

CSLS

Sociolinguistics Handbook



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Welcome to the CSLS

This handbook covers the most important information about your Master's program at the Center for the Study of Language and Society (CSLS). Here you will find a summary of all the important information you need, such as how to organize your studies, the different Master's programs we offer and all program requirements. Further links provide access to a wide range of information that are useful during your studies.

Center for the Study of Language and Society

The Center for the Study of Language and Society (CSLS) at the University of Bern is dedicated to research and advocacy on the intersection between language and society. We conceive of this intersection in its widest sense. As a result, our work focuses on exploring how social changes affect languages and language use, how social beliefs and ideologies are reproduced and transmitted through language, and how, conversely, beliefs about language and language users have lasting social impacts. We support and enable research and training on these topics at the postgraduate and postdoctoral levels, and work to promote the importance of language and language issues to a broad public, both within and outside of academia.

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Organizing Your Studies

CSLS courses and study programs are organized via three key online platforms of the University of Bern: KSL, KVV and ILIAS.



KSL

The [teaching core system \(KSL\)](#) administers all courses at the University of Bern. Students find relevant information about courses and register for courses directly on KSL. All courses offered by the CSLS are added to KSL before the start of the semester. Courses offered by our [partner institutes](#) are also listed on KSL.

In addition, KSL administers the records of students' study achievements (course grades, study progress, degrees and certificates). The assignment of credits for [seminar papers](#) is also processed via KSL.

KVV

The [annotated course catalog \(KVV\)](#) provides all information about courses on offer in a given semester by the CSLS. The KVV is available for download on the CSLS website. Are you interested in a course outside the specified faculties/the University of Ber? Write an e-mail to the study coordination and it will be clarified whether the desired course is creditable.

ILIAS

The [integrated learning, information and work collaboration system \(ILIAS\)](#) is the central teaching and learning platform of the University of Bern. ILIAS is mainly used for exchanging documents and information between lecturers and students. ILIAS is also used as the platform for online courses and exams.

Master Programs

Sociolinguistics

Detailed information can be found in the sections about [written papers](#) and [ECTS accreditation and course offerings](#) of this document and in the [study plan](#).

According to the former study plan (2015)

Mono 120 ECTS points

- Courses from at least three of the participating Institutes or two Institutes and the CSLS itself,
- at least four written papers in the courses attended (maximum two group papers),
- Master's thesis with a 45-minute subject examination.

Major 90 ECTS- points

- Courses from at least three of the participating Institutes or two Institutes and the CSLS itself,
- at least three written papers in the courses attended (maximum one group paper),
- Master's thesis with a 45-minute subject examination.

Minor 30 ECTS points

- Courses from at least two of the participating Institutes or one Institute and the CSLS itself,
- at least one written paper in the courses attended (no group paper).



According to the new study plan (2021)

The new MA Study Plan applies to all who begin their studies at the CSLS from the fall semester of 2021.

Mono 120 ECTS points

- 50 ECTS credits from required courses:
 - Required courses (see [Appendix](#))
 - Two written papers from required seminars (max. two group papers)
 - Master's thesis incl. 30-minute oral subject examination
- 70 ECTS credits from elective courses:
 - At least 10 ECTS credits from courses in each of the three thematic blocks:
 - Sociolinguistic Theories
 - Sociolinguistic Methods
 - Special Topics in Sociolinguistics
 - Two written papers, 15-20 pages

Major 90 ECTS points

- 50 ECTS credits from required courses:
 - Required Courses (see [Appendix](#))
 - Two written papers from required seminars (max. one group paper)
 - Master's thesis incl. 30-minute oral subject examination
- 40 ECTS credits from elective courses:
 - At least 10 ECTS credits from courses in each of the three thematic blocks
 - Sociolinguistic Theories
 - Sociolinguistic Methods
 - Special Topics in Sociolinguistics
 - One written paper, 15-20 pages

Minor 30 ECTS points

- 11 ECTS credits from required courses:
 - Required Courses (see [Appendix](#))
- 19 ECTS credits from elective courses:
 - Courses from each of the three thematic blocks:
 - Sociolinguistic Theories
 - Sociolinguistic Methods
 - Special Topics in Sociolinguistics
 - One written paper, 15-20 pages (no group paper)

Required courses (according to the new curriculum)

The following required courses must be completed in all programs of study under the new curriculum:

- Lecture: Approaching Language and Society: Sociolinguistic Theories
- Seminar: Qualitative Methods in Sociolinguistics
- Seminar: Quantitative Methods in Sociolinguistics
- MA colloquium (Mono and Major only)

Subject blocks (according to new curriculum)

The following subject blocks can be selected as electives:

Sociolinguistic Theories

Courses offered by the CSLS or associated Institutes with a theoretical focus.

