

# **Survival Guide for Graduate Students:**

**Your informal guide to graduate studies in Linguistics at the  
University of Toronto**

**2009-2010**

## Note from the Graduate Coordinator

*Doing a graduate degree is a complex process, while technically academic and intellectual, it also requires careful organization skills and life management. Knowing what to expect can help keep you focused on the former, while feeling comfortable in the latter. This “survival guide” was created for just this purpose.*

*Something that might surprise you is that being a graduate student is like having the best job of your life – where else can you focus your attention on a project that is just what you want to do? However, remember that like all jobs, there are important requirements that need to be fulfilled. Please see the “official student handbook” for details.*

*Should you ever have trouble meeting the requirement of your graduate program, I am here to help guide you through. I look forward to meeting you all!*

*Sali A. Tagliamonte  
Graduate Coordinator  
grad.lin@utoronto.ca*

*June 19, 2009*

### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

*I would like to extend my appreciate and thanks to Alex Motut for creating this “Survival Guide”, to Mary Hsu for guidance and to Brenna Haimes-Kusomoto and the rest of the MA cohort 2008-2009 for inspiration. My thanks to you all!*

## I. Calendar/Check-list for Incoming Graduate Students:

### May/June:

- Apply for Graduate Residence accommodation if necessary
- Entering the MA program directly from another university program?  
Send complete official transcript(s) to the department to fulfill the conditions on your offer of admission.

### July/August:

- Apply for Fall and Winter TA-ships  
Make sure the department has your current email address, as notification of TA applications will be sent by email.  
Forms can be found at Form Directory:  
<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/linguistics/Forms/>  
New PhDs: see “Important Note about TA Hours” at the end of this guide.
- Fill out fee deferral form and return to department  
Link: <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/forms.htm>  
“Fees Arrangement” form under “General Forms”  
Under “Award,” students in the funded cohort can write “University of Toronto Open Fellowship”.
- Set up direct deposit with Mary for payroll  
Form Directory: <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/linguistics/Forms/>  
‘Bank Authorization for Direct Deposit,’ under ‘Personnel Forms’  
‘New Employee Form’ under ‘Personnel Forms’
- Set up direct deposit on ROSI for your fellowship installments and scholarships.  
ROSI Link: <http://www.rosi.utoronto.ca/>  
You will need your student number to sign in.
- Get your University of Toronto T-Card  
Get your card on the second floor of Robarts Library.  
Bring identification and proof of admission (see link below)  
Hours and more info found here: <http://www.utoronto.ca/tcard/>  
Note: to get your T-Card you must be physically present in Toronto; if you are coming from far away and want to arrive in early September, you can delay getting your card until then, as long as you get it done early. You will need your UTORid (issued with the T-Card) to do the next item in the checklist.

- ❑ **Activate your UTORid and set up your UTORmail email address**  
Your UTORid is issued to you with your T-Card  
Go to the following link, under 'First Time Users' to activate your UTORid: <https://www.utorid.utoronto.ca/>  
Set up your UTORmail address

## **August/ September:**

- ❑ **Meet with the Graduate Coordinator (Sali Tagliamonte)**  
Email Sali to set up a meeting: [sali.tagliamonte@utoronto.ca](mailto:sali.tagliamonte@utoronto.ca)  
Don't plan to arrive in Toronto at a time when either Sali or Mary is away. You need to meet with them first.
- ❑ **Enroll in courses on ROSI (as discussed with Grad Coordinator)**  
Link: <http://www.rosi.utoronto.ca/>
- ❑ **Pay for tuition fees (at the bank); view financial account on ROSI**  
Link: <http://www.rosi.utoronto.ca/>  
See "Important Info About Funding" below for info on paying and deferring your fees.
- ❑ **Have out-of-province student loans? You may need a proof of registration form, found at SGS website.**  
Link to form:  
<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/Assets/current/finishing+up/Letter+Confirming+Registration.pdf>  
Note you must be registered to properly complete this form.  
For more information on maintaining interest-free status on your student loans, see the following link, or go in person to SGS:  
[http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/awards/finances.htm#interest\\_free](http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/awards/finances.htm#interest_free)
- ❑ **Locate your classes: see current schedule at:**  
<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/linguistics/courses/gradcourses0910.html>  
Check that your course schedule does not clash with your tutorial/ TA schedule.
- ❑ **Find your desk, your mailbox; get your desk key from the current 'Space Cowboy'**  
Mailboxes are located near the windows by the main office.  
Desks are located behind the lounge, in the grad student area.
- ❑ **Make sure you are on the following listservs:**  
LGCU (lingrad): contact \_\_\_\_\_  
Lingdept (linguistics department): contact \_\_\_\_\_  
Any research groups you intend to be a part of.

