rijksuniversiteit groningen / faculteit der letteren

Academic year 2025/2026

Assessment Plan

Master Linguistics

Master's track Theoretical and Empirical Linguistics

1 / Vision of teaching and assessment[1]

The educational vision of the Master's programme Linguistics, and hence the Master's track Theoretical and Empirical Linguistics, can be summarized in four central notions that are the basis of the learning and teaching in our programme. They fully agree with the faculty's educational vision[2] where the importance of teaching informed by research, the dialogue between students and staff and between cultures, and active learning in groups is emphasised. These concepts are small-scale learning communities, internationalization, research-based teaching, and active learning. While these different notions are tightly interwoven in the daily educational practice of our teachers, the following paragraphs will address them separately and illustrate them with representative examples.

Small-scale learning communities

Students profit from learning in smaller groups. They promote more contact between students and with teachers, a more lively learning atmosphere, and better community-forming and identification with the programme. In the Master's programme, this is implemented in the overall setup of the programme as well as the organisation of the different tracks. In spite of the average total intake of about 100 students per year, large-scale, teacher-centred classes practically do not exist. The division of the programme into four specialised tracks leads to smaller student communities that are bound together by their shared interest for the orientation of their track of choice. Within the tracks, virtually all courses contain seminar-style classes (e.g., werkcolleges) which often break down the student numbers even further, and challenge the students to participate actively. In the courses offered in the first semester, the focus is on (group) work regarding small research projects after discussing recent advances of the field in the first classes.

Internationalization

Internationalization contributes to a rich learning environment. One aspect of internationalisation is the International Classroom. Classes with students with different, international backgrounds afford possibilities both for students and instructors. Students in such settings can profit by getting to know each other's values and learning from each other's experiences, and by developing inter-cultural sensitivity in this way. By respecting and taking into account the diversity in the classroom, instructors, on the other hand, can try to foster the same attitude also in the students themselves. Also, instructors gain the opportunity to use the different backgrounds of the students as a resource for their teaching and to increase inclusion in the classroom. Therefore, all classes are open to exchange students. However, the programme is partially taught in Dutch and requires to ability to speak Dutch in order to participate in (clinical) internships. Due the international background of the teaching staff, individual courses can be followed by international, non-Dutch speaking students as well.

Research-based teaching

[1] This section is largely based on the self-evaluation report written by Dr R. Steinkrauss (secretary of the Programme Committee for the Master's programme in Linguistics) in 2019 for the purpose of the NVAO-application for the reaccreditation of the programme

[2] See https://myuniversity.rug.nl/infonet/medewerkers/let/onderwijs/vision-for-education

Teaching at the university, especially on the level of a Master's programme, should be firmly anchored in research. In the Master Linguistics, the aim is not only to provide the students with a solid knowledge of theory and research, but also with the skills to apply their knowledge. This endeavour is visible in all tracks and all classes and underpinned by making use of instructors who are active researchers themselves, nearly all hold a PhD degree, and frequently use their research as resource in their teaching. An illustrative example of the interwoven nature of research and teaching may be the course 'Aphasiology, in which the students are asked to critically evaluate and discuss research performed by one of the course instructors, thereby giving the students a direct access to recent research and strengthening the link between instructor and students.

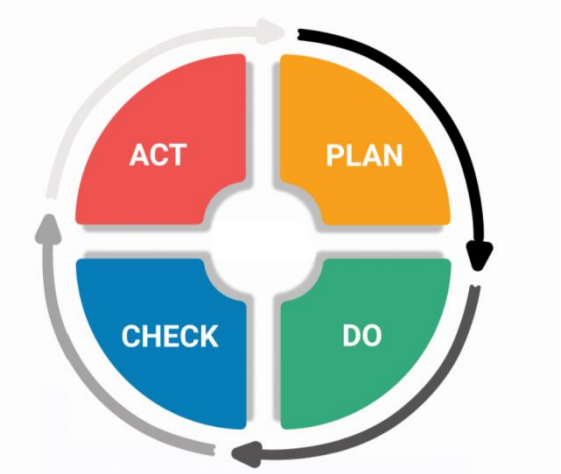
Active learning

In our vision, teaching should be student-oriented. This entails that teaching should be activating the students to take ownership of their own learning process, both within classes and in their choice of classes. This is achieved by offering small-scale learning communities where active student involvement is fostered, and by using activating forms of teaching such as hands-on activities. Thereby, students with different backgrounds and goals can follow their own individual learning trajectories.