Sociolinguistic Methods

Courses offered by the CSLS or associated Institutes with a methodological focus.

Special Topics in Sociolinguistics

Courses offered by the CSLS or associated Institutes devoted to specific topics or themes in sociolinguistics.

The number of ECTS per subject block for the different study programs can be found in the [appendix](#) and in the [new study plan 2021](#).

Written Papers



Guidelines for writing papers

Some of our partner Institutes offer guidelines for writing seminar papers. These can assist you in your writing process. In particular, we refer students to the detailed [document](#) prepared by the Institute for English Languages and Literatures.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious form of academic misconduct. You should make sure that you always reference the literature use correctly and clearly indicate relevant source materials. In some of our partner Institutes, you will be asked to submit a signed declaration of originality along with your assignments. In this declaration, you affirm that you have written the paper independently and have clearly identified sources used.

Seminar papers

Formalities

All seminar papers to be credited to the Master in Sociolinguistics must be 15-20 A4 pages long (1800 characters per page including spaces, total min. 27,000 - max. 36,000 characters including spaces). This includes all parts of the paper except the title page, the table of contents, the bibliography and the appendix.

All papers consist of the following parts:

- Title page with the following information: University of Bern; name of the Institute; title of the paper; name of the supervisor; name of the seminar; type of assignment (seminar paper); name of the author; address; E-Mail address; matriculation number and date.
- Table of contents and list of figures (for longer papers)
- Bibliography

If you write seminar papers as part of courses offered by one of our partner Institutes, their internal requirements usually apply.

Recognizing seminar papers on KSL (old study plan)

All seminar papers have to be sent as PDF files to the director of studies (info.csls@unibe.ch). If the paper meets all formal requirements (see above), the course, in which the seminar paper was written, will be moved to the column "written papers" on your KSL profile.

Recognizing seminar papers on KSL (new study plan)

The two written papers from your required courses (only applies to mono and major students) are automatically credited on KSL. Papers written in elective courses must be registered on KSL (i.e., 1 paper for minor and major students, 2 papers for mono students).

Please register on KSL for "Seminar paper 1 (Sociolinguistics SP 2021)" in the semester in which you write your first seminar paper in an elective course. Mono students do the same for their second seminar paper under "Seminar paper 2 (Sociolinguistics SP 2021)." Once the paper has been graded, send it as a PDF file to the director of studies (info.csls@unibe.ch). If the paper meets all formal requirements (see above), the "Seminar paper" will be credited on KSL.

Please note: "Seminar paper 1" and "Seminar paper 2" are assigned 0 ECTS on KSL. You will receive ECTS points for your paper through the seminar in which the paper was written. The "Seminar paper" serves only to check that the minimum requirements for written assignments have been met. Without recognition of the paper, you won't be able complete your MA in Sociolinguistics.

Master's thesis

The Master's thesis is written by those students doing either a Sociolinguistics Mono (120 ECTS) or Major (90 ECTS) degree. In this section, you will find important information about registration, format, submission and subject examination for Master's theses.

Registration

You will write your Master's thesis in your last semester, after you have written all seminar papers required for your study program. Of course, you may start your Master's thesis earlier (e.g. in the form of field research). However, you must officially register six months before submitting your thesis. The registration and submission dates are set by the Dean's Office. Registration occurs both through the Dean's Office and internally through the CSLS Office of Student Affairs. Information on how to register with the Dean's Office can be found [here](#).

Formalities

A Master's thesis written within the framework of the Sociolinguistics program must be 80-100 A4 pages long (min. 144,000 - 180,000 characters including spaces). Included are all parts of the thesis except the title page, the table of contents, the bibliography and the appendix. Please discuss all other format-related details with your supervisor.

Extending the submission of the Master's thesis

If you have been ill for an extended period of time or are unable to submit the Master's thesis by the deadline due to other circumstances, the following options are available:

- Extension by one month: For this you need the consent of your supervisor. The form to be submitted to the Dean's Office at least one week before the regular submission date can be found [here](#).
- Extension by one semester: You also need the consent of your supervisor. Please submit the form to the Dean's Office at least one week before the regular submission date.
- Second extension of one semester: This is granted only in exceptional cases and must be approved by the Collegium decanale. You must write a short letter, signed by your supervisor, and hand it in to the Dean's Office for the attention of the Collegium decanale. In it, you explain the reason for the renewal and include, if available, medical certificates or other supporting information.

Submission of the Master's thesis

You are required to submit two bound copies (ring-bound or perfect-bound) of your Master's thesis:

- one to your supervisor (ask if an electronic copy is also required) and
- one to the dean's office.

In addition to the copy of your Master's thesis, a "[Declaration on the Master's Thesis](#)" must be submitted to the Dean's Office.

