

COGNITIVE SCIENCE AND LANGUAGE POSTGRADUATE PROGRAM

Guide for students

The *Cognitive Science and Language* (CCiL) program is a postgraduate interdisciplinary program focused on language and cognition as approached from three different disciplines: Psychology, Linguistics and Philosophy. Its goal is to educate and promote researchers in the field of Language and Cognition Studies with interdisciplinary motivation, providing the scientific formation and the methodological tools necessary to carry out high level research in a specific subtopic. The program is co-organized by five different Catalan universities: Universitat de Barcelona, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Universitat Rovira i Virgili and Universitat de Girona.

Master and PhD

CCiL has two subprograms: *CCiL Master Program* and the *CCiL PhD Program*.

- The **CCiL Master** Program is the first, taught period (between 60 and 120 credits, 1-2 years respectively). It provides an official Master Degree and qualifies for applying to the CCiL PhD program (although the acceptance depends on an admission process).
- The **CCiL PhD** Program is the second, research period, during which students are expected to carry out the research for, and complete, a doctoral dissertation, the submission of which will earn them the PhD degree.

Language

Official languages are English, Spanish and Catalan. The language of each course is announced at the time of registration. Every branch offers enough courses in English so that it is possible to complete the whole second year of the master in English; in particular, all mandatory courses, and at least 3 optional courses per branch, are in English. Other program activities (talks, workshops, conferences ...) are mainly in English.

Quality award

The whole program has been classed as “first-rate” postgraduate program (‘Programa de Calidad’) by the Catalan and Spanish quality-evaluation agencies since it started in 1989. This qualification facilitates scholarships and other economic aids for students.

Phd in Cognitive Science and Language

Student's guide

Structure

The CCIl PhD is the second, research period. It has three different branches: Psychology, Linguistics and Philosophy. The student has to apply to one of these branches.

CCIl PhD program is also participated by the different universities of the CCIl program. Nevertheless, in contrast to the CCIl Master program, application, admission, and enrolment are decided and processed by each university. Students can choose the university where they want to apply and, if accepted, register. In order to apply for the PhD, students must first complete the pre-enrolment process as established by the university where they want to enroll. Every university has a general CCIl PhD coordinator.

Application, selection and enrolment

Applications

- The CCIl Research/Master degree automatically qualifies for applying to the corresponding branch of CCIl PhD, so that applicants with this master degree don't need to submit any other document but those specified in the formal pre-registration process that the university to which they apply establishes. It must be noticed that, although CCIl Research/Master degree qualifies for CCIl PhD *application*, it does not imply any right for CCIl *admission*. The transition from CCIl Research/Master to CCIl PhD is not automatic; students with CCIl Research/Master degree are subject to the same admission process that applies to other CCIl PhD applicants.

- Applicants with a degree similar to the CCIl Master, in the corresponding branch, may be asked to submit, together with the documents specified for the formal pre-registration process by the university to which they apply:

- (a) a brief draft-description (between 800 and 1500 words) of a possible topic for the dissertation
- (b) a sample of written work representative of their interests and research aptitudes
- (c) two reference letters specifically written for the CCIl PhD application
- (d) an up-to-date CV

Every branch at every university may establish additional conditions or criteria for PhD acceptance. The coordinator of the branch at the corresponding university will inform the PhD applicants about them.

Admission and registration

PhD Admission committees will take into account the candidate's academic qualifications, research aptitudes, scientific quality and interest of the project, the fit of the topic with staff expertise, and the number of dissertations the staff are at that moment able to supervise. They will decide whether the applicant is (ai) accepted, (aai) rejected, or (aaii) accepted conditionally upon prior achievement of some CCI L formation credits (20 research credits plus some courses of the second year of CCI L Master).

The Admission Committee at every university will notify the applicants of this outcome. Once notified, the student must contact his/her supervisor(s) and complete the registration process. Registration requires, among other things, the acceptance letter by the supervisor(s) and a specification of the topic/title of the dissertation. In order to proceed to the official registration, in some universities the PhD student and the supervisor have to sign a specific Commitment Form that specifies the duties of each.

