

## Careers for Majors in Linguistics & Applied Linguistics

There are a great many career fields which build on studies in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. In exploring options, reflect on the skills you have developed through your major, the ones you prefer using and the careers which are most strongly related.

### ***What skills and knowledge do I develop by studying Linguistics?***

- An in-depth knowledge of all the main aspects of the structure and function of human languages generally
- An ability to analyze language data and solve problems relevant to language
- Broadly applicable and transferrable skills in engaging critically with unfamiliar analytical problems, with the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative empirical data, and with the structural analysis of data
- Excellent understanding of the issues involved in communication across languages and cultures
- Experience and skills in working collaboratively to solve problems

### ***What careers build on these skills and knowledge?***

Language is integral to the way in which we navigate the world as human beings existing in a network of social interactions. Each language offers a unique perspective on reality, yet even as cross-cultural communication increases in its frequency and complexity, more and more languages are dying out, sometimes before they can be properly described or documented. There is a growing demand for people with the knowledge and skills needed to analyse language. Graduates with a major in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics are well-equipped to tackle the many language related issues facing modern societies. As individuals with skills in expressing themselves, in problem solving, and analytical thinking, they have also acquired a range of transferrable skills which can lead to careers outside core linguistic and applied linguistic fields.

Graduates with a major in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics have several broad pathways open to them:

1. A career as a specialist in linguistics / applied linguistics, either in academic employment or in government, NGO or commercial fields, usually but not always involving further study
2. Further study and a career in a field building on the foundation of their major, such as law (or speech pathology)
3. Employment in a general employment position open to new Graduates of Arts, with the specific advantage of being able to point to superior analytical skills

Pathway 1 will normally begin with an Honours year in Linguistics & Applied Linguistics or a Postgraduate Diploma in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. Another great option we offer is the Master of Applied Linguistics: you can enter this from Honours, or even from a Bachelor pass degree if you have some additional relevant work experience.

Pathway 2 will normally involve enrolment into a further course of study after your major.

For pathway 3, you can seek employment straight out of your pass degree, or after completing an Honours year.

The table below lists a range of careers which make direct use of studies in Linguistics – pathway 1. The list is not definitive – depending on your own interests and experiences, there may well be other ways to build on your major. Your teachers and Undergraduate Coordinator in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics are well-equipped to advise you on further steps in your career path. Professional associations such as the Australian Linguistic Society, the Applied Linguistic Association of Australia, and communities such as the Linguist List offer a range of information about available jobs, courses and financial support.

More information on many of these career areas is available at:  
[http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/online\\_career\\_tools/exploring\\_your\\_options](http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/online_career_tools/exploring_your_options)  
 (Career Exploration - Career Links by Degree – Arts)

### **Next Steps**

The table also provides some information about ‘next steps’ ie what you might need to do to start a career in the particular field, specifically whether graduate study is required or whether immediate employment is possible.

There are two employment types for Bachelor graduates:

- General employment positions suitable for new graduates
- Graduate Employment Programs

Graduate Employment Programs are offered by some employers – generally large commercial organisations and government. Graduate Employment Program positions are jobs that include a substantial component of training and development. Recruitment for these programs takes place early in the year (around March-May). Final year tertiary students and recent grads can apply. For some of the career areas discussed, Graduate Employment programs are available.

For more information on Graduate Employment Programs:

[http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/find\\_a\\_job/professional\\_and\\_graduate\\_work](http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/find_a_job/professional_and_graduate_work)

<b>Career field</b>	<b>Employment setting</b>	<b>Next Steps: Employment and/or graduate study</b>
Research (academic)	Universities, research institutes	Graduate research study – Honours/ Masters/PhD (Research Assistant roles require Honours minimum)
Teaching/ Educating	Secondary schools – VCE English Language is a subject which requires training in Linguistics and	Graduate study – Teaching (requires studies to cover 2 ‘learning areas’ – refer to guidelines – Master of Teaching site)

	<p>language teachers will also benefit from training in linguistics and applied linguistics</p> <p>Primary</p> <p>Universities</p>	<p>Graduate study – any undergraduate degree</p> <p>Graduate research study path – Honours/Masters/PhD</p>
TESOL/ESL	Private language schools, colleges, and universities in Australia and overseas	A range of training options are available including short private courses through to Master of TESOL or Master of Education in TESOL, and the Master of Applied Linguistics (TESOL)
Language documentation and preservation	Language centres, universities or research centres. May involve field research and/or working with language communities for example in Indigenous Australia to produce materials in their language.	Language documentation work at language centres normally requires at least an Honours degree in Linguistics & Applied Linguistics
Speech Pathology	Specialist clinical teams, including in hospital settings or private practice; universities and research institutes	A Masters degree in Speech Pathology
Publishing and editing eg language reference books/lexiography, language teaching materials	Publishing houses, journals	Roles possible post BA (eg Editorial Assistant) - prospects enhanced significantly by relevant work experience eg Arts Internship subject, and/or Graduate study – publishing and editing
Information Technology eg speech recognition, database or lexicon development	Commercial IT companies such as Toggle Text or Appen; universities and research institutes	Depending on the role they want filled, companies often do not require previous study or training in computer science / IT. An honours degree in Linguistics & Applied Linguistics is likely to be an advantage but students with a pass degree and a major in LAL may also

		be suitable. There are many opportunities overseas both for further study and employment in this area.
Translating and Interpreting (in conjunction with specific languages)	Business/multinational companies; media; freelance; government; NGO/NPO	MA in Translation; Training in programs provided by private institutions
Policy and programs eg multiculturalism, education, disability support	Government	Further study is desirable e.g. Honours or Postgraduate Diploma + PhD; or Masters in Applied Linguistics
Intelligence/forensic linguistics	Intelligence agencies/departments eg Defence Signals Directorate, ASIO	Can apply straight from the BA, or following graduate study

### ***What other careers could I consider?***

Linguistics majors may also pursue careers which are not directly related to the study of linguistics but make use of transferable skills and/or pick up on other interests.

- **Careers via graduate study** – many careers are available via graduate study which is accessible to Bachelor of Arts graduates; these include both Arts-related careers eg Journalism, Information Management/Librarianship, Law, International Development; and careers in more diverse fields such as Urban Planning, Nursing, Information Systems, Accounting.
- **Careers via Graduate Employment Programs** - in addition to government, some other large organisations have programs open to all disciplines where graduates are generally recruited for general management careers. Some management consultancies also consider applicants from all disciplines. Opportunities are advertised (generally early each year) on *Careers Online*, and graduate recruitment sites eg Graduate Opportunities, GradConnection.

### ***Where can I find out more?***

**Other discussions about what you can do with a major in Linguistics:**

- Linguistics Society of America <http://www.linguisticsociety.org/files/why-major-linguistics.pdf>
- University of Tennessee <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/>

- University of Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand:  
[www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/careers/Resources/career\\_publications/career\\_view/index.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/careers/Resources/career_publications/career_view/index.aspx)
- ASIO <http://www.asio.gov.au/careers/asio-careers/linguists.html>

**Professional Associations:**

[http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/online\\_career\\_tools/exploring\\_your\\_options](http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/online_career_tools/exploring_your_options)  
(Career Exploration – Professional Associations by Degree - Arts)  
<http://www.als.asn.au/> (The Australian Linguistic Society)  
<http://www.alaa.org.au/> (The Applied Linguistics Association of Australia)  
<http://linguistlist.org/> (The Linguist List – International Linguistics Community Online)

**Further study at University of Melbourne:**

<http://languages-linguistics.unimelb.edu.au/honours/linguistics-applied-linguistics>  
<http://futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/courses/graduate>  
<http://graduate.arts.unimelb.edu.au/> (including the Master of Applied Linguistics:  
<http://graduate.arts.unimelb.edu.au/degrees/3-master-of-applied-linguistics> )  
<http://government.unimelb.edu.au/>  
[http://audspeech.healthsciences.unimelb.edu.au/study\\_here/master\\_of\\_speech\\_pathology](http://audspeech.healthsciences.unimelb.edu.au/study_here/master_of_speech_pathology) (Master of Speech Pathology)

**Researching courses which are not offered at Melbourne:** [www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au)