

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Spanish graduate studies at PSU**

### **Admissions:**

The Foreign Languages Department does not require the GRE.

French, German and Japanese have a rolling enrollment policy.

The Spanish program admits for only Summer and Fall terms. The application deadline for summer admission is February 1; for fall admission, it is April 1. Students must enroll for at least 1 credit hour during the term for which they are admitted. NOTE: Admission to our programs is quite competitive. During the 2005-2006 academic year, only 50% of those who applied were accepted.

There are two "writing samples" as part of the application. The personal essay or statement should serve as a tool for helping the admissions committee get a good idea of who the student is, what his/her background in Spanish is, and why s/he wishes to pursue a graduate degree in Spanish. It should be written in English. Applicants should also submit a sample of writing in Spanish, such as a copy of an essay for an undergraduate class. The more recent, the better. Because one of the requirements for admission to the MA program is a BA in Spanish (or the equivalent course work in Spanish – see below), all applicants should readily have available to them a sample of their writing in Spanish. If not, s/he will need to write an essay of some sort. A translation of a paper for another course is fine.

For admission into any of our Masters' program, a student must have a BA in Spanish or its equivalent. A student may demonstrate the equivalency of a BA in Spanish in two ways: (1) by means of an academic transcript, show that the equivalent number of courses and/or credits have been taken even though no degree was awarded; (2) by pursuing a Postbac degree in Spanish (see the PSU Bulletin for details). Courses taken during pursuit of the first B.A. do not need to be repeated for the Postbac.

While the level of fluency is a determining factor in the admissions process and experience abroad certainly speaks to the quality of a candidate's Spanish, the BA or its equivalent is non-negotiable requirement for admission. Our MA degree is primarily a literature program, and without the background provided by the undergraduate course work, students are quite simply not prepared to handle the additional rigors of graduate-level work in literature. Again, it is not an issue of fluency but rather of adequate preparation in the content area.

Admission into the MA-FLL program assumes that the candidate holds the BA in Spanish and a minor in the second language (which must be one of the major languages taught at PSU).

### **Clarification of various MA programs:**

The M.A. in Spanish is a traditional literature program. There is a thesis option and a non-thesis option. Theses in our department are critical studies of literature, and generally they are continuations of projects begun in courses in the program. Students who write a thesis have an

oral defense of the thesis; their examination committee is comprised of two Spanish professors (the thesis director and the second reader) and one professor from another department who acts as the Graduate School representative. Students who follow the non-thesis option submit two revised papers written with two different professors, take written exams based on their program of study (courses listed on the GO-12), and take oral exams which can cover the papers, written exams, and/or program of study. Guidelines for the M.A. in French and Spanish (including all deadlines) is available in the main office of the Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures (393 NH). The examination committee for non-thesis students is comprised of the two professors for whom the revised papers were written and one additional Spanish professor.

The MAT in Spanish is not a licensure program. Generally speaking, students who enroll in our MAT are either also enrolled in the GTEP (Graduate Teacher Education Program, which is the licensure program at PSU) or have recently completed the GTEP. Because the GTEP is not a degree program, credits earned during that program can be applied to a degree program. In the case of the MAT in Spanish, a student is required to take 9-15 credits of education courses, which can be part of the GTEP, but don't have to be. However, since the degree does not result in a license, it is not a viable option for someone wanting to pursue a career in secondary education unless they choose to also enroll in the GTEP. The PSU bulletin also lists a second MAT program (MAT with initial license), but this program is only for those who have been hired to teach with a restricted transitional or "emergency" license. The examination committee for the MAT is comprised of the two Spanish professors and one professor from the School of Education.

For the MA-FLL program, students take graduate-level courses in Spanish and complete the major in the second foreign language (any required courses taken during the undergraduate program will be waived). This is a non-thesis program. The examination committee for this program is comprised of two Spanish professors (one of whom will have supervised the revised papers in the Spanish) and one professor from the second language (who will have supervised the paper written in this language).

### **Dual MA programs:**

There are three options for combining graduate programs in two different departments. The first is to apply to and be admitted to both M.A. programs (i.e., Spanish and TESOL). The student would in fact be pursuing both degrees. But as a dual-admit student, s/he would be able to overlap 15 credits, i.e., the same 15 credits would count in both degrees. (Generally speaking, M.A. programs are 45 credits; following this option requires 75 credits in order to complete both degrees. We have had several students pursue this option.)

The second option is to pursue an MAT in General Arts and Letters. This is also a 45-credit program. The student would be required to take at least 12 credits in two departments (i.e., Spanish and TESOL), plus at least 9 credits in Education. Both departments must agree to accept a student to this program, but the advisor would be from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). (To date, no students in our department have pursued this option.)

The final option is to obtain an MA in Interdisciplinary Studies. This option is available only to

those students for whom an already existing option does not fulfill their needs. The pre-designed program must be submitted with the application for grad school, and it must include an agreement signed by the chairs and program advisors of both programs as well as the approval of the Office of Graduate Studies. The entire program must be clearly spelled out (i.e., which specific courses will be included) and approved before the application can be submitted. This is the more complicated option, but it is an option. (To date, no students in our department have pursued this degree.)

### **Degree requirements:**

The university requires that all students demonstrate proficiency in one language **other than their language of speciality or English** by passing a departmental reading exam or by documenting coursework beyond the 200-level.

### **Graduate Teaching Assistantships:**

Those who are enrolled as full-time students in our MA/MAT programs may apply to be graduate teaching assistants (GTAs); the GTA application may be submitted as part of the MA/MAT application packet. GTAs teach either first- or second-year Spanish under the supervision of a language coordinator. The GTAship includes a tuition remission plus a stipend of approximately \$1700 per term. GTAs are responsible for fees.

All GTAs are required to attend a mandatory orientation in September; this week-long orientation is held during the week prior to the first day of Fall term. Failure to attend each session of this orientation will result in the termination of the GTA contract.

Full-time graduate students must be enrolled in a minimum of 9 graduate-level credits . Each term all course work must be completed with a minimum GPA of 3.00. An incomplete in any course will disqualify a student from teaching. As GTAs in Spanish, students are required to be active participants in the academic program of the Spanish program. They must register for SPAN 509, Practicum each term they teach; this practicum course is a weekly meeting the language coordinator/mentor.

The Spanish program occasionally has GTA openings for full-time graduate students from other programs. These students should complete an GTA application form and submit it to Dr. Robert Sanders, who coordinates our first-year Spanish program. Any further questions regarding GTA positions should be directed to him.

### **Additional information:**

We do not have a distance learning option for our master's programs.

Graduate credits at Master's programs at PSU are only valid for 7 years. This also applies to transfer credits. In **exceptional** and **well documented** cases, the student has the option to petition for validation of out-of-date course credits (GO-15 form) or for an extension.

Substitutions for any of the courses required for the M.A. are generally not recommended; only the advisor may approve such substitutions.

Additional questions not addressed here should be directed to a member of the Spanish faculty.