FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT 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 Second 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, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swahili.

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. That person 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 Language Coordinator (currently Ann Marie Decembrele) upon their arrival at Fletcher.

LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY
The level of language proficiency required for all three Fletcher School degrees (MA, MALD, and PhD) is the same: Limited Working proficiency on the oral exam and General Professional proficiency on the reading examination. Students offering Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, or Korean may meet the language requirement in reading with Limited Working proficiency.

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.dlielc.org/testing/round_table.pdf

1. 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.

2. **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.

3. **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.

4. **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.

**EXAMINATIONS**

**Oral examinations** are offered regularly throughout the academic year by designated faculty members from the language departments at Tufts University. The oral exam is a 20-30 minute conversational interchange between the student and the examiner. The Fletcher Registrar’s Office maintains a list of approved oral examiners with their contact information.

**Reading Comprehension exams** are offered three times each year on specific dates in September/October, February, and 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 semester.

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.
GUIDELINES FOR THE READING COMPREHENSION EXAM

The language exam guidelines (approved and implemented in April, 1990) reflect a consensus that the Fletcher foreign language reading exam should test students' abilities to read, comprehend and restate in written 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. **Students should restate the text into English but their work should not be judged on the basis of exact translation, specialized vocabulary, or elegance of English expression.** However, the meaning of the passage must be conveyed accurately and coherently in English. The ability to convey meaning accurately is more important than testing knowledge of specific vocabulary items.

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-word mark will be clearly indicated on the text so that students opting for "general proficiency" will understand the end point of their exam.

b. **Time limits**
   Students have one and 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) may be used for all language exams at the limited, general, and advanced proficiency levels. Dictionary usage is not allowed for exams targeting the functionally native proficiency level.

d. **English Rendering of Text**
   The student's written paragraph by paragraph English rendering of the foreign text should be roughly equivalent in length (that is 300 words for “limited or general” proficiency and 500 words for "advanced" proficiency) to the primary material which is read. Students must restate 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 conveyed accurately and coherently in English.

e. **Functionally Native Proficiency**
   Functionally native proficiency will be based on a superior performance on a separate text selection. 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).