



Master's Student Handbook

Academic Year 2025 - 2026

School of Computer Science
Language Technologies Institute

Master's Student Handbook

Degree Programs Covered by This Handbook:

Master of Language Technologies: Integrated Study
(5LT)

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SECTION 1: Welcome & Introduction

Welcome to the Language Technologies Institute, a graduate department in the School of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University. You have joined an Integrated Masters' program that focuses on excellence, creativity, and training the next generation of research leaders. While the next year will be a time of hard work and intense concentration, we hope that your time at the LTI will also be rewarding personally and professionally.

The Master of Language Technologies: Integrated Studies (5LT) program is a 4-year bachelor's degree, 1-year master's degree completion program for SCS undergraduate students who have shown interest and aptitude in language technologies. The duration of the master's program is 12 months, including one standard academic year and one summer. The program consists of courses and directed research. Typical research areas include speech processing, information retrieval, machine translation, natural language processing, machine learning, and computational biology.

One of the primary motivations for the program is to encourage our very brightest CMU School of Computer Science undergraduates to become more involved with research and to broaden their undergraduate experience. The most common scenario will be for students to start working on a research project during the summer after their senior year and continue with that project while taking classes during the academic year. A student's advisor will be the faculty member who sponsored the student's admission. The rationale for this is that the student has already gotten a head start working with that faculty member, and that faculty member has gone through the effort to work with that student and identify them as being highly skilled.

There are significant differences between CMU's various departments and degree programs in philosophical approaches, procedures, policies, and regulations. Each department issues a handbook that informs graduate students of their program requirements and procedures, and ensures that students have written access to standard information. This handbook describes the policies, procedures, and requirements for the Master of Science in Language and Information Technologies: Integrated Study (5LT). All policies not explicitly described in this document conform to School of Computer Science (SCS) policies and university policies.

While this handbook is specific to your academic experience in the Language Technologies Institute, it is just one element of the Graduate Student Handbook Suite. There are several other resources within the suite that you should consult when needed:

- [University-Wide Graduate Student Handbook \(Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs\)](#)
- [The Word Student Handbook](#)

Welcome! We hope that your time here is a life-changing experience.

SECTION 2: Degrees Offered

The Language Technologies Institute offers one Ph.D. program and five Masters' degree programs.

- Ph.D. in Language and Information Technologies (LTI Ph.D.)
- Masters in Language Technologies (MLT)
- Master of Science in Intelligent Information Systems (MIIS)
- Master of Computational Data Science (MCDS)
- Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence and Innovation (MSAI)
- Master of Science in Language Technologies – Integrated Study (5th Year Masters)

This handbook applies to the LTI 5LT.

The 5LT in Language Technologies is focused on understanding and extending the state of the art in computational linguistics, natural language processing, dialogue systems, information retrieval, machine translation, speech processing, video understanding, multimodal systems, automated reasoning, and other topics related to analysis and understanding of unstructured information (e.g., machine learning, and software engineering of intelligent systems).

SECTION 3: Departmental Personnel

The people responsible for administering the LTI 5LT degree are:

Robert Frederking
Program Director
Principal Systems Scientist
GHC 5501
ref@cs.cmu.edu
412-268-6656

Mona Diab
LTI Director
Professor
GHC 5723
mdiab@andrew.cmu.edu
412-268-3669

Caitlin Korpus
MLT/5LT Program Manager
GHC 5414
ckorpus@cs.cmu.edu
412-268-7096

Julie Nys
Employment Processes Manager
GHC 6716
jnys@andrew.cmu.edu
412-268-3515

Joan Axelson
Office Manager
GHC 6716
jaxelson@andrew.cmu.edu
412-268-7517

Students may also confer with the Graduate Education Office (graded@andrew.cmu.edu) regarding issues of process or other concerns as they navigate conflicts.

SECTION 4: Departmental Resources

4.1 Pittsburgh Campus Location

The Language Technologies Institute is located primarily on the 5th and 6th floors of the Gates Hillman Complex (GHC) on Carnegie Mellon's Pittsburgh campus. The address and contact information of the LTI are:

Language Technologies Institute
Carnegie Mellon University
5000 Forbes Avenue
Gates Hillman Complex 5402
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

412-268-6298 (fax)
www.lti.cs.cmu.edu

4.1 Office Space

To help them create a sense of community, full time students in the 5LT program have access to shared office space.

