



RHODES UNIVERSITY
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2026



**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 Rhodes University Centre for Postgraduate Studies:
<https://www.ru.ac.za/cpgs/>
- the Rhodes University Calendar:
https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/registrar/rhodesuniversitytermdates2023/diary2026/Rhodes_Calendar_2026_web_file.pdf
- the Higher Degrees Guide:
<https://ruconnected.ru.ac.za/mod/resource/view.php?id=651127>

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 Postgraduate Coordinator, if you have any questions.

General departmental telephone: +27 (0)46 603 8105

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

Postgraduate Coordinator:

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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 our 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/>

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Meet the academic staff | 1 |
| Mark de Vos | 1 |
| Will Bennett | 1 |
| Ian Siebörger | 1 |
| Sally Hunt | 2 |
| Tracy Bowles | 2 |
| Mbali Jiyane | 2 |
| 1. First steps and registration | 2 |
| 2. Postgraduate coursework requirements | 3 |
| 2.1 Postgraduate Orientation Week..... | 4 |
| 2.2 Putting together your postgraduate study curriculum | 5 |
| 2.3 Postgraduate Programme for the year | 5 |
| 2.3.1 Module 2: Phonetics and Phonology: descriptive and field approaches (Will Bennett) | 6 |
| 2.3.2 Module 3: Introduction to Minimalist Syntax (Mark de Vos) | 6 |
| 2.3.3 Module 10: Appraisal (Ian Siebörger) | 6 |
| 2.3.4 Module 11: Research Report (All staff members) | 7 |
| 2.3.5 Module 12: Corpus Linguistics (Sally Hunt) | 7 |
| 2.3.6 Module 15: External Language Credit (Outside the department) | 7 |
| 2.3.7 Module 19: Field Methods in Linguistics (Eva-Marie Bloom Ström) | 8 |
| 2.3.8 Module 20: The Morphosyntax of Negation (Mbali Jiyane) | 8 |
| 2.4 Postgraduate Calendar 2026 | 8 |
| 3 The Postgrad Conference..... | 10 |
| 3.1 What is the function of the Postgrad Conference? | 10 |
| 3.2 What is expected of you at the Postgrad Conference? | 10 |
| 3.3 What happens if you choose not to participate in the Postgrad Conference? | 12 |
| 4. Theses, research projects and the supervision process | 12 |
| 4.1 The supervision relationship | 12 |
| 4.2 The research project..... | 13 |
| 4.3 The research proposal: MA and PhD students only | 13 |
| 4.3.1 The Humanities Higher Degrees Committee (HHDC) | 14 |
| 4.3.2 How should the HHDC research proposal be structured? | 15 |
| 4.3.3 Ethics approval | 15 |
| 4.4 The final thesis..... | 16 |
| 4.4.1 Submission and examination | 17 |

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| 5. | Planning your studies: Outline of the general timeline for research projects and theses | 18 |
| 5.1 | Detailed specification of the process for Honours and MA students embarking on research projects | 18 |
| 6. | Other ways of getting involved | 21 |
| 6.1 | Departmental Research Seminars | 21 |
| 6.2 | Annual national conferences of the linguistics societies..... | 21 |
| 6.3 | RUconnected forums | 21 |
| 6.4 | Facebook groups | 21 |
| 7. | Funding your degree | 22 |
| 8. | Postgraduate outcomes and workload expectations | 22 |
| 8.1 | General postgraduate outcomes..... | 23 |
| 8.2 | Honours outcomes | 24 |
| 8.3 | Master's outcomes | 24 |
| 8.4 | Annual review process | 25 |
| 8.5 | Written work and assignments | 26 |
| 8.6 | Postgraduate Research Report Assessment form | 27 |
| 9. | Postgraduate Programmes in Linguistics offered by our department | 28 |
| 9.1 | Honours Degrees | 28 |
| 9.1.1 | Honours in Linguistics and Applied Language Studies | 28 |
| 9.1.2 | Joint Honours | 29 |
| 9.2 | Master's Degree in Linguistics and Applied Language Studies..... | 29 |
| 9.2.1 | Master's by Coursework and Short Thesis | 29 |
| 9.2.2 | Master's by Thesis only | 29 |
| 9.3 | Doctoral Degrees | 29 |

