Foreign Languages at Elon: A Handbook for Advisors
(All the questions you have heard -- or had yourself -- but were afraid to ask!)
Fall 2007

Introduction:
I have prepared this handbook to assist advisors in responding to student questions about the Foreign Language Proficiency Requirement (FLPR) and other foreign language issues. As chair of the Department of Foreign Languages (DFL) from 2000 until 2008, I have answered many questions about foreign languages at Elon, foreign language teaching, the FLPR and other issues. Our Program Assistant, Linda Martindale, has also dealt with many student questions. I have written this document to provide the answers to those frequently-asked questions in one place, but future DFL department chairs will surely edit and add to this as they deal with additional unique situations and unusual questions. This handbook will be posted on the Advising Center website and on the DFL website. IF you want a printable copy, please contact the department’s program assistant, Linda Martindale (ext. 5620 or martinda@elon.edu). You can always ask the current department chair if you need additional clarification. Happy reading and happy advising!

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What is the Foreign Language Proficiency Requirement (FLPR)?
Following several years of discussion and reflection, and as a logical component of Elon’s international focus, Elon added the Foreign Language Proficiency Requirement (FLPR) as a graduation requirement for Elon beginning with new freshmen entering Elon in the fall of 2005.

The Elon University catalog states the FLPR as follows:

“Foreign Language Requirement
Students must meet a graduation requirement defined by one of the following: scoring 4 or 5 on a language Advanced Placement test, or scoring similarly on the IB Higher Level exam or CLEP exams; placing beyond FL 122 on the CAPE placement test or suitable alternative placement instrument; completing a 122-level language course; or completing a semester or summer in a university approved program in a non-English speaking country that includes a course in language instruction at the 122 level or above. Students may count only 4 s.h. of language study utilized to meet the graduation requirement in the Civilization category.”

(from page 36 of the 2007-2008 catalog)

Who must fulfill the FLPR?
Virtually all students who will graduate from Elon must demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language. By fall 2008, all students on campus will be required to fulfill the FLPR or demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English. Exceptions: students who started at Elon before fall 2005, transfers who entered Elon during the 2005-2006 academic year with at least 18 hours from another institution, students who receive a 4 or 5 on the advanced placement exam, and students who transfer in FOR 122 or higher. Transfer students who arrived at Elon beginning in fall 2006 are NOT exempt.

Are there any exemptions?
International students who speak a language other than English natively are exempt. Until this year, those students had to request the exemption by completing a petition to the chair of the DFL. Beginning next year, we will enter a code into Datatel for certain international students. Other international students may petition the chair of the DFL if the code does not appear. Rationale for an exemption for these international students: They have already proven proficiency in at least two languages – their native language and English.

Students with certain learning disabilities MAY be exempt, but they must present appropriate documentation to Coordinator of Disabilities Services located in the Advising Center. A committee of qualified experts reviews the students’ documentation and petition and may recommend that such students begin their foreign language study at a lower level than their placement or may recommend alternate course work. This latter exemption is rare.

What kind of placement exam do students take?
Students who studied French, German or Spanish in high school take the Computer-Adaptive Placement Exam (CAPE) in their language. This exam was developed by Brigham Young

1 Eighteen hours, as per Nancy Midgette 10/4/07.
University, it is used in many universities for placement purposes, and it is administered and graded via computer. We have also developed a placement exam in Italian and Latin, which is administered via a password-protected Blackboard website. For Arabic, Chinese and Japanese, we use a paper-and-pencil exam. The placement ranges are based on the performance of Elon students on the same instruments. For example, the placement range for FRE 221 is based on the performance on the French CAPE of our own students who finished FRE 122 in our own program. The placement ranges are reviewed and adjusted periodically in response to changes in our student body.

While the computer-based exams provide good data quickly, they only measure reading and grammar skills. They do not measure a student’s ability to write, speak or comprehend the language. Given that we often have to test 500 students in a short period of time, there is no practical means of assessing those skills yet. However, we do consider the limitations of the exam when a student appeals their placement level.

