



UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Program description

Master in Theoretical Linguistics

120 credits/Campus Tromsø

The program description has been approved by the board of Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education 24.9.2025.

From autumn 2026



Study programme name	Bokmål: Master i teoretisk lingvistikk Nynorsk: Master i teoretisk lingvistikk Engelsk: Master in Theoretical Linguistics
Degree obtained	Master in Linguistics
Target group	The programme is well suited for students who wish to study language from a comparative perspective.
Admission requirements, required prerequisite, recommended prerequisite knowledge	Admission to the master's programme in Theoretical Linguistics requires a bachelor's degree (180 ECTS), or equivalent qualification, in a language or linguistics, or a degree combining linguistics and literature (minimum 80 ECTS in linguistics/language/literature, of which minimum 60 ECTS must be in linguistics and/or language). Applicants must have a minimum grade average comparable to a Norwegian C (2,5) in the ECTS scale, see UiT's webpage for international admissions for more information on how the point average is calculated. A special interest in the formal and descriptive properties of natural language is a precondition. Admission to master's programmes is regulated by Forskrift om opptak til UiT §§ 12.-16 Applicants from EU/EEA and Switzerland and outside Europe: • Applicants with education from non-Nordic countries must document English language proficiency. <u>You will find more information about English language requirements here.</u> • <u>You will find more information about international admission here.</u>
The study programme's Learning Outcome	After completing the master's programme in Theoretical Linguistics, the candidate will have the following learning outcomes: Knowledge The candidate has • specialised knowledge of a linguistic subfield through work with the master's thesis • deeper knowledge of theoretical linguistics through the study of core subjects • broadened knowledge of adjoining fields through elective courses • a critical view of the theories and methods that have been informing linguistic research

	Skills The candidate can • orient himself or herself in linguistic scientific literature with special regard to the development of theory and methods, and to earlier research • solve problems, analyze linguistic data, and present findings according to academic standards • communicate scientific content at a high level General competence The candidate is able to • work in occupations that require thorough knowledge of human language and/or experience with independent project work • analyze academic, professional and research ethical problems in linguistics • apply his/her knowledge and skills in new linguistic areas in order to carry out advanced assignments and projects • communicate extensive independent work and master the language and terminology of linguistics • communicate about linguistic issues, analyses and conclusions, both with specialists and the general public • contribute to new thinking and innovation processes in linguistic theorizing
Academic content and description of the study programme	The Master's in Theoretical Linguistics covers graduate level studies in theoretical linguistics and is to be seen as an extension of work at the bachelor's level. The programme places special emphasis on the formal aspects of grammar, in particular syntax, phonology and morphology. The approach to these disciplines relies on comparative studies of different languages. Students will develop insight into the structure of language, comparative aspects of linguistic research, social and geographic variation, the historical development of languages, and language acquisition. At the master's level, students will develop special interests based on their coursework and will write a master's thesis. The programme consists of the following components: • 80 ECTS of coursework and • 40 ECTS for a thesis. The two elective ten credit courses can come from any 3000-level course in language or linguistics offered by the groups for English and General Linguistics. Other courses may be accepted (e.g. courses in philosophy, psychology, mathematics, and so on), subject to approval by the head of the study programme. <i>Interdisciplinary courses</i>

Several "interdisciplinary" courses are offered, and these courses are assigned a HIF-code in the university catalogue. Not all of the HIF-courses, however, may be appropriate for incorporation into the programme. To find out which HIF-courses are accepted as part of the Master in Theoretical Linguistics, please contact the programme staff.

Progression

The following courses are offered in the first semester: HIF-3001 Foundations in linguistic theory and analysis and HIF-3031 Morphology. In addition, students are required to complete an elective course.

The following courses are offered in the second semester: HIF-3011 Syntax and HIF-3021 Phonological interfaces. The students also have to complete an elective course. In the third semester, HIF-3041 Semantics and HIF-3051 Topics in Language Variation will be offered in alternate years, and students can also choose an ENG-3000 course in linguistics instead. In addition, students are required to take a course in Sustainability and Innovation, TVR-3000.