Meet the academic staff

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BJourn (Rhodes), MPhil (Tromsø), PhD (Leiden)

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Research interests:

- Syntax and formal models in all languages
- The linguistics of literacy in Africa and African languages
- Syntactic linearisation
- English and Afrikaans grammar and syntax
- Pseudo-coordination



Will Bennett

Associate Professor

BA (Carleton), PhD (Rutgers)

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Research interests:

- Theoretical phonology
- Phonetics and phonology of South African languages
- Endangered language description and documentation
- Crosslinguistic typology
- Optimality Theory



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PhD (Rhodes)

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Research interests:

- Systemic Functional Linguistics
- Legitimation Code Theory
- Sign language linguistics
- Political discourse
- Media discourse



Sally Hunt

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PhD (Rhodes)

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Research interests:

- Corpus linguistics
- (Critical) Discourse Analysis
- Language and gender



Tracy Bowles

Lecturer

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Research interests:

- The linguistics of literacy in African languages
- Language in education
- Psycholinguistics (in particular, second language acquisition and language learning)
- Syntax



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Research interests:

- Bantu morphosyntax
- Psycholinguistics
- Multilingual literacy and language policy



1. 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 should apply in the year prior to the commencement of their studies and report to the department at the beginning of the department's Postgraduate Orientation Week (PG O-Week), usually one week before the beginning of the university's Term 1. The specific date each year is conveyed to accepted students via email before classes begin. Attendance at 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 PG O-Week, we would usually 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:

All higher degree candidates are required to re-register each year via ROSS before 15 February, until the completion of the degree. Failure to re-register before 15 February in a given year can result in the cancellation of registration. Such a defaulter might be required to re-apply for admission as a candidate for the degree *de novo*.

2. Postgraduate coursework requirements

Most postgraduate students are required to do coursework in Linguistics, in addition to their research project. Requirements for the various postgraduate degrees in Linguistics at Rhodes University are the successful completion of the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| Honours | 4 coursework modules PLUS the research report (Module 11) which culminates in a research report |
| Master's by coursework and half-thesis | 4 coursework modules PLUS the research report (Module 11) which culminates in a half-thesis |
| Master's by full thesis | A full MA thesis PLUS any coursework modules the Department deems will support the student's research. |
| PhD | A full PhD thesis PLUS any coursework modules the Department deems will support the student's research. |

MA and PhD students who are allocated coursework modules must complete them within the first year of registration. Failure to do so will result in deregistration. Module 11 (Research report) is compulsory. 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.

In addition, MA and PhD students are required to submit their research proposal to the Humanities Higher Degrees Committee for approval, and may need to submit an ethical clearance application. MA students are expected to submit their research proposal to the Humanities Higher Degrees Committee within the first six months of registration, and PhD students within the first year of registration.

Usually in August 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. 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 based outside Makhanda, 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. In exceptional circumstances, students may attend via videoconferencing. To do so, they will need to email the Postgraduate Coordinator at least one month before the conference. Applications for attendance via videoconferencing will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

All students must decide, in consultation with the department, which modules they intend to take and when. Usually, module choices will be made in individual appointments with advisors during Postgraduate Orientation Week. In the unusual situation that students in their second or third years of study need to take modules, they should inform the Postgraduate Coordinator in writing of the modules they plan to take. Only in exceptional circumstances will deviation from this plan be allowed, as firm numbers are required for module planning. See Table 1 below for typical study structures.

| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | Years 3 & 4 |
|------|---|-----------------------------|--|---|-------------|
| | Semester 1 | Semester 2 | | | |
| Hons | 4 x coursework modules | | | | |
| | Research report | | | | |
| MA | 2 x coursework modules (MA by full thesis) 4 x coursework modules (MA by coursework and half thesis) | | | | |
| | Develop a MA research proposal for half-thesis and submit it to the HHDC | Apply for ethical clearance | Present report on pilot project at Postgrad Conference | Present results of thesis research at Postgrad Conference Write the half-thesis | |
| PhD | 2 x coursework modules | | | | |
| | Develop a PhD research proposal for half-thesis and submit it to the HHDC | Apply for ethical clearance | Present report on pilot project at Postgrad Conference | Present results of thesis research at Postgrad Conference annually Write full thesis | |

Table 1: Typical PG Degree Structures

2.1 Postgraduate Orientation Week

This week is compulsory for all our postgraduate (PG) students, as it is an introduction to PG studies at Rhodes University. During this week you will be taken through our PG curriculum, which includes the requirements of your degree, whether that be Honours, Master's 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 a variety of sessions with our 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 managing sources, plagiarism and AI, writing with voice and authority, research questions and research topics. A separate session for Master's and PhD students gives more logistical information on the function of the Humanities Higher Degrees Committee (HHDC) 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.

2.2 Putting together your postgraduate study curriculum

When you register for postgraduate studies in linguistics at Rhodes University, you will be required to choose some study modules in consultation with the department. 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 you through the period of integration into the department, advise on practical matters and talk through the decisions you need to make.

Most students will be present on campus for the whole year, although some MA and PhD students may be based off-campus. It is important to realise, however, that both on-campus and off-campus (distance) students are considered **full-time students**. The Rhodes University 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 supervisor(s) and your lecturers.

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

Table 1 shows some typical ways in which a postgraduate degree in Linguistics at Rhodes University may unfold. It serves only as a suggestion, however. You should plan your own degree in consultation with your supervisor, bearing in mind that maximum lengths of postgraduate degrees are increasingly being enforced at the university. This means that it is not advisable to plan to complete a Master's degree in longer than three years or a PhD in longer than five years.

2.3 Postgraduate Programme for the year

This section provides brief descriptions of each module offered in 2025. Note that while we will make every effort to offer the programme as is, changes may be unavoidable, and the outline is thus provisional. Additional modules may be offered in the year depending on staffing.

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 website and on RUconnected.

2.3.1 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), analyse 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.

2.3.2 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 and if you are interested in syntactic analysis of different languages, 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? Minimalist syntax approaches this question by postulating that all syntactic diversity in the world's 6 000 languages reduces to just three basic, elegant operations: Merge, Move and Agree applied to syntactic features. In short, it focuses on what all languages have in common and deriving the immense diversity from simple, elegant principles that all human languages share.

The module includes an overall introduction to Minimalist Syntax and its principles, followed by exploration of syntactic structures and problems in various languages. There is considerable flexibility about what topics we can choose to focus on, and we can adapt our focus depending on what the class wants to look at. By studying syntax, you are joining an established international community of scholars who have been building a research programme since at least 1957. Minimalist Syntax is just the most recent adaptation of Chomskyan generative syntax and has been the dominant framework since 1995. The minimalist framework gives you tools to study the syntax of particular languages as well as contribute to language theory in general. The module focuses on analytical skills, puzzle solving, theory formation, testing of hypotheses and argumentation skills.

2.3.3 Module 10: Appraisal (Ian Siebörger)

This module explores in detail the Appraisal framework, which has been developed within Systemic Functional Linguistics to describe how language is used to express emotion, evaluate things and people, tone meanings up and down and take a stance in relation to others' ideas. We will examine closely all three systems of Appraisal described in Martin and White (2005): Attitude, Graduation and Engagement. We review recent Appraisal research studies and 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. The module culminates in the writing of a research paper using Appraisal. This module is useful for any students planning research in discourse analysis.

2.3.4 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 4. Students' progress in this module is also supported through, for example, sessions in 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 August, and close collaboration with their supervisor(s) throughout the course of their studies.

2.3.5 Module 12: Corpus Linguistics (Sally Hunt)

Corpus linguistics is a field of study which is rapidly increasing in scope and importance, as more applications are found that benefit from the computer-assisted analysis of language. This paper will trace the historical development of corpus linguistics, offer tasters of various applications of the method (e.g. lexicography, diachronic analysis, CDA), cover the various decisions facing corpus builders and afford students the opportunity to develop their own corpus, using a variety of software packages, for a purpose of their choice.

2.3.6 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 a postgraduate module). 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 University, this means a student may do French 1P, German 1, Greek and Latin 1, isiXhosa 1 Language Acquisition or Mandarin. Students may not study English 1 because this is a literary subject at Rhodes University. 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 a postgraduate module); 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.