PhD-supervisor(s)

Every PhD student must have a PhD-supervisor or supervisors, whose acceptance letter is needed for the registration. Although there is usually only one supervisor, it is possible, and in some cases recommended, to have two supervisors.

The supervisor(s) may not belong to the CCI L PhD staff of the university where the student is enrolled; in such a case, there must also be a PhD-tutor from the student's home university.

For PhD students having a grant, the grant-supervisor will usually be (one of) the PhD-supervisor(s).

PhD-supervisor(s) will:

- (a) sign the acceptance letter for student's registration
- (b) sign, and comply, the Commitment Form if demanded by the corresponding university
- (c) advise the student in the selection of the thesis topic/title for the registration
- (d) advise the student in the elaboration and presentation of the thesis prospectus (see below)
- (e) supervise the student's research towards the PhD thesis
- (f) advise the student about possible stays in research institutions, attendance/participation in congresses and scientific meetings, and any other scientific activity convenient for the elaboration of the dissertation
- (g) keep track of, and evaluate, the student's activity and report on this annually to the CCI L PhD Committee
- (h) propose, in accordance with the CCI L PhD Committee, a list of possible members of the Dissertation Committee, that is in charge of examining the PhD dissertation
- (i) help the student in any other academic matter pertaining to the successful completion of a PhD thesis.

At any moment during the process, and only if there are cogent reasons, the student may ask for a change of supervisor(s). The request should be directed to the general branch coordinator, who will transfer it to the CCIIL PhD Committee who will in turn accept or reject it.

Thesis prospectus and follow up

Every PhD student must present a Thesis Prospectus and will be subject to academic follow up and supervision until the defense of the PhD dissertation. Although different universities may slightly differ in format, process or timing, the following will in general be applicable.

Thesis Prospectus

Between 9 and 12 months after the PhD registration, the student must present a “thesis-prospectus”. A thesis prospectus is a piece of work that allows the prospectus committee to evaluate whether the student has an adequate plan for the PhD thesis. The thesis prospectus is elaborated with the assistance of the PhD supervisor(s). A thesis prospectus can be:

- a detailed table of contents
- a state-of-the-art essay on some area of research plus a plan for the PhD thesis.
- a part/chapter of the PhD thesis with a plan of the remainder
- any other format agreed with the supervisor that shows that there is (i) a clear research problem, (ii) sufficient knowledge of the relevant literature to start working, and (iii) a promising working plan.

The thesis prospectus must be presented to an *ad hoc committee* nominated by the university CCIIL PhD committee according to the regulations of the corresponding university. It will in general be constituted by maximum of two members belonging to the branch where the dissertation has been registered and a minimum of one member belonging to other branch(es).

If the thesis prospectus is rejected by the committee, the student has a second chance to modify and present it next year. If the prospectus is rejected for the second time, the student has to re-apply to the PhD program.

Follow up and annual report

PhD students’ scientific activity and dissertation progress must be continuously monitored and assessed by the advisor(s), who will report every year to the university CCIIL PhD Committee. This annual report includes:

- (a) dissertation progress
- (b) scientific activities
- (c) any other issue considered relevant
- (d) general assessment

Other student's duties

Together with the regular duties for the achievement of the PhD degree, CCIIL students must attend the main activities organized by the whole PhD program or the corresponding branch. In particular, at least

- (a) The annual Opening CCIIL Lecture
- (b) The annual CCIIL workshop
- (c) General CCIIL talks
- (d) General branch-talks
- (e) Branch-research seminars

Which activities belong to (c), (d) and (e) and are thereby mandatory will be specified in the activity announcements.

Student representatives

There will be one student representative per branch of the PhD, to be elected among the students of each branch by themselves. A branch's student representative will:

- (a) inform the branch-coordinator about any issue/question/complaint related to aspects of the master concerning students of the branch in general (not issues involving only a single student, which should be raised by the student to his/her tutor)
- (b) meet the branch's students at least twice a year (once per term), and table any issue/question/complaint students want to raise.
- (c) call a general meeting of students of the branch when at least 30% of them ask for such a meeting in relation to some specific issue.