The teaching-learning environment within the Theoretical and Empirical Linguistics track can be illustrated with the course 'Language Comparison'. This course focuses on linguistic phenomena, which show interesting differences (and similarities) among the European Languages. Phenomena that will be discussed are WH-movement, including in-situ variants and long-distance phenomena, strong and weak quantifiers, Tense & Aspect, word-order, and a number more. The lectures focus is on the theoretical insights on the make-up of European Languages. The students will both work on the linguistic aspects as well as on the language variation and descriptive ones. Each student will be assigned a specific European language and applies the course material to her or his "own" language. Moreover, students are allowed to collect data through conducting surveys and experiments.

2 / How to follow the assessment cycle (from design to evaluation and optimization)

The programme aligns itself with the protocols of the Faculty of Arts for designing, evaluating and optimizing its assessments, following the PDCA-cycle, as depicted in the figure below:



3 / Assessment dossier

a. The assessment dossier

The requirements of the assessment dossier are set out in §4 of the 'Protocol for Quality Assurance in the Assessment of Course Units' drawn up by the Board of Examiners.

All the examiners of a degree programme must provide the Board of Examiners with an 'assessment dossier' containing the following:

a. the syllabus
b. the list of marks, comprising all marks that count towards the final mark
c.
   - for assessments in the narrower sense of the word (i.e. tests): the test that was set, incl. model answers/key;
   - for written assignments: the formulation of the assignment, information about the assessment method (assessment criteria and standards) if this is not listed in the syllabus, and the completed assessment forms
   - for final assignments: the completed assessment forms and the work submitted (with or without the lecturer's comments)
d. the assessment blueprint, minutes of peer-support meetings and/or intervision, evaluations and self-evaluations of course units, etc., if available.

b. Parties involved

The following parties are involved in fulfilling duties related to the assessment dossier:

- Programme coordinator: is responsible for formulating the assessment plan of the programme and/or track.
- Examiner (lecturer and/or course coordinator): is responsible for formulating the syllabus, based on the syllabus format of the faculty, and designing the assessments based on the matrix learning outcomes (see appendix 1) of the programme. The examiner is also responsible for adding all necessary (links to) files belonging to the assessment dossier of their course on Nestor in the assigned folder.
- Cluster Board: is responsible for assessing the assessment plan and for gathering assessment dossiers.
- Expert Team / Board of Examiners: is responsible for assessing the assessment plan, (a selection of) assessment dossiers, and for discussing potential issues with the responsible examiners.

Faculty Board: is responsible for formalising the assessment plan as an attachment to the TER of the programme on the basis of advice from the Board of Examiners, the Programme Committee, and the Faculty Council.

4 / Assessment timetable

Overview of learning outcomes of the degree programme + matrix	Appendix 1
Schematic overview of time periods intended for assessment, modes of assessment used and, if relevant, learning pathways	Appendix 2
Overview of the intended learning outcomes of the course units and their modes of assessment	Appendix 3

The objectives of the degree programme, set out in the learning outcomes of the degree programme (Appendix 1), form the guiding principles. All course units together fulfil a role in working towards these learning outcomes. This is reflected in a coherent curriculum with a transparent structure. The matrix of learning outcomes (Appendix 1) defines the course units that include summative assessments and distinguishes between a) course units with assessments that *lead up to* the attainment level set out in the programme-level learning outcomes and b) course units with assessments *at this attainment level* (in the latter case the learning outcomes of the course unit are thus identical to the programme-level learning outcomes of the degree programme). This distinction is expressed as follows:

'**X**', i.e. bold, is used for summative[3] assessments at the level specified in the programme-level learning outcomes 'x' for summative assessments at lower performance levels 'fx' for formative[4] evaluations at lower performance levels

In parallel with the curriculum, the assessment programme (Appendix 2) offers a balanced, well-structured overview of modes of assessment and exam periods. Course units taught within one learning pathway may be given matching visual markings in the overview.
In order to gain insight at the programme level into whether the chosen modes of assessment tie in with the learning outcomes of the course units and create a balanced mix in the run-up to the programme-level learning outcomes of the degree programme, the intended learning outcomes of the course units are related to their modes of assessment (Appendix 3).
Specific rules may apply to certain components of the graduation dossier (e.g. for the thesis: approval of the thesis proposal, amount of supervision, resit). These rules are set out in Appendix 4.