2.3.7 Module 19: Field Methods in Linguistics (Eva-Marie Bloom Ström)

Many research questions about the structure of language can only be answered by asking people who speak the language, especially for lesser-described languages, for which answers cannot be found in published sources. This is not only the case for endangered languages, but also for many African languages with large speaker numbers, including isiXhosa and other Nguni varieties. In this course, you will 'learn the tricks of the trade' and gain knowledge of different methods used to obtain language data from a speaker. We will focus on existing research questions from an extensive worldwide project and uncover exciting details, for example, about landscape terminology, something other researchers will investigate in different parts of the world. You learn how to prepare and conduct linguistic interviews, work with focus groups, record and analyse conversations and so on.

You will also learn about the ethical principles for working with speakers, how to structure and organize your data and how to transcribe and annotate it for further analysis.

2.3.8 Module 20: The Morphosyntax of Negation (Mbali Jiyane)

This module will introduce the morphosyntactic structures, focusing on how negation is encoded and interacts with syntactic components across different languages. We will cover the basics of negation, including its syntactic positioning, morphological expression, and the theoretical frameworks used to analyse it, such as the Jespersen Cycle. Special emphasis will be placed on studying typologically diverse languages, including languages with limited historical documentation. Students will also learn how to address diachronic and synchronic perspectives on negation, as well as explore the challenges of analysing languages with sparse historical records. Practical application will involve analysing and comparing negation markers across languages, and students will refine their analytic skills through case studies and linguistic data analysis.

2.4 Postgraduate Calendar 2026

| Week | Week beginning | Terms | Compulsory modules | Modules taught | | |
|------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|
| 6 | 2-Feb | | PG O-Week | | | |
| 7 | 9-Feb | Term 1, Week 1 | | Field Methods | Appraisal | Corpus Ling |
| 8 | 16-Feb | Week 2 | | Field Methods | Appraisal | Corpus Ling |
| 9 | 23-Feb | Week 3 | | Field Methods | Appraisal | Corpus Ling |
| 10 | 2-Mar | Week 4 | | Field Methods | Appraisal | Corpus Ling |
| 11 | 9-Mar | Week 5 | | Field Methods | Appraisal | Corpus Ling |
| 12 | 16-Mar | Week 6 | | Field Methods | Appraisal | Corpus Ling |
| 13 | 21 – 29 Mar | VAC, Grad | | | | |
| 14 | 30-Mar | Term 2, Week 1 | | Field Methods | Appraisal | Corpus Ling |
| 15 | 6-Apr | Week 2 | | Field Methods | Appraisal | Corpus Ling |
| 16 | 20-Apr | Week 3 | | Field Methods | Appraisal | Corpus Ling |
| 17 | 27-Apr | Week 4 | | Field Methods | Appraisal | Corpus Ling |
| 18 | 4-May | Week 5 | | Field Methods | Appraisal | Corpus Ling |

| | | | | | | |
|-------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 19 | 11-May | Week 6 | | Field Methods | Appraisal | Corpus Ling |
| 20 | 18-May | Swot period | | | | |
| 21 | 25-May | Exams begin | | | | |
| 22 | 1-Jun | Exams | | | | |
| 23 | 8-Jun | Exams end | | | | |
| 24-26 | 13-Jun – 5-Jul | VAC | | | | |
| 27 | 6-Jul | Term 3, Week 1 | | Syntax | Phonetics & Phonology | Morphosyntax of Negation |
| 28 | 13-Jul | Week 2 | | Syntax | Phonetics & Phonology | Morphosyntax of Negation |
| 29 | 20-Jul | Week 3 | | Syntax | Phonetics & Phonology | Morphosyntax of Negation |
| 30 | 27-Jul | Week 4 | | Syntax | Phonetics & Phonology | Morphosyntax of Negation |
| 31 | 3-Aug | Week 5 | | Syntax | Phonetics & Phonology | Morphosyntax of Negation |
| 32 | 10-Aug | Week 6 | | Syntax | Phonetics & Phonology | Morphosyntax of Negation |
| 33 | 15 – 23-Aug | VAC | | | | |
| 34 | 24-Aug | Term 4, week 1 | PG Conference | | | |
| 35 | 31-Aug | Week 2 | | Syntax | Phonetics & Phonology | Morphosyntax of Negation |
| 36 | 7-Sep | Week 3 | | Syntax | Phonetics & Phonology | Morphosyntax of Negation |
| 37 | 14-Sep | Week 4 | | Syntax | Phonetics & Phonology | Morphosyntax of Negation |
| 38 | 21-Sep | Week 5 | | Syntax | Phonetics & Phonology | Morphosyntax of Negation |
| 39 | 28-Sep | Week 6 | | Syntax | Phonetics & Phonology | Morphosyntax of Negation |
| 40 | 5-Oct | Swot period | | | | |
| 41 | 12-Oct | Exams begin | | | | |
| 42 | 19-Oct | Exams | | | | |
| 43 | 26-Oct | Exams | | | | |
| 44 | 2-Nov | Exams end | | | | |

3 The Postgrad Conference

Each August, *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 organised by our department, during which you will present your work to staff and students. This year's Postgrad Conference will be held from **24 to 26 August**. You will be allocated a slot closer to the time. Please organise your travel and accommodation accordingly.

3.1 What is the function of the Postgrad Conference?

There are several reasons why the department organises this event. It is part of the department's support and scaffolding process for its postgraduates to make the research process a little less isolating. It provides an opportunity for more advanced postgrads to model the research process for 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.

3.2 What is expected of you at the Postgrad Conference?

Our postgraduates are always at different stages in their research. Some postgrads will have spent the year crafting their proposals and surveying the literature; others will have been busy finishing their theses. Here are some suggestions for what you can present at the conference:

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

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 focused on. You should, of course, aim to meet the criteria for a Mastering rating on each dimension. Ask your supervisor(s) if you are unsure what is meant by any of the criteria. (See Table 2.) Your presentation is not given marks but is viewed as an important gauge of your progress, which will be considered when this is evaluated by the department at the end of the year.

Each presentation is usually 20 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 if you are able to at your stage of research; your talk should not focus so heavily on the literature and method sections that you have no time for data.

| Development -> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| Criteria | Emerging | | Developing | | Mastering | |
| Voice: 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 |
| Methodology and data collection: 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 practicalities or ethics | 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 |
| Evidence: 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 |
| Language: 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 |
| Academic literacy and presentation: 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. |

Table 2: Feedback criteria for Postgrad Conference presentations

3.3 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.

4. Theses, research projects and the supervision process

Much of what follows has been paraphrased or taken verbatim from the *Higher Degrees Guide: A Guide for Master's and Doctoral students at Rhodes University*. You are strongly encouraged to read this entire guide carefully. It is available online at:

<https://ruconnected.ru.ac.za/mod/resource/view.php?id=651127>

4.1 The 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 seek regular supervision opportunities actively and enthusiastically.

There are various rights and responsibilities within a supervisory relationship. You and your supervisor should negotiate these in the first few meetings. In addition, supervisors will ask you to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with them outlining rights and responsibilities. This MoU functions similarly to a contract but is less formal and legally binding. There are many advantages to establishing an MoU of this type, as it provides a measure of protection for both parties around various issues, including plagiarism and authorship. Supervisors will be supplied with templates of such student – supervisor MoUs. Your supervisor and you should discuss and, where necessary, amend the terms of this MoU together carefully before signing it.

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 the student and supervisor, with the proviso that all students present their work at 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 Postgraduate Coordinator via email or in person.

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

- a. Students must arrange regular meetings (fortnightly is ideal) with their supervisors.
- 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 supervisors are required to submit progress reports to the Dean via ROSS.
- g. In addition, a Progress Review Meeting will be held between the student concerned, the PG Coordinator and the supervisor during Term 3. At these meetings, the students' progress will be discussed and such interventions as the staff deem necessary will be implemented. These meetings are intended to support students in focusing on their studies and to provide them with the support they need to arrive at a successful outcome.

4.2 The research project

At Rhodes University, we believe that students should receive top-quality supervision 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, students must produce a research report of not more than 10 000 words (i.e. around 30-35 pages). This work is carefully scaffolded and supported and constitutes one-fifth of your final mark. You should choose a topic that fits the research areas available in the department. You will be assigned one or two supervisors who have expertise in your research area.

During Master's or a PhD, students are expected to complete their research proposals and have them approved by the Humanities Higher Degrees Committee. This is expected to happen in the first six months of a Master's degree or the first year of a PhD. Once the research proposal is complete, students should begin work on their theses.

All research projects involving human participants (i.e. those in which people will be interviewed or observed) do require ethical clearance, 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 4.3.3 below for more information.

4.3 The 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 a 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.

4.3.1 The Humanities Higher Degrees Committee (HHDC)

Students will work with their allocated supervisors to prepare the proposal for readiness for approval by the department. Once this is complete, the draft proposal will be circulated to other lecturers in the department electronically for comment. After being approved by the department, the proposal 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; see Table 3 for the proposal due dates and meeting dates for 2025. 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.

| Humanities Higher Degree Proposal Submission dates | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| <u>Meeting</u> | <u>Proposal Submission Date</u> | <u>Meeting Date</u> |
| 2026.01 | Tuesday, 13 January 2026 | Tuesday, 27 January 2026 |
| 2026.02 | Thursday, 12 March 2026 | Tuesday 31 March 2026 |
| 2026.03 | Thursday, 11 June 2026 | Thursday 25 June 2026 |
| 2026.04 | Thursday, 13 August 2026 | Thursday 27 August 2026 |
| 2026.05 | Monday, 09 November 2026 | Monday 23 November 2026 |

Table 3: Humanities Higher Degrees Committee proposal submission and meeting dates

HHDC proposals need to be approved by the department before they can be submitted. In our department, supervisors circulate a draft of your proposal to the rest of the department staff for comment. Usually a week is allowed for comment, and it is good practice to allow yourself another week to revise the proposal after the staff have commented on it. This means that you should aim to send a final draft of your proposal to your supervisor two weeks before the proposal submission date mentioned above if you want your proposal to be considered in any of the HHDC meetings listed above.

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 not too long, 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 HHDC 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.

Master's proposals are usually submitted in the first six months of registration and PhD proposals within the first year of registration. If the proposal is not submitted in the first year, this immediately raises a red flag when the Dean reviews your progress at the end of this year, and if the proposal is not yet approved by then, he may require that it be approved during the first half of the second year of study, failing which you will automatically be deregistered. 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 these reasons, it is better to attempt to submit as early as possible, but also to ensure that the proposal is an excellently thought out and polished document when submitted.

4.3.2 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 may 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. Goals of research: 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. Methods, procedures and techniques: a description of exactly how you intend to collect data, analyse it, etc. 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.

4.3.3 Ethics approval

In addition to HHDC approval, each research project requires ethical clearance. You may only apply for ethical clearance once you have received HHDC approval.

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 an ethics committee. Low-risk studies conducted in the Faculty of Humanities are considered by the Humanities Faculty Research Ethics Committee, while medium- and high-risk studies are considered by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

Please be aware that after they are first considered by an ethics committee, most applications for ethical clearance are referred back to you for changes to be made or additional details to be added. This is normal, but you should do your best to avoid a situation where your application is sent back and forth to the committee multiple times, causing delays. The best way to avoid these delays 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), an awareness of the potential for harm must be taken into account, certain safeguards must be built into your research, and approval obtained from an ethics committee.

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.

4.4 The final thesis

For details about the presentation and submission of your thesis, please consult the Higher Degrees Guide. What follows are some of the more important things to remember:

- a. It is recommended that the thesis be on A4 size paper and the text be in 12pt font with one-and-a-half line spacing.
- b. Theses are normally submitted electronically as PDF documents via ROSS. A printed copy is only required in cases when one of your examiners has requested one. If this is the case, you will be informed of this by your supervisor.
- c. Upon completion of the examination process, you are required to submit a final, corrected copy of your thesis to the library. This copy should be submitted electronically as a PDF file via email.
- d. 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 **half 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.
- e. The guideline for the upper length of a PhD thesis (excluding, footnotes, illustrative material, reference list and appendices) is 100 000 words, with 70 000 to 80 000 words being common (approximately 200 to 240 pages). Candidates are cautioned against exceeding this length without careful consideration in consultation with their supervisor(s) on how the length might be viewed by their examiners.
- f. A candidate must follow a consistent and recognised 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. Our department uses the APA referencing style, and further details about this can be found in the [Guide to Academic Writing in Linguistics](#).
- g. It is usual for the title page to be un-numbered. Preliminary pages (abstract, table of contents, list of tables etc., and preface) are numbered with lower-case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.), counting the abstract as the first page. The rest of the thesis should be numbered in one sequence of Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3 etc.).
- h. 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 half-theses) of the requirements of the appropriate degree of Rhodes University.
- Full name of the candidate
- Candidate's ORCID ID number
 - ORCID numbers are compulsory for students submitting theses for examinations. To obtain an ORCID number, register at <https://orcid.org/>. The library can assist with all matters pertaining to ORCID.
- Month and year in which the thesis is submitted.
 - After examination, this should be updated to the month and year in which the final library version is submitted prior to graduation.

Abstract

Every thesis must be accompanied by a double-spaced typewritten abstract in English of typically one page or normally not more than 350 words. If the thesis is in a language other than English, it must in addition be accompanied by an abstract in the language of the thesis. Neither references nor illustrative materials such as tables, graphs or charts should be included in the abstract. The abstract must be approved by the supervisor(s) of the thesis and on acceptance of the thesis will be submitted to the university's digital repository for publication and distribution.

The abstract must be placed immediately after the title page.

Students are encouraged to also include an abstract in their home language where this is not English.

Table of Contents

List of tables, figures, illustrations, plates
Preface / Acknowledgements

Chapters

Introductory chapter

The text, appropriately divided into chapters, sections, and/or parts, sometimes including journal articles or creative outputs with clear indication of

- Authorship
- If in press or published should include name of journal/exhibition date and venue

Conclusion

Reference materials

References
Appendices

4.4.1 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 two months before submitting, candidates must indicate their intention to submit a thesis by completing an Intention to Submit Thesis form on ROSS. This is called 'intimating' that you intend to submit. 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 the end of the first week of 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.

5. Planning your studies: Outline of the general timeline for research projects and theses

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.

5.1 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 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 | 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. | |
| MARCH 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 and <u>obtain ethical clearance if necessary</u> |
| 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 | RESEARCH PROPOSAL | Submit your HHDC research proposal / combined methodology & literature and theoretical overview. | |
| Swot Period | | Study for exams! | |
| JUNE / JULY VAC | | 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 | | Do a 'dry run' with your supervisor for the Postgrad Conference and incorporate the feedback into your work. | |
| AUGUST VAC | | Write up and polish your research report | |
| 1 | POSTGRAD CONFERENCE | | Term 4: Write the final report |
| 2 | SUBMIT FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH REPORT | Submit first draft of research report. 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 | Finalise and submit | |

| | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------------|--|
| 6 | | Prepare for exams | |
| Swot Period | | Study for exams | |
| DEC/JAN VAC | Write exams and do research There are around three months at the end of the year which are invaluable in making progress. Give yourself a couple of weeks off, but use the rest of the time productively. Do readings to support your research in the coming semester. | | |

6. Other ways of getting involved

6.1 Departmental Research Seminars

Our department values and actively builds a research culture and collegiality. We believe that knowledge is rarely built 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. The DRSeS, as they are called, allow staff and students to share research ideas, throw ideas around and 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 email of apology to the Postgraduate Coordinator before the meeting.

6.2 Annual national conferences of the linguistics societies

There are various academic societies concerned with language issues in Southern Africa. Two important ones in the fields of research pursued in our department are the [Southern African Linguistics and Applied Linguistics Society \(SALALS\)](#) and the [Literacy Association of South Africa \(LITASA\)](#). These societies 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. Travel and subsistence funding is available for students to attend these conferences. 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.

6.3 RUconnected forums

Rhodes uses an interactive, online teaching and learning administration system called RUconnected. Each module we offer has a course site on RUconnected, including 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.

6.4 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 learning about resources

that other students have found helpful. There's also usually quite a bit of amusing banter too. [Rhodes Ling Alumni](#) is a group 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 group filled with jokes, queries, observations and departmental news.

7. 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 Clocktower building or email Nichole Austin, the Acting Manager: Postgraduate Funding, at pgfunding@ru.ac.za for more information.

Rhodes University has many scholarship funding programmes (both internal and funder-based) in order to attract postgraduate students to Rhodes University. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Scholarships, Allan Gray Senior Scholarships, Henderson Scholarships, Ada & Bertie Levenstein Bursary and the Rhodes University Postgraduate Scholarships are the cornerstone of these programmes.