4.2 Mailboxes and Office Supplies

Mailboxes, printers, copiers, and other departmental resources are in GHC 5404.

4.3 Photocopies and Printers

Printers and photocopies are available to LTI students. The use of a photocopier or printer requires you to log in with your CMU ID card. LTI students may use printers/photocopiers scattered throughout the School of Computer Science buildings, but the machines in GHC 5404 and GHC 6604 are the most convenient. [SCS Computing Facilities](#) publishes a list of printers at <https://computing.cs.cmu.edu/desktop/printer-list>.

4.4 Computers for MS Students

Students are expected to provide their own laptop computers that can be used to access university resources and complete course assignments. Laptops running Windows, MacOS, and Linux software are all acceptable.

MS students will be given a CS user ID. A CS user ID is required to use the LTI computer cluster, department printers, and other SCS services. The School of Computer Science has a Help Center located at 4203 GHC. They can be contacted at help@cs.cmu.edu, extension 8-4231 from a campus phone, or 412-268-4231 from an outside line.

MS students will be given access to the LTI's computer cluster on an as-needed basis, to be used for course assignments, directed study projects, and/or capstone projects. The LTI cluster provides storage and computation for projects involving large datasets and/or lengthy computation.

SECTION 5: Advising

5.1: Role of an Advisor and Advisor Assignments

A 5LT student's advisor will be the faculty member who sponsored the student's admission. Each student has a faculty advisor charged with guiding the education and monitoring the progress of the student through the program. The advisor also supervises the student's directed study projects. This personal student-advisor relationship ensures that every student receives the necessary faculty mentoring. The advisor also provides the student with career advice. 5LT students are expected to perform research with a faculty advisor, since research experience is an important part of our graduate programs.

5.2: Advisor/Advisee Collaboration

How to change advisors: In extraordinary circumstances, with the program director's permission, an advisor change may be possible. To do so, the student should find another faculty member willing to serve as an advisor and then make a request to the Program Director to switch advisors. The LTI follows the long-standing SCS policy that both the new and old advisors need to agree to the change; typically, this is not a problem (assuming the new advisor has agreed in advance, as described here). It is to the student's advantage to avoid switching advisors, especially late in their graduate studies, because forging a strong student-advisor relationship takes time.

SECTION 6: Master's Degree Requirements

6.1: Residency Requirements

U.S. government regulations require F-1 and J-1 international students to be enrolled in an in-person degree program, with in-person expectation coursework. Even though this

immigration requirement is specifically for international students, residency requirements in a degree program must be consistent for both international and domestic students.

6.2: Transferring Into the 5LT Program

Given the short duration, transfers into the 5LT are not possible.

6.3: Transferring Out of the 5LT Program

The 5LT program does not prevent students from transferring to another degree program. Each degree program has its own rules about whether and when transfers into the program are permitted. A student that is interested in transferring out of the 5LT degree program should consult the handbook and Program Director of the desired degree program to learn whether transfers are permitted, and if so, how and when to request such a transfer.

6.4: Expected Timeline

Carnegie Mellon graduate students are expected to complete their degree requirements within the standard length of time for their program of study as outlined in the relevant Graduate Student Handbook. The expected completion time for the 5LT degree is 12 months. This assumes the student has taken some courses in the first 4 years that are not required for the BS. The total time for BS and MS is expected to be 5 years. Upon completion of the graduate program degree requirements, the degree will be certified in the semester in which the student completes the requirements.

Extended or Longer-than-Standard Completion

Longer-than-standard degree completion may occur due to academic interruptions in making progress toward the degree as defined by the academic program, interruptions of full-time study or progress towards the degree due to serious, documented medical issues, or other unusual or unforeseen circumstances.

Master's students who require longer than the standard time to complete their degree requirements are expected to remain in close contact with their graduate program and will be certified at the end of the semester in which they have completed their degree requirements.

Students shall reference CMU Policy on master's Student Statute of Limitations (www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/masters-students-statute-of-limitations.html) regarding guidelines and restrictions which place an upper limit on the maximum length of time allowable for master's degree completion and certification.