Elective courses will primarily be selected from English (ENG-3000 courses) but may also come from the list of language courses offered in the Department of Language and Culture. Note that elective courses should be oriented to theory of language rather than practical language learning. It is also possible to take courses offered by other Faculties as long as their relevance to the degree can be documented. Elective courses from other programmes than English must be approved by the head of the study programme.

This is a full-time study programme located at the Tromsø campus. It is possible to take courses abroad in the second semester.

Table: programme structure

Semester	10 credits	10 credits	10 credits
Semester 1	HIF-3001 Foundations in linguistic theory and analysis	HIF-3031 Morphology	Elective course
Semester 2	HIF-3011 Syntax or exchange	HIF-3021 Phonological interfaces or exchange	Elective course or exchange
Semester 3	HIF-3041 Semantics or HIF-3051 Topics in Language Variation or ENG-3000 course	TVR-3000 Sustainability and Innovation	LIN-3900 Master's Thesis in Linguistics
Semester 4	LIN-3900 Master's Thesis in Linguistics		

Learning activities, examination and assessment	Teaching takes the form of lectures and seminars. The most common forms of examination are home exams written on assigned topics over a one-two week period or term papers on topics that students choose in cooperation with course instructor. Grades range from A-F, where A is the highest grade and F is fail. As a master's student, you will be assigned a supervisor who will monitor your progress throughout your studies. The master's thesis project is developed in discussion with the supervisor taking into account the ongoing research activity and expertise in the department to find a topic that is at the forefront of current linguistic theorizing. The master's thesis will be assigned a grade (from A to F); the coursework will be graded on the same scale. For information about examinations, please see the individual course descriptions. All course work is processed electronically via the university's web-based services. Students are encouraged to take an active role in their education and give lecturers and their supervisor feedback on the learning process and teaching methods used. Students are also encouraged to participate actively in the research environment by attending research seminars, colloquia, and workshops and conferences organized by the research groups CASTL-FISH and C-LaBL connected to the programme.
Summary of coursework requirements and assessment	For further information about work requirements, exam format and evaluative criteria, see the individual course descriptions on the UiT website.
The study programme's relevance	The programme is an excellent starting-point for further study at PhD level. It also qualifies candidates for work in occupations that require specialized insight into language and/or experience with independent project work, for example programming, administration, industry or the media.
Work scope	The Master's in Theoretical Linguistics is a demanding programme that requires the student to work throughout the term. The students are expected to spend 40 hours per week on their studies, including preparation for lectures and seminars, work on term papers and other assignments.
For master's theses/independent work in master's degrees	The degree includes 40 ECTS which must be earned by writing a master's thesis (40 ECTS). This work is normally done individually but may be part of a research project being carried out at the Department of Language and Culture (ISK). The topic and supervisors for this work will be chosen in consultation with one of the academic staff. There is no restriction on the subfield of linguistics that the thesis should deal with, but it is expected that the content be contextualized to reflect an understanding of the relevant issues from linguistic theory.
Language of instruction and examination	The language of instruction, of all syllabus material, and of exams is English.
Internationalisation	The programme is embedded in a thriving international research environment and students are encouraged to get into contact with guest researchers from

	abroad. Furthermore, the department has a well-stocked portfolio of Erasmus agreements, which the students can make use of.
Student exchange	Students taking the Master's in Theoretical Linguistics are encouraged to make use of one of our exchange agreements in the second semester. We especially recommend our agreements with the following institutions: • The University of Konstanz, which offers an MA in Multilingualism: https://www.ling.uni-konstanz.de/studium/master-of-arts/ma-multilingualism/ • The University of York (via the Norwegian Study Centre in York): https://www.york.ac.uk/nsc/masters/why-masters/ • Eötvös Loránd University, which in the MA in English offers an English Theoretical Specialisation Track with numerous courses in theoretical linguistics.
Administrative responsibility and academic responsibility	Administration of the program is handled by the Department of Language and Culture within the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education. Academic responsibility is handled by the Head of Linguistics and English Language.
Quality assurance	The programme quality is evaluated every year. All courses will be evaluated once during the two-year period of the study programme. The head of the study programme decides which methods are to be made use of for the evaluation, as well as how the results should be reported back to the students and used for the improvement of the programme.

