

Guidelines for the International Languages & Cultures Portfolio and Overview

The International Languages & Cultures Overview takes place before the candidate's graduation. The candidate and his/her advisor should agree on a mutually convenient date for the Overview, which should be communicated to the Department Chair. A summer session Overview (for July graduation) may be considered in special cases.

The Overview will consist of an hour-long oral examination. The candidate will present his/her selected topic in the target language (French, German, or Spanish) for 20 minutes. This will be followed by a question and answer period of forty minutes on the subject of the oral presentation and on a specific list of works previously submitted by the student and on the study abroad experience.

No later than two weeks before the scheduled Overview, the candidate will submit the following to the Department Chair in a "portfolio" format.

1) Samples (two or three per course) of his/her best-written work from upper-level (3000-level or above) courses taken in the language of emphasis. These could include written examinations, compositions, papers, book reviews, creative work, etc. This material should be organized in a 'portfolio.' The candidate is urged to consult with his/her advisor every semester as to which items might be most appropriate to include. Members of the Overview committee are interested in seeing improvement/progression in language skills and expect to see corrected work as well as the work as originally submitted for a grade.

2) A list of works -- "reading list" -- read in classes in the language of the emphasis, which should include at least 5 texts selected by the student with the help of the advisor. The student is expected to review these 5 specific texts in sufficient detail to be able to answer general questions about content, historical context and significance.

3) The sample documentation from each course included in the 'portfolio' should be preceded by a personal evaluation and a summary of content of course (in the target language and in English).

4) A 2-3-page essay (both in target language and English) on the Study Abroad Experience – its impact on the candidate's target language improvement and appreciation/understanding of the target culture.

5) A topic for the oral presentation, described in both English and the target language, and a list of sources consulted. The advisor must previously approve this topic. The sources for the oral presentation can overlap with some or all of the texts selected by the student from the "reading list". At least half of the sources must be read (and originally written) in the target language. At least one source must be a book (the remaining sources can include films, articles and scholarly internet sites).

Prior to submitting the above materials to the Department Chair, the candidate will have them approved by his/her advisor. All of this information will be distributed to the members of the overview committee.

Each candidate will be evaluated on his/her communication skills as well as on his/her cultural knowledge of the French, German, or Spanish-speaking worlds. In order to pass the overview s/he needs:

- 1) To attain a minimum of "Advanced Low" in speaking in the language of his/her major, according to the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Guidelines.
- 2) To demonstrate familiarity with and understanding of literary, historical or sociological aspects of the target culture (the student's reading list can be concentrated in one of these areas or can touch upon all three). This will be determined by the ability to answer factual questions accurately and to provide reasonable arguments and relevant examples for subjective statements.
- 3) To analyze the Study Abroad Experience by making cross-cultural comparisons that demonstrate understanding of perspectives from both the target country and the US.

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