# Bachelor of Arts in Languages

# Academic Assessment Plan

**Adopted by**

**The Department of Languages Faculty: Fall 2013**

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Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide language learning within cultural contexts. The study of languages and cultures enriches students’ lives by allowing them to explore different world views and concepts through immersion experiences in the classroom, community, and abroad. In the global market, proficiency in languages and knowledge of diverse cultures also creates greater potential for career opportunities. As part of its mission, the Department of Languages:

* teaches American Sign Language, Mandarin Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish, from beginning to various levels of proficiency
* deepens students' understanding of cultural diversity
* encourages students to study abroad
* works closely with local, national, and international organizations, including the Anchorage School District, the Alaska Court System, and governmental and nonprofit organizations.

Program Introduction

The interdependency of today’s world makes the need for cross-cultural understanding and communication of crucial importance. The Department of Languages’ mission is to provide excellent language instruction, from elementary to various levels of spoken and written proficiency together with cultural literacy in American Sign Language, French, German, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, and Spanish, and to promote a comprehensive understanding of cultural diversity in Alaska, the U.S., and the world.

We prepare students to become informed global citizens by allowing them to explore different world views and concepts through immersion experiences in the classroom, community, and abroad, and fostering an appreciation for the changing and increasingly multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual living environments. We help students develop and refine their critical and analytical skills, which will allow them to consider a diversity of perspectives and make sound decisions as they embark on their careers.

Although the Department of Languages at the University of Alaska Anchorage does not possess national accreditation, its faculty members design course curriculum and evaluate student performance according to the highest disciplinary standards set by the **A**merican **C**ouncil on the **T**eaching of **F**oreign **L**anguages (i.e. ACTFL Guidelines).

UAA undergraduate students in Languages have been recipients of many prestigious international scholarships. Between the years 2004-2012, a total of twenty-five students majoring or minoring in Languages were selected as US Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars, US Fulbright Scholars, Japan Student Services Organization Scholars, Congress-Bundestag Scholars to Germany, or US Critical Language Scholars. To date, the Department of Languages boasts the largest percentage of UAA undergraduate competitive international scholarship recipients. Rigorous curricular standards, intensive academic mentoring between faculty and students, and active student language clubs and conversational tables facilitated by the faculty members of the Department of Languages have been key to student success.

Assessment Process Introduction

The members of the Curriculum Committee within the Department of Languages met a total of five times for a period of 1½ hours over the course of Fall Semester 2012 to discuss, draft, and refine the Program Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Methods presented in this document. This Curriculum Committee is comprised of ten members: Coordinators of Language Programs (Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish), tenure-track, and tenured faculty members in the Department of Languages. All but the Coordinator of American Sign Language participated on a regular basis. The purpose of the revision of these Program Student Learning Outcomes during Fall 2012 was to create transparency throughout the entire assessment process, elevate the academic rigor of the student outcomes by demanding effective demonstration of linguistic proficiency in both the spoken and written forms, and mandate critical analyses of authentic texts in the target language with inherent articulation of cultural literacy. In sum, the Program Student Learning Outcomes, Assessment Measures with corresponding weight, and Rubrics contained herein were voted upon and unanimously approved on November 27, 2012.

Historically, program assessment procedures for the Department of Languages have evaluated linguistic proficiency and cultural knowledge via an oral testing format only; final results have been submitted to the departmental Chair in statistical format only. Based on the current faculty members’ programmatic goals and our response to Peer Review Committee Assessment Reports, a more comprehensive examination has been incorporated into the proposed Assessment Plan 2012—one which thoroughly evaluates the linguistic, cross-cultural, and critical/analytical skill development of UAA graduates with a BA in Languages. The Department of Languages will now archive all exam questions, student responses and artifacts, assessment tools, and faculty evaluations (narrative and numerical).

Assessment Procedures:

Historical Overview for the Department of Languages

Since 2001 to the present, the Department of Languages has implemented several measures to assess learning outcomes of students, ranging from a series of examinations to exit surveys and questionnaires of graduating students. In particular, commencing in Spring 2004, the Department began to administer a Prochievement Test in each respective Major Language Program at the Advanced II (A302) level as part of the final exam for the course, evaluating student oral proficiency (with a minimum goal of the Intermediate Level according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Guidelines) and cultural knowledge as integrated into the language programs. Although effective in determining the speaking skill level and cultural literacy of students, the faculty members of the Department of Languages during Fall 2012 determined that they wished to evaluate more comprehensively the language and cross-cultural learning which occurs for the student majors. As such, after a total of seven hours of discussion, on November 27, 2012 Coordinators, Tenure-Track, and Tenured faculty members of the Department of Languages agreed to adopt the following additional approaches to assessment to better reflect the Program Student Learning Outcomes achieved by majors: 1) One formal Oral and one formal Written Proficiency Test according to ACTFL Standards and Guidelines for graduating seniors in their final semester; 2) A Student Artifact (in either the written or spoken formats) presented from an upper-division course at least 9 credits beyond the A302 level which demonstrates close reading and critical analysis of an authentic text in the target language and articulates knowledge of cross-cultural similarities and differences, appropriately communicating this knowledge within a given context in the target language.

