

A Guide to Language Exams

Musicology, UCLA

The Department of Musicology offers two kinds of language exams: in house, for students who wish to be examined in many of the standard languages [French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Latin]; for less commonly used languages, the department will help to arrange an outside examination. Despite some past variations, language exams have now been systematized such that they are sufficiently commensurate with the exams offered at comparable graduate programs in musicology. Students whose first language is not English may elect to have their native tongue count as one of their languages by arrangement with the department.

In- house exams

- These normally last 90 minutes, and include two excerpts: one passage of modern academic prose **OR** an older text of historical significance, and one sample of poetry (this includes opera, libretti, of course).
- The total word count of the exam normally runs between 500 – 700 words, of which the majority of each text must be translated. In each case, the exam referee will balance the amount of text with then number and gravity of mistakes to arrive at an exam mark.
- Dictionaries are customarily used, but grammars are not (excluding the notes at the back of many dictionaries).
- It is difficult to specify the nature of the translation any more precisely than to note that students should aim somewhere between paraphrase and word- for- word, with greater weight towards the latter.
- Language exams are graded *High Pass*, *Low Pass*, *Low Pass/Marginal*, and *Fail*. Students must consult with their referees for feedback regardless of the mark received; in some cases, mark of *Low Pass/Marginal* will require a re-take.
- Language exams will be given **ONLY** three times per year, normally on the Friday of Week 3 in Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters. There will be no exceptions for any reason. The department will arrange for the space in which exams will be administered, and proctor them as well.
- Any unusual requirements with respect to language exams must be negotiated in good time with the director of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair.

Outside Exams

- These will be arranged to match the in house exams as closely as possible.