5 / Safeguarding of assessment quality by the Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners is responsible for safeguarding the quality of assessment at both the degree programme level and the level of individual course units.

a. Safeguarding of assessment quality at degree programme level

The Board of Examiners annually issues advice on each degree programme's draft assessment plan for the coming academic year.

b. Safeguarding of assessment quality at course unit level

The Board of Examiners aims to evaluate the assessments of a reasonable number of course units of the program each year, bearing in mind the position of the course unit in the curriculum and in a specific learning pathway. In addition, a substantiated selection of theses is also evaluated.

6 / Archiving

[3] Summative assessment aims to assess a student's knowledge and skills. Such assessments are usually awarded a mark, accompanied by a justification of the mark (adapted from *Toetsen in het hoger onderwijs* (2017)).
[4] Formative evaluation relates to the process of searching, aggregating and interpreting information, which students and lecturers can then use to determine how students are doing in their learning process, what they should work towards and how this can be most effectively done (adapted from *Toetsen in het hoger onderwijs* (2017)).

Lecturers archive the Assessment Dossiers of their courses in the respective course environment folders created on Nestor for the purpose of evaluations by the Expert Team / the Board of Examiners and future accreditation procedures.

7 / List of documents relevant to assessment

Faculty vision of teaching and assessment – see https://myuniversity.rug.nl/infonet/medewerkers/let/onderwijs/vision-for-education.
Rules and Regulations – the internal regulations of the Board of Examiners.
Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER = OER; *Onderwijs- en examenregeling*) – a legally binding document that applies to the entire cohort of students who start a degree programme in a certain academic year. The TER may also contain transitional arrangements for previous cohorts.
Matrix of learning outcomes – an appendix to the Assessment Plan that specifies the course units with *summative* assessment leading up to or at the level specified in the programme-level learning outcomes and the course units with formative assessment.
Placement manual – a manual for the placement course unit.
Syllabus – a document that sets out the details of the TER and the Assessment Plan at course unit level in accordance with the information in Ocasys.
Assessment programme – the implementation of the TER, Part A, Article 4.16

Appendix 1. Learning outcomes of the degree programme + Matrix of learning outcomes

The matrixes for the learning outcomes of the Master Linguistics, track Theoretical and Empirical Linguistics, broken down in the three specializations.

The Master's degree level in line with the Dublin Descriptors	*Learning outcomes for the Master's degree programme in Linguistics – Master's track Theoretical and Empirical Linguistics*, *specialization* ***Language Development and Variation***
1. Knowledge and understanding Graduates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon and exceeds the level reached in the Bachelor's phase and are able to use specialist literature that requires knowledge of the latest developments in the field.	Students who have completed the Master's degree programme in this track have demonstrated: 1.1 specialist knowledge and understanding of concepts and theories in the field of ***language development and variation, and concerning modern European languages in particular.*** 1.2 the ability to make connections between theory/analysis and empiricism in the field of ***language development and variation***. 1.3 knowledge of recent developments in the field of ***language development and variation***. 1.4 experience with the methods and techniques used to conduct research in the field of ***language development and variation***. 1.5 the ability to independently develop new ideas for research in the field of ***language development and variation.*** 1.6 specialist knowledge of interactions between ***the field of language development and variation and related disciplines***.
2. Applying knowledge and understanding Graduates can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments	Students who have completed the Master's degree programme in this track have demonstrated: 2.1 the ability to combine information from different sources and subdisciplines and distil relevant problems and questions in the field of ***language development and variation***. ***2.2 the ability to analyse complex linguistic data from a theoretical perspective, and formulate an argument for or against certain hypotheses.*** 2.3 the ability to conduct independent research in the field of ***language development and variation***.