International Students

Immigration status for students in F-1 and J-1 non-immigrant status is tied to making normal progress toward completing degree requirements. Therefore, F-1 and J-1 students who are considering completing their degree requirements early or who are anticipating longer-than-standard completion should consult with their designated advisor in the Office of International Education (OIE) to ensure compliance with immigration regulations.

Statute of Limitations: Time to Degree

As outlined in the Master's Students Statute of Limitations, <https://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/masters-students-statute-of-limitations.html>. Students will complete all requirements for the masters' degree within a maximum of seven (7) years from original matriculation as a masters' student, or less if required by a more restrictive department, school, or college policy. Once this time-to-degree limit has lapsed, the person may resume work towards a masters' degree only if newly admitted to a currently offered masters' degree program under criteria determined by that program.

6.5: Leave of Absence

The LTI discourages Leaves of Absence (LOA), because students usually do not return, despite good intentions. However, a student in good standing may be granted a LOA of at most 1 year, upon written request to the Program Director and with consent of the student's advisor. It is the responsibility of the student on LOA to contact the LTI to initiate a return to the program.

Students taking or returning from a leave of absence must follow the university's [leave of absence process](#).

6.6 Registration Process

5LT students must register for at least 36 units per semester to be considered full-time, and SCS typically requires at least 54 units per semester.

6.7: Required Units for Degree Attainment

In order to complete the Master of Language Technologies: Integrated Study degree, the student must satisfy all of the following course requirements with passing grades:

- At least 96 total course units of senior-to-graduate-level courses
- At least 72 of the 96 units must be "LTI" courses (see next section for definition)

- At least 24 of the 96 units must be “SCS” courses (see next section for definition)
- One of these LTI courses must be 11-711
- One of these LTI courses must be 11-791 (or an equivalent, see below)
- One of these LTI courses must be a “Applications Engineering” class

24 units of the above 96 units of courses may be double counted from their bachelor’s degree requirements. The remainder of the 132 units in the program are fulfilled by 12 units of Directed Research (11-910) with their advisor each academic semester, and 36 units of Directed Research during the required full-time summer directed research.

The student must also attend the LTI Colloquium (11-700) each semester (the class “Introduction to Research in Language Technologies” (11-705) may be substituted for Colloquium once).

Since 11-791 is not being offered currently, the faculty have defined a list of acceptable substitute courses:

- 11-727: Computational Semantics for NLP (only if the course project was done as a group project)
- 11-731: Machine Translation
- 11-747: Neural Networks for NLP
- 11-751: Speech Recognition
- 11-775: Large-Scale Multimedia
- 11-776: Multimodal Affective Computing
- 11-777: Multimodal Machine Learning
- 11-785: Deep Learning
- 11-797: Question Answering

Students may request to have other LTI courses with a group engineering project component to be added to this list.

Unless approved by the Program Director in advance, course requirements must be satisfied by actual classroom courses, not credit given for research or independent study.

6.8: Definitions of LTI Terminology

We define here some of the terms as used in this handbook:

- An “LTI course” is any 12-unit course with a number of 11-XXX; a 6-unit course with an 11-XXX counts as 1/2 of an LTI course. Unless otherwise specified, “course” means an actual classroom course, not credit given for research or independent

study. Note that we will allow any one MLD (10-xxx) graduate-level course to count as an "LTI course."

- An "SCS course" is any 12-unit course with a course number indicating a unit of the School of Computer Science (including LTI); a 6-unit course with such a number counts as 1/2 of an SCS course. Unless otherwise specified, "course" means an actual classroom course, not credit given for research or independent study. Note: Recommended electives that are technically outside of the SCS now count towards this requirement; for example, Digital Signal Processing in ECE. Please see the Program Director for approval of electives as "SCS."

- "Applications Engineering" courses provide experience using core language technologies to build software systems that tackle real-world applications. The LTI website has a PhD and MLT Course Categories page that identifies courses that satisfy the Applications Engineering requirement. If a student believes a new course should be added to the Applications Engineering category, they should make a request to the Ph.D. Program Director. The Ph.D. Program Director will decide, with advice from the faculty, whether it should be in the Applications Engineering category. If approved, it will be added to the Ph.D. and MLT Course Categories webpage.

