FLARE stands for Foreign Language Acquisition Research and Education, and it is the name of the interdisciplinary unit that sponsors the second language 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.