From Spring 2004 to the present, reporting of results has been left to the discretion of the faculty member teaching A302 who submitted numerical statistics to the Chair of the Department. The new Assessment Plan mandates that all exam questions and answers, student artifacts, rubrics, and evaluations be reviewed by all Coordinators, Tenure-Track, and Tenured faculty within respective Major Language Programs, whose collective results will be submitted to the Chair of the Department. Since all data and analysis will be archived digitally in the Department of Languages, there will be complete transparency throughout this revised process, allowing all members to review the data and analyses on a yearly basis and improve upon the process by formal vote.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this program, graduates with a BA in Languages are able to

1. communicate effectively in both spoken and written forms, as per the **A**merican **C**ouncil on the **T**eaching of **F**oreign **L**anguages Guidelines, in the emphasis language,
2. demonstrate close reading and critical analysis of authentic texts in the emphasis language, and
3. articulate knowledge of cross-cultural similarities and differences, appropriately communicating this knowledge within a given context in the emphasis language.

Table 1: Association of Assessment Measures to Student Learning Outcomes

This table is intended to help organize outcomes and the measures that are used to assess them. Each measure contributes information on the students’ achievement of a different set of outcomes. That contribution is tracked in this table.

This table also forms the basis of the template for reporting and analyzing the combined data gathered from these measures.

| **Outcomes** | Exit Exam | Course Exam,  *or*  Course Paper,  *or*  Audio-Visual Recording |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Graduates with a BA in Languages will be able to communicate effectively in both spoken and written forms, as per the **A**merican **C**ouncil on the **T**eaching of **F**oreign **L**anguages Guidelines, in the emphasis language. | 1 | 0 |
| Graduates with a BA in Languages will be able to demonstrate close reading and critical analysis of authentic texts in the emphasis language. | 0 | 1 |
| Graduates with a BA in Languages will be able to articulate knowledge of cross-cultural similarities and differences, appropriately communicating this knowledge within a given context in the emphasis language. | 0 | 1 |

0 = Measure is not used to measure the associated outcome.

1 = Measure is used to measure the associated outcome.

Assessment Measures

A description of the measures used in the assessment of the student learning outcomes and their implementation are summarized in Table 2 below. The measures and their relationships to the student learning outcomes are listed in Table 1, above.

There is a separate appendix for each measure that shows the measure itself and describes its use and the factors that affect the results.

Table 2: Assessment Measures and Administration

| **Measure** | **Description** | **Frequency/ Start Date** | **Collection Method** | **Administered by** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Exit Exam  (*Weighted 50/100%*) | An exit exam which 1) is conducted entirely in the emphasis language, and 2) examines both written and oral proficiencies. This exit exam is evaluated according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Guidelines (ACTFL Guidelines). | Every semester for graduating majors beginning Fall 2013 | Oral Interview and Written Sample archived digitally in the Department of Languages | Language Coordinators, Tenure-Track and/or Tenured Faculty Members of individual Major Languages Programs |
| Course Exam,  *or*  Course Paper,  *or*  Audio-Visual Recording  (*Weighted 50/100%*) | A written or audio-visual critical analysis of an authentic text articulating knowledge of cross-cultural similarities and differences (which is realized in the emphasis language) from a respective upper-division language course taken during the penultimate or ultimate semester in fulfillment of the major. | Every semester for seniors with a minimum of three upper-division courses\* completed in the target language (minimum of 9 credits) beginning Fall 2013 | Written Exam, Paper, or Audio-Visual Recording archived digitally in the Department of Languages | Language Coordinators, Tenure-Track and/or Tenured Faculty Members of individual Major Languages Programs |

\*Necessary in order to be able to assess uniformally all Languages Majors, both Single and Dual Option Majors.

Assessment Process

General Implementation Strategy

Every semester, Language Coordinators, Tenure-Track, and Tenured faculty members will review the list of graduating Languages majors in their respective programs and perform the following:

1. conduct an Exit Exam entirely in the emphasis language which consists of both oral and written components and tests for effective communication according to the ACTFL Guidelines. In adherence to ACTFL linguistic proficiency examination standards, students will not have access to any of the exam questions prior to the administration of the test.
2. present one archived student artifact representative of upper-division work completed in the penultimate or ultimate semester of completion of Languages Major Requirements (minimum of 9 credits completed in upper-division coursework taught in the emphasis language) and which demonstrates in the target language close reading and critical analysis of an authentic text as well as articulation of cross-cultural similarities and differences within an appropriate context. This student artifact may be presented in the form of a written exam, written paper, or audio/visual recording.