6.9: Department Policy on Double Counting Courses

A master's student who uses courses taken as part of another degree program (at Carnegie Mellon or elsewhere) toward their program requirements cannot use those same courses toward any other M.S. degree offered by the School of Computer Science without prior approval. This is an SCS-wide policy. The university will allow international students to double count up to 2 courses from their bachelor's degree towards their master's degree program. Below is just one example of what a 5LT student's schedule could look like for the duration of the program.

	Fall	Spring	Summer
Year 1	Grammars and Lexicons Algorithms for NLP Speech Understanding Directed Study	Search Engines or Machine Learning for Text Mining Machine Translation Computational Semantics for NLP Directed Study	Required Research

6.10: Department Policy for Courses Outside the Department/College

Students may take elective courses outside the SCS, at Carnegie Mellon or cross-registered at the University of Pittsburgh, as long as the student fulfills the requirements of their program as described above. The student should discuss any such electives in advance with their advisor. Typical choices might include ECE courses for Speech students, Pitt Linguistics courses, or Statistics courses.

Students interested in taking recommended electives outside the SCS should pay particular attention to the following issues:

- Know which recommended electives outside of the SCS count towards the “SCS course” requirement. Please see the Program Director for approval of new electives that can count as an “SCS course.”
- Students need advance approval for any courses not covered by their normal tuition (e.g., summer courses).
- The grading of outside courses is the responsibility of the department offering the course; however, the LTI’s Minimum Course Grade Policy described in Section 9.1 still applies (“C” is the minimum for 5LT).

6.11: Course Exemptions

Definition of Transfer Credit vs. Course Exemption

The LTI may grant transfer credit or issue an exemption for equivalent graduate courses previously completed at another institution. This decision rests with the director of the particular program.

If a student is exempt from a required course due to prior courses or experience, the student can replace that course with an open elective. The student does not receive credit for the external course but can take any course that could normally count toward the degree in its place.

If a student receives transfer credit for prior coursework completed at CMU or elsewhere, the student receives that many units of credit, and the total amount of required coursework is reduced by that amount.

6.12: Protocol for Evaluation of Transfer Credit

An equivalent graduate course previously completed at another institution may be permitted to satisfy one of the 5LT course requirements. The decision on whether a course may be transferred is made by the 5LT Program Director. Typically, the student will provide the Program Director with the syllabus of the external course, and the Program Director will use that and the student's transcript to make the decision.

See the section on "Definition of transfer credit versus course exemption."

All 5LT students are required to take a minimum of 96 units of coursework at CMU.

6.13: Teaching Requirements/Opportunities

5LT students do not normally serve as Teaching Assistants (TAs). If an 5LT student wants to TA a course, they must get the approval of the program director.

In the unusual case of an 5LT student TAing, note that graduate students are required to have a certain level of fluency in English before they can instruct in Pennsylvania, as required by the English Fluency in Higher Education Act of 1990. Through this Act, all institutions of higher education in the state are required to evaluate and certify the English fluency of all instructional personnel, including teaching assistants and interns. The full University policy can be reviewed at <https://www.cmu.edu/policies/faculty/evaluation-certification-english-fluencyinstructors.html>.

The fluency of all instructional personnel will be rated by Language Support in the Student Academic Success Center to determine at what level of responsibility the student can TA. In addition to administering the International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Test (a mandatory screening for all non-native speakers of English), Language Support in the Student

Academic Success Center helps teaching assistants who are non-native English speakers develop fluency and cultural understanding to teach successfully at Carnegie Mellon. Visit the Student Academic Success Center website for additional information: <https://www.cmu.edu/student-success/>.

6.14: Research Requirements/Opportunities

Resources and Regulations Governing Research at Carnegie Mellon

- [Office of Sponsored Programs](#)
- [Office of Research Integrity & Compliance](#)
- [Intellectual Property Policy](#)
- [Policy on Restricted Research](#)
- [Human Subjects in Research Policy](#)

5LT students carry out directed research each semester and in the summer under the guidance of their research advisor. See section 5.1 regarding the role of the advisor. See section 8.6 for a description of the LTI's end-of-semester review, at which research progress is evaluated and research grades are determined.