Note that PhD's are expected to participate in the research groups that correspond to their area(s) of study.

Interested MAs are also encouraged to join.

- ❑ Attend Linguistics Graduate Course Union (LGCU) Meeting  
Sign up for committees.

Everyone must volunteer for at least one committee.  
If you do not volunteer, you'll be assigned to one!

- ❑ Attend meeting about Graduate Student Funding (SSHRC, OGS, etc.) for the following year.

Meeting is in September: get started on your applications early!

To make sure you meet the deadline, you should do the following as soon as possible:

- Order official transcripts
- Request reference letters from referees
- Begin your statement of interest

You *must* apply for external funding if you will be continuing in the program the next year, (and you should still apply even if you're just considering continuing), so attend this meeting!

- ❑ Set up your laptop so that you can receive wireless from the departmental network

- ❑ Set up your computer so that you can print on the departmental printers.

See Bill for your printer code so you can print/photocopy on department printers.

- ❑ Sign your Fellowship, and TA/ RA contracts and return to departmental office.

- ❑ Get key card from Bill to let you into the department after hours. See below, "How to Access the Building After Hours" for instructions.

### Problems?

- See Bill for administrative issues, computer problems
- See Mary for info about financial matters
- See Sali for info about courses, program requirements, etc.

## Important Info About Funding:

- Note that some of your funding is given in installments, and some is earned through your TA/RA work. The fellowship portion of your funding arrives in three installments in September, January, and May.

- For the earned portion, you will receive a direct deposit into your account each month. You can estimate the amount of this deposit by the following:

$$\frac{\text{Total hours TA-ing/grading} \times \text{Rate per hour}}{\text{Number of months of TA/grader appointment}}$$

- Calculate each semester separately.

- Note that fellowship installments may not be deposited until a week or two into the month when funding is due: you may need some of your own personal funds to tide you over until then.

- You can choose not to pay any fees in September, but you are responsible for paying them, and even though you've requested a deferral to April, your January installment of funding will go directly into paying your fees (So effectively, you are only allowed to defer fees until January). This means that if you don't pay your fees in full at the beginning of the year, all or some of your second installment, and possibly some of your third installment (in May), will go directly into your student account to pay what you owe.

- September installments are usually larger than January and May installments, so make sure you budget accordingly. See Mary Hsu for details.

- If you've properly set up direct deposit, then your September installment will go into your account; if not, you will receive a cheque in the mail.

- See Mary to discuss anything about funding that you're not sure about! Each individual's funding may work slightly differently, depending on what external awards you have, etc., so it's a good idea to meet with Mary at the beginning of the year to figure out how yours will work.

## How to Access the Building After-Hours:

Once you have your key card from Bill, you can access the department after the library is closed. You cannot use this back entrance during

regular hours. If you try to, an alarm will sound. Here is where you go to get in and out:

**Getting Out:**

- Go through the door directly across from the door to the linguistics department. You must use your key card to scan in the alcove to the left of this door or an alarm will sound.
- Once inside, turn left immediately, then go right and walk through the kitchen/lounge area (lots of chairs)
- Follow this passage around to the right, and then go left through the double doors across from an abstract painting on the wall.
- Once through these doors, elevators are on the left. Go down to 1<sup>st</sup> floor
- Go straight once out of the elevators. Get to large set of double doors. Push the Open button (large silver button to right of doors), go through. There should be a single black door in front of you, somewhat on an angle. You must use your key card here again to scan, then go through this door. You're out! You will be at the back of Robarts Library.

**Getting In:**

\* Coming back in is essentially the same steps (but in reverse), except after you open the door at the back of Robarts (which is hard to find the first time!), the large, round silver button you press to open the black double doors on the first floor is almost immediately to you right once you enter the building.

Note that during regular library hours, the department is ONLY accessible via the elevator. If for some reason the elevator breaks down, you must call Campus Security to help you get out.

Link: <http://www.campuspolice.utoronto.ca>

Phone (Admin): 416 978 2323

Phone (Urgent): 416-978-2222

In case of fire, the emergency exit is near the windows. Do not use this exit unless it is an emergency.