Both the Exit Exam and the Student Artifact will be reviewed and evaluated by all current Language Coordinators, Tenure-Track, and Tenured faculty members (not on sabbatical) of the respective Languages Programs during a given semester. Results will be submitted by the Coordinator of each Major Language Program—representing the evaluations/conclusions of all participating faculty members—and forwarded to the Chair of the Department of Languages and the Chair of the Outcomes Assessment Committee by the third week of November during Fall Semesters and the third week of April during Spring Semesters.

Graded Exit Exams and Student Artifacts will be scanned and/or archived digitally in the system maintained by the Administrative Assistant of the Department of Languages. All personal identifiers of students will be removed prior to archival. Likewise, rubrics implemented and corresponding recorded results used in evaluation of students and program assessment will be archived digitally within the Department.

Description of Faculty Involvement

All Coordinators, Tenure-Track, and Tenured faculty within the Major Languages Programs will actively participate in designing, administering, and grading the Exit Exams as well as evaluating the Student Artifacts submitted. Written and oral student samples will be reviewed according to the ACTFL Guidelines—an internationally-recognized assessment tool. All Major Languages Programs will record results adhering to the same rubrics in order to maintain uniformity in assessing the Bachelor of Arts in Languages.

The Department of Languages will collect and analyze data on a yearly basis to be able to track fulfillment of established Learning Outcomes and changing trends in pedagogy and/or student learning styles. Analysis and interpretation of results by the full-time faculty members of the Department of Languages will aid in making positive changes to programs as determined. Examples of future changes specified may include the following:

* Changes in course content and measuring tools
* Changes in advising methods and/or advisor assignments
* Changes in course sequencing and/or prerequisites
* Changes in faculty assignments and/or scheduling
* Addition or replacement of equipment
* Changes to priority classrooms

Given the five-year program-assessment cycle, the assessment process will be staged according to the following timeline:

2013-14: Collection and analysis of data

2014-15: Collection and analysis of data; Recommendations for improvement

2015-16: Collection and analysis of data; Recommendations for improvement

2016-17: Collection and analysis of data; Implementation of suggested changes

2017-18: Collection and analysis of data; Compilation of Revised Assessment Plan

2018-2022: Collection and analysis of data; Recommendations for improvement

2022-2023: Collection and analysis of data

2023-2024: Collection and analysis of data; Recommendations for improvement

2024-2025: Collection and analysis of data; Recommendations for improvement

2025-2026: Collection and analysis of data; Recommendations for improvement

2026-2027: Collection and analysis of data; Recommendations for Revised Assessment Plan

Modification of the Assessment Plan

Our Spring Exit Exams are conducted during the first three weeks in April. Between the end of the third week in April and the close of every academic year, all Coordinators, Tenure-Track, and Tenured faculty members in a Major Language Programs will convene to review the assessment measures in place, noting its strengths and weaknesses. Areas of improvement will be suggested, voted upon, and, if approved, recorded in the Annual Assessment Report. Any changes to evaluating rubrics and guidelines will be shared among all full-time departmental members and publicized on the website.

Appendix A: Exit Exam

Measure Description:

**Sample Exit Exam: Oral Proficiency Component (to be realized in the target language):** (Weighted 25/100%)

1. Describe your current family and student life here in Anchorage. What occupies your time?
2. Narrate one of the memorable moments of your childhood, describing the circumstances under which this unforgettable event took place and your reactions to it.
3. State the title of a book you have read or a film that you have seen and provide a short narration of the plot.
4. If your vehicle were to break down on the way to school, what would you do to remedy the situation? Describe the course of action that you would take.
5. Justify the benefits of learning another language and travel abroad.
6. If you were able to spend one hour with the President of the United States, what issues would you tell him are the most pressing for your generation? What suggestions would you offer for change?
7. Imagine that you have been cast away, completely alone, to a deserted island for a period of one year. Beyond the basic necessities of food and water, name three essential items that you would require for physical and psychological survival and why.
8. Compare your High School experience with your Post-Secondary education.
9. What has been one of the most rewarding university courses that you have ever taken and why? What did you learn in that course and how will you incorporate that knowledge into your post-baccalaureate life?
10. If you were able to go back in time and change a decision that you made in the past, what decision would that be? If you were to have chosen another path, what different course would your life have taken?

**ACTFL Oral Guidelines (Intermediate and Advanced)**

<http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/speaking>

***Speaking » Advanced***

*Speakers at the Advanced level engage in conversation in a clearly participatory manner in order to communicate information on autobiographical topics, as well as topics of community, national, or international interest. The topics are handled concretely by means of narration and* [*description*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#description) *in the major* [*time frames*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#timeframes) *of past, present, and future. These speakers can also deal with a social situation with an unexpected complication. The language of Advanced-level speakers is abundant, the oral* [*paragraph*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#paragraph) *being the measure of Advanced-level length and* [*discourse*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discourse)*. Advanced-level speakers have sufficient control of basic structures and* [*generic vocabulary*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#genericvocabulary) *to be understood by native speakers of the language, including those unaccustomed to non-native speech.*

***Advanced High***

*Speakers at the Advanced High sublevel perform all Advanced-level tasks with linguistic ease, confidence, and competence. They are consistently able to explain in detail and narrate fully and accurately in all* [*time frames*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#timeframes)*. In addition, Advanced High speakers handle the tasks pertaining to the Superior level but cannot sustain performance at that level across a variety of topics. They may provide a structured* [*argument*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#argument) *to support their opinions, and they may construct hypotheses, but patterns of error appear. They can discuss some topics abstractly, especially those relating to their particular interests and special fields of expertise, but in general, they are more comfortable discussing a variety of topics concretely.*

*Advanced High speakers may demonstrate a well-developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms or for limitations in vocabulary by the confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing,* [*circumlocution*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#circumlocution)*, and illustration. They use precise vocabulary and* [*intonation*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#intonation) *to express meaning and often show great* [*fluency*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#fluency) *and ease of speech. However, when called on to perform the complex tasks associated with the Superior level over a variety of topics, their language will at times break down or prove inadequate, or they may avoid the task altogether, for example, by resorting to simplification through the use of* [*description*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#description) *or narration in place of* [*argument*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#argument) *or hypothesis.*

***Advanced Mid***

*Speakers at the Advanced Mid sublevel are able to handle with ease and confidence a large number of communicative tasks. They participate actively in most informal and some formal exchanges on a variety of concrete topics relating to work, school, home, and leisure activities, as well as topics relating to events of current, public, and personal interest or individual relevance.*

*Advanced Mid speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major* [*time frames*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#timeframes) *of past, present, and future by providing a full account, with good control of* [*aspect*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#aspect)*. Narration and* [*description*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#description) *tend to be combined and interwoven to relate relevant and supporting facts in connected,* [*paragraph*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#paragraph)*-length* [*discourse*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discourse)*.*

*Advanced Mid speakers can handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar. Communicative strategies such as* [*circumlocution*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#circumlocution) *or* [*rephrasing*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#rephrasing) *are often employed for this purpose. The speech of Advanced Mid speakers performing Advanced-level tasks is marked by substantial flow. Their vocabulary is fairly extensive although primarily generic in nature, except in the case of a particular area of specialization or interest. Their* [*discourse*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discourse) *may still reflect the oral paragraph structure of their own language rather than that of the target language.*

*Advanced Mid speakers contribute to conversations on a variety of familiar topics, dealt with concretely, with much accuracy, clarity and precision, and they convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. They are readily understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the quality and/or quantity of their speech will generally decline.*

***Advanced Low***

*Speakers at the Advanced Low sublevel are able to handle a variety of communicative tasks. They are able to participate in most informal and some formal conversations on topics related to school, home, and leisure activities. They can also speak about some topics related to employment, current events, and matters of public and community interest.*

*Advanced Low speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major* [*time frames*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#timeframes) *of past, present, and future in* [*paragraph*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#paragraph)*-length* [*discourse*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discourse) *with some control of* [*aspect*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#aspect)*. In these narrations and descriptions, Advanced Low speakers combine and link sentences into* [*connected*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#connecteddiscourse) [*discourse*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discourse) *of paragraph length, although these narrations and descriptions tend to be handled separately rather than interwoven. They can handle appropriately the essential linguistic challenges presented by a complication or an unexpected turn of events.*

*Responses produced by Advanced Low speakers are typically not longer than a single paragraph. The speaker’s dominant language may be evident in the use of false* [*cognates*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#cognates)*, literal translations, or the oral paragraph structure of that language. At times their* [*discourse*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discourse) *may be minimal for the level, marked by an irregular flow, and containing noticeable self-correction. More generally, the performance of Advanced Low speakers tends to be uneven.*

*Advanced Low speech is typically marked by a certain* [*grammatical*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#grammatical) *roughness (e.g., inconsistent control of verb endings), but the overall performance of the Advanced-level tasks is sustained, albeit minimally. The vocabulary of Advanced Low speakers often lacks specificity. Nevertheless, Advanced Low speakers are able to use communicative strategies such as* [*rephrasing*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#rephrasing) *and* [*circumlocution*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#circumlocution)*.*

*Advanced Low speakers contribute to the conversation with sufficient accuracy, clarity, and precision to convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. Their speech can be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, even though this may require some repetition or restatement. When attempting to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the linguistic quality and quantity of their speech will deteriorate significantly.*

***Speaking » Intermediate***

*Speakers at the Intermediate level are distinguished primarily by their ability to create with the language when talking about familiar topics related to their daily life. They are able to recombine learned material in order to express personal meaning. Intermediate-level speakers can ask simple questions and can handle a straightforward survival situation. They produce sentence-level language, ranging from* [*discrete sentences*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discretesentences) *to* [*strings of sentences*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#stringsofsentences)*, typically in present time. Intermediate-level speakers are understood by* [*interlocutors*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#interlocutors) *who are accustomed to dealing with non-native learners of the language.*

***Intermediate High***

*Intermediate High speakers are able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with the routine tasks and social situations of the Intermediate level. They are able to handle successfully uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring an exchange of basic information related to their work, school, recreation, particular interests, and areas of competence.*

*Intermediate High speakers can handle a substantial number of tasks associated with the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance of all of these tasks all of the time. Intermediate High speakers can narrate and describe in all major* [*time frames*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#timeframes) *using* [*connected*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#connecteddiscourse) [*discourse*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discourse) *of* [*paragraph*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#paragraph) *length, but not all the time. Typically, when Intermediate High speakers attempt to perform Advanced-level tasks, their speech exhibits one or more features of* [*breakdown*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#breakdown)*, such as the failure to carry out fully the narration or* [*description*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#description) *in the appropriate major time frame, an inability to maintain* [*paragraph*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#paragraph)*-length* [*discourse*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discourse)*, or a reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary.*

*Intermediate High speakers can generally be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, although interference from another language may be evident (e.g., use of* [*code-switching*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#code-switching)*, false* [*cognates*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#cognates)*, literal translations), and a pattern of gaps in communication may occur.*

***Intermediate Mid***

*Speakers at the Intermediate Mid sublevel are able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is generally limited to those predictable and concrete exchanges necessary for survival in the target culture. These include personal information related to self, family, home, daily activities, interests and personal preferences, as well as physical and social needs, such as food, shopping, travel, and lodging.*

*Intermediate Mid speakers tend to function reactively, for example, by responding to direct questions or requests for information. However, they are capable of asking a variety of questions when necessary to obtain simple information to satisfy basic needs, such as directions, prices, and services. When called on to perform functions or handle topics at the Advanced level, they provide some information but have difficulty linking ideas, manipulating time and* [*aspect*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#aspect)*, and using communicative strategies, such as* [*circumlocution*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#circumlocution)*.*

*Intermediate Mid speakers are able to express personal meaning by creating with the language, in part by combining and recombining known elements and conversational input to produce responses typically consisting of sentences and* [*strings of sentences*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#stringsofsentences)*. Their speech may contain pauses, reformulations, and self-corrections as they search for adequate vocabulary and appropriate language forms to express themselves. In spite of the limitations in their vocabulary and/or pronunciation and/or grammar and/or syntax, Intermediate Mid speakers are generally understood by sympathetic* [*interlocutors*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#interlocutors) *accustomed to dealing with non-natives.*

*Overall, Intermediate Mid speakers are at ease when performing Intermediate-level tasks and do so with significant quantity and quality of Intermediate-level language.*

***Intermediate Low***

*Speakers at the Intermediate Low sublevel are able to handle successfully a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by creating with the language in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target-language culture. These topics relate to basic personal information; for example, self and family, some daily activities and personal preferences, and some immediate needs, such as ordering food and making simple purchases. At the Intermediate Low sublevel, speakers are primarily reactive and struggle to answer direct questions or requests for information. They are also able to ask a few appropriate questions. Intermediate Low speakers manage to sustain the functions of the Intermediate level, although just barely.*

*Intermediate Low speakers express personal meaning by combining and recombining what they know and what they hear from their interlocutors into short statements and* [*discrete sentences*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discretesentences)*. Their responses are often filled with hesitancy and inaccuracies as they search for appropriate linguistic forms and vocabulary while attempting to give form to the message. Their speech is characterized by frequent pauses, ineffective reformulations and self-corrections. Their pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax are strongly influenced by their first language. In spite of frequent misunderstandings that may require repetition or* [*rephrasing*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#rephrasing)*, Intermediate Low speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors, particularly by those accustomed to dealing with non-natives.*

**RUBRIC**

| UAA, Department of Languages  I. Scale for Linguistic Oral Proficiency |
| --- |
| *Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Language:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *Date :* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **🢧Overall content (15%)**  Information conveyed was not appropriate for topic **10 11**  Some information was appropriate for topic **12 13**  Appropriate information conveyed  **14 15**  **🢧Communication (15%)**  Responses were not logical; overall incoherent **10 11**  Partially illogical and incoherent responses **12 13**  Logical and coherent responses; speaker displays linguistic control  and confidence **14 15**  **🢧Vocabulary (20%)**  Inadequate for situation; use of English or literal translations **13 14**  and invented words; problematic for sympathetic native speaker  Barely adequate for situation; some literal translation, use of English **16 17**  and invented words; native speaker would have to interpret  to understand  Adequate for situation, a few erroneous words, but sympathetic native  speaker can understand **19 20**  **🢧Grammar (20%)**  Interferes with comprehension **14 15**  Frequent errors interfere partially with comprehension, native  speaker needs to interpret meaning **17 18**  Errors do not interfere with comprehension **19 20**  **🢧Pronunciation (15%)**  Is frequently unintelligible **10 11**  Heavy influence of native language requires concentrated listening **12 13**  Mispronunciations do not interfere with comprehension **14 15**  **🢧Fluency (15%)**  Fragmented, unnatural pauses disturb communication **10 11**  Some natural pauses **12 13**  Relatively natural flow **14 15**  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Total (100%):** |

**Sample Exit Exam: Written Proficiency Component: (to be realized in the target language)**

(Weighted 25/100%)

1. Analyze one (1) literary or cultural work that you examined during your undergraduate studies in the FREN/GER/JPN/RUSS/SPAN Program, placing its predominant themes within a historical, socio-political, or philosophical context. How does this artistic work reflect cultural values which are different from your own, and how have these alternative perspectives influenced the way in which you now perceive the world?
2. Describe a first-hand cultural experience other than one which is traditional to your culture of origin. How did this experience allow you to perceive the world around you in a new light?
3. Justify the benefits of learning another language and travel abroad.

**ACTFL Written Guidelines (Intermediate and Advanced)**

[**http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/writing**](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/writing)

***Writing » Advanced***

*Writers at the Advanced level are characterized by the ability to write routine informal and some* [*formal correspondence*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#formalcorrespondence)*, as well as narratives, descriptions, and summaries of a factual nature. They can narrate and describe in the major* [*time frames*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#timeframes) *of past, present, and future, using paraphrasing and* [*elaboration*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#elaboration) *to provide clarity. Advanced-level writers produce* [*connected*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#connecteddiscourse) [*discourse*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discourse) *of* [*paragraph*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#paragraph) *length and structure. At this level, writers show good control of the most frequently used structures and* [*generic vocabulary*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#genericvocabulary)*, allowing them to be understood by those unaccustomed to the writing of non-natives.*

***Advanced High***

*Writers at the Advanced High sublevel are able to write about a variety of topics with significant precision and detail. They can handle informal and* [*formal correspondence*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#formalcorrespondence) *according to appropriate conventions. They can write summaries and reports of a factual nature. They can also write extensively about topics relating to particular interests and special areas of competence, although their writing tends to emphasize the concrete aspects of such topics. Advanced High writers can narrate and describe in the major* [*time frames*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#timeframes)*, with solid control of* [*aspect*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#aspect)*. In addition, they are able to demonstrate the ability to handle writing tasks associated with the Superior level, such as developing arguments and constructing hypotheses, but are not able to do this all of the time; they cannot produce Superior-level writing consistently across a variety of topics treated abstractly or generally. They have good control of a range of* [*grammatical*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#grammatical) *structures and a fairly wide general vocabulary. When writing at the Advanced level, they often show remarkable ease of expression, but under the demands of Superior-level writing tasks, patterns of error appear. The linguistic limitations of Advanced High writing may occasionally* [*distract*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#distract) *the native reader from the message.*

***Advanced Mid***

*Writers at the Advanced Mid sublevel are able to meet a range of work and/or academic writing needs. They demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe with detail in all major* [*time frames*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#timeframes) *with good control of* [*aspect*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#aspect)*. They are able to write straightforward summaries on topics of general interest. Their writing exhibits a variety of* [*cohesive devices*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#cohesivedevices) *in texts up to several paragraphs in length. There is good control of the most frequently used target-language* [*syntactic*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#syntactic) *structures and a range of general vocabulary. Most often, thoughts are expressed clearly and supported by some* [*elaboration*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#elaboration)*. This writing incorporates organizational features both of the target language and the writer’s first language and may at times resemble oral* [*discourse*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discourse)*. Writing at the Advanced Mid sublevel is understood readily by natives not used to the writing of non-natives. When called on to perform functions or to treat issues at the Superior level, Advanced-Mid writers will manifest a decline in the quality and/or quantity of their writing.*

***Advanced Low***

*Writers at the Advanced Low sublevel are able to meet basic work and/or academic writing needs. They demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in major* [*time frames*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#timeframes) *with some control of* [*aspect*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#aspect)*. They are able to compose simple summaries on familiar topics. Advanced Low writers are able to combine and link sentences into texts of* [*paragraph*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#paragraph) *length and structure. Their writing, while adequate to satisfy the criteria of the Advanced level, may not be substantive. Writers at the Advanced Low sublevel demonstrate the ability to incorporate a limited number of* [*cohesive devices*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#cohesivedevices)*, and may resort to some* [*redundancy*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#redundancy) *and awkward repetition. They rely on patterns of oral* [*discourse*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discourse) *and the writing style of their first language. These writers demonstrate minimal control of common structures and vocabulary associated with the Advanced level. Their writing is understood by natives not accustomed to the writing of non-natives, although some additional effort may be required in the reading of the text. When attempting to perform functions at the Superior level, their writing will deteriorate significantly.*

***Writing » Intermediate***

*Writers at the Intermediate level are characterized by the ability to meet practical writing needs, such as simple messages and letters, requests for information, and notes. In addition, they can ask and respond to simple questions in writing. These writers can create with the language and communicate simple facts and ideas in a series of loosely* [*connected sentences*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#connectedsentences) *on topics of personal interest and social needs. They write primarily in present time. At this level, writers use basic vocabulary and structures to express meaning that is comprehensible to those accustomed to the writing of non-natives.*

***Intermediate High***

*Writers at the Intermediate High sublevel are able to meet all practical writing needs of the Intermediate level. Additionally, they can write compositions and simple summaries related to work and/or school experiences. They can narrate and describe in different* [*time frames*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#timeframes) *when writing about everyday events and situations. These narrations and descriptions are often, but not always, of* [*paragraph*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#paragraph) *length, and they typically contain some evidence of* [*breakdown*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#breakdown) *in one or more features of the Advanced level. For example, these writers may be inconsistent in the use of appropriate major* [*time markers*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#timemarkers)*, resulting in a loss of clarity. The vocabulary, grammar and style of Intermediate High writers essentially correspond to those of the spoken language. Intermediate High writing, even with numerous and perhaps significant errors, is generally comprehensible to natives not used to the writing of non-natives, but there are likely to be gaps in comprehension.*

***Intermediate Mid***

*Writers at the Intermediate Mid sublevel are able to meet a number of practical writing needs. They can write short, simple communications, compositions, and requests for information in loosely connected texts about personal preferences, daily routines, common events, and other personal topics. Their writing is framed in present time but may contain references to other* [*time frames*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#timeframes)*. The writing style closely resembles oral* [*discourse*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discourse)*. Writers at the Intermediate Mid sublevel show evidence of control of basic sentence structure and verb forms. This writing is best defined as a collection of* [*discrete sentences*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#discretesentences) *and/or questions loosely strung together. There is little evidence of deliberate organization. Intermediate Mid writers can be understood readily by natives used to the writing of non-natives. When Intermediate Mid writers attempt Advanced-level writing tasks, the quality and/or quantity of their writing declines and the message may be unclear.*

***Intermediate Low***

*Writers at the Intermediate Low sublevel are able to meet some limited practical writing needs. They can create statements and formulate questions based on familiar material. Most sentences are* [*recombinations*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#recombinations) *of learned vocabulary and structures. These are short and simple conversational-style sentences with basic word order. They are written almost exclusively in present time. Writing tends to consist of a few simple sentences, often with repetitive structure. Topics are tied to highly predictable content areas and personal information. Vocabulary is adequate to express elementary needs. There may be basic errors in grammar, word choice, punctuation, spelling, and in the formation and use of* [*non-alphabetic symbols*](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/glossary#non-alphabeticsymbols)*. Their writing is understood by natives used to the writing of non-natives, although additional effort may be required. When Intermediate Low writers attempt to perform writing tasks at the Advanced level, their writing will deteriorate significantly and their message may be left incomplete.*

