

University of South Alabama
English Department / M.A. Program

Foreign Language Proficiency Requirement

Prior to registering for the department's comprehensive exam option (for the Literature Concentration, a Thesis or Written Comprehensive; for the Creative Writing Concentration, a Thesis), all M.A. students must demonstrate reading proficiency in French, Spanish, German, or Latin. International students for whom English is not native may offer their native language. Two methods are available for satisfying this requirement: undergraduate coursework taken within five years of completing the M.A. degree and a locally administered translation test (in French, German, Latin, or Spanish).

Coursework

The first method requires the student to provide evidence of undergraduate coursework in an acceptable foreign language, showing completion of the second-year (intermediate) level with a minimum grade-point average of 2.5 in all work attempted in the language. The coursework must have been completed not earlier than five years before the date of graduation from the Master's Program. Transcripts already on file in the English Department may be used to substantiate the coursework, but the student must request, in writing, that the coursework be accepted for this purpose. Students who enter the program with sufficient undergraduate coursework, but who may not complete the degree within five years of the undergraduate coursework, are encouraged to avail themselves of the written translation options while their experience is still fresh. Graduate students may take undergraduate courses to satisfy the language requirement, but, of course, they will not carry graduate credit nor be included in the thirty-six semester hours of the program.

Exam

The second option requires the student to pass an examination administered by the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literature. This exam asks the student to translate a two-to-three-page passage from the selected language into English in two hours, using a dual-language dictionary for assistance. The material, according to the Graduate School, should be from the student's subject area, which, in the case of students in the English program, usually means something of a general critical nature. Students will not be asked to translate poetry or other imaginative literature. The test will be limited to reading ability and will not ask the student to answer grammatical questions, supply conjugations, or otherwise address the details of the language being translated. This exam must not pre-date graduation by more than five years. **Foreign Language Proficiency exams must be scheduled at the beginning of the semester with the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literature in HUMB 322.**