be able to identify exactly how it would be able to answer each research question	
3		RESEARCH REPORT METHODOLOGY	Write a methodology section based on what methodology your supervisor suggests	

		for you.	
4		Collect some sample data and try and reflect on whether the methodology was successful or not.	
5		Write your methodology.	
6		Read some more and extend and fine-tune your literature and theoretical overview.	
7		Submit a combined methodology & literature and theoretical overview.	
8	RESEARCH REPORT PILOT PROJECT	Study for exams!	
<b>JUNE VAC</b>		Recover from the exams, re-read your research project. Consider what went right and what went wrong and make changes accordingly	
1		Plan data collection and collect data	Term 3: Write the draft
2			
3		Plan data collection and collect data	
4		Plan data collection and collect data	
5		Think about your analysis and write up your results. Prepare for the Postgrad Conference.	
6	<b>POSTGRAD CONFERENCE</b>	Present at the Postgrad Conference and incorporate the feedback into your work.	
<b>SEPTEMBER VAC</b>		Write up and polish your research report	
1	SUBMIT FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH REPORT	Submit first draft of research report.	Term 4: Write the final report
2		Continue reading and writing while your supervisor reads your work.	
3	DRAFT RESEARCH REPORT RETURNED TO YOU	Consider what went right and what went wrong and make changes accordingly. Collect additional data, analyse it and do additional readings.	
4		Rewriting continues...	
5	Final Research report handed in	Finalize and submit	
6		Prepare for exams	
7		Prepare for exams	
8		Study for exams	

	Write exams and do research There are around three months at the end of the year which are invaluable in making progress. This is not a holiday! Convert your Hons or MA coursework research projects into a MA proposal. Do readings to support your research in the coming semester.	
	Semester 1 begins	Fine-tune and rewrite your research proposal in collaboration with your supervisor and submit it to the department and to HDC.

## 8. Other ways of getting involved

### 8.1 Departmental Research Seminars

Our department values and actively builds an active research culture and collegiality. We believe that knowledge is rarely constructed by individuals working alone. One of the ways we do this is to develop research groups where students explore common theoretical areas together. Another way we promote collaborative learning is through our Departmental Research Seminars. These seminars occur once every two weeks on Tuesdays from 5pm sharp to just after 6pm. The DRSeS, as they are called, allow staff and students to share research ideas, throw ideas around and also provide a forum where new PG students can learn from staff and senior students. Attendance is compulsory if you are 'in attendance'. If you cannot attend, then you must send a personal e-mail of apology to the DRS coordinator before the meeting.

### 8.2 Annual national conference of the linguistics societies

The societies concerned with language issues in Southern Africa (e.g. SAALALS, LITASA) hold conferences annually. Students whose research is sufficiently far advanced (usually only in their second year of PG registration) may request assistance from their supervisors to submit proposals to present their work at the conference. Conferences are a wonderful opportunity to hear about work done by linguists elsewhere in the world, so do talk to your supervisor if you might be able to attend.

### 8.3 RUConnected forums

Rhodes uses an interactive, online teaching and learning administration system called RUConnected. Each of the modules on RUConnected has a forum to which staff and students may post comments, questions and information. We would encourage you to make use of this informal mode of communication with your fellow students and the staff. RUConnected can be accessed at <http://ruconnected.ru.ac.za> and you will be required to log in with your student number and password.

### 8.4 Facebook groups

If you are on Facebook, you may be interested in joining Postgraduate Studies in Ling at Rhodes, a group specifically for you. This is a good forum for quick questions about coursework or making arrangements for visits to Grahamstown. There's also usually quite a bit of amusing banter too. Rhodes Ling Alumni is a page for alumni i.e. those who are or have been involved with the Linguistics Department at Rhodes, either as staff or students (or both!). It's a lively page filled with jokes, queries, observations and departmental news.