**RUBRIC**

| UAA, Department of Languages  I. Scale for Written Linguistic Proficiency |
| --- |
| *Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Language:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *Date :* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **🢧Overall content (15%)**  Information conveyed was not appropriate for topic **10 11**  Some information was appropriate for topic **12 13**  Appropriate information conveyed  **14 15**  **🢧Communication (15%)**  Responses were not logical; overall incoherent **10 11**  Partially illogical and incoherent responses **12 13**  Logical and coherent responses; writer displays linguistic control  and confidence **14 15**  **🢧Vocabulary (20%)**  Inadequate for situation; use of English or literal translations **13 14**  and invented words; problematic for sympathetic native speaker  Barely adequate for situation; some literal translation, use of English **16 17**  and invented words; native speaker would have to interpret  to understand  Adequate for situation, a few erroneous words, but sympathetic native  speaker can understand **19 20**  **🢧Grammar (20%)**  Interferes with comprehension **14 15**  Frequent errors interfere partially with comprehension, native  speaker needs to interpret meaning **17 18**  Errors do not interfere with comprehension **19 20**  **🢧Syntax (15%)**  Is frequently unintelligible **10 11**  Heavy influence of native language requires concentrated reading **12 13**  Sentence structure does not interfere with comprehension **14 15**  **🢧Fluency/Stylistics (15%)**  Fragmented, unnatural, choppy patterns disturb communication **10 11**  Some unnatural patterns, but thoughts fairly organized **12 13**  Relatively natural flow **14 15**  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Total (100%):** |

Factors that affect the collected data:

Previous academic experience of students as well as testing anxiety will be factors likely to affect the data. The ACTFL Proficiency guidelines are an internationally recognized assessment tool. Their use will minimize the margin of subjective influences affecting the oral and written proficiency evaluation of students. Assessors will be knowledgeable in applying ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.

How to interpret the data:

Comparison with ACTFL standards will help determine the level of oral and written proficiency of the students in the program, thus enabling the Department of Languages to make appropriate adjustments to the academic content of its courses, the delivery of its courses, and the appropriate corresponding advising of students needed.

Appendix B: Student Artifact

Measure Description:

**Course Exam, Course Paper, *or* Audio-Visual Recording (realized in the target language):**

(Weighted 50/100%)

A written or audio-visual critical analysis of an authentic text articulating knowledge of cross-cultural similarities and differences (which is realized in the emphasis language) from a respective upper-division language course taken during the penultimate or ultimate semester in fulfillment of the major.

Student Artifacts will be evaluated according to three ACTFL Guidelines—the “Cs of Foreign Language Education”—inherent to the vision and goals of the Bachelor of Arts in Languages.

**3 Cs of Foreign Language Education inherent to the Vision and Goals of the BA in Languages:**

**Cultures, Connections, and Comparisons**

<http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/public/StandardsforFLLexecsumm_rev.pdf>

***CULTURES***

***Students demonstrate an understanding of the******relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.***

*This standard focuses on the* ***products*** *of the culture studied and on how they reflect the perspectives of the culture. Products may be tangible (e.g., a painting, a piece of literature, a pair of chopsticks) or intangible (e.g., an oral tale, a dance, a sacred ritual, a system of education). Whatever the form of the product, its presence within the culture is required or justified by the underlying beliefs and values (perspectives) of that culture, and the cultural practices involve the use of that product.*

***CONNECTIONS***

***Students acquire information and recognize the******distinctive viewpoints that are only available******through the foreign language and its cultures.***

*As a consequence of learning another language and gaining access to its unique means of communication, students are able to broaden the sources of information available to them. They have a “new window on the world.” At the early levels of language learning, students can begin to examine a variety of sources intended for native speakers, and extract specific information. As they become more proficient users of the foreign language, they can seek out materials of interest to them, analyze the content, compare it to information available in their own language, and assess the linguistic and cultural differences.*

***COMPARISONS***

***Students demonstrate understanding******of the concept of culture through comparisons******of the cultures studied and their own.***

*As students expand their knowledge of cultures through language learning, they continually discover perspectives, practices, and products that are similar and different from their own culture, and they develop the ability to hypothesize about cultural systems in general. Some students may make these comparisons naturally, others may not. This standard helps focus this reflective process for all students by encouraging integration of this process into instruction from the earliest levels of learning.*

**RUBRIC**

| II. Scale for Cultural Proficiency Speaker/Writer is able to provide a substantial account of information;  demonstrates accurate knowledge of material; is also able to supply examples  and detailed explanations to substantiate thesis in analysis. **10 9**  Speaker/Writer displays for the most part a general knowledge of material  but lacks accuracy and control of topic at times. **8 7**  Though the analysis is inaccurate for the most part,  speaker/writer displays some knowledge of material and is able to partly provide  information on topic. **6**  Speaker/Writer does not know material; the cultural references  are inaccurate at all times.  **5**  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Total (100%):** |
| --- |

Factors that affect the collected data:

Previous academic experience of students as well as testing anxiety will be factors likely to affect the data. The ACTFL Proficiency guidelines are an internationally recognized assessment tool. Their use will minimize the margin of subjective influences affecting the oral and written proficiency evaluation of students. Assessors will be knowledgeable in applying ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.

How to interpret the data:

Comparison with ACTFL standards will help determine the level of oral and written proficiency of the students in the program, thus enabling the Department of Languages to make appropriate adjustments to the academic content of its courses, the delivery of its courses, and the appropriate corresponding advising of students needed.