

French Language Proficiency Exams for M.A. and PhD. candidates
(Effective Fall 2005)

Please note: you must first determine whether your department requires you to take an oral or written test, or both

A. Oral exam

The purpose of the exam is to verify that you can express yourself adequately in French in a semi-formal context, as if for instance you had to discuss a point with a colleague at a professional conference (as opposed to informal contexts such as ordering a meal in a restaurant or making small talk, and formal contexts such as undergoing a job interview or delivering a paper).

The examiner will give you a 2-3 page text to read within 30 minutes, after which s/he will ask you some questions or elicit comments based on what you have read (you may use a dictionary to prepare). The conversation will be entirely in French and last about 15 minutes. The text will most likely not be from a scholarly publication, but it will be written at a fairly high level of complexity and about a specialized topic (education, language policy, language learning, literature, philosophy).

Please e-mail the examiner to make an appointment, and bring with you a **completed language exam slip**, which you can obtain from your department's administrative assistant.

B. Written exam

The purpose of this exam is to verify that you can read and comprehend a scholarly article in French, as if you were using it as a source for your research.

You will need to locate ***two*** scholarly articles in French (or chapters of a scholarly book, if they can be read and understood separately), on a topic that is of relevance to you --- perhaps something related to your current research. Each reading should be about 10-15 pages long. Please note that the readings ***must*** to be from a scholarly (i.e. secondary) works, not from primary works, and that they should be no more than 15 years old.

You will supply copies of the articles to the examiner (drop them off at the French Dept. Office, ICC 416); please include a **completed language exam slip**, which you can obtain from your department's administrative assistant. On the copies of the articles, please also write your name, degree being pursued, and department, as well as your e-mail address.

The examiner will write four or five questions in French about one of the articles. Some may ask you to clarify the meaning of (and not just translate) certain important words, expressions or sentences; others require that you synthesize information from the article. Questions are to be answered in English, and you may use a dictionary, but you are bound by the honor code not to ask for outside help.

The examiner will inform you when the questions are ready, and leave them in hard copy with our Administrative Officer in ICC 416. You can then take the exam in the French Department on a day and time convenient to you, within the department's business hours --we advise that you call ahead (x 7-5717) to make sure that there will be someone in the office. People usually take about two hours to complete the exam. Drop off your answers in the examiner's mailbox in the French department; the examiner will then pick them up and grade them.