Results of the first investigation made in 1957 by the Foreign Language Program of the Modern Language Association of America into foreign language requirements in graduate schools throughout the United States are presented in this report. Based on a questionnaire sent to 225 colleges and graduate schools, tables are furnished which illustrate requirements in graduate schools with Ph.D. programs and in schools with Master's degree programs only. Schools are listed alphabetically by state in each table. A summary of results concludes the report. (RL)
FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENTRANCE AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.A., M.S., AND PH.D. DEGREES

CLAUDE P. VIENS AND PHILIP WADSWORTH

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENTRANCE AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.A., M.S., AND PH.D. DEGREES

By Claude P. Viens and Philip Wadsworth

A Survey Conducted for the FL Program

This is the first attempt on the part of the FL Program to investigate the foreign language requirements in graduate schools throughout the United States. To keep the problem within manageable limits it was restricted to three advanced degrees, the M.A., the M.S., and the Ph.D., and to requirements in fields of study other than foreign languages. No effort was made to gain information from graduate schools which are clearly and strictly professional, such as schools of law, music, theology, medicine, and education. We used as the basis of our mailing list the USOE Circular No. 418, Earned Degrees Conferred by Higher Educational Institutions, 1953-1954, and sent a lengthy questionnaire to two kinds of institutions: (1) all graduate schools which granted any Ph.D. degrees, and (2) all schools listed in the Circular which granted 30 or more master's degrees. This arbitrary figure was chosen because it seemed necessary to eliminate from consideration several hundred small colleges which each year award a handful of master's degrees; most of these, presumably, have no language requirement.

The questionnaire was mailed out to the deans of 225 colleges and graduate schools, and 204 usable replies were received. The schools canvassed can be divided into four groups. First, 121 schools which have a program leading to the Ph.D. degree. These large institutions account for at least 90% of the M.A., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees granted in the United States. They are discussed in Section I of this report and the results are summarized in Table I. Second, 38 schools which award the M.A. and/or the M.S. degree and have some sort of language requirement for students in nonlanguage fields of specialization. See Section II and Table II. Third, 45 schools on our mailing list (identified in the starred footnote on p. 30) which confer the master's degree but have no language requirement either for admission to graduate study or for obtaining the degree. A number of these are teachers' colleges granting mainly the M.Ed. degree or else the M.A. or the M.S. in the field of education. Fourth, 21 institutions (identified in the starred footnote on p. 30) which failed to reply to our questionnaires and letters, presumably, in most cases, because they do not confer the degrees in question or because they have no foreign language requirements. In the following discussion the numbered paragraphs correspond to the numbered columns.
of Tables I and II, which in turn reflect, in condensed form, the content of the questionnaire.

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TABLE I. Requirements in Graduate Schools with Ph.D. Programs

Nearly all the 121 graduate schools which grant the Ph.D. degree also grant both the M.A. and the M.S. degrees. A few of these schools have only one kind of master's degree: the M.S. in technological schools or the M.A. in smaller schools which, generally speaking, emphasize teacher training or which lack research facilities for advanced work in the sciences. Sometimes the designated type of master's degree has little apparent relation to the student's field of study; it is possible, in certain institutions, to obtain the M.A. degree in scientific or the M.S. degree in nonscientific fields. Nevertheless, if the school specializes in a limited area of advanced work—e.g., mostly science, or mostly humanities, or mostly education—this specialization is usually reflected in its language requirements.

1. For admission to graduate standing only eleven schools reported a uniform language prerequisite for entrance in all fields of study. In these schools the admission requirement is usually two years of college credit in a modern foreign language. The great majority of graduate schools do not have a uniform language requirement for admission. This does not always mean, of course, that the entering student will not have studied a language in college. For admission to graduate standing many schools have departmental language entrance requirements. Among the non-language departments it often happens that the department of chemistry or of English or of history (these are the recurring instances reported) will not accept a student for entrance unless he has had two or more years of foreign language work in college. Also, some departments which do not require language training for admission do give preference to students who have studied a language. No graduate department of agriculture or of education or of engineering was found which has a departmental language requirement for admission.

2. Almost one third (38) of the institutions report a uniform language requirement for obtaining the M.A. degree, and about one fifth (26) have a similar requirement for the M.S. Whether or not a foreign language is required at the master's level is frequently a matter for the student's department to decide. Just less than one half (54) of the schools state that a language is required in some departments, but not all. Here again, chemistry, English, and history usually require a foreign language, but almost all departments (except agriculture, education, and engineering) are sometimes mentioned as requiring a foreign language.

3. When a language is required for the master's degree, the student
24 Foreign Language Entrance and Degree Requirements

is sometimes (10) obliged to choose either French or German. Spanish and Russian are occasionally cited as a third option, along with French and German. Twenty-five schools report a requirement of any one modern foreign language.

4. In schools which require a foreign language for the master's degree, whether in some or in all departments, the requirement is usually satisfied by means of a reading examination (54). Twenty-eight other schools accept language course work or undergraduate credit in lieu of a reading examination.

5. For the Ph.D. degree 76% (92) of the schools have a uniform

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<tr>
<th>MASTER'S DEGREE (Columns 1-4):</th>
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<tr>
<td>COLUMN 1: Entrance Requirement. &quot;A&quot; indicates FL admission requirement for all students; &quot;(A)&quot; means requirement only in some fields; a dash (—) means no requirement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLUMN 2: Degree Requirement. &quot;D&quot; indicates a uniform FL requirement for both M.A and M.S.; when &quot;MA&quot; or &quot;MS&quot; is specified, a uniform requirement exists only for that degree; &quot;S&quot; means only some departments have the requirement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLUMN 3: The Language in the Uniform Degree Requirement. &quot;IL&quot; means one modern foreign language is called for, with the choice left to the student; &quot;F/G&quot; means that the student must present either French or German. Note that where only some departments have a requirement (&quot;S&quot; in Col. 2) no language listing appears in Column 3.</td>
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<td>COLUMN 4: Satisfying the Degree Requirement. &quot;R&quot; means the student must pass a reading exam; &quot;C&quot; means that the student need only present a certain amount of language course work or undergraduate credit.</td>
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<td>COLUMN 5: Uniformity of Degree Requirement. &quot;D&quot; means all departments granting the Ph.D. degree have the same FL requirement; &quot;D*&quot; means all departments have an FL requirement, but it is not always the same for each.</td>
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<td>COLUMN 6: The Languages in the Degree Requirement. &quot;F/G&quot; means French and German are specifically required; &quot;F/G+1&quot; means French or German, plus one other language; &quot;2L&quot; means two unspecified languages; &quot;oth&quot; means (1) the uniform FL requirement is other than one of those already identified, or (2) in special cases the student may substitute another language for one of those specified in the requirement.</td>
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<td>COLUMN 7: Substitution of Non-Language Work for One FL. &quot;a&quot; means one of the required languages may be waived in favor of certain course work integrated with the major field of the student (e.g., statistics for a psychology major).</td>
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<td>COLUMN 8: Satisfying the Degree Requirement. &quot;R&quot; means the student must pass a reading exam; &quot;d&quot; following directly behind &quot;R&quot; means a dictionary is permitted for all or part of the reading exam; &quot;C&quot; means the institution accepts course work or undergraduate credit in foreign languages as satisfaction for the requirement, usually as an alternative to &quot;Rd.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLUMN 9: Department that Prepares the Reading Exam. &quot;L&quot; means prepared by the language department; &quot;S&quot; means by the department of the student's major; &quot;B&quot; means by a special board of examiners.</td>
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<td>COLUMN 10: Department that Grades the Reading Exam. Same symbols as in Column 9.</td>
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Claude F. Vien and Philip Wadsworth

### Table 1

**Foreign Language Requirements in Schools Granting the Ph.D.**

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2. A uniform requirement for the M.A. departments.
4. A uniform requirement for the M.A. departments.
5. Other institutions.
6. No general requirement. Only some departments have the FL requirement for the Ph.D.
### Table I (Continued)

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**Kentucky**

- University of Kentucky
- University of Louisville

**Louisiana**

- Louisiana State University
- Tulane University
- Louisiana Tech University

**Maryland**

- Johns Hