Language Sciences (LSCI)

A new major in the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Communication

https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/explore/study-areas/language-sciences/overview

Study New Zealand's first **Language Sciences** major, at the country's top-ranked university for Linguistics (2024 QS ranking: #48 world-wide). Develop a broad understanding of language, how it is used and learned, and its impact on society and culture.

By doing the **Language Sciences (LSCI)** major, you will gain language expertise relevant to careers in language and communication, language teaching and planning, cognitive science, AI, and more—offering many opportunities to make a global impact. By selecting certain courses within the major, you can gain a Specialisation in **Applied Linguistics (ALIN, including TESOL)** or **Linguistics (LING)** to tailor your major to your career goals.

Below is the programme structure. **Green cells** indicate required courses for the major (regardless of specialisation). **Yellow cells** indicate courses required for the Applied Linguistics specialisation. Blue cells indicate courses that are part of the Linguistics specialisation, with required courses in **bold**.

<table>
<tr><th>Applied Linguistics
(ALIN)</th><th colspan="2">Language Sciences</th><th>Linguistics
(LING)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">LSCI 101 Language and Society
LSCI 111 Introduction to Language Sciences
(LSCI 130 Special Topic: Topics in Computer and Language Science: Introduction to Using and Evaluating Generative AI)</td></tr>
<tr><td>For ALIN specialisation:
A language paper or language learning experience</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">LSCI 210 Languages in the Life of Aotearoa New Zealand and Asia-Pacific

LSCI 220 Introduction to Computational Linguistics and Natural Language Processing</td><td>For LING specialisation:
Choose three of the below or LSCI 3110</td></tr>
<tr><td>LSCI 201 Vocabulary and Grammar for Language Learners</td><td>LSCI 311 The Structure and Design of Languages</td></tr>
<tr><td>LSCI 301: Language Teaching: Principles to Practice</td><td>LSCI 310 Language</td><td>Understanding Learning</td><td>LSCI 311 Linguistic Typology: Uniformity and Variation in Language Patterns
LSCI 312 Psycholinguistics
LSCI 313 Language Variation and Change
NZSL 311 Structure and Use of New Zealand Sign Language</td></tr>
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Language Sciences major requirements:

- (a) LSCI 101, 111
- (b) LSCI 210; LSCI 201 or 211
- (c) 40 points from LSCI 301-399, NZSL 311
- (d) 20 further points from LSCI 101-399, COMS 201, or in any language other than English in the BA schedule or equivalent language learning experience including learning English as an additional language

Applied Linguistics (ALIN) specialisation Include: LSCI 201, 301, 310 and 20 points in any language other than English in the BA regulations or equivalent language learning experience including learning English as an additional language

Linguistics (LING) specialisation Include: LSCI 211, 60 points from LSCI 310-399, NZSL 311

In 2025, the following special topic is offered: **LSCI 130 Special Topic – Introduction to using and evaluating generative AI**

	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
2025	LSCI 101 Language & Society LING 227 Syntax & Morphology LING 228 Phonetics & Phonology LSCI 310 Understanding Language Learning	LSCI 111 Introduction to Language Sciences LSCI 201 Vocabulary and Grammar for Language Learners LSCI 311 Linguistic Typology: Uniformity and Variation in Language Patterns NZSL 311 Structure and Use of New Zealand Sign Language	LSCI 220 Intro to Computational Linguistics & NLP LSCI 130 ST: Intro to using and evaluating generative AI
2026	LSCI 101 Language & Society LSCI 210 Languages in the Life of Aotearoa New Zealand and Asia-Pacific LSCI 211 The Structure and Design of Languages LSCI 301 Language Teaching: Principles to Practice LSCI 310 Understanding Language Learning LSCI 312 Psycholinguistics	LSCI 111 Introduction to Language Sciences LSCI 201 Vocabulary and Grammar for Language Learners LSCI 313 Language Variation and Change NZSL 311 Structure and Use of New Zealand Sign Language	LSCI 220 Intro to Computational Linguistics & NLP

*Courses for 2026 are provisional, special topics may be offered in some years.

LSCI 101 Language and Society

This course introduces students to the major roles and uses of language in human society from linguistic and applied linguistic perspectives. Students will learn to understand key connections between language, society, the mind, and education, amongst other areas. Students will also learn how professional linguists and applied linguists research language and then contribute to knowledge and society.

LSCI 201 Vocabulary and grammar for language learners and teachers

The course explores the key features and patterns of English vocabulary and grammar from the perspective of the challenges they present to learners and teachers. It examines the implications for planning teaching and assessing learning. Students will evaluate the content of courses and published teaching materials.

LSCI 220 Introduction to Computational Linguistics and Natural Language Processing

This course introduces fundamental natural language processing concepts including preprocessing, text analytics, lexical annotation, and language models in order to understand how language is represented computationally. Students will learn how to use the Python programming language, with an emphasis on natural language processing libraries. No prior knowledge of programming is assumed.