**October/November:**

- Apply for funding for the next year – SSHRC, OGS, etc

SSHRC Link: <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/site/apply-demande/etudiants-eng.aspx>

OGS Link:

[http://osap.gov.on.ca/eng/Not\\_Secure/Plan\\_Grants\\_full\\_sepapp\\_OGS\\_12345.htm](http://osap.gov.on.ca/eng/Not_Secure/Plan_Grants_full_sepapp_OGS_12345.htm)

Remember to attend the September meeting for information.

- ❑ Stressed? Running out of time? See Student Services – they often run workshops on time management skills, have counseling services, etc.  
Health Services Link: <http://www.utoronto.ca/health/>  
Counseling and Psychological Services:  
<http://www.caps.utoronto.ca/>
- ❑ MA students: meet with Forum Paper advisors, set up regular meeting schedule. See section below for more info on Forum and Advisors

## December:

- ❑ Prepare application for PhD program (due date is in January), if you are planning on applying.  
Program Info Link:  
[http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/linguistics/graduates/phd\\_programs.html](http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/linguistics/graduates/phd_programs.html)  
Applications Info Link:  
<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/linguistics/graduates/applications.html>
- ❑ Finish first semester of coursework!  
If you are a grader/TA, you may have to put in significant hours in December marking finals, so plan accordingly.

## January:

- ❑ Submit application for PhD program (if applying)
- ❑ Call Student Services for refund if any remaining installment money is in your account  
Link: <http://www.rosi.utoronto.ca/>  
Phone number (Student Accounts): 416-978-2142

Note: You must call to have this refunded efficiently; it is refunded automatically, but this could take a month or two. Even if the balance on your student account is \$0.00, your January installment will still be put into your student account, which you can check on ROSI:

Link: <http://www.rosi.utoronto.ca/>

You cannot request a refund until the funds have been deposited in your student account. Remember that you will likely not receive your January installment on Jan 1<sup>st</sup>. It could take a couple of weeks, so be prepared to wait, and have some money saved from the previous installment or cheque to tide you over.

- ❑ MA Students: Register for Language Requirement unless you have already taken the language exam

## April:

- Finish MA coursework/ PhD I coursework  
If you are a grader/TA, you might have to spend significant hours grading final exams around April/May, so make sure you plan for that!
- MA: Create a timeline with your advisor for your final Forum Paper
- Apply for Summer TA-ships

## May:

- Call Student Services to request refund of your third installment  
Phone number (Student Accounts): 416-978-2142
- For PhD Year I—Begin work on your first Generals paper (register).
- Reapply for interest-free status on your student loans, if applicable.

## May – August:

- MA: Write your forum paper!
- PhD: Year 1. Generals Paper 1. Senior Forum.

See Timeline below and more info on pp.12 - 13 of the Handbook.

## September:

- For MA students: submit the title of your final Forum paper to the department so that you can be recommended for convocation in November.

## The Forum Paper:

### Choosing your forum topic:

Your topic needs to be chosen very quickly after you begin the program; however, don't panic if you don't know what you want to work on right away. Some start with a clear idea of their forum topic, some don't, and their topic is revised over several weeks.

### Working with your advisor:

All advisors work differently! Some have experience being MA Forum advisors, and some don't, so take some time in your meeting(s) with your advisors to find out what s/he expects from you, and to discuss what you expect from him/her. Some students meet with their advisors every week;

some meet less often. Talk to your advisor and decide on a meeting schedule that works for both of you.

**Your Forum Group:** Your forum group is your support group! They know what you're going through, and they're in the same boat! If you're having problems, talk to your peers—chances are they're having similar difficulties. Past forum cohorts have held weekly events such as Breakfast Forum (breakfast and coffee provided by a rotating member of Forum each week, when Forum is held in the morning), and Drinking Forum (weekly Friday pub-nights).

**Previous Forum Papers:** Papers from past cohorts can be found on the first bookshelf to your right once you enter the Grad Student Area. Check them out to get a sense of what a finished Forum Paper should look like.

**Forum Presentations:** Forum presentations are supposed to show your progress on your research. Your first one or two presentations may be introductory, as you get into your topic and clarify your project. Those students planning to run experiments may spend significant time working on experimental design. Your supervisor will be present for all presentations except the first one. Remember to ask questions when others present: this is a good place for everyone to get feedback on their work.

