Second Language Acquisition, PhD

FLARE stands for Foreign Language Acquisition Research and Education, and it is the name of the interdisciplinary unit that sponsors the second language acquisition PhD program. Students are able to take a variety of courses taught by affiliated faculty members from a number of departments and programs across campus.

The second language acquisition (SLA) doctoral program emphasizes theory, research, and classroom-based teaching and learning. All students take courses in SLA theory, multimedia, research methods, language learning, and linguistics. In addition, each student defines an area of specialization, in consultation with an SLA advisor. The two broad areas of specialization are language learning and postsecondary education, and linguistics and psycholinguistics.

Students in the language learning and postsecondary education specialization area demonstrate an interest in issues where SLA and pedagogy converge. This includes classroom discourse, assessment, and the acquisition of grammatical knowledge in the classroom context. Students also may focus on aspects of technology and how it facilitates second language acquisition.

Students in the linguistics and psycholinguistics specialization area exhibit interest in areas of formal linguistics (e.g., syntax, phonology, morphology) and/or applied linguistics issues that relate to their particular second language focus. Student projects include the acquisition of the syntactic structures and/or phonological features of a second language, and generative and cognitive approaches to explaining acquisition. Students who work in psycholinguistics also may focus on the relationship between language processing and language acquisition.

The Doctor of Philosophy in second language acquisition is a research-oriented degree. This interdisciplinary program, which focuses on languages other than English, requires 72 s.h., including a maximum of 33 s.h. earned in work toward a master's degree. Students must earn a minimum of 61 s.h. at the University of Iowa. Those interested in pursuing the PhD must hold a master's degree in an appropriate field (e.g., linguistics, foreign language education) or have equivalent academic experience.

A course may be used to fulfill only one requirement. All courses taken to fulfill program requirements must be taken on an A-F graded basis; no graduate credit is awarded for a grade lower than C-minus. To remain in good standing, PhD students must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.00.

The required curriculum includes 14 courses, including two foundation courses, three courses in the area of research methods, two courses in the area of language learning, two courses in the area of linguistics, and five courses in a student’s area of specialization. Students may specialize in language learning and postsecondary education, which includes a focus on technology in language acquisition and learning; or in linguistics and psycholinguistics, with a focus on phonetics/phonology or on syntax in a particular second language. In addition, the PhD requires successful completion and defense of a dissertation representing original research in second language acquisition.

Students may extend their interdisciplinary interests by taking relevant elective coursework offered by the departments of Asian and Slavic Languages and Literatures, Communication Sciences and Disorders, French and Italian, German, Linguistics, Psychological and Brain Sciences, Rhetoric, and Spanish and Portuguese in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the departments of Psychological and Quantitative Foundations, and Teaching and Learning in the College of Education.

The PhD in second language acquisition requires the following coursework.

### Requirements

The second language acquisition program at the University of Iowa emphasizes theory, research, and classroom-based teaching and learning. It offers two broad areas of specialization—language learning and postsecondary education, and linguistics and psycholinguistics. Students can focus on aspects of technology and how it facilitates second language acquisition.

The program requires 72 credits, including 61 credits in coursework. Students must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.00. A course may be used to fulfill only one requirement. All courses taken to fulfill program requirements must be taken on an A-F graded basis; no graduate credit is awarded for a grade lower than C-minus. Students must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.00 to remain in good standing.

The required curriculum includes 14 courses, including two foundation courses, three courses in the area of research methods, two courses in the area of language learning, two courses in the area of linguistics, and five courses in a student’s area of specialization. Students may specialize in language learning and postsecondary education, which includes a focus on technology in language acquisition and learning; or in linguistics and psycholinguistics, with a focus on phonetics/phonology or on syntax in a particular second language. In addition, the PhD requires successful completion and defense of a dissertation representing original research in second language acquisition.

Students can extend their interdisciplinary interests by taking relevant elective coursework offered by the departments of Asian and Slavic Languages and Literatures, Communication Sciences and Disorders, French and Italian, German, Linguistics, Psychological and Brain Sciences, Rhetoric, and Spanish and Portuguese in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the departments of Psychological and Quantitative Foundations, and Teaching and Learning in the College of Education.

The PhD in second language acquisition requires the following coursework.

#### Foundation Course

Current students will have taken SLA:6920 to fulfill this requirement.

#### Research Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDTL:7405</td>
<td>Research Methods in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSQF:6243</td>
<td>Intermediate Statistical Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A course to complement dissertation research (consult advisor) 3

#### Language Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDTL:6400</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Second Language Assessment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDTL:6409</td>
<td>Cultural Curriculum</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDTL:6483</td>
<td>Multilingual Education and Applied Linguistics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDTL:6484</td>
<td>Bi/Multilingual Literacies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDTL:6497</td>
<td>Principles of Course Design for Second Language Instruction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Linguistics Courses

Students complete two courses (6 s.h.) chosen in consultation with an advisor.

#### Specialization Courses

Each student selects one of two specialization areas—linguistics and psycholinguistics or language learning and postsecondary education—and takes five courses (total of 15 s.h.) in one area, not including courses taken to satisfy the
preceding requirements. Each student’s specific specialization area and set of courses are determined in consultation with the advisor.

Courses that may be used in the specialization areas are in the following course lists.

**Linguistics and Psycholinguistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LING:6020</td>
<td>Phonological Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LING:6080</td>
<td>Topics in Second Language Acquisition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LING:7010</td>
<td>Advanced Syntactic Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY:3670</td>
<td>Language Processes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPAN:4170</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPAN:6150</td>
<td>Topics in Spanish Language Acquisition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other courses (chosen in consultation with advisor)

**Language Learning and Postsecondary Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDTL:6402</td>
<td>Second Language Program Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDTL:6403</td>
<td>Language Policy and Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDTL:6480</td>
<td>Graduate Seminar in Multilingual Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDTL:7015</td>
<td>PhD Seminar in Language, Literacy, and Culture</td>
<td>arr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSQF:6205</td>
<td>Design of Instruction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSQF:6208</td>
<td>Digital Media and Learning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSQF:6215</td>
<td>Online Instruction: Design and Facilitation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSQF:6265</td>
<td>Program Evaluation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other courses (chosen in consultation with advisor)

**Elective Courses**

Students take elective coursework relevant to their research interests, including SLA:7025 Special Projects in Second Language Acquisition.

**Thesis**

Students must complete a thesis (maximum of 15 s.h., with a minimum of 2 s.h.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Admission**

Admission is for fall semester; students are admitted only for full-time study. Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

Strong applicants hold a master's degree in a related area, have a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.50 in master's degree work, and speak and write English and another language at a professional level. Applicants must submit a writing sample that demonstrates their ability to synthesize and analyze information using standard academic English.

**Financial Support**

Teaching assistantships are available to qualified students. Assistantships usually involve teaching elementary or intermediate language courses. Visit the FLARE website for details.