

# Spanish MA

## Goal: Demonstration Of Breadth Of Knowledge

### Goal Description:

Spanish MA students will demonstrate their graduate-level of knowledge in literature, language, and linguistics. Graduate-level knowledge gives students the ability to teach and/or clearly communicate what they have learned through their focused study in the discipline.

**Providing Department:** Spanish MA

### RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### Learning Objective: Breadth Of Knowledge

### Learning Objective Description:

Spanish MA students will demonstrate their graduate-level knowledge through comprehensive written exams demonstrating their ability to clearly communicate what they have learned through their program of study. Students whose dominant language is not Spanish will demonstrate their Advanced High Oral Communication skills on the AVANT STAMP assessment.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### Indicator 1: Breadth of Knowledge

### Indicator Description:

During their last semester of study, Spanish MA students will demonstrate their graduate-level knowledge through written comprehensive exams in three subject areas of their choosing. Students select these areas from their MA coursework and work with faculty to develop a reading list and exam questions.

### Criterion Description:

All Spanish MA students will achieve a score of Pass or High Pass on their written comprehensive exams during their final semester of study.

### Findings Description:

All students achieved a *Pass* score on their written comprehensive exams during their final semester of study. These exams represent student knowledge of their coursework and allows them to demonstrate discipline-specific skills. WOLC has discussed replacing MA exams with a capstone project or portfolio that would be of more utility for graduating students.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

### Action 1: Breadth of Knowledge

### Action Description:

WOLC faculty will determine whether to continue using MA exams as a final assessment or if it would be more fruitful to require students to submit a capstone project or portfolio. Faculty will reach out to colleagues in other departments and at other institutions for feedback about this possibility.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### Indicator 2: Breadth of Knowledge

### Indicator Description:

Prior to graduation, Spanish MA students whose dominant language is not Spanish will take the AVANT STAMP and obtain a minimum score of Advanced High. WOLC selected this benchmark based on the ACTFL guidelines for Oral Proficiency Levels in the Workplace (2015) (see: <https://bit.ly/ACTFLOPITW>).

Attached Files

 [OralProficiencyWorkplacePoster.pdf](#)

**Criterion Description:**

All students taking the OPI-C will obtain a minimum score of Advanced High. ACTFL describes this level as follows:

“Speakers at the Advanced High sublevel perform all Advanced-level tasks with linguistic ease, confidence, and competence. They are consistently able to explain in detail and narrate fully and accurately in all time frames. In addition, Advanced High speakers handle the tasks pertaining to the Superior level but cannot sustain performance at that level across a variety of topics. They may provide a structured argument to support their opinions, and they may construct hypotheses, but patterns of error appear. They can discuss some topics abstractly, especially those relating to their particular interests and special fields of expertise, but in general, they are more comfortable discussing a variety of topics concretely.

Advanced High speakers may demonstrate a well-developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms or for limitations in vocabulary by the confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, and illustration. They use precise vocabulary and intonation to express meaning and often show great fluency and ease of speech. However, when called on to perform the complex tasks associated with the Superior level over a variety of topics, their language will at times break down or prove inadequate, or they may avoid the task altogether, for example, by resorting to simplification through the use of description or narration in place of argument or hypothesis.

**Findings Description:**

The first language of all graduating students was Spanish, thus no testing was necessary.

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3**

**Action 2: Breadth of Knowledge**

**Action Description:**

WOLC will retain this measure for students whose first language is not Spanish.

**Goal: Graduate Student Scholarship**

**Goal Description:**

Graduate-level study will give students essential professional scholarly knowledge and skills.

**Providing Department: Spanish MA**

**RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS** -----

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1**

**Learning Objective: Graduate Student Scholarship**

**Learning Objective Description:**

Through a deliberate admissions process and faculty-student research collaboration, the MA Spanish program will give students essential professional and scholarly knowledge and skills.

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2**

**Indicator 1: Graduate Student Scholarship**

**Indicator Description:**

The Spanish Graduate Faculty revised admissions criteria to more accurately reflect program content and goals. Prior to admission, graduate faculty evaluate students’ prior coursework (minimum of 18 hours undergraduate Spanish), undergraduate GPA, writing in Spanish and English, and students’ letters of recommendation from academic and professional sources. The student application package reflects these criteria; students must submit writing samples in Spanish and English and must provide letters of recommendation from academic and professional mentors. Application packages are evaluated using the attached rubric.

Attached Files

 [Admission Rubric Spanish MA.pdf](#)

**Criterion Description:**

All students admitted to the Spanish MA program will meet minimum criteria for program admission or will have a clear remediation plan in place prior to admission.

**Findings Description:**

All students were minimally qualified for the MA program. Despite this, WOLC faculty have noted a decrease in student quality and dedication following admission. The department will review admissions requirements and standards to determine whether a change in procedure or policy is necessary.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Action 1: Graduate Student Scholarship**

**Action Description:**

Due to a decrease in student quality and dedication following admission, WOLC will review admissions requirements and standards to determine whether a change in procedure or policy is necessary.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Indicator 2: Graduate Student Scholarship**

**Indicator Description:**

WOLC will build a program of regular graduate student external scholarly activity.

**Criterion Description:**

Each academic year, at least 1 graduate student will collaborate with faculty to prepare a scholarly project for submission to a peer-reviewed conference, publication venue, or grant agency.

**Findings Description:**

No graduate students were interested in collaboration during this cycle. This may be a reflection on what WOLC faculty noted with respect to admitted students. That is, faculty have noticed a decrease in student quality and dedication despite an increase in admissions standards. WOLC will continue to pursue this activity in the next cycle.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Indicator 2: Graduate Student Scholarship**

**Action Description:**

WOLC will continue to invite graduate student collaboration in faculty scholarship while simultaneously addressing the issues related to student quality and dedication.

**Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

**Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):**

**Closing Summary**

- 1) Revise current Spanish MA program to be a fully online WOLC MA program oriented to building professional language skills.
- 2) Continue to survey school districts, teachers, and current/future MA students to tailor curriculum and program development.
- 3) Continue direct recruitment in Houston-area schools and at campus events to increase enrollment

**Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:**

In addition to retaining measures related to student breadth of knowledge and scholarship, WOLC proposed three goals in the 2023-2024 plan for continuous improvement. These goals were not met, but they were revised to reflect current department needs.

1. MA Spanish program revisions were delayed until the WOLC BA has been proposed. Once the WOLC BA has been proposed, the WOLC curriculum team will expand its work to the WOLC MA and will include a 4+1 proposal.
2. The department surveyed current MA students to understand curriculum needs and tailor program development. The department will reach out to school districts and active teachers with a survey about

their skill needs in the 2024-2025 cycle.

3. WOLC will appoint a MA committee to ensure that recruitment activities align with curriculum proposals.

## **New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

### **Closing Summary:**

1. Explore 4+1 WOLC BA/MA once BA proposal is completed.
2. Survey current MA students to understand curriculum needs and tailor program development.
3. Contact school districts and active teachers with a survey about their skill needs in the 2024-2025 cycle.
4. Appoint a MA committee to ensure that recruitment activities align with curriculum proposals.
5. Assess cultural competence in graduating MA students.