#### **MA FORUM PAPER IDEALIZED TIMELINE:**

Sept/Oct: Assigned forum advisor; choose topic  
 Oct – Nov: First presentations  
 Nov – Dec: Second presentations  
 Jan – Feb: Third presentations  
 Feb – March: Fourth presentations  
 April – August: Write forum paper

#### **General Guidelines for Writing (Not a required timeline!):**

June 15<sup>th</sup>: First draft due to advisor  
 July 15<sup>th</sup>: Second draft due to advisor  
 August 1<sup>st</sup>: Give to second reader  
 August 15<sup>th</sup>: Get back from second reader  
 August 31<sup>st</sup>: Final copy due

\* Remember if you are TA-ing in the summer, the grading will have a faster turnaround than during the normal semester; plan accordingly, especially with regards to your forum writing.

\* For those who require Ethics approval for their research, be aware that it takes a significant amount of time to fill out the required forms, and have them passed by the committee.

Find ethics forms at the Forms Directory under “Ethics”:  
<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/linguistics/Forms/>

\* SIGS money is available to help fund your research (i.e., if you need to pay participants, etc.) or to offset the cost of traveling to conferences if you are presenting. Watch for deadline notifications on the departmental listserv.

## II. For new and returning PhD students:

The most important information you need—the Timeline:

Timeline (Deadlines)	
Year I: May	Complete PhD coursework
Year II: January	Complete 1 <sup>st</sup> Generals paper
Year III: September	Complete 2 <sup>nd</sup> Generals Paper
Year III: April 15 <sup>th</sup>	Present Thesis Proposal
Year IV: August	Complete Thesis

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
Year 1	COURSEWORK								1 <sup>st</sup> Generals			
Year 2	1 <sup>st</sup> Generals Paper					2 <sup>nd</sup> Generals Paper						
Year 3	Thesis Proposal								THESIS			
Year 4	THESIS											

**Achieving Candidacy:** You have achieved candidacy once you have satisfied all the requirements of your program except for completing your thesis.

\*2 Language requirements must be completed before achieving candidacy.

See p. 12 of the Handbook for more info on satisfying the language requirement.

### SGS Time Limits:

- You must have achieved candidacy by the end of Year III (September 15)
- You must have completed the PhD by the end of Year VI

**May Monitoring:** Meetings convened in May with Graduate Coordinator and two other members of the department to check on progress.

See Forms Directory, under 'Graduate Program Forms'

<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/linguistics/Forms/>

### Generals Papers & Thesis:

See pp. 14 – 17 of the Handbook for more information about writing your Generals papers, and pp. 17 – 20 for information on the thesis proposal and thesis. See the Forms Directory on the departmental website for relevant forms.

### **Tips for PhD students:**

- Let the Timeline be your guide!
- Attend Thesis proposals of other PhDs in the department
  - This will help you understand what is expected of you, and PhD students are expected to attend.
- All eligible PhDs are expected to apply for external funding (if you do not already have such funding).
  - Attend SSHRC/OGS funding meeting in the department in September
  - For SSHRC Eligibility, see following links:
    - SSHRC: <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/site/apply-demande/students-etudiants-eng.aspx>
    - OGS: [http://osap.gov.on.ca/eng/Not\\_Secure/Plan\\_Grants\\_full\\_sepa\\_pp\\_OGS\\_12345.htm](http://osap.gov.on.ca/eng/Not_Secure/Plan_Grants_full_sepa_pp_OGS_12345.htm)
- Attend LGSU Meetings
  - Sign up for committees!
  - If you were on a particular committee last year, make sure this year's committee understands their responsibilities

- Participate in the research groups that are related to your area of study
  - Ensure you're on the listservs for the research projects in your field(s) of study.
  - Research groups are a good place to do trial runs of presentations you are planning to present later at conferences. The atmosphere in these groups is generally supportive and informal, making them a good place to receive feedback.
  
- Once you start presenting at conferences, set up a graduate student webpage. You might include the following:
  - A list of your presentations,
  - Pdfs or titles of papers you've written,
  - A summary of your research interests,
  - An up-to-date CV.

You can request webspace from the university, using your UTORid. See the following link: <http://www.utoronto.ca/ns/utorweb/>

### **Important Note about TA hours:**

Note that the number of TA hours you have in your first year as a PhD student is the number of hours the department must guarantee you for subsequent years (this is based on your union's contract). This is especially important to SSHRC holders and those who may not need to do as much TA-ing in their first year. If you only have 50 hours your first year, you may end up with only 50 hrs in subsequent years when you really need more, so be aware of this!

### **For more info....**

Check out the official Graduate Student Handbook:

Link:

Check out the SGS website:

Link: <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca>

### **Trying to track down forms?**

Forms page at SGS:

Link: <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/forms.htm>

Forms Directory at departmental page:

Link: <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/linguistics/Forms/>