For languages for which we don’t have a placement exam, we must locate an appropriate instrument from another university.

When should new students take the placement exam?
Incoming new students take the placement exam during spring visitations. We also provide web access to the exam (password protected) during the summer for the students who were unable to visit campus. Finally, during schedule adjustment day in August, students can drop in to the Language Media Center to take the exam. Unfortunately, many students wait until this last testing period to take the placement exam. It is vitally important that students take the placement exam early so that the Advising Center can place students properly for the fall. IF YOU CONDUCT ONE OF THE SPRING ORIENTATION ADVISING SESSIONS, PLEASE URGE YOUR STUDENTS TO TAKE THE PLACEMENT EXAM EARLY. Language classes fill rapidly, and the longer a student waits to start the FLPR, the more difficult it will be to complete the requirement successfully.

Do all new students have to take the placement exam?
If the student studied a foreign language in high school, then YES, YES, YES!!! Even if students plan to start a new language, we want the data on their high school language for research purposes. Also, who knows? A student may be surprised and place into FL 221 and be exempt!

How do I read the degree audit for my advisee to determine his/her placement?

IF YOU READ NOTHING ELSE IN THIS HANDBOOK, READ THIS SECTION, PLEASE!!!

Look under “Foreign Language Proficiency” on the degree audit (Item #3). You will see the following statement:

C) 3: Foreign Language Proficiency
> One of the following must be met:
> 1. Score at the appropriate level on AP, IB, or CLEP exam.
> 2. Place beyond the 122 level on the CAPE placement test;
> 3. Complete the 122-level in a foreign language course;
> 4. Complete an approved semester or summer program in a
>    non-English speaking country; including 122-level course.

Immediately below the 4 options appears this notation:

```
SPN 221 Placement............. 04/22/05 --- 0 *NE
```

This means that this particular student placed INTO SPN 221 when she took the exam on April 22, 2005. As per #2, she has fulfilled the Foreign Language Proficiency Requirement by virtue of her placement. The “C” before the #3 means “Completed”.

Let’s look at another student’s degree audit: It shows that the FLPR is not completed as follows (N = not completed):

“N) 3: Foreign Language Proficiency”

It then lists the same four options above. Below the four options, it says:

“_______________________________ 1 course needed”

**IMPORTANT: THIS “1 course needed” IS MISLEADING, BUT DUE TO THE LIMITATIONS OF DATATEL, THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO EXPRESS THE VARIOUS MEANS THE STUDENT CAN USE TO FULFILL THE FLPR. IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THE FLPR, THE STUDENT MUST CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOUR OPTIONS. TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHERE THE STUDENT PLACED AND EXACTLY HOW MANY COURSES HE/SHE NEEDS TO TAKE, LOOK UNDER “OTHER COURSES” AT THE END OF THE DEGREE AUDIT.** In this case, the following notation appears:

```
OTHER COURSES: Registered Earned
Credits Credits
SPN 120 Placement......... 05/01/06 0.00 0.00 *NE
```

This means that the student placed INTO SPN 120 when she took the exam on May 1, 2006. She must take both SPN 120 AND SPN 122 to complete the FLPR, meaning that she needs TWO courses NOT JUST ONE course.

A student who has not fulfilled the FLPR yet may need to take two courses (FOR 121 and 122, or SPN 120 and 122) or just one course (FOR 122) depending on the placement. **Remember: Look for OTHER COURSES to find out into which course the student placed. The “1 course needed” statement can be misleading. The degree audit looks for one specific course (FOR 122) or a specific placement level (221 or higher) before it changes the “N” to a “C”**.

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**How can students fulfill the FLPR?**

Prior to starting classes at Elon:

- By scoring a 4 or 5 in the AP exam in the language.
- By scoring similarly on the IB exam.
• By placing into FOR 221 (Intermediate 1). This means that they possess the proficiency equivalent to completion of the elementary level (e.g. FOR 121 AND 122).
• Transfer students may bring in a foreign language course equivalent to 122 or higher

**While a student at Elon:**
• By placing into FOR 122 AND completing that course successfully.
• By placing into FOR 121 or SPN 120 AND completing both that course and 122 successfully.
• By taking the placement exam at the end of any course of study in a foreign language and placing into FOR 221. For example, a student who spends the semester in Costa Rica and takes Level 1 Spanish there may take the placement exam at the end of the semester. If the student scores into SPN 221, he/she has fulfilled the requirement.

