

What do universities look for in Foreign Language Competency?

You may already know how much foreign language proficiency your prospective colleges require for admission.

But do you know what they require for graduation from college? Read on...

Samples of Foreign Language Graduation Requirements in Undergraduate Programs (with excerpts from colleges' websites):

University of Virginia

http://artsandsciences.virginia.edu/college/requirements/language_placement_index.html

Depending on their language placement examination scores, students must earn anywhere from zero to 14 credits or take the equivalent of four semesters of a foreign language to fulfill the requirement. The types of examinations for foreign language placement and requirement exemption include: SAT II Subject Test; Advanced Placement (AP) Exam; Higher-level International Baccalaureate Exam; College Summer Orientation Foreign Language Placement Test.

William & Mary

<http://www.wm.edu/admission/undergraduateadmission/faqs/academics/index.php#3>

Is foreign language required?

There is no foreign language requirement for applicants. However, W&M requires its graduates to be proficient through four semesters of a foreign language. If a prospective student has taken four years of a single foreign language, he/she is automatically exempt from the foreign language requirement at W&M. Therefore, we recommend four years of a foreign language, but it is not required.

Duke

<http://t-regs.trinity.duke.edu/curriculum/faqmodes.html#whyfor>

To fulfill the FL requirement, you must demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language at the intermediate or advanced level. Specifically, you must complete one of the following, depending on your level of proficiency in the language you choose to study at Duke:

- *If you enter language study at Duke at the intermediate level or above:*
successful completion of a 100-level course that carries the FL designation.
Accordingly, if you place into the first semester of the intermediate level, you will need to take at least three full courses in the same language. If you place into the second semester of the intermediate level, you will need to take at least two full courses in the same language. And if you place into the 100-level, you will need to take at least one full course.

University of North Carolina

http://www.unc.edu/depts/uc/ccurric_desc.html

The study of a foreign language enables students to see more clearly the nature and structure of their own language while gaining an understanding of a foreign culture.

Students should improve their language preparation by continuing their foreign language study through the senior year of high school.

Princeton

http://www.princeton.edu/odoc/academics/degree_requirements/language_proficiency/

Foreign language competence is usually necessary for any student who proposes to earn graduate degrees in arts and sciences. Certain professional schools also expect applicants to have ability in one or more foreign languages. There are also increasing opportunities to study a language in a country in which it is spoken through term-time and summer study abroad programs. For these reasons each student should anticipate language needs and plan a program of study accordingly. Many descriptions of departmental programs of study make reference to the languages appropriate for graduate study in that field.

Harvard

http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~rll/undergraduate/language_requirement.html

Degree candidates must meet a foreign language requirement in a language with a written component that is taught at Harvard or for which an appropriate examination with a written component can be given. The requirement can be satisfied in one of the following ways:

- * Earning a minimum score of 600 on a College Entrance Examination Board SAT II Test that includes a reading component, or
- * Earning a passing score as determined by the department on a placement examination administered by certain language departments, or
- * Passing with a letter grade one appropriate full course or two half-courses in one language at Harvard.

In addition, students who have... a minimum score of 5 on a College Board Advanced Placement Examination will be deemed to have satisfied the language requirement...

Yale

<http://www.cls.yale.edu/page.asp?file=2/flr>

To ensure that undergraduate students are exposed to a range of ideas and disciplines during their time at Yale, Yale College requires them to fulfill a variety of distributional requirements, which must be met by certain milestone points. As knowledge of more than one language and familiarity with more than one culture will become increasingly important in the world of the twenty-first century for professionals in every field, the distributional requirements include foreign language study.

Yale College has created a requirement designed to ensure that all students improve their proficiency in at least one foreign language. Exactly how many courses you have to take to fulfill the requirement will depend on your language experience prior to entering Yale, but for every student, some language study is necessary. If you received a 4 or 5 on an AP test in your language, proceed as though you have placed into L5 (last required level). You do not need to take a placement test.

Cornell

<http://www.arts.cornell.edu/preorientation/page5.php>

You can complete the Arts & Science language requirement in either of two ways. One is by passing one course at the intermediate level (usually at the 2000-level -- the appropriate level after 4 or more years of high school study) taught here in a language you have already studied. The second way is by passing 11 or 12 credits of study (usually 3 semesters) in a single foreign language.

If you plan to continue a previously-studied language, it is especially helpful to resume instruction as soon as possible so that you do not forget what you learned.

University of Pennsylvania

<http://www.college.upenn.edu/curriculum/policies/language.php>

The Foreign Language Requirement may be satisfied in a variety of ways at the discretion of the language department or group concerned:

- By passing an examination administered by the language group. In some instances, students will take the examination after completing 4 credits of study.
- By obtaining a minimum grade of C-, after 4 credits of study (or the equivalent) in those languages where satisfaction of the Language Requirement is not based on an examination.
- As a result of achieving the required score on:
 - An Advanced Placement test administered in a foreign
 - An **SAT II foreign language test** administered by the ETS.
 - A departmental placement test.

It is highly recommended that students take steps to satisfy the language requirement as early as possible in their academic careers.

Georgetown University

<http://bulletin.georgetown.edu/collegegen.html>

All students in the College must achieve proficiency in a language (ancient or modern) through the intermediate level. Students are strongly urged to complete the language requirement no later than the end of their sophomore year.