List of Master's theses of the study program

[Here](#) you can find a list of all Master's theses written for the Sociolinguistics MA program.

Subject Examination

If the grade for the written Master's thesis is satisfactory, an oral subject examination in the form of a defense of the research conducted takes place. The subject examination lasts 30 minutes (45 minutes according to the former curriculum 2015) and consists of an oral presentation of the Master's thesis by the student (ca. 10 minutes) followed by questions about the contents of the thesis by the examiners (ca. 20 minutes). The examiners for the subject examination are the supervisor of the Master's thesis and a lecturer with a PhD in hand from one of the Institutes involved in the study program. The examination date must take place *at the latest* before calendar week 6 (approx. beginning of February) *for graduation in FS* or calendar week 36 (beginning of September) *for graduation in HS!* Otherwise, you will have to enroll for a further semester.

The grade for the Master's thesis is calculated as 25% of the grade for the subject examination and 75% of the grade for the written paper (one third and two thirds according to the old curriculum 2015). An unsatisfactory subject examination can be repeated once.



ECTS Accreditation and Courses

Graded and ungraded ECTS

Phil.-hist. Faculty regulations allow you to take up to one-third of your courses ungraded (i.e., pass/fail). For the CSLS Master's programs this means the following number of ungraded ECTS:

- Mono major in Sociolinguistics (120 ECTS): maximum 40 ungraded ECTS
- Major program in Sociolinguistics (90 ECTS): maximum 30 ungraded ECTS
- Minor program in Sociolinguistics (30 ECTS): maximum 10 ungraded ECTS

You are responsible for completing enough graded coursework. Please note that KSL will not give you a warning. If you have too many ungraded courses in your study program, you will not be able to complete the degree.

CSLS events

At the CSLS you can receive ECTS points for events such as guest lectures and workshops. You will receive 0.25 ECTS per guest lecture. To receive ECTS, you must register for the event with the Director of Studies. Thus, the registration does not occur through KSL as it does for other courses.

Courses within the doctoral program SLS

Courses within the doctoral program can be taken for credit by Master's students. Important: Those who attend these courses must confirm their attendance by signature in order to receive ECTS credits.

Courses outside the CSLS

You are allowed to import a total of 20% of the credits to be earned for your study program from outside the regular linguistics program (CSLS and partner Institutes). This includes:

- [Language courses](#): These may be credited upon request.
- [Courses from other universities](#): These should be linguistics courses. For the crediting of non-linguistic courses, a justification must be submitted.

The courses are approved prior to the start of the course upon special request to the Head of Studies (an e-mail is sufficient).

Completion of Master's Studies

Apply for your Master's degree

As soon as you have completed all the requirements for the study program, you can apply for the [completion of your Master's degree](#). To do this, you must take the following steps:

1. Check your study profile for KSL (planning view): Has all required coursework been completed? Are all courses registered in the right place?
2. Inform the Directorate of Studies via info.csls@unibe.ch about the planned completion of your Master's degree (In which semester are you graduating? Who is your supervisor?)
3. Once you have completed all the required work, register [online](#) with the Faculty of Humanities for the Master's thesis. Please note the official registration and submission deadlines for the written thesis. You should also arrange a date for the oral examination with your supervisor in good time.
4. 4. apply for a diploma: After completing your Master's thesis, contact the Directorate of Studies to check your study profile. As soon as they have marked the subject requirement as "fulfilled" in your KSL profile, you can apply for the Master's diploma to be issued on the [Dean's Office website](#). To do this, you will also need a "proof of payment of the graduation fee/performance assessments".

Attention!

You cannot apply for your degree directly through KSL. Please contact the Head of Studies to do so and follow the steps listed above. More information on the application process can be found on the [Dean's Office website](#).

Resources and Support

Funding

There are a variety of options and funding available for student financial aid:

- [Faculty of Humanities](#): wide range of financial aid
- Scholarships: Financial support for studies and/or stay abroad
 - [Stipendienberatung der SUB](#)
 - [Verein Schweizerischer Studentenschaften VSS](#)
 - [EDUCA](#)
- [Berrow Foundation Scholarship](#): The Foundation awards annual scholarships to Swiss students who wish to study at the University of Oxford.
- [Field work costs](#): e.g. for an MA thesis
- [Research Foundation](#): Support for ongoing research projects
- [Karl-Jaberg Foundation](#): Contributions to printing costs for talented young linguists

Recording devices

The CSLS provides various devices that can be used for field research (e.g. recording devices, microphone attachments, cameras, etc.). In addition, the CSLS has facilities for research purposes or interview recordings.

The devices can be borrowed by arrangement with the Head of Studies for a deposit of CHF 50 (per device).