## 9. Funding your degree

Rhodes University's Postgraduate Financial Aid Office provides plenty of information about funding opportunities for prospective and current postgraduate students. The following information comes from their website: <http://www.ru.ac.za/research/postgraduates/funding/>. This site also contains far more information about opportunities for postgraduate funding at Rhodes. Feel free to visit their office in the Clock tower building or email John Gillam, the Postgraduate Financial Aid Administrator, at [pgfinaid-admin@ru.ac.za](mailto:pgfinaid-admin@ru.ac.za) for more information.

Rhodes University has set up several scholarship programmes in order to attract excellent students and researchers to further their studies at postgraduate level. The Andrew Mellon Foundation Scholarships, Allan Gray Senior Scholarships, Henderson Scholarships and the Rhodes University Postgraduate Scholarships are the cornerstone of this programme. The Andrew Mellon Foundation Scholarship is also linked to a staff development programme and staff transformation at the university.

Approximately 40 new awards across all disciplines are made annually at Honours (R40 000 pa), Masters (R50 000 pa) and Doctoral level (R70 000 pa), in addition to renewals. Approximately R4 million is awarded to such students each year. Scholarship holders are encouraged to be involved within the department's activities, and are required to teach to a maximum of 6 hours a week within the department, gaining exposure and experience in the academic teaching environment.

Smaller bursaries are on offer and are based on a merit and/or financial need basis. Students can also apply for a study loan or Rhodes University Council loan. These loans are available to those students who essentially are registering full-time and would normally not be able to study if it were not for the assistance of these loans to assist with their tuition costs. In the poorer family situations, an attempt is made to cover the tuition costs fully via the RU Council Loan programme. Sureties are required for the loans.

Further funding for postgraduate study is made available through external organisations such as the NRF, WRC, MRC and other funding bodies by way of individual bursaries or project linked bursaries.

## 10. Postgraduate outcomes and workload expectations

According to the National Qualifications Authority an Honours degree is NQF level 8 (120 credits), a Master's degree is NQF level 9 (240 credits) and a PhD degree is NQF level 10 (360 credits).<sup>2</sup> This means that each module of postgraduate study is approximately 24 credits or 240 nominal hours. According to SAQA an average student should be spending 240 hours on a postgraduate module including class meetings, reading, preparation, assessment and, most importantly, thinking/pondering/grappling as a minimum requirement to pass the module. Students who expect to achieve more than 50% should naturally spend more time. The department recommends that for an extended module, students should spend at least one day per week (8 hours) reading and preparing and 2 to 3 hours in class. For a compact module, teaching is compacted into a 32-40 hour week but students should still allocate around one day of reading per week for each of the preparation and post-teaching weeks. If you are also balancing a career and relationships with your studies, this would typically mean that you should probably spend a minimum of two hours every day for every module for the 8 pre- and post-sessional weeks.

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<sup>2</sup> The level descriptors on which module outcomes are based is available at ([http://www.nqf.org.za/download\\_files/Level-Descriptors-for-the-NQF-2012.pdf](http://www.nqf.org.za/download_files/Level-Descriptors-for-the-NQF-2012.pdf)).

This also provides a guide to lecturers about the amount of reading that should be allocated. There are different types of readings and they require different types and amounts of engagement. Generally, however, preparation for any single postgraduate class session should not exceed eight hours of preparation. This may be equivalent to three readings or around 60 pages, depending on the type of reading required. If written assignments are required in addition, then the amount of reading should be less. Lecturers who prescribe more should be aware that the course-load should not interfere with other modules.<sup>3</sup>

With respect to assessment, each module is assessed formatively (during the module) and summatively (at the end of the module). There should be at least one of each type of assessment. A typical formatively assessed assignment for any module may be a single 10-12 page research paper to be written by each student. Alternatively, three shorter papers of four pages each may be required. The completed assignment is submitted to the lecturer who provides feedback. Students may choose to re-submit their essays, taking into account the feedback received, and have one week to do so from the date on which the marked assignments were returned to them.

With respect to the research project (Module 11), the research project is marked summatively and there are no intermediate marks. However, it is wise to submit sections of the research report at regular intervals for feedback. Students have the responsibility to actively seek supervision opportunities as a means of obtaining formative, qualitative (but not numerical) feedback. The length of the research project at Honours level is 30 to 35 pages of text (without appendices and references) and should not exceed this.

### **10.1 General postgraduate outcomes**

'Outcomes' is a technical term used to describe the skills, abilities, values and characteristics that students should demonstrate at the end of a learning experience. Outcomes can be either quite general or very specific, depending on whether they describe a programme, a module or even a particular lecture. As a rule of thumb, outcomes should be explicitly formulated by the lecturer before teaching begins. However, learning is a dynamic process and at postgraduate level a lecturer plays a more facilitating role. Sometimes a class will discover knowledge in ways that cannot be predicted by the lecturer. For this reason, outcomes are frequently developed interactively by both lecturers and students during teaching as a module progresses. Outcomes are useful because they provide a guideline to students about what is expected of them. For staff, they provide a guideline around what should be taught. For these reasons, it is very important that you examine the outcomes and attempt to emulate them as much as possible.

- communicate effectively: exhibit mastery of the relevant terminology, present research in a seminar setting (as part of a community of researchers) in a well-structured and convincingly argued or projected way
- conduct research (see below)
- present and analyse the findings of this research in the form of a research essay
- master the literary style and tone appropriate to the discipline
- make a reasoned judgment / construct an argument on the basis of their own and other research findings

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<sup>3</sup> A tutorial on how to calculate notional hours and suitable workloads is provided at:  
([http://www.unisa.ac.za/contents/faculties/service\\_dept/bld/docs/Creditsnotionalhoursandworkload.doc](http://www.unisa.ac.za/contents/faculties/service_dept/bld/docs/Creditsnotionalhoursandworkload.doc)).



- ground their research in established frameworks of analysis and inquiry appropriate to Linguistics
- frame and address research questions (define the nature of the problem/question and describe the context of the research)
- justify claims made with reference to existing literature in the field
- acknowledge the linguistic dimensions of research in the field
- read sympathetically (i.e. taking care to understand the author's perspective) as well as critically (i.e. questioning the author's assumptions and interpretation)
- identify and explain competing/alternative views on a topic
- situate their work within the context of existing research.

These outcomes are specified in relation to the Honours and Master's programmes below. Since many of the outcomes overlap, we need to precisely define our assessment criteria to quantify the difference between Honours and Master's.

## 10.2 Honours outcomes

Honours represents the consolidation of undergraduate outcomes, i.e. it is not a 'mini-Masters'. One factor which was identified in the Rhodes University Calendar as distinguishing an Honours degree from an undergraduate degree is:

*Candidates taking the honours degree...will be required to study and write examinations in only one of their major subjects, but they will be required to **study the subject more widely and with greater thoroughness** than in the case of candidates for the ordinary degree...In their final year candidates will be required to pursue a course of **advanced study** in their chosen subject (RU Calendar 2007: 79)*

At Honours level students may not be expected to critique existing research but merely to situate their work within the context of existing research. These two distinctions are confirmed in the following statement: "One simplistic distinction between Honours and Masters levels is that Honours study requires the systematic understanding of a body of knowledge whilst Masters study requires critical awareness of the current trends/problems in a specific area" (Quality Assurance Handbook 2006/7).

Students should not specialise in a specific sub-discipline of Linguistics at Honours level. Rather, they should have a broad grounding in several sub-disciplines of Linguistics so that they can make informed research choices.

After completing Honours students should be able to:

- conduct closely guided research on a small-scale
- discuss the findings of this research in the form of a research essay of no more than 10 000 words (RU Calendar 2007).
- identify and explain the kernel of an argument, which entails identifying parts of the argument that are less central
- synthesise the relevant literature. This does not necessarily include selecting the relevant literature, nor critiquing it.

