I. Qualifying exam
After completing all required coursework for the M.A., a student will be admitted to the Ph.D. program upon satisfaction of a minimum GPA requirement and the successful oral defense of two qualifying exam research papers (QE papers). Specifically, a student must:

1. Achieve a minimum GPA of 3.5 on the Core courses required for the M.A. program, based on the Core courses defined in the published guidelines with the inclusion of Practicum (Ling 504). No elective courses are counted in computing the minimum GPA requirement. The GPA on the Core courses will be assessed at the end of the 5th semester, by which time all required courses must be completed.

2. Write two QE research papers.
   a. The student must choose topics for the two QE research papers in two distinct areas from the seven areas of specialization approved by the department: Computational Linguistics, Historical Linguistics, Phonology/Phonetics, Psycholinguistics/Neurolinguistics, Second Language Studies, Semantics/Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, or Syntax.
   b. No later than the fifth semester in the graduate program the student must enroll in one semester of Practicum (Ling 504), to develop the research, writing, and oral presentation skills necessary for satisfying the QE paper requirement. The Practicum course appears as a course requirement for the Ph.D. because it is only required of students seeking advancement to the Ph.D. program. Students seeking a terminal M.A. degree are not required to take Practicum. The credit hours earned from Practicum will be counted as elective credit hours towards the M.A. degree.
   c. Both QE papers must be submitted to the department no later than the last day of instruction of the student’s 5th semester in the graduate program. This is a firm deadline, and extensions will be considered only under extreme circumstances such as personal or family emergency. For Fall 2008, QE papers are due by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 10, 2008. Papers must be submitted in pdf format and sent via email sent to Mary Ellen Fryer of the SLCL Graduate Student Services (mefryer@illinois.edu). The Graduate Student Services office will distribute all QE papers to the appropriate QE committee members.

3. Pass an oral defense of both QE research papers.
   a. Upon submission of the two QE papers, a committee of three Linguistics Department faculty members will be selected by the Student Examination and Evaluation Committee (SEEC) and assigned to evaluate both of the QE papers and conduct the student’s oral examination. A single oral defense will be scheduled early in the student’s 6th semester on a date determined by the
SEEC. The examination committee will send a report on the QE papers and oral exam to the SEEC with a recommendation to Advance or Not Advance, based both on the student’s performance on the written papers and the oral defense. The QE committee’s evaluation is final, and there will be no routine rewrite or re-examination option.

The final decision on advancement to the Ph.D. program is made by the SEEC based on the QE committee’s recommendation, review of the student’s graduate transcript, and consideration of any other matters relevant to evaluating the student’s progress in the M.A. program. Students can expect to receive a letter with the SEEC decision within two weeks after the last oral qualifying exams scheduled for that semester (usually within 4 weeks of the first scheduled oral exam).

II. Guidelines for students seeking a terminal M.A. in Linguistics.
Students who seek a terminal M.A. degree and do plan to enter the Ph.D. program are exempted from the qualifying exam. Students seeking the terminal M.A. degree must submit a M.A. thesis in addition to fulfilling the course requirements for the M.A. Work on the thesis must include registering for 4 credit hours of LING 590 with the thesis director.

Student’s right to petition. All Linguistics graduate students in the M.A./Ph.D. track are expected to follow the guidelines for the qualifying exam described above. Students who experience special circumstances that disrupt their graduate study may submit a petition to the department’s Student Examination & Evaluation Committee to request a deadline extension or other modification. Petitions will be considered by the committee and handled on an individual basis. Petitions for extension will be granted only for genuine and unavoidable disruptions, and must be submitted prior to the deadline for completion of qualifying exam requirements.