and solving problems within their field of study.	
3. Making judgements Graduates have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, academic or ethical aspects.	Students who have completed the Master's degree programme in this track have demonstrated: 3.1 the ability to ***critically assess and compare existing linguistic analyses of data in the field of language development and variation***. 3.2 the ability to understand the nature ***of a problem in the field of language development and variation, and reflect on the right approach to finding a solution.*** 3.3 the ability to evaluate the soundness of research ***in the field of language development and variation*** in terms of the methodology used.
4. Communication Graduates can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.	Students who have completed the Master's degree programme in this track have demonstrated: 4.1 the ability to report orally and in writing on ideas and research in the field of linguistics ***in accordance with the correct register (formal, informal, specialist)***. 4.2 the ability to report, ***either individually or as part of a group,*** on supervised own research in the field of ***language development and variation in accordance with the criteria of the international academic community, in both oral presentations (at symposia or conferences) and potentially publishable articles (professional or academic)***, if necessary using applicable audiovisual and IT aids.
5. Learning skills Graduates have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.	Students who have completed the Master's degree programme in this track have demonstrated: 5.1 the ability to study independently with an eye to further academic development upon completion of the degree programme. 5.2 the ability to acquire new knowledge ***in the field of language development and variation***, and independently find the relevant academic literature. 5.3 the ability to follow developments within ***the field of language development and variation***, and constantly revise their knowledge and understanding and develop new skills accordingly. 5.4 the ability to start a PhD programme in linguistics or related fields.

The Master's degree level in line with the Dublin Descriptors	*Learning outcomes for the Master's degree programme in Linguistics – Master's track* **Theoretical and Empirical Linguistics,** *specialization* ***The Human Language System***
1. Knowledge and understanding Graduates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon and exceeds the level reached in the Bachelor's phase and are able to use specialist literature that requires knowledge of the latest developments in the field.	Students who have completed the Master's degree programme in this track have demonstrated: 1.1 specialist knowledge and understanding of concepts and theories in the field of ***theoretical linguistics***. 1.2 the ability to make connections between theory/analysis and empiricism in the field of ***theoretical linguistics***. 1.3 knowledge of recent developments in the field ***theoretical linguistics***. 1.4 experience with the methods and techniques used to conduct research in the field of ***theoretical linguistics***. 1.5 the ability to independently develop new ideas for research in the field of ***theoretical linguistics.*** 1.6 specialist knowledge of interactions between ***the field of theoretical linguistics and related disciplines***.
2. Applying knowledge and understanding Graduates can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study.	Students who have completed the Master's degree programme in this track have demonstrated: 2.1 the ability to combine information from different sources and subdisciplines and distil relevant problems and questions in the field of ***theoretical linguistics***. ***2.2 the ability to analyse complex linguistic data from a theoretical perspective, and formulate an argument for or against certain hypotheses.*** 2.3 the ability to conduct independent research in the field of ***theoretical linguistics.***
3. Making judgements Graduates have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to	Students who have completed the Master's degree programme in this track have demonstrated: 3.1 the ability to ***critically assess and compare existing linguistic analyses in the field of theoretical linguistics***. 3.2 the ability to understand the nature ***of a problem in the field of theoretical linguistics, and reflect on the right approach to finding a solution.***

inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, academic or ethical aspects.	3.3 the ability to evaluate the soundness of research ***in the field of theoretical linguistics*** in terms of the methodology used.
4. Communication Graduates can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.	Students who have completed the Master's degree programme in this track have demonstrated: 4.1 the ability to report orally and in writing on ideas and research in the field of linguistics ***in accordance with the correct register (formal, informal, specialist)***. 4.2 the ability to report on supervised own research in the field of ***theoretical linguistics in accordance with the criteria of the international academic community, in both oral presentations (at symposia or conferences) and potentially publishable articles (professional or academic)***, if necessary using applicable audiovisual and IT aids.
5. Learning skills Graduates have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.	Students who have completed the Master's degree programme in this track have demonstrated: 5.1 the ability to study independently with an eye to further academic development upon completion of the degree programme. 5.2 the ability to acquire new knowledge ***in the field of theoretical linguistics***, and independently find the relevant academic literature. 5.3 the ability to follow developments within ***the field of theoretical linguistics***, and constantly revise their knowledge and understanding and develop new skills accordingly. 5.4 the ability to start a PhD programme in linguistics or related fields.

