

Washington State University

Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures
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Fulfillment of the Foreign Languages Translation Requirement

for Graduate Students
in
Other Departments

*The translation requirement may be satisfied by **either***

- a) Passing a language course numbered 306 or higher with a B or better;
- or***
- b) Passing the translation exam described in this document.
- c) Passing Span 600 if approved by the student's department

Directives to Prospective Students Taking the Translation Exam

- 1) The Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures offers graduate translation exams in the following languages: Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish.
- 2) After consulting with your advisor, please contact the main office of the Department of Foreign Languages and request the names of the professors who are qualified to administer the Graduate Foreign Language Translation Exam in the language of your choice.
- 3) Make initial arrangements with one of these professors to administer the exam. Agree on a time and a location for the exam. Although exceptions may be made, the DFLLC strongly urges students to take their translation exam *before* their final semester of studies.

- 4) When time and other circumstances permit, a “dry run” practice session under conditions similar to those of the official exam may be useful. You must inquire if the examiner in charge of your translation exam is willing and able to offer such a practice session.
- 5) The selection of materials for the exam presents an option. 1. The examiner, after reaching an agreement with the student, and upon previous consultation with the student’s advisor, selects the texts to be used for the exam. 2. If the examiner and the student agree that, upon consultation with his/her advisor, the student should select the materials for the exam, the student will provide at least 250 pp. of materials to the examiner. These materials may be passages from significant scholarly texts in the student’s general field of study, from research articles, or, possibly, from works of literature. The examiner proceeds to select portions of these materials for the exam. There must be at least two excerpts from two different sources. The total number of words in the excerpts to be translated will not exceed 500. In the case of Chinese and Japanese, it will not exceed 500 characters.
- 6) Before the day of the exam, fill out the Graduate Translation Form and pick up a Cash Deposit Report, both at the main office of the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures. The fee is \$90.00, to be paid at the Cashier’s window in the French Administration Building.
- 7) Immediately before the scheduled time of the exam, report to the main office of the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures, and show the Cashier’s receipt for the \$90.00 fee. A staff member will take you to the exam room and provide you with the text to be translated.
- 8) The exam lasts two hours. You are able to use a dictionary and/or appropriate vocabulary lists that were previously vetted and approved by the examiner. These lists should contain common foreign language words that you anticipate needing to complete your translation, and should function as an additional dictionary resource during the exam. Other translation aids such as “500 Spanish Verbs” or “Verb Wheels” may also be approved by the examiner. The student should remember that exam time is limited to 2 hours, and the utilization of these instruments can be time-consuming.
- 9) Graduate translation exams receive a grade of Pass or Fail, where “Pass” signifies a grade of B or better. While it is not important to translate every single word, the substance and major points of the foreign-language text must be clearly understood. In other words, the level of translation accuracy should be approximately 85% or higher.
- 10) The professor in charge of your exam grades the translation, and you will receive an official letter with the result. One copy is also sent to your advisor, and another is kept in the files of the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures.