What Skills Does a Degree in Linguistics Provide?

Linguistics majors will develop a variety of skills that are attractive to employers across all fields. Some of the top skills a Linguistics major will develop include:

- Effective writing and oral communication skills
- Finding solutions to intricate problems
- Perceiving the world from multiple points of view
- Creating persuasive messages
- Influencing and persuading
- Gathering information
- Ability to read, reflect, and critique
- Using original sources
- Working with others
- Interpreting data
- Meeting deadlines and managing time
- Summarizing and presenting information
- Understanding components of complex problems
- Evaluating results
- Analyzing texts and information
- Perceiving patterns/structures
- Creativity
- Comparing/contrasting
- Synthesizing information
- Managing a project from conception to completion
- Writing creatively

In the National Association of Colleges & Employers' (NACE) 2011 Job Outlook, the skills and abilities such employers are seeking were listed in order of importance. The top ten skills were:

- Communication (verbal)
- Strong work ethic
- Teamwork
- Analytical skills
- Initiative
- Problem-solving skills
- Communication (written)
- Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
- Computer skills
- Flexibility/adaptability

Why Linguistics?

A Linguistics major provides a gateway to many careers in a service and information economy by developing a broad skill set in its students.

Maryland linguistics students go on to some of the most prestigious graduate programs in linguistics and cognitive science, such as MIT, Stanford, Cornell, and the University of Pennsylvania. Students who combine linguistics with computer science have been hired in high-tech jobs with Internet companies. Those who combine linguistics with the study of a language go on to teach languages and work as translators. Many of our students study linguistics just for their own interest and go on to successful careers in a variety of unrelated subjects, including being admitted to prestigious law and medical schools.
What Can I Do With a Linguistics Degree?

A Linguistics degree can be shaped to fit a variety of disciplines and the broad skill set you acquire allows you to apply your knowledge in many exciting areas. From the University Career Center’s most recent graduate survey, upon graduation ARHU students entered into a range of dynamic industries including:

Arts, Government, Academia/Education, Non-Profit, Communications/Media, Advertising, Technology, Food & Hospitality Services, Entertainment, Social Services and more!

Sample job titles include:

- Civil Service Employee
- Sales Representative
- Foreign Service Officer
- Foreign Diplomat
- Proofreader
- Human Resources Director
- Editor
- International Banking Officer
- Paralegal
- Investment Analyst
- Instructional Coordinator
- Business Analyst
- Museum Curator
- Lawyer
- Copy Writer
- Negotiator
- Grant Writer
- Professor
- National Security Agent
- Linguist
- Research Assistant
- FBI Agent
- Police Officer
- International Trade Specialist
- Translator
- Peace Corps Volunteer
- ESL Teacher
- Interpreter/Tour Guide
- Intelligence Specialist
- Technical Writer

Gaining Experience With Your Degree

It’s never too early to start your search for experience. Ideally, you should begin at least one semester in advance. Make an appointment to talk with the University Career Center & The President’s Promise and/or your department internship coordinator and faculty advisor. Research shows that having an internship (or multiple internships) drastically increases your ability to obtain a full-time position upon graduation, especially since most employers use their intern pool as a direct talent pipeline. The most recent NACE Internship & Co-op Survey reported that 44.6% of employers’ hires came from their internship programs. The College of Arts & Humanities ensures that students can have an internship experience prior to graduating, offering numerous credit-granting courses for experiential education at the college and departmental level.

Internships enable students to gain a sense of what it would be like to work in a particular field as they develop marketable skills and establish contacts that may lead to a job offer upon graduation. To get started, visit the University Career Center & The President’s Promise website (www.Careers.umd.edu) and sign up for a Careers4Terps account, a free web-based job posting service, to search for internships and employment.