Student Society

The Sociolinguistics Student Society represents the interests of CSLS students and maintains their voice in all matters pertaining to the CSLS. It is interested in promoting contact between sociolinguistics students. Through various events throughout the semester, it aims to provide a platform for students to get to know each other and exchange ideas. Further information can be found on the [website](#), announcements will be shared on WhatsApp and via email (to register, please send an email to fachschaft.csls@unibe.ch).



Further Information

[Center for the Study of Language and Society \(CSLS\)](#)

[Career Service](#)

[Clubs and Associations at the University of Bern](#)

[IT Services](#)

[Cafeterias and canteens](#)

[Faculty of Humanities](#)

[Semester Planning](#)

[City of Bern](#)

[Students with Children](#)

[Studis Selfservice](#)

[Studierendenschaft der Universität Bern \(SUB\)](#)

[Research Portal of the University Library \(Swisscovery\)](#)

[UNICARD](#)

[University of Bern](#)

[University Library](#)

[University Sports](#)

[Walter Benjamin Kolleg](#)

[Admissions Office \(ZIB\)](#)



Appendix

Study plan according to new curriculum

STUDY CONSTRUCTION (Annex 1a)	MA Sociolinguistics Mono (120 ECTS)	MA Sociolinguistics Major (90 ECTS)	MA Sociolinguistics Minor (30 ECTS)
Mandatory courses	20	20	11
Lecture: Approaching Language and Society: Sociolinguistic Theories*	3	3	3
Seminar: Qualitative Methods in Sociolinguistics*	7 (with a written paper)	7 (with a written paper)	4 (without a written paper)
Seminar: Quantitative Methods in Sociolinguistics*	7 (with a written paper)	7 (with a written paper)	4 (without a written paper)
MA Colloquium**	3	3	-

* 1st and 2nd semester | ** from 3rd semester onwards

Compulsory elective courses	70 (with at least 2 written papers)	40 (with at least 1 written paper)	19 (with at least 1 written paper)
Sociolinguistic Theories	min. 10	min. 10	N/A
Sociolinguistic Methods	min. 10	min. 10	N/A
Special Topics in Sociolinguistics	min. 10	min. 10	N/A
Master's thesis & examination	30	30	-

Example course of studies according to the new curriculum

EXEMPLARY STUDY PROGRAM (Annex 1b)	MA Sociolinguistics Mono (120 ECTS)	MA Sociolinguistics Major (90 ECTS)	MA Sociolinguistics Minor (30 ECTS)
First semester	30	20	10
Lecture: Approaching Language and Society: Sociolinguistic Theories	3	3	3
Seminar: Qualitative Methods in Sociolinguistics	7	7	4
Elective courses	20	10	3
Second semester	30	20	11
Seminar: Quantitative Methods in Sociolinguistics	7	7	4
Elective courses	23 (1 written paper)	13	7 (1 written paper)
Third semester	27	17	9
Elective courses	27 (1 written paper)	17 (1 written paper)	9
Fourth semester	30	30	-
MA Colloquium	3	3	-
Master's thesis & examination	30	30	-

Explanations of courses according to the new curriculum

LECTURES (Appendix 2)	
Mandatory courses	Attention: Compulsory courses cannot be compensated.
Lecture: Approaching Language and Society: Sociolinguistic Theories	Introductory lecture introducing different research areas and approaches in sociolinguistics. The course shows students how epistemological standpoints lead to different questions and methods of analysis, and helps them to develop their own research questions and projects.
Seminar: Qualitative Methods in Sociolinguistics	Methodological seminar in which students acquire skills in qualitative sociolinguistics and gain analytical experience. (including discourse analysis, linguistic ethnography, interview methods and multimodal approaches).
Seminar: Quantitative Methods in Sociolinguistics	Methods seminar in which students gain skills and experience in experimental and quantitative sociolinguistics (including corpus linguistics, experimental approaches, coding and statistical analysis).
MA Colloquium	Colloquium that supports students in the preparation and implementation of their Master's thesis (only for students with Sociolinguistics as mono or major). Questions of research ethics, research as well as oral and written research communication are dealt with.
Compulsory elective courses	
Sociolinguistic Theories	Events/classes of the CSLS or associated institutes with a theoretical focus.
Sociolinguistic Methods	Events/classes of the CSLS or associated institutes with a focus on methods.
Special Topics in Sociolinguistics	Events/classes of the CSLS or associated institutes dedicated to specific topics or subject areas in sociolinguistics.
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The courses offered in the sociolinguistics program consist of the courses of the CSLS and selected courses of associated institutes. Courses can only be credited if they are listed in the respective course catalogue of the semester. ❖ A maximum of 20% of the credits may be acquired outside the study program of the Master's program in Sociolinguistics (only applies to students with Sociolinguistics as a mono or major). ❖ A maximum of one third of the total credit points may be earned from ungraded courses.