

## Information for students who wish to demonstrate foreign language proficiency for AXLE through testing at the Tennessee Language Center (TLC)

March 2019

If you believe that you are proficient in a language other than English at the level of a second-semester language acquisition course at Vanderbilt, you may test out of the AXLE foreign language requirement. To do so, you must score at least '4' on both the spoken and written tests administered at TLC. When you take the tests, please arrange to have your scores sent directly to Dean Roger Moore ([roger.e.moore@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:roger.e.moore@vanderbilt.edu)), who will have them posted to your record. If you score '4' or higher on both tests, you will not be required to take any foreign language classes at Vanderbilt, but you will be required to complete three classes from the International category of AXLE.

### Information from the Tennessee Language Center, as of March 2019:

We administer spoken and written proficiency tests on behalf of ALTA Language Services. The spoken test is taken over the phone with a trained evaluator and lasts up to 30 minutes. The Written test is composed of five short essay questions that the candidate has up to 60 minutes to complete. For more information, including a list of languages available for testing, please see ALTA's website at [www.altalang.com](http://www.altalang.com). Whether you need to take the spoken test, written test, or both, is up to the institution for which you are testing.

To schedule the test, which would be held here at TLC (220 French Landing Drive, Nashville, TN 37243), we will need you to contact us and **provide two different time and day options** that you will be available, in order of preference. You will need to include the language and dialect you would like to be tested in when scheduling the exam. We administer tests Monday-Friday between 9:30am and 2:30pm. It usually takes 4-5 days to schedule the test, so the dates should be requested a week or more in advance. We will then submit those times and days and wait for ALTA to respond. As soon as they have let us know when the test has been scheduled, we will then let you know when you can come in for the test.

**The cost of each test is \$100.** The fee is payable by Visa, MasterCard, Discover, check, or cash on the day of the test. We encourage you to arrive at least 15 minutes in advance of the test time and bring a photo ID. You will check in with the security guard and we will have your name on a list of expected visitors. If you are late for a test (even 5 minutes), you will be charged a "no-show" fee. We encourage you to get here at least 15 minutes early. Please let us know if you need further information. We look forward to hearing from you.

**Heather Seybold** • Interim Director  
Foreign Languages Program

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 **Tennessee Language Center**  
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

*"...create a dialogue with the world."*

Below are the grading rubrics for the test.

**Speaking and Listening Performance Levels**

SKILL LEVEL		DESCRIPTION
TOTAL BEGINNER	1	The candidate has no knowledge of the language whatsoever.
BEGINNER	- 2	The candidate can communicate in a simple way in specific situations such as ordering food, asking directions and expressing basic needs.
	3	
	+ 4	
INTERMEDIATE	- 5	The candidate can handle successfully a limited number of interactive, task-oriented social and business activities.
	6	
	+ 7	
ADVANCED	- 8	The candidate can handle successfully a variety of communicative tasks feeling comfortable enough to conduct business meetings, converse effectively on the telephone, present a new idea and discuss details.
	9	
	+ 10	
NEARLY FLUENT	11	The candidate can initiate and sustain a wide variety of communicative tasks with finesse.
FLUENT	12	The candidate speaks at the level of a native speaker.

**Identification of the Assessment Categories**

The ALTA evaluation process assesses the level of skill in two areas: comprehension and speaking. These two categories are subdivided as shown below:

**Comprehension**

- SCOPE: How wide is the candidate's range of comprehension?
- SPEED: What speed of talking by a native speaker can the candidate understand?
- STRUCTURE: What complexity of speech can the candidate understand?

**Speaking**

- ACCENT: What degree of non-native accent and pronunciation does the candidate have?
- SCOPE: How easily can the candidate express ideas?
- SPEED: How rapidly can the candidate speak and how much does the candidate hesitate?
- NOUNS: How well does the candidate use proper gender and cases (where applicable)?
- STRUCTURE: How well does the candidate use complex structures?
- VERBS: How well does the candidate use correct conjugations, subject-verb agreement, mood and voice?
- VOCABULARY: How wide is the candidate's range of vocabulary and how precise?

The questions following each subdivision identify in practical terms what each subdivision means. In total, the subdivisions identify the range of capability needed to comprehend or speak a language.

### Writing Performance Levels

SKILL LEVEL			DESCRIPTION
TOTAL BEGINNER		1	The candidate has no knowledge of the language whatsoever.
BEGINNER	-	2	The candidate can communicate in a simple way in specific situations but makes many grammatical and spelling (or character) errors.
		3	
	+	4	
INTERMEDIATE	-	5	The candidate can handle successfully a limited number of task-oriented social and business communications, but does not use advanced tenses, makes some spelling (or character) errors and has limited advanced vocabulary.
		6	
	+	7	
ADVANCED	-	8	The candidate can handle successfully a variety of communicative tasks feeling comfortable enough to write business letters using advanced tenses, but still makes a few grammatical and spelling (or character) errors with some imprecision in vocabulary usage.
		9	
	+	10	

NEARLY FLUENT		11	The candidate can initiate and sustain a wide variety of communicative tasks with finesse, but makes occasional spelling (or character) errors and minor grammatical errors.
FLUENT		12	The candidate writes at the level of a native speaker.