## 10.3 Master's outcomes

A Master's degree does not represent a consolidation of undergraduate study, but rather it represents independent research. Hart (2005:30) captures perhaps the key competency a Master's thesis should

demonstrate: “A good thesis demonstrates more than the acquisition of skills. It is testimony to the capability, attitude and qualities of the student to be accredited as a *competent researcher*”.

The thesis should show evidence of adding to the extant body of literature, but, unlike a doctoral thesis, the contribution to knowledge does not have to be original: “The Master’s thesis may well add to our level of understanding, but the findings may be more dependent upon, and embedded within, existing knowledge” (Oliver 2004: 9).

After completing a Master’s students should be able to:

- show mastery (i.e. advanced knowledge) of the field of specialization, including acquaintance with the appropriate literature and methods of research
- conduct supervised research
- be able to extrapolate the broader significance of their work, i.e. generalise their findings to different contexts, languages etc.
- demonstrate higher order cognitive skills including (but not limited to)
  - ☐ critical thinking
  - ☐ analyzing
  - ☐ synthesizing ideas and findings
  - ☐ planning and executing a piece of research
  - ☐ theorizing on a topic
  - ☐ critiquing the relevant literature, i.e. taking a position
- show evidence of self-directed learning through independent research
- show evidence of reflexivity by analysing their findings in terms of their limitations and proposing avenues for further research
- test ideas including the application of models as appropriate, using a variety of research designs, methodologies, measurements and techniques of analysis
- exercise independent judgement, using this to reflect upon their own practice and that of others
- critically evaluate their own research and describe its limitations and suggest avenues for further research

#### **10.4 Annual review process**

It is important to realize that by being accepted to Rhodes, you have been given an opportunity to do well. The progress of your studies depends on you and your commitment. However, while at Rhodes you are using up resources (both State money and the time and energy of your supervisors and teachers). Since you are using resources that could be spent on other students, it is imperative that you make adequate progress.

Every semester your progress will be reviewed by the department. Your supervisor(s) and advisor will meet with you, together with the head of department and the postgraduate coordinator to discuss your progress. You will be assessed against the outcomes and timelines in this document, and the staff will raise any issues which they think are indicative of existing or emerging problems in your progress. If you have not made sufficient progress, the department will consider various forms of intervention i.e. ways to assist you to master the competencies you need to make adequate progress in your degree work. This might take the form of additional reading and exercises to develop academic skills, for instance, or a short computer course to deal with problems in that regard. In some circumstances, a student will be requested to deregister on the basis of poor performance or perceived inability to complete the degree programme. We will always try to give you credit for the work you have done, even if it is not sufficient

for the degree for which the student is registered: for example, MA or PhD students who have successfully completed four coursework modules and a research report may be allowed to graduate with an Honours degree.

At faculty level, every year both you and your supervisor will be requested to submit an online report to the Dean of the Faculty. The reports remain private and the faculty office encourage students and supervisors to provide an honest assessment of the supervision relationship. In exceptional circumstances, the Dean will recommend a faculty-level intervention.

### **10.5 Written Work and Assignments**

Written work is an essential ingredient of postgraduate study and it is normally with recourse to this mode that decisions about the award of degrees are made. Students write assignments in order to be admitted to examinations, they write the examinations and then they move on to their research projects which, although also involving practical work, really hinge on the proposal and the thesis for their assessment – and these are both complex genres with their own conventions. When you consider the outcomes for each of the modules you will notice that many of them refer to higher order academic skills that will be assessed via your writing. This indicates the importance of writing in your degree. It is quite normal to feel somewhat apprehensive about one's ability to conquer these new challenges, but bear in mind that we have designed the set readings and other course material to support you to do exactly that and that the goal of academic study is, to a large extent, one's own growth as a researcher and writer.

