

UIC Connect – MA in Hispanic Studies

Welcome to the Master of Arts Program in Hispanic Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago! UIC offers MA programs in Hispanic literatures, Applied Linguistics and Descriptive and Theoretical Linguistics. Below you will find more general information. For further questions, you can contact Luis López, director of graduate studies (luislope@uic.edu) or Rocío García, the program administrator (mexotic@uic.edu).

Orientation

A general graduate student orientation meeting is held every August during the week before classes, in conjunction with the orientation for teaching assistants. In the spring, new students receive a letter and/or an email message from Rocío García with a detailed schedule for orientation week. Orientation week is very busy, so new students are strongly encouraged to plan on coming to Chicago at least one week before orientation to find housing obtain their *i-card* (see below), etc.

Graduate Student Handbook

Click [here](#) to view our Graduate Student Handbook for the academic year 2007-8

Advising

Your orientation letter in the spring will include preliminary instructions and advice concerning fall courses. You will be assigned a faculty advisor according to your intellectual interests who will guide you in choosing courses and complete your degree. You will also be assigned a peer advisor, a fellow graduate student that can tell you more about the experience of being a graduate student at UIC.

Registration

Sometime after you receive your official admission letter from the Office of Admissions and Records you will receive, usually via email, instructions on when and how to register.

Registration, including changes to any existing registration, begins a number of months before the term and continues through the first official ten days of the term (first official five days for summer session). Up until this date you can add or drop courses freely and without penalty.

During the registration period, all registration activity is carried out by the student using Student Self-Service, which may be accessed from [UIC Web For Student](#). When attempting to register, if you receive an error message directly pertaining to the class or section you are requesting, consult with the department offering the course as an override may need to be input into the system to allow you to continue to register. Once the override has been added you still have to register for the course in Student Self-Service. If you receive an error message that you do not understand, consult the Registration Help Line at (312) 996-8600.

i-card

The *i-Card* is the official identification card of the University for students, staff and faculty. It is important to obtain the *i-Card* and carry it with you at all times. The *i-Card* is needed to enter certain labs and buildings, for access to certain student-related events and services, and to check material out of the library.

Once you have registered, you should obtain your *i-Card* as soon as possible. You will need to bring a print-out of your registration and either a driver's license, state ID card, or passport to the *i-Card* Office. Complete information, including locations, is available from the [i-Card Office](#).

Medical Immunization Requirement

Illinois state law requires proof of certain immunizations for students in most situations. The policy and contact information are available at the [Office of Medical Immunization Records](#). It is important that you read this information carefully as registration for future terms is not allowed if you are not in compliance at that time.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees are set by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. The tuition and fee schedule at UIC is fairly elaborate so it is important to understand what your charges will be, as well as your payment obligations. This information is available from the [Office of Admissions and Records website](#).

Teaching Assistantships

If you have been granted an assistantship there are a number of important steps that have to be undertaken to ensure timely processing and receipt of your first stipend check.

- You will receive a formal letter of offer from the Department of Spanish, French, Italian, & Portuguese.
- After you have returned with your signature the formal letter of offer for the assistantship, the Department of Spanish, French, Italian, & Portuguese will complete the necessary information in the university database.
- When the Department completes the previous step, it will trigger an email to you with logon and other information for an online system called NESSIE.
- In NESSIE, you will need to complete the HR Application and Payroll information (demographic, educational, and bank deposit information).
- After that is completed in NESSIE, you will be instructed by your department to complete a Statement of a Drug-Free Workplace and I-9 forms, which you submit to the hiring unit. The I-9 form is viewable in Nessie and includes a list of acceptable official identification you will need to bring in with the completed forms.
- For international students on a visa, the Department of Spanish, French, Italian, & Portuguese will send appropriate information to the Office of International Services to initiate an Employee Clearance form.

- The processing for international students on a visa allows less flexibility in regards to the start date, so it is important to complete the necessary steps in a timely fashion.

It is only after all these stages have been successfully completed that your appointment becomes official and allows you to begin your duties and receive the monthly stipend, which is paid on the 16th. In addition, if the appointment comes with a tuition waiver (contact the Department to find out exactly which parts of the tuition and fees are waived and which are not), it is only at this stage that the waiver is available to be applied to your account, assuming you have also correctly registered for the total hours required to receive the waiver. If the appointment for the assistantship is offered or processed late, or any of the steps outlined above are delayed, there is a possibility of missing your first monthly stipend check. Although you will receive an adjusted payment a month later (assuming the beginning date is properly processed and assuming you worked for that period), not having the first check can cause financial issues you did not anticipate. Therefore, if you do not receive timely responses you should always contact the Department of Spanish, French, Italian, & Portuguese to ensure procedures have not been overlooked. See the Graduate College website at <http://grad.uic.edu/cms/?pid=1000081> for additional assistantship information.

For a description of the Teaching Assistant's responsibilities in the Department of Spanish, French, Italian, & Portuguese, consult section 10.1 of the [Graduate Student Handbook](#).

Integration of New Students

Although you will have an official advisor throughout the time you spend working toward your M.A., you should feel free to contact other faculty members as well as the Director of Graduate Studies at any time for further advice. All graduate students in Spanish are expected to participate actively in the life of the Department of Spanish, French, Italian, & Portuguese. This includes regular attendance at lectures and other events scheduled either within the Spanish section or in the Department of Spanish, French, Italian, & Portuguese. We strongly recommend students that they take advantage of the cultural opportunities offered by the city of Chicago: the Instituto Cervantes, the Mexican Fine Arts Museum, the Latino Film Festival, lectures given at the other universities of the Chicago area, etc.