

Process for UK approval:

Undergraduate Studies Committee → Admissions & Academic Standards Committee (Joe Sottile, chair)
→ Univ. Senate

The General Education Reform Steering Committee, in consideration of its Learning Outcome #4:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the complexities of citizenship and the process for making informed choices as engaged citizens in a diverse, multilingual world.

proposes a revision of the Foreign Language entrance requirement. The current Foreign Language entrance requirement is the following:

“meet Kentucky's pre-college curriculum requirement” (see <http://www.uky.edu/Admission/apply.htm>)

which means, according to the Kentucky Department of Education website:

“2 credits required or demonstrated competency” (see <http://education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/High+School/Additional+Information/The+PreCollege+Curriculum.htm>)

that is, 2 years of high school study, or the equivalent demonstrated competency. We propose that the University of Kentucky entrance requirement be changed from that “seat time” requirement to a competency-based requirement; that is, we propose that the entrance requirement be amended to read:

“competency equivalent of two years of high school foreign language.”

The rationale for this change is the following: In all other academic areas, students entering UK are required to demonstrate competencies, rather than completion of credit hours, as prerequisites for enrolling in university-level coursework. Studies have shown significant variation among Kentucky school districts, in terms of the efficacy of high school language instruction, and resulting student competencies. We propose that students be required to demonstrate competency, according to any of the methods listed below; and that if said competency is not demonstrated, then remediation should be implemented (a one-semester “high beginner” elementary language course at the University of Kentucky, or equivalent), as is currently the case for students with other entrance-requirement deficiencies.

Students may demonstrate competency in any of the following ways:¹

- STAMP test developed at the University of Oregon, currently implemented in 15 Kentucky public school districts;² score of “Novice Mid” or higher in the areas of Speaking, Reading, and Writing;³
- AP language or literature exam, score of 2 or higher
- acceptable SAT Subject Test scores in a second language;⁴
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score above UK minimum,⁵ if the TOEFL constitutes part of the student’s application requirements

Students who opt to enroll in the 101-102 sequence of any language at the University of Kentucky do not need to show test results. Heritage speakers would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, as they are now.

In order to allow for accurate calibration of Kentucky students’ foreign language ability from individual school districts and institutions, we propose the following: that the assessment measures be implemented in Fall 2010, along with the new General Education curriculum, and that the scores submitted by incoming students on the tests mentioned above be reported back to the corresponding school districts. The implementation of remediation (coursework) at UK would begin in Fall 2012, thus allowing individual districts and other concerned parties time to make necessary curricular and pedagogical adjustments, to help students achieve the required levels of foreign language proficiency.

¹ Heritage speakers would be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

² Students could present the score of the STAMP test administered during their high school course of study, if available; alternatively, they could take the test on campus during the summer preceding their first year of study at UK (during Advising weekends). The STAMP test could also be offered during the high school World Language Festival, held annually on the UK campus in May.

³ Expectations will remain linked to the Kentucky Department of Education and the CPE standards; we anticipate that the statewide standard will reach “Novice High” by 2016.

⁴ SAT Subject Test scoring varies by language; see

[HTTP://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/sat_subject_tests_lang_performance_years_study_2008.pdf](http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/sat_subject_tests_lang_performance_years_study_2008.pdf).

⁵ Current minimum TOEFL scores for admission to the University of Kentucky are 527 (paper-and-pen version), 197 (computer-based), or 71 (iBT).

Date: March 27, 2009

TO: David Randall, Senate Council

FROM: Jeannine Blackwell, Chair
Undergraduate Council

RE: Foreign Language Placement Policy

Undergraduate Council met on Tuesday March 25, 2009 to discuss the proposed change in Foreign Language Placement Policy. The Council voted unanimously to approve this policy, but with the stipulation that the date of full implementation of required remediation not be set at 2012, but rather left open until data has been assessed concerning remediation resources needed. This implementation would be an open date after fall 2011, depending on the outcome of the assessment of data.



Steven L. Beshear
Governor

Elaine Farris
Interim Commissioner of Education

**EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CABINET
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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March 4, 2009

Susan Carvalho
Assistant Provost for International Programs
Convener, General Education Reform Steering Committee
1125 Patterson Office Tower
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506

Dear Dr. Carvalho:

Please accept this letter from the Kentucky Department of Education in support of your committee's recommendation of a competency-based, minimal proficiency requirement as part of the University of Kentucky's general education admission requirements.

Eliminating the "seat time" entrance requirement follows the trend of the Council on Postsecondary Education's 2007's 13 KAR 2:20 Guidelines for admission to the state-supported postsecondary education institutions in Kentucky to move toward to a competency-based requirement. The current and proposed (2009) guidelines state that students must either have two units in the same foreign language or demonstrate the linguistic competence equivalent to two years of high school language.

Your proposal also reinforces the 2006 State Board of Education's recommendation to plan for a 2016 world language high school graduation requirement based on a minimum competency level of Basic User (Common European Framework of Reference) or novice-high (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines). Referencing both these criteria addresses the national call for international benchmarking of educational performance.

Other states (e.g., Michigan) and universities (e.g., University of Washington) are also moving toward the competency-based model. As the flagship institution in the commonwealth, the University of Kentucky will be providing leadership for other postsecondary institutions and secondary schools to help us better prepare our students with skills necessary to compete in the twenty-first century global economy.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacqueline Van Houten".

Jacqueline Van Houten
World Language & International Education Consultant





UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Dream • Challenge • Succeed

MODERN & CLASSICAL LANGUAGES, LITERATURES AND CULTURES

February 23, 2009

Dr. Susan Carvalho
Assistant Provost for International Affairs and
Convener, General Education Reform Steering Committee

Dear Susan,

I am writing on behalf of the faculty of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Cultures to express our strong and unqualified support for the proposal being put forward in conjunction with general education reform to change the University's Foreign Language entrance requirement from one of two years of high school "seat time" to a competency requirement based on national standards and measured by widely recognized assessment instruments. This proposal will align entrance requirements for Foreign Languages with those in place for other basic subject areas such as English and Math. It is also very much in keeping with one of the central aims of the University's general education reform. In an age of globalization when full competency in another language is becoming ever more important both in terms of the job market and as an aspect of global citizenship in an increasingly interdependent yet multilingual world, the proposed change will signal the University's seriousness in moving its undergraduate students toward this goal.

We are especially pleased to see that the proposed revision is linked to joint efforts undertaken by the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education to improve learning outcomes in the teaching of foreign languages in Kentucky's public high schools. We are aware that the Jefferson County School District has already adopted the competency level "Novice High" as its norm for learning outcomes after two years of foreign language instruction by 2010 but that KDE and the CPE have more realistically identified this as the level to be achieved statewide by 2016. It is important that Kentucky's flagship university be involved in gradually raising the bar for college-bound students, and we are more than willing to participate in the efforts needed to bring about the implementation of this goal.

Sincerely,

Theodore Fiedler
Professor of German and Chair



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March 5, 2009

Dr. Susan Carvalho
Professor, Department of Hispanic Studies
Convener, General Education Reform Steering Committee

Dear Dr. Carvalho:

The Department of Hispanic Studies met on February 25, 2009 to discuss the proposal that was submitted to us regarding the university's foreign language entrance requirement. I am attaching the proposal to this letter.

The faculty in Hispanic Studies finds the proposal and its rationale cogent from a pedagogical and curricular standpoint and is willing to have the conversations needed for implementation. We understand that this proposal, which is put forward in conjunction with the General Education reform, changes the two years of high school "seat time" to a competency requirement that is based on national standards and evaluated by recognized assessment instruments. We are indeed pleased to learn from your communication that the proposed revision has the support of the of the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. We look forward to the positive washback effect that this new requirement will surely have on foreign language education at our institution, other institutions of higher education, and, most important, secondary schools across the state of Kentucky. We find the strategy of gradual implementation and targeted remediation for deficient students sensible and effective. We look forward to further updates on the progress of the proposal.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ana Rueda
Professor of Spanish Literature and Chair