As was mentioned above, each module will have one or more assignments which must be completed satisfactorily in order for you to be allowed to write the associated examination. Information concerning the assignments will be supplied timeously, usually at the beginning of the module. We will often suggest readings which would help you to complete the assignment. You need to ensure that you acquire whatever readings you will need while you are in Grahamstown, as we are unable to supply readings to you remotely. The onus is also on you to seek any necessary clarification of the topic or other details well before the due date. The lecturers associated with particular modules would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Please consult the department's Guide to Writing Assignments for more information and bear in mind that assignments are usually designed to ascertain the degree to which you meet the outcomes of the course. The matrix supplied below, "Postgraduate Assessment Form for Written Work", should be helpful in illuminating the kind of progression we anticipate in individuals' development in terms of academic skills, as they move towards more advanced degrees. We don't expect anyone to arrive at the department with fully developed academic skills – that movement is something that we will help to facilitate.

## 10.6 Postgraduate Research Report Assessment form

Outcomes completed in a...	Prestructural manner	Unistrucltural manner	Multistrucltural manner	Relational manner	Extended abstract manne
Generic	<i>There is no evidence of any knowledge of the process involved in learning and the student's writing misses the point entirely (Biggs 1999:67).</i>	<i>One relevant aspect of learning is understood and focused upon. The student's writing includes the following: identify phenomena and do simple procedures, list enumerate, describe (Biggs 1999:67).</i>	<i>Several [two or more] independent aspects of knowledge are presented. These aspects are not integrated into an overall structure. There is evidence that the student takes responsibility for his or her own learning. The student's writing includes the following: combine, do algorithms (Biggs 1999:67).</i>	<i>The relevant aspects of learning are integrated into an overall structure. The student's writing includes the following: compare, contrast, explain causes, analyse, relate, apply, correlate, interrelate. (Biggs 1999:67).</i>	<i>The integrated knowledge learning is generalised m abstractly to a new domain. student's work attempts theorize, generalize, hypothes reflect (Biggs 1999:67).</i>
Use data to build an argument and explain linguistic phenomena	No data	Data but they are not interpreted. Data speak for themselves.	Data are provided and then described. Glosses may serve as a first step in this direction.	Data are analysed – there is an attempt to explain how the data support the hypothesis (whether that of the paper as a whole, or maybe even just a statement in the paragraph). Shows / demonstrates how the data provided prove the point.	All of the above and in addition the data themselves are compared perhaps relying on other sets of data to set up complex interactions. E.g. if data 1 is correct, then this suggests data 2 must be interpreted in the following light . . .
Methodology and data collection	Methodology is intuitive or absent.	Simple methodologies and replication studies. Alternatively methodology is incorrectly carried out, there are inconsistencies, etc.	The student carries out a simple methodology correctly and competently. The student does not collect follow-up data or adjust methodologies to problems encountered.	Methodology is correctly carried out, there is evidence of critical reflexivity on the part of the researcher, i.e. they reflect on the impact of the methodology and how it may skew results, etc. Students adjust their methodologies to reflect fieldwork experience and collect follow-up data.	
Use correct and appropriate language	Spelling and grammar mistakes. Lack of theoretical terminology. Writing is couched in common-sense terms reflecting lack of engagement with the course and theory.		Correct spelling and grammar and a style that is formal and well-suited to the academic discourse. The appropriate terminology is used in the right contexts. Language may be wordy or inappropriate showing difficulty in mastering the literacies involved.	Spelling and grammar were flawless. There was a high degree of cohesion and a good academic register. For instance, hedges were used appropriately. Technical terminology was used correctly.	
Use research questions/hypotheses	No research questions	Research questions of the yes/no type; merely seeking to identify the existence of certain phenomena. Replication studies of existing methods/research etc.	Seek to describe phenomena: what are the characteristics of . . .	Seeks to correlate different kinds of phenomena (based on a theoretical link of course – i.e. no spurious correlations); the research questions are used to structure the paper. They are answered clearly.	
Findings, discussion and level of interpretation	No findings are presented or discussed. Interpretation is non-existent or at a common-sense level.	Findings are presented in numerical format only (e.g. 33% of respondents said X), i.e. findings are presented at a superficial empirical level only. Interpretation is superficial and/or related to a single theoretical base.	Findings are presented, there are attempts to explain data but inferences or conclusions may be incorrect or inconsistent. There is little discussion of negative or counter-evidence.	Findings are presented, data is (correctly) explained, generalizations are drawn and explanations are provided which are embedded in theory. There is discussion of negative or counter-evidence.	
References, bibliography and how these are integrated	No or few references.	Referencing is minimal or incorrect (showing difficulty in learning academic literacies). Sources are overused and sources may be from coursework or simple prescribed texts, i.e. the student is largely reliant on the supervisor to provide material. Literature review is not integrated, relies heavily on quotes and may be presented consecutively rather than in integrated themes.	There are a good number of academic references of excellent quality. The student has gone to a lot of effort to get good references. However, a significant portion of them are from coursework material which may indicate a certain lack of reflexivity. But this is nicely balanced by the academic journal articles that she has clearly selected. There is also a tendency to overuse some of the references.	In addition to good references, the literature review is thematically organized, showing trends in the literature. There is an attempt to interrelate and synthesize.	In addition to good references and integrated literature review the student has attempted critique (correctly) the literature to highlight inconsistencies and present an integrated (perhaps novel) whole.
Effort	Very little effort is expended.	Degree of effort is about what is expected.	Evidence of substantial additional effort. E.g. the data are demanding to collect; there is additional reading which has been done.		
Ability to work with supervisor		Makes typographical and formatting changes only.	Makes content changes.	Engages in major rethinking of project?	