**What languages are taught at Elon?**
For many years, we have taught Chinese, French, German, Japanese and Spanish at Elon. Since 2000, we have added Arabic, Italian and Latin. Students can fulfill their language requirement in any one of those 8 languages. Biblical Greek and Biblical Hebrew are occasionally taught through the Religious Studies department, but those languages have not been offered for some time.

**Which courses fulfill the FLPR?**
If students do not place into FOR 221, they must complete through the 122 level (Elementary FL 2). Some students place into FOR 122, and therefore fulfill the requirement when they successfully complete FOR 122 (4 s.h.). Others must take both FOR 121 and 122 for 8 s.h. Some Spanish students place into the SPN 120 review course. Those students can finish the requirement with 6 s.h.

Students can also fulfill the requirement by taking language courses abroad as long as the course is approximately equivalent to the end of the second semester of elementary language. A little shameless self-promotion here: An example is SPN 176 IS Intensive Language and Culture in Yucatán, which I will offer in Summer Session I (2008).

**My advisee placed into a class at a particular level but all the sections are full. She really wants to take language classes this year. Will the chair let her into a full class?**
The answer to that question is: “Maybe.” It depends on how full or overfull the class is, how much movement from that level we have historically experienced, what language it is, what permission the professor has given to overload the class, etc. Please send your advisee to the chair to discuss her options.

**NOTE:** If the student just wants to complete the FLPR and is not interested in further study in a particular language, she might want to consider studying a new language where there are openings. This is an attractive option if the student would have to take two semesters of the language studied in high school anyway in order to complete the requirement. Arabic, Chinese, German, Japanese and Latin frequently have openings in their 121 classes.
My advisee placed into SPN 120 Elementary Spanish Review? What does he have to take to complete the requirement?

Scenario 1: Your student takes SPN 120, a 2 s.h. course offered during the first half of the semester. Then, he takes the placement exam when the class finishes. If he places into SPN 221, he has completed the language requirement. Otherwise, he should take SPN 122 in the following semester to complete the requirement. NOTE: If he wants his score recorded in Datatel and his graduation audit updated he must provide a printed copy of the results to Linda Martindale (Carlton 324).

Scenario 2: The student takes SPN 120 during the first half of the semester and SPN 119 Elementary Spanish Conversation during the second half of the semester. SPN 119 is optional. He can re-take the placement exam at the end of SPN 119. Again, if he places into SPN 221, he has completed the FLPR. Otherwise, he should take SPN 122 in the following semester to complete the requirement.

Shameless self-promotion #2: Another option is to take SPN 176 IS Intensive Language and Culture in the Yucatán during the summer. This 8 s.h. course allows students to complete the FLPR in one summer session. However, students must have some background in Spanish to be admitted to this course. Students with 2-3 years of high school Spanish are good candidates for this course as well.

My advisee is a junior this year. She took several years of Spanish in high school but did not place out of the requirement. She has not taken a class at Elon yet. Can she start over at SPN 121?

She should start at SPN 120 Elementary Spanish Review. SPN 121 is reserved for true beginners – students who have never studied Spanish before.

My advisee tried to register via OnTrack for SPN 121 but was unable to do so. The class is not full. What's going on?

To prevent overqualified students from entering that class instead of SPN 120, ALL students seeking admission to SPN 121, even the true beginners, must have the department chair’s signature to enter the class.

My advisee had some Spanish in high school but the DFL chair allowed him into SPN 121 during winter term. I thought SPN 121 was reserved for true beginners.

Because of the rapid pace of SPN 121 in the winter term, the chair will use discretion in allowing some students into the class who may have studied only two years or less of Spanish in high school and who studied it in their freshman and sophomore years. If the student is now an Elon junior, sufficient time has passed and the student will not have a major advantage over true beginners in a class that moves so quickly.

Do the language courses count for any Liberal Studies requirements?

As stated in the catalog “Students may count only 4 s.h. of language study utilized to meet the graduation requirement in the Civilization category.” (underscore mine)
Students who take a LITERATURE class in a foreign language may count that class in the Expression category for Literature. Literature classes are 300-level courses and are taught in the target language. This option is only open for very qualified students or language majors or minors. A language class is not a literature class.

Upper level courses (e.g. FRE 322, GER 374, SPN 321) can count as an upper-level liberal studies course outside the major. Therefore, a student who places into FRE 122 and decides to minor in French can fulfill the requirements for the minor while also fulfilling the following general studies requirements:

FRE 122 Elementary French 2 4 s.h. in CIVILIZATION; completes FLPR
FRE 221 Intermediate French 1
FRE 222 Intermediate French 1
FRE 322 Advanced Oral and Written Expression 4 s.h. of 300-level outside major
FRE 332 Survey of Modern French Literature 4 s.h. in EXPRESSION – literature

If the student also studies abroad in Nice, France during the summer, he/she will fulfill the ELR.

Do winter and summer term courses count for language credit in the minor or major, or to fulfill the Foreign Language Proficiency Requirement?

It depends on the course. The department has approved the following courses for credit in its minors, majors or for the FLPR as indicated. Remember: All study abroad courses fulfill the ELR.

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<th>Course and Location</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Credit possible</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GST 252 IS</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>4 s.h. of 200-level Spanish credit for the minor only</td>
<td>Prerequisite: SPN 121 at Elon. Student must request the change in credit designation from the department chair.</td>
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<tr>
<td>COSTA RICA: Language, Culture and Ecotourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>GST 211 IS</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>2 s.h. in Spanish for the minor only. Level depends on placement.</td>
<td>No language prerequisite. SPN credit requires letter from department chair. Does NOT fulfill FLPR.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERU: The Living Heritage of the Andes: Language, Society and Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>GST 247 SPAIN: Lessons from the Past: Christianity, Islam and Judaism</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>2 s.h. in Spanish for the minor only. Level depends on placement.</td>
<td>No language prerequisite. SPN credit requires letter from department chair. Does NOT fulfill FLPR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPN 318 IS</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>4 s.h. of 300-level Spanish. Counts toward major or minor.</td>
<td>Prerequisite: SPN 222 or equivalent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEXICO: Advanced Spanish and the Maya Worlds</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRE TBA 170 IS + GST 280</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>4 s.h. in French. Level depends on placement. Credits for minor or major depending on placement.</td>
<td>Prerequisite: FRE 122 or equivalent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRANCE: Language and Culture – Summer Study in Nice</td>
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<tr>
<td>GER TBA IS</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Credits, courses and level</td>
<td>Prerequisite: GER 122 or equivalent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GERMANY: Summer</td>
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## Course and Location

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<tr>
<th>Course and Location</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Credit possible</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>study in Heidelberg</td>
<td>determined by placement</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITL TBA 170 IS + GST 214 Italy: Contemporary Italy – Language and Culture</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>4 s.h. in Italian. Level depends on placement. Credits apply to Italian Studies minor or FLPR.</td>
<td>No prerequisite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPN 176 IS Mexico: Intensive Spanish Language and Culture in Yucatan</td>
<td>Summer 2008 and alternate summers</td>
<td>8 s.h. in Spanish, fulfills FLPR</td>
<td>Prerequisite: at least two years of high school Spanish. May not have taken SPN 122 here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPN TBA 170 IS + GST 204 Spain: Language and Culture - Galicia: The Other Spain</td>
<td>Summer 2007 and alternate summers</td>
<td>4 s.h. in Spanish. Level depends on placement. Credits for minor or major depending on placement.</td>
<td>Prerequisite: SPN 122 or equivalent.</td>
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### How are languages taught at Elon?