Appendix 2. Learning outcomes and their assessment in course units

Matrix of realized learning outcomes / course units in the Master's degree programme in Linguistics, Master's track Theoretical and Empirical Linguistics, broken down in the two specializations.

Language Development and Variation – matrix learning outcomes

	knowledge and understanding						applying knowledge			making judgments			communication		learning skills			
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4
semester 1 **vaktitel**																		
Language variation in Europe: Crossing borders	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
Language comparison	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x		
Language development	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
semester 2 **vaktitel**																		
The sound of language	x			x	x	x		x				x	x		x	x		
Debates in linguistics	x	x			x	x		x		x	x	x	x		x	x		
Internship MA Linguistics	x	x					x	x					x	x	x	x	x	
MA-scriptie	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

The Human Language System – matrix learning outcomes

	knowledge and understanding						applying knowledge			making judgments			communication		learning skills			
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4
semester 1 **vaktitel**																		
The interpretation of language	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Language comparison	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x		
The structure of language	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
semester 2 **vaktitel**																		
Architecture of the language system	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
The sound of language	x			x	x	x		x				x	x		x	x		
Internship MA Linguistics	x	x					x	x					x	x	x	x	x	
MA-scriptie	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Appendix 3. Schematic overview of the assessment programme

Assessment Plan MA Linguistics (Theoretical and Empirical Linguistics) 2022-2023

Language Development and Variation – assessment plan

semester 1	blok 1		blok 2	
course title (ECTS)	wk 1-7 lectures	wk 8-10 exams/resits	wk 11-17 lectures	wk 18-20 exams/resits
Language variation in Europe: Crossing borders (10)	seminar, assignments, presentations	(individual research)	seminar, assignments, presentations	**writing ; presentation** (individual resit within a month)
Language comparison (10)	seminar, assignments, presentations	(individual research)	seminar, assignments, presentations	**paper** (individual resit within a month)
Language development (10)	seminar, assignments, presentations	(individual research)	seminar, assignments, presentations	**paper, assignments, presentations** (resit within a month)
semester 2	blok 3		blok 4	
course title (ECTS)	wk 21-27 lectures	wk 28-30 exams/resits	wk 31-37 lectures	wk 38-41 exams/resits
The sound of language (5)	seminar, assignments, presentations, lab	**Assignment or short paper, presentation** (resit within a month)		
Debates in linguistics (5)			seminar, assignments, presentations, discussions	**Assignment or short paper, presentation** (resit within a month)
MA-thesis (20)	Supervised thesis research			**MA thesis**

The Human Language System – assessment plan

semester 1	blok 1		blok 2	
course title (ECTS)	wk 1-7 lectures	wk 8-10 exams/resits	wk 11-17 lectures	wk 18-20 exams/resits
The interpretation of language (10)	seminar, assignments, presentations	(individual research)	seminar, assignments, presentations	**paper** (individual resit within a month)
Language comparison (10)	seminar, assignments, presentations	(individual research)	seminar, assignments, presentations	**paper** (individual resit within a month)
The structure of language (10)	seminar, assignments, presentations	(individual research)	seminar, assignments, presentations	**paper** (individual resit within a month)
semester 2	blok 3		blok 4	
course title (ECTS)	wk 21-27 lectures	wk 28-30 exams/resits	wk 31-37 lectures	wk 38-41 exams/resits
Architecture of the language system (5)	seminar, assignments, presentations, discussions	**Assignment or short paper, presentation** (resit within a month)		
The sound of language (5)	seminar, assignments, presentations, lab	**Assignment or short paper, presentation** (resit within a month)		
MA-thesis (20)	Supervised thesis research			**MA thesis**