LSCI 111 Intro to Language Sciences

Language is the 'operating system' of human beings, shaping our history, culture and technological achievements. This course introduces students to the scientific understanding of how language is designed, how it evolved, how it is learnt and cognitively processed. Students will gain core skills in analysing the sounds (phonetics), sound systems (phonology), word structures (morphology) and sentence structures (syntax) used across human languages.

LSCI 210 Languages in the Life of Aotearoa New Zealand and Asia-Pacific

This course focuses on the history and current status of languages in Aotearoa New Zealand and in Asia-Pacific. Students in this course will learn how linguists study the origins of languages in this region and document their use, as well as how applied linguists contribute to work on language maintenance and revitalisation, language policy, and language education.

LSCI 130 Topics in Computer and Language Science: Introduction to Using and Evaluating Generative AI

This course provides a foundational understanding of how various generative AI (e.g. text-based, image-based) technologies function and how to use them- functionally and ethically. Weekly one-hour lectures will introduce a facet of AI that will then be engaged in weekly two-hour workshops. These workshops are spaces for students to 1) more deeply explore the content of lecture through case studies, 2) develop skills for using generative AI by practicing with AI tools mentioned in lecture, and 3) have discussions about the ethical considerations surrounding lecture topics. This course is open to all and requires no experience with generative AI or linguistics.

LSCI 211 The structure and design of languages

Every language is a system that conveys thoughts and meaning. This course explores the building blocks of human language in a broad spectrum of languages—in terms of sound and sentence structure. You will dive into the fundamentals of grammatical rules, word formation, the sounds of speech, and sound patterns, gaining insights into the rich diversity of language systems worldwide. This exploration is tailored for those curious about how languages are structured and function at their core. The course lays the groundwork for a deeper appreciation and understanding of linguistic principles.

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LSCI 310 Understanding Language Learning

This course examines the cognitive and social processes involved in the learning of first and second/additional languages, including the study of bilingualism and multilingualism, and focusing on the implications for language learners and teachers.

LSCI 311 Linguistic Typology: Uniformity and Variation in Language Patterns

This advanced linguistics course investigates the core of syntax, morphology, phonology, and phonetics with a typological emphasis, focusing on uniformity and variation across different language families. You will explore universal language principles and unique linguistic features, addressing the balance of uniformity and variation in human languages. Through comparative analysis, the course aims to deepen understanding of language complexity and enhance critical analysis skills in studying human communication.

LSCI 312 Psycholinguistics

An exploration of the psychological processes involved in producing and understanding language, including topics such as how we mentally represent words and multi-word expressions, how we use prediction and inferencing to comprehend language, and how prosody shapes speech production and comprehension. Students will get hands-on experience with experimental approaches to the study of language processing.

LSCI 313 Historical Linguistics: Language Variation and Change

This course analyses how languages evolve through time and split into multiple varieties through human migration. It introduces two standard methods in Historical Linguistics, the comparative method and internal reconstruction. With these two methods we will study three core practices in Historical Linguistics: (i) reconstructing the structure of a proto-language that is no longer spoken, (ii) determining the locus of the homeland of a language family, and (iii) reconstructing human prehistory.

NZSL 311 Structure and Use of New Zealand Sign Language

This course surveys how concepts in linguistic structure are applied to the analysis of sign language, at the levels of phonology, morphology, lexicon and syntax. Sociolinguistic issues in the use of sign language use will be explored, including variation and language contact, and the status of NZSL in society.

Language matters. It's hard to imagine human life without language. We use language for almost everything we do—from making friends and sharing stories to asking a smartphone for directions. Language fundamentally shapes our history, culture, and technology. That's why knowing how language works can be an asset in so many fields. Why do kids tend to sound like their friends and not their parents? How do we store language in our minds? Why do languages vary so much across the globe? These are the kinds of questions you'll explore in Language Sciences.

The science of language. In Language Sciences, you'll take a systematic and scientific approach to analysing all aspects of language. You'll learn to analyse the structure and meaning of different languages and the social contexts in which they occur.

As you develop a solid grounding in linguistics, you'll learn how language intersects with other fields—psychology, data science, AI, anthropology, cognitive science, language teaching, and more.

Language Sciences is a natural choice if you're interested in learning or teaching languages. It's also a great subject to study if you like science, maths, and puzzle-solving.

When you major in Language Sciences, you have the option of adding a specialisation in Linguistics or Applied Linguistics. These specialisations are valuable in themselves—but they also set you up for further study at postgraduate level in Postgraduate Applied Linguistics, Postgraduate Linguistics, or Postgraduate TESOL.

⊕ **Further info about LSCI**: https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/explore/study-areas/language-sciences/overview

⊕ **Contact us**: lals@vuw.ac.nz