G. FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS

All students receiving degrees from The Fletcher School must possess the ability to speak a foreign (second) language sufficiently well to exchange ideas in conversation with a native speaker and the ability to read and restate into English primary materials on contemporary topics involving foreign affairs.

Foreign nationals whose native language is not English and who have received a substantial portion of their education in their native language may have English accepted as their second language. Generally, these students will have completed the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam.

For students whose native language is English, proficiency in a foreign language is demonstrated through reading comprehension and oral examinations. The Fletcher School routinely offers proficiency exams in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swahili and Urdu.

Subject to the approval of The Fletcher School’s Committee on Student Academic Programs, degree candidates may offer languages other than the ones listed above to fulfill the foreign language proficiency requirement. In those cases, it is the student’s responsibility to identify a qualified individual to serve as their examiner and to have that person approved by CSAP prior to the student’s final semester at Fletcher. The proposed examiner should have credentials as an instructor of the foreign language being offered. Students who wish to offer languages other than those given by Fletcher should speak with The Fletcher School’s Language Coordinator (currently Ann Marie Decembrele).

1. LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY

The level of language proficiency required for all Fletcher School degrees is the same: “Limited Working” proficiency on the oral exam and “General Professional” proficiency on the reading examination.

The only exception to the above is for students offering Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, or Korean where a score of “Limited Working” proficiency is considered a passing score on both the oral and the reading examination.

- Students who achieve the General Professional proficiency level or higher on the reading comprehension exam will have satisfied the reading comprehension portion of the requirement. (A score of Limited Working proficiency is not a passing score on the reading comprehension examination except for students offering Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, or Korean)

- Students who achieve the Limited Working proficiency level or higher on the oral exam will have satisfied the oral component of the foreign language requirement. (A score of Limited Working proficiency on the oral exam is a passing score for all languages.)

Students who do not meet the minimum level of proficiency required on their first attempt at either the reading or the oral exam will need to take that portion of the exam again. Reading comprehension exams are offered three times during each academic year (in September, February,
and March/April.) Oral exams may be re-scheduled by the student directly with one of the approved oral examiners at any time throughout the academic year.

For purposes of establishing consistent standards of language proficiency, The Fletcher School employs the definitions of reading and speaking proficiency employed by the “Interagency Language Roundtable” (ILR) of the U.S. government. The following levels of language proficiency are provided to place in context the requirements for the Fletcher degree. A more detailed description of these proficiency levels can be found on the web at: http://www.govtilr.org/

a. **Limited Working (ILR Level 2)**
   
   **SPEAKING:** Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can handle routine work-related interactions that are limited in scope.

   **READING:** Sufficient comprehension to read simple, authentic written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript on subjects within a familiar context. Limited Working proficiency on the reading comprehension exam is only an option for students offering Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, or Korean.

b. **General Professional (ILR Level 3)**

   **SPEAKING:** Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.

   **READING:** Able to read within a normal range of speed and with almost complete comprehension on a variety of authentic prose material on unfamiliar subjects.

c. **Advanced Professional (ILR Level 4)**

   **SPEAKING:** Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs.

   **READING:** Able to read fluently and accurately all styles and forms of the language pertinent to professional needs.

d. **Functionally Native (ILR Level 5)**

   **SPEAKING:** Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

   **READING:** Reading proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of the well-educated native reader.

2. **EXAMINATIONS**

   **Oral examinations** are offered regularly throughout the academic year by designated faculty members from the language departments at Tufts University and in a few cases, from faculty at other schools in the Boston area. The oral exam is a 20-30 minute conversation between the student and the examiner. The Fletcher Registrar’s Office maintains a list of approved oral examiners with their contact information. Students schedule appointments for their oral interview directly with one of the approved examiners on the list and are encouraged to do so as early as possible in their Fletcher careers.
**Reading Comprehension exams** are offered three times each year on specific dates in September/October, February, and March/April as listed on the Academic Calendar. Entering students are **strongly** encouraged to attempt the reading exam when they first arrive in September. Students entering in January are strongly encouraged to take the exam in February or April of their first term. May degree candidates are strongly encouraged to fulfill their language requirement by April 1st of their graduating term. Students offering non-routine languages must petition for approval prior to their final semester at Fletcher.