Our mission statement says: “In support of Elon’s language proficiency requirement and the drive to internationalize the campus, our professors employ a communicative pedagogy that emphasizes the essential skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, critical thinking and cultural literacy. Foreign language classes at Elon are supported by the state-of-the-art Language Media Center, and department members are adept at using computer and multimedia technology in the classroom. Our courses foster originality of thought and encourage research in the target language. Foreign language students acquire substantive knowledge of other cultures with different values and priority systems; such knowledge leads them to become responsible global citizens. Majors and minors use skills they acquire in the classroom in practical situations involving service, research, and outreach, both at home and abroad. We help students find such opportunities, require study abroad of our majors and encourage it for all our students. Additionally, in conjunction with Elon’s Department of Education, we provide students with the opportunity to earn teaching licensure in French and Spanish.”

**ALL OF OUR CLASSES, EVEN THOSE AT THE 121 LEVEL, ARE TAUGHT IN THE TARGET LANGUAGE** (i.e. the language that is being taught). According to documented research and professional experience, this is the appropriate methodology for enhancing language acquisition, and via this pedagogy, we create a mini-immersion experience for the length of each class period. Think of how a baby learns his own language. Many freshmen and transfers are shocked by the “no English” policy at first, but with a little encouragement and perseverance, and with support from YOU, their advisor, by the second week of class, they don’t even realize that no English is spoken in class.

The one exception to teaching in the target language occurs in Latin classes. A student who is afraid of speaking a foreign language can take Latin instead. Students in Latin class will learn a great deal about the ancient world and our cultural heritage, their critical thinking and analysis skills will be challenged, they will expand their vocabulary, and they can begin a Classical Studies minor.
My advisee placed out of the language requirement and wants to continue her language study but is afraid to start at the level in which she placed. Can she enroll in a lower level to start her foreign language studies here at Elon?

She should make an appointment with the chair of the department. Only the chair can authorize a student to move down (or up) a level from the placement. Generally, if the student has a good argument, she will be given permission to drop a level (a form is needed to document this permission). Generally, we only authorize dropping one level (e.g. from 222 to 221).

My advisee placed out of the language requirement, and he really loves languages. What academic options are available for a student who wants to continue his language study?

The department chair would welcome an opportunity to talk with him. Depending on the language that he studied in high school or at another college, he can major or minor in French or Spanish, or minor in Classical Studies, German Studies or Italian Studies. He might also be interested in an International Studies major, which requires significant foreign language study and a study abroad experience. Many students double major in a language and International Studies. He can apply to live in one of the language living-learning communities (French, German, Italian and Spanish). He can take non-credit Spanish conversation classes at El Centro de Español. He can participate in language clubs or other activities organized for language students. He can study abroad for a winter term, summer term or semester. He can apply to do an international internship or a local internship that requires language skills. He can volunteer through the Elon Volunteers! Los Amigos program and work with local Latino children. There are so many opportunities!

What is involved in minoring or majoring in French or Spanish, or minoring in Classical Studies, German Studies or Italian Studies?

Consult the current academic catalog. IMPORTANT: Courses taught in the target language abroad during winter or summer terms or during a semester MAY fulfill certain requirements in the minor or major. A student should check with the department chair or his/her designate for further information. Any student who plans to study abroad for a semester and use the classes taught abroad for a minor or major in our department should consult with the departmental representative about those plans.

I still have questions, or I have an advisee with an unusual situation. What shall I do?

Contact the current chair of the Department of Foreign Languages via telephone or email, or tell your advisee to make an appointment with him/her.

Concluding remarks

As our departmental mission states:

“The mission of the Elon University Department of Foreign Languages is to promote insight into foreign cultures and mastery of languages other than English. Language, literary and cultural studies are central to our program. We further equip students to discover the unique insights available only to those who study a foreign culture through its own linguistic code. As
our students become aware of language as a vehicle of culture, they learn to connect and interact with other cultures, locally and abroad.”

We in the Department of Foreign Languages proudly support the General Studies and Liberal Studies programs and Elon’s mission with our courses and co-curricular activities. We look forward to motivating and guiding your advisees in their exploration of other cultures through classes that are models of the engaged learning for which Elon is famous.