## **11. Postgraduate Programmes in Linguistics offered by our department**

There are a number of options for postgraduate studies in **Linguistics and Applied Language Studies** including Honours, Master's and PhD degrees. Senior research students also have the option of studying in attendance or as distance students, allowing them to maintain their careers and family life while pursuing higher degrees. There are some specific requirements for students who have not done their previous degrees with the department which involve coming to Grahamstown for a number of visits during the course of their studies. These visits are mandatory and cannot be waived.

### **11.1 Honours Degrees**

An Honours degree is completed full-time in one year. It can also be completed over two years on a part-time basis. There are a number of other options available to students as outlined below. In all cases, however, please note that the closing date for applications is 1 November.

Application forms are available on-line at the following web page:

<https://www.ru.ac.za/postgraduategateway/honours/honoursapplication/>

Once your application has been processed by the university administration, the department will make you an offer of a place in Honours or decline your application, usually based on your June marks. You may also be made a provisional offer, dependent on your final marks for third year, or waitlisted. A final decision is made in late November or early December when internal marks have been ratified by the Humanities Faculty. The decision is conveyed to applicants via the online system. If you accept our offer, you will need to register administratively at the start of the year of study. A meeting for all postgraduate students in the department is scheduled for early February and it is essential that you attend this meeting. You will be informed about the date and time of this meeting a few weeks before.

#### **11.1.1 Honours in Linguistics and Applied Language Studies**

Entry to the Honours programme in Linguistics and Applied Language Studies requires a first degree in Linguistics or a cognate discipline (e.g. a language). The department usually requires the student to have obtained at least 65% in their third year of study in Linguistics or a cognate discipline (e.g. English, Psychology, African languages), although exceptions are sometimes made.

Students in the Honours programme must complete Research Module 11 and any four coursework modules subject to restrictions around obligatory modules etc. It is permissible for a student to select one Honours paper from another department instead, as long as this meets with the Head of Department's approval. Students who have not previously majored in Linguistics may not be able to take certain modules.

Each paper is typically examined in one three-hour examination at the end of the semester in which it is taught. Assessment varies depending on Module outcomes. This means each student writes four examinations and hands in a research report (equivalent to a fifth module). The class record for each coursework module is based on all written and practical work completed for that module (usually at least three assignments per module).

A student may, under certain conditions, take a language credit from the School of Languages (in lieu of one Linguistics module) at the discretion of the Head of Department. The specifics of these conditions are available from the Course Coordinator and the Head of Department.

In order to qualify to write the examinations, students must attend all classes, and hand in all written assignments (on the due date, unless other arrangements are made with the lecturer concerned). The overall mark for each module is based on 50% coursework and 50% examinations.

Students must pass at least three out of the five modules, and in addition to obtaining an overall pass mark for the course as a whole, they must obtain a minimum of 40% in each module to be awarded the degree.

#### **11.1.2 Joint Honours**

Students may pursue a Joint Honours in Linguistics and a cognate discipline such as English, Journalism, Politics, Anthropology or Psychology. According to Faculty regulations, a Joint Honours programme is divided 60/40 between the two departmental programmes (e.g. 3 modules in Linguistics and 2 modules in English). All Joint Honours programmes must form a coherent programme, and must be approved by the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities. Students who opt for 60% in Linguistics are required to write a research report in Linguistics. On completion of the programme a joint degree in both subjects will be awarded, with only one final mark, averaged over both subjects.

### **11.2 Master's Degree in Linguistics and Applied Language Studies**

Entry into the Master's programme in Linguistics and Applied Language Studies requires an Honours degree in Linguistics or an Honours degree in a cognate discipline, subject to the approval of the Head of Department. Two structures are possible in the Master's degree, namely Master's by coursework and short thesis *or* Masters by full thesis.

#### **11.2.1 Master's by Coursework and Short Thesis**

The Department of English Language and Linguistics strongly recommends that students consider combining a thesis with coursework, especially for students who have not completed the Rhodes Linguistics undergraduate curriculum. The reason for this is that it allows for consolidating your existing linguistic knowledge as well as exploring the research avenues available in the department. Normally, full-time students complete the degree over two or three years (the coursework in the first year and the short thesis in the second and third). Admission to the second year of study is dependent on the student successfully completing at least two of the coursework modules in the first year.

Coursework comprises five modules (including Module 11). Note that modules passed at the Honours level may not be repeated at Master's level. Students who have not previously studied linguistics at Rhodes may not be able to take certain modules. Module 11 is considered to be part of the thesis and is compulsory for all students.

In order to qualify to write the examinations, students must attend all classes, and hand in all written assignments (on the due date, unless other arrangements are made with the lecturer concerned). The coursework and examinations make up 50% of the final mark for the degree and the thesis counts the other 50% of the final mark. Students must pass all five modules. A distinction for the degree as a whole can only be awarded if the thesis achieves a distinction. Please read Section C for more information on theses, theses and the supervision process.

#### **11.2.2 Master's by Thesis only**

This is a research degree, which is governed by the general regulations for Master's degrees in the university. It is available only with the permission of the Head of Department and in exceptional circumstances. Full-time candidates can complete the requirements for the award of the degree within

one year, and part-time candidates can complete the requirements in two years. The maximum time permitted for all students is three years.

### **11.3 Doctoral Degrees**

Students are encouraged to proceed from the Master's degree to the Doctoral degree. In this degree the focus is on the thesis but it does involve coursework designed to support the thesis-writing process. Coursework includes five modules (including Module 11) chosen from the list of coursework modules provided in section D (i.e. Modules 2 to 16). Note that modules passed at the Honours and Master's levels may not be repeated at PhD level. Although the Department of English Language and Linguistics requires some doctoral candidates to take coursework modules, the degree is summatively assessed on the basis of the thesis alone. The marks for the coursework modules play no role in the final mark. Students who have not previously studied linguistics at Rhodes may not be able to take certain modules. Module 11 is considered to be part of the thesis and is compulsory for all students.

The minimum time in which a student can complete a PhD degree is two years. The maximum is five years. Admission to the second year of study is dependent on the student successfully completing at least two of the coursework modules in the first year. Registration forms can be downloaded from the Rhodes university website (i.e. not the departmental website).

***We hope that you have a wonderful postgraduate experience with us  
and that you grow intellectually into the best you can be.***

English Language and Linguistics

[www.ru.ac.za](http://www.ru.ac.za)