6.15: Internship/Co-op Requirements and Opportunities

5LT students cannot normally have an internship, due to the nature of the program. Any exception would have to be approved in advance by the program director.

We caution all students to be aware of potential intellectual property (IP) problems with internships, and to review any IP agreements with their advisors before signing them. It is possible to lose ownership of your ideas.

International students are required to consult with the Office of International Education for eligibility for work authorization before starting or seeking an internship/co-op or consulting opportunity. International students will benefit from proactively reviewing OIE guidance regarding off-campus work authorization. Off-campus work authorization processing times can take several weeks or months, and international students will benefit from starting the off-campus work authorization process as early as possible.

6.16: Requirements for Application/Consideration for Entry into PhD Program

5LT students who wish to enter the LTI PhD program need to apply through the normal School of Computer Science process, via the normal graduate admissions portal:

<https://www.cs.cmu.edu/academics/graduate-admissions>

If admitted, any courses that they have taken at CMU will be counted as if they were taken during the PhD program. Note that senior undergraduate courses do not normally count towards PhD requirements.

SECTION 7: Department Policies & Protocols

7.1 Department Policy for Withdrawing from a Course

Students taking undergraduate and Masters' level courses must follow the procedures and deadlines for adding, dropping, and withdrawing from courses as identified on the academic calendar. Information can be found at

<https://www.cmu.edu/hub/registrar/coursechanges.index>. Please note that there is a separate calendar for doctoral courses that does not apply to Masters' students.

7.2: New Policies / "Grandfather" Policy

A student can graduate under the policies in effect at the time that the student entered the program; or, at the student's choice, the student can graduate under policies that are adopted after the student entered the program. If it is not realistic to follow a particular policy exactly, the department may approximate the policy as closely as possible; this situation is rare and typically arises only when a student is enrolled in the program for an extended period of time.

7.3: Time Away from Academic Responsibilities

Please see the University expectation on time away

<https://www.cmu.edu/leadership/the-provost/campus-comms/2022/2022-03-16.html>

SECTION 8: Grading & Evaluation

8.1: Grade Requirements

Students must demonstrate their mastery of material taught in courses and their success in applying their skills in directed study by satisfying the following grade requirements.

Minimum grade: Only courses with a grade of C or higher are counted as satisfying a degree requirement.

The 5LT program does not have a minimum QPA (GPA) requirement. Instead, see section 8.6 regarding the end-of-semester review process.

8.2: Department Policy on Pass/Fail, Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Pass/fail grades are not permitted for courses and projects used to satisfy a degree requirement.

Graduate students who are required to take additional undergraduate courses to build up the core foundations of computer science may not elect the pass/fail option for these courses.

8.3: Department Policy for Incompletes

Carnegie Mellon students are expected to complete a course during the academic semester in which the course was taken. However, if the instructor agrees, a grade of I (incomplete) may be given when a student, for reasons beyond his or her control, has been unable to complete the work of a course, but the work completed to date is of passing quality and the grade of incomplete provides no undue advantage to that student over other students.

In awarding an I grade, an instructor must specify the requirements for completing the work and designate a default letter grade where no further work is submitted. Students must complete the required course work no later than the end of the following academic semester, or sooner if required by prior agreement. The instructor must record the permanent grade by the last day of the examination period of that following semester, or Enrollment Services will administratively assign the default grade.

8.4: Independent Study/Directed Reading

All 5LT students register for 11910 Directed Research, to document the research work they do with their advisor. This is typically 12 units each semester, and 36 units in the summer.

Separately, a student may wish to pursue a semester-long study with a faculty member and

use it to satisfy a course requirement. This would be registered as 11920 Independent Study. For an Independent Study to satisfy an 5LT student's coursework requirements, it must be approved by the 5LT Program Director in advance. In consultation with the CMU faculty member who will be supervising the Independent Study, the student should produce a short (half-page to one page) description of the goals of the Independent Study, and how the results will be evaluated, and submit it to the Program Director before the end of the Add period of the semester of the proposed study. The study should be planned so that it is finished in time for the supervising faculty member to give a grade at the end of the semester. Independent studies may be undertaken for 6 or 12 units. Normally only one Independent Study would be approved during a student's 5LT coursework.