Rhodes University internal awards are made annually covering all disciplines at Honours, Master's and Doctoral levels, in addition to renewals. Scholarship holders are encouraged to be involved in the department's activities and are required to tutor for a maximum of 6 hours a week within the department, gaining experience in the tutoring teaching environment.

Scholarships and other bursaries are on offer and are based on a merit and/or a financial need basis. The Ada & Bertie Levenstein Bursary programme funds approximately 25 academically strong students who are in financial need so as to further their Postgraduate studies. Further funding for postgraduate study is made available through organisations such as NRF, WRC, MRC and other funding bodies by way of individual bursaries or project-linked bursaries.

Students can also apply for a Rhodes University Council loan. These loans are available to those students who are registering full-time and would normally not be able to study if it were not for the assistance of these loans.

8. 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). 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 each module, students should spend at least one day per week (8 hours) reading and preparing and 2 to 3 hours in class.

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.

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 resubmit 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.

The research project/thesis (Module 11) 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 seek supervision opportunities actively 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.

8.1 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 a 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.

The following is a list of general outcomes for any Rhodes University Linguistics postgraduate degree:

- 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
- 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.

8.2 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 Master's levels is that Honours study requires the systematic understanding of a body of knowledge whilst Master's 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 or critiquing it.

8.3 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 specialisation, 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
 - analysing
 - synthesising ideas and findings
 - planning and executing a piece of research
 - theorising 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, describe its limitations and suggest avenues for further research

8.4 Annual review process

It is important to realise that by being accepted to Rhodes University, you have been given an opportunity to do well. The progress of your studies depends on you and your commitment. However, while at Rhodes University 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.

Your progress will be reviewed regularly by the department. Your supervisor(s) and the postgraduate coordinator will meet with you to discuss your progress in the Progress Review meetings in Term 3, and at the end of the year your supervisors will report on your progress to the Postgraduate Coordinator, and you will be required to submit an annual progress report via ROSS. 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 the faculty level, every year, both you and your supervisor will be requested to submit an online report to the Dean of the Faculty. The faculty office encourages students and supervisors to provide an honest

assessment of the supervision relationship. In exceptional circumstances, the Dean will recommend an intervention that must take place for you to remain registered.

8.5 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, primarily, 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. 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 Academic Writing in Linguistics](#) for more information and bear in mind that assignments are usually designed to ascertain the degree to which you meet the outcomes of the module. The matrix supplied below, "Postgraduate Research Report Assessment Form", 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.

8.6 Postgraduate Research Report Assessment form

| Outcomes completed in a... | Prestructural manner | Unistructural manner | Multistructural manner | Relational manner | Extended abstract manner | Manner which challenges me |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| 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 complex, 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, generalisations 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 organised, showing trends in the literature. There is an attempt to interrelate and synthesise. | In addition to good references and integrated literature review, the student has attempted to critique (correctly) the literature, 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? | | |

9. 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 lives while pursuing higher degrees. There are some specific requirements for students who have not done their previous degrees with the department which involve regular visits to the department throughout their degrees. These requirements are mandatory and cannot be waived.

Applications for all levels of postgraduate degrees can be made online via <https://ross.ru.ac.za>.

9.1 Honours Degrees

An Honours degree is completed full-time in one year. 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.

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 or waitlisted. A final decision is made in January. 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. It is essential that you attend Postgraduate Orientation Week, which usually occurs in February and is the beginning of the department's postgraduate programme. You will be informed about the date and time of this meeting a few weeks before.

9.1.1 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 60% 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. 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.

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 in section 2.3.6.

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.

9.1.2 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.

9.2 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* Master's by full thesis.

9.2.1 Master's by Coursework and Short Thesis

The Department of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies strongly recommends that students consider combining coursework with a thesis, especially for students who have not completed the Rhodes University 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 four modules. Note that modules passed at the Honours level may not be repeated at Master's level.

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 4 for more information on theses and the supervision process.

9.2.2 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.

9.3 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 students who have not completed a previous degree in the Rhodes University Linguistics department are required to complete coursework designed to support the thesis-writing

process. Coursework includes four modules chosen from the list of coursework modules provided in section 2. Although the Department 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.

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.

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