

**Objectives for the Language Requirement at the
University of Missouri-St. Louis
For all students who begin first-semester language
study in Fall 2007**

French, German, Spanish

After 13 credit hours in French, German, and Spanish at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, students will:

- Achieve Intermediate-Low proficiency in speaking on the ACTFL scale
- Achieve Intermediate-Mid proficiency in writing on the ACTFL scale
- Achieve Intermediate-Low proficiency in listening on the ACTFL scale
- Achieve Intermediate-Mid proficiency in reading on the ACTFL scale
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied, as well as the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied (ACTFL Standards 2.1 and 2.2)

These objectives lay the foundation for further language study leading to a minor or major in foreign language. They also prepare students to participate in international internships, study abroad opportunities, and service learning experiences.

The following descriptions are taken directly from the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*, and the *Standards for Language Learning; Preparing for the 21st Century*, available in their complete forms at www.actfl.org.

SPEAKING: Intermediate Low

Speakers at the Intermediate-Low level are able to handle successfully a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by creating with the language in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture. These topics relate to basic personal information covering, for example, self and family, some daily activities and personal preferences, as well as to some immediate needs, such as ordering food and making simple purchases. At the Intermediate-Low level, speakers are primarily reactive and struggle to answer direct questions or requests for information, but they are also able to ask a few appropriate questions.

Intermediate-Low speakers express personal meaning by combining and recombining into short statements what they know and what they hear from their interlocutors. Their utterances are often filled with hesitancy and inaccuracies as they search for appropriate linguistic forms and vocabulary while attempting to give form to the message. Their speech is characterized by frequent pauses, ineffective reformulations and self-corrections. Their pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax are strongly influenced by their first language but, in spite of frequent misunderstandings that require repetition or rephrasing, Intermediate-Low speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors, particularly by those accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

WRITING: Intermediate Mid

Writers at the Intermediate-Mid level are able to meet a number of practical writing needs. They can write short, simple communications, compositions, descriptions, and requests for information in loosely connected texts that are based on personal preferences, daily routines, common events, and other topics related to personal experiences and immediate surroundings. Most writing is framed in present time, with inconsistent references to other time frames. The writing style closely resembles the grammar and lexicon of oral discourse. Writers at the Intermediate-Mid level show evidence of control of syntax in non-complex sentences and in basic verb forms and they may demonstrate some ability to use grammatical and stylistic cohesive elements. This writing is

best defined as a collection of discrete sentences and/or questions loosely strung together; there is little evidence of deliberate organization. Writers at the Intermediate-Mid level pay only sporadic attention to the reader of their texts; they focus their energies on the production of the writing rather than on the reception the text will receive. When Intermediate-Mid writers attempt Advanced-level writing tasks, the quality and/or quantity of their writing declines and the message may be unclear. Intermediate-Mid writers can be understood readily by natives used to the writing of non-natives.

LISTENING: Intermediate Low

Listeners at the Intermediate-Low level are able to understand sentence-length utterances which consist of recombinations of learned elements in a limited number of content areas, particularly if strongly supported by the situational context. Content refers to basic personal background and needs, social conventions and routine tasks, such as getting meals and receiving simple instructions and directions. Listening tasks pertain primarily to spontaneous face-to-face conversations. Understanding is often uneven; repetition and rewording may be necessary. Misunderstandings in both main ideas and details arise frequently.

READING: Intermediate Mid

Readers at the Intermediate-Mid level are able to read consistently with increased understanding simple, connected texts dealing with a variety of basic and social needs. Such texts are still linguistically noncomplex and have a clear underlying internal structure. They impart basic information about which the reader has to make minimal suppositions and to which the reader brings personal interest and/or knowledge. Examples may include short, straightforward descriptions of persons, places, and things written for a wide audience.

CULTURE: ACTFL Standards 2.1 and 2.2

2.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

This standard focuses on the *practices* that are derived from the traditional ideas and attitudes (*perspectives*) of a culture. Cultural practices refer to patterns of behavior accepted by society and deal with aspects of culture such as rites of passage, the use of forms of discourse, the social "pecking order," and the use of space. In short, they represent the knowledge of "*what to do when and where.*"

2.2 Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

This standard focuses on the *products* of the culture studied and on how they reflect the perspectives of the culture. Products may be tangible (e.g., a painting, a piece of literature, a pair of chopsticks) or intangible (e.g., an oral tale, a dance, a sacred ritual, a system of education). Whatever the form of the product, its presence within the culture is required or justified by the underlying beliefs and values (*perspectives*) of that culture, and the cultural practices involve the use of that product.