

FRENCH DEPARTMENT MSFS PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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- Methods and Requirements
 - List of French Topics

Dear MSFS Candidates,

What is the MSFS Proficiency Exam?

The French Proficiency Exam is an oral language exam. Candidates will be judged on their ability to outline the given article and sustain a conversation on topics in international affairs, politics, economics, culture and civilization, relating specifically to the French or Francophone worlds, while using a wide range of vocabulary, correct grammar, proper pronunciation, and a professional level of language. The content (See the list of themes attached.) is the basis for the conversations, and as such, it is an integral component of the exam. A student who is not able to discuss topics because of a lack of general knowledge will, in all probability, not pass the exam.

The candidate will be provided with an article from a recent issue of a French or Francophone newspaper or magazine and will be given fifteen (15) minutes to read it. The candidate will then go to another area where two (2) examiners will listen to the candidate give a short outline of the article, after which the examiners will ask questions about the article and proceed to a discussion (which the candidate is expected to sustain) on several topics taken from the list of themes. This portion of the exam will last between fifteen (15) and twenty (20) minutes.

MSFS candidates will be rated as Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, and Poor. They must receive a rating of “Good” to pass the exam.

When is the exam offered?

The French Proficiency Exam is offered in September, November, and April (check with the Department of French office, ICC 416, for actual dates). Students who are unable to take the exam at established times must show good cause and pay a fifty dollar (\$50) fee (exact payment accepted in cash only). Students who need to take the exam more than once because of a previous failure and students who do not show up for their scheduled examination appointments will also have to pay the fifty dollar (\$50) fee. The Proficiency Exam may be taken only once to satisfy the degree requirement, unless the exam result is a failing mark.

Who is eligible to take the MSFS Proficiency Exam?

Students are required to take the Placement Exam offered by the French Department as a first step in proper placement and determination of language preparedness. **Only those who have placed at or above Advanced French II (FREN-102) are eligible to take the exam.** Those who have placed into Introductory, Intermediate, or Advanced French I must complete all levels through Advanced French II. Students planning to go abroad should be aware that their direct matriculation into a francophone institution will automatically fulfill their oral proficiency requirement.

How should a student prepare for the MSFS Proficiency Exam?

All students must review and become familiar with the topics (French, Belgian, Canadian, or African studies) on which the discussions might be based (see attached). The list of themes covers material on France and/or the Francophone world which students cover in the Advanced French I and II (as well as more advanced French courses such as Topics for Oral Proficiency, African Self-Perceptions, and Contemporary French Canada, etc.). Candidates may obtain additional information from Professors Guieu and Roman, SFS Core Faculty members. Dictionaries may not be used during any part of the exam. Students may consult the article in front of them, write notes, or underline text if they would like.

What content will the exam cover ?

For the **reading comprehension component** of the exam, selected articles will be made available to the student fifteen (15) minutes prior to the exam.

Along with the article itself, the student should be able to discuss all listed topics or themes to some extent. In order to be prepared for this **content component** of the exam, all students planning to take the SFS French Proficiency Exam should consult texts used in the SFS Advanced French courses.

Students should consult, Edmiston & Duménie, La France Contemporaine, Fourth Edition.
(or can consult, G. Michaud & G. Torrès, Nouveau Guide France, Hachette, Paris)

List of Themes:

1. Notions d'Histoire de France: Rétrospective du passé
2. Notions d'Histoire de France: Histoire récente
3. Géographie économique et politique de la France
4. La famille
5. Le rôle des religions
6. La jeunesse
7. Les classes sociales
8. La Vie Quotidienne
9. La Vie Culturelle
10. Les Institutions: Pouvoir législatif (les deux chambres)
11. Les Institutions: Pouvoir exécutif
12. Les Institutions: Pouvoir juridique
13. L'Administration: l'Etat patron et L'Etat providence (la couverture sociale)
14. L'Administration: les Services publics
15. L'Economie
16. Les Ressources (Industrie, Commerce/Agriculture, Energie)
17. Politique intérieure: les Partis Politiques
18. Politique intérieure: les Elections
19. Politique extérieure: l'Europe, l'Union Européenne
20. Politique extérieure: les Etats-Unis
21. Politique extérieure: le Monde
22. Le Syndicalisme
23. Le Système d'Éducation
24. Les Medias
25. L'Immigration
26. Le chômage
27. L'Environnement
28. La Vème République
29. La Francophonie
30. Les problèmes du moment

Results of the exam will be emailed to students.