**Guidelines for the Reading Comprehension Exam**

The language exam guidelines reflect a consensus that the Fletcher foreign language reading exam should test students’ abilities to read, comprehend, and restate into English primary materials on contemporary topics involving foreign affairs rather than test students’ abilities to translate with precision foreign journals, newspapers, and scholarly works on international relations topics.

a. **Length of reading passage**
   Students receive a passage from a foreign journal, newspaper, or scholarly work on a current topic in international affairs. The passage will be approximately 300 words in length for students seeking “limited” or “general proficiency” and approximately 500 words in length for students seeking “advanced proficiency.” A single article, approximately 500 words in length, may be used for both proficiency levels. In this case, the 300-words mark will be clearly indicated on the text so that students opting for “limited” or “general proficiency” will understand the end point of their exam.

b. **Time limits**
   Students have one and a half hours (90 minutes) for exams in the Roman alphabet languages and two hours (120 minutes) for exams in the non-Roman alphabet languages except for exams in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean where three hours (180 minutes) is permitted.

c. **Dictionaries**
   Bi-lingual dictionaries (foreign language to English, e.g. Chinese to English), including electronic dictionaries, may be used for all language exams at the limited, general, and advanced proficiency levels. Dictionary usage is not permitted for exams targeting the functionally native proficiency level.

d. **English Rendering of Text**
   The student’s written rendering in English will be roughly equivalent in length (that is 300 words for “general and limited proficiency” and 500 words for “advanced proficiency”) to the primary material that is read. Students must restate (translate) the foreign text into English but their work will not be judged on the basis of exact translation, specialized vocabulary, or elegance of English expression. However, the meaning of the passage must be accurately and coherently conveyed.

e. **Functionally Native Proficiency**
   Functionally native proficiency will be based on a superior performance on a separate 500-600 word text selection offered during the April exam administration. Dictionary usage is not allowed during exams at this level and students may only attempt a functionally native exam after they have passed at the advanced proficiency level. Interested students should speak with the Fletcher Language Coordinator (presently Ann Marie Decembrele).

Students who are unable to pass the language proficiency exams cannot be allowed to graduate. However, continuing or reinstated students may continue to take the language proficiency exams after leaving Fletcher. If it is a hardship for the students to physically come to Boston, special
arrangements may be made for the Fletcher reading comprehension exam to be administered off-site by an approved proctor providing the following criteria are met:

a. Student made a reasonable attempt to pass the proficiency exam while in residence at Fletcher.

b. If feasible, the student returned to Fletcher at least one time for the exam.

c. Arrangements are made with an academic administrator at another university to serve as the exam administrator.

d. Exam administrator agrees to accept the Fletcher text selection; administer the exam in accordance with Fletcher’s approved guidelines; and return it to Fletcher for grading by our approved examiner.

3. LANGUAGE STUDIES

Students who have concerns about their required foreign language proficiency are urged to undertake language study in the summer prior to enrollment at The Fletcher School, since it is difficult to devote a lot of time to language study during the course of the academic year. For this purpose, students may enroll in the Tufts University Summer School language programs or may choose to enroll in equivalent programs at other institutions.

However, during the academic year, MALD, MIB, and external admit PhD students who wish to supplement their foreign language learning may enroll, at no extra charge, in language courses for credit at either Tufts University or Harvard through cross-registration. Credit for language study does require approval from the Committee on Student Academic Programs (CSAP) but when the language study is appropriate for the student’s academic program and/or professional goals, the Committee is generally amenable. Foreign language courses taken for credit will be included as one of the four course credits students are permitted to take per term.

In order to be eligible to receive credit for language study, the following criteria must be met:

a. Foreign language instruction should be appropriate for both the student’s Fletcher academic experience and his/her professional career objectives.

b. Foreign language credit will be given for a maximum of two course credits, regardless of the number of language studies the student completes.

c. Allowance of credit for foreign language study should encourage, where there is no conflict with professional demands, a multi-cultural approach to language learning.

Foreign language credit may not be offered for transfer credit and may not be applied to the one-year MA or LLM degree requirements. However, all students, regardless of their degree program, are eligible to audit one language course per term in addition to their normal load of four courses. Audited language courses do not appear on the student’s transcript.

Students may also choose to take a language course for credit as a 5th course during each of two semesters for MALD students or during a single semester for MA or LLM students. If the language course is taken as a 5th course, students are not required to petition for approval but are required to pay an additional course fee. Please refer to the “Fifth Course Enrollment Policy,” included in the Academic Policies and Procedures section of this Handbook, for complete details on registering for five courses in any term.