8.5: Satisfactory Academic Standing

If a student does not make satisfactory progress each semester toward completing the degree, the LTI may remove them from the program. See section 10.8 on "End of Semester Evaluation."

Students may appeal any/all of these decisions; see the [Summary of Graduate Student Appeal and Grievance Procedures](#) for more information.

8.6: Regular Reviews and Evaluations by Department

The 5LT program does not have a minimum QPA requirement. Instead, the LTI faculty review each 5LT student at the end of the Fall and Spring semester.

Near the end of the semester, the student must prepare a statement that describes his or her achievements in the current semester and plans for the next semester. At the end of the semester, the faculty evaluates each student's academic progress. The student's advisor serves as the student's advocate in this process. The result of the evaluation is a letter from the faculty to the student that indicates whether the student is making satisfactory progress towards completing the degree. This process also determines the student's grade in 11910 Directed Research for the semester.

A good letter typically indicates that the student is making satisfactory progress. If the student is doing exceptionally good work, a stronger adjective such as "excellent" might be used, but this is not expected.

If a student seems to be having trouble, the faculty determines whether it believes the student can finish the degree, and if so, what needs to be accomplished to get back on track. This type of letter should be considered a serious warning. It is not a permanent "black mark" on the student's record; if the student begins making satisfactory progress again, there is no official record of the letter in the student's transcript.

In the most serious cases, the faculty gives the student an “N-1” letter that specifies a list of conditions that the student must satisfy by specific deadlines. Failure to meet all the specified conditions may result in the student's termination from the program.

8.7: Review/Redress of Academic Conflicts

Final grades will be changed only in exceptional circumstances and only with the approval of the instructor and the department, unit, or program.

Grading is a matter of sound discretion of the instructor, and final grades are rarely changed without the consent of the instructor who assigned the grade. The following circumstances are the unusual exceptions that may warrant a grade appeal: (a) the final grade assigned for a course is based on manifest error (e.g., a clear error such as arithmetic error in computing a grade or failure to grade one of the answers on an exam), or (b) the faculty or staff member who assigned the grade did so in violation of a university policy.

See the university's [Summary of Graduate Student Appeal and Grievance Procedures](#) web page for more information.

SECTION 9: Funding & Financial Support

9.1: Graduate Student Funding

For all 5LT students, funding is not provided through the Language Technologies Institute. If a 5LT student receives a graduate fellowship or scholarship from another source (e.g., NSF, Fulbright, Apple), the student is encouraged to accept it. Students are required to inform the LTI about any external funding that they receive.

9.2 Health Insurance Requirement

Carnegie Mellon has a Student Health Insurance policy requiring full-time, degree seeking students to carry adequate medical insurance. Students must either purchase the plan offered by the University or an application for a waiver can be made if the student is “enrolled as the dependent, partner/spouse or principal in an employer or government-sponsored insurance plan.” (See the Carnegie Mellon University Student Health Insurance Policy (SHIP)).

It is the responsibility of each student to make arrangements with Student Health Services to either pay for their insurance at the beginning of the semester or elect a payment plan over the course of the academic year. More information is available at the Student Health Services Web site.

9.3: Travel/Conference and Research Funding

Students funded by research projects receive travel funding according to policies set by the individual projects. Students that have no travel support may request partial travel support from the department once a year. *All forms of travel support must be requested in advance.*

9.4: Department Policy on Outside Employment

Due to the intense nature of the 5LT program, we normally expect students to have no outside employment. Any exceptions must be approved by the program director.

Important: Any work for pay outside of the funding research project must be approved in advance by the advisor (and OIE, for international students). This includes paid TAing, consulting, online freelancing, etc.

SECTION 10: Additional Departmental Information

10.1: LTI Orientation

At the beginning of each Fall semester, the LTI provides several days of talks and panels to help students learn about the department and meet people. Students are expected to attend this orientation and treat it as seriously as a standard course, because it helps people come up to speed quickly. Students do not register for the LTI Orientation, nor do they receive a grade; however, the department is serious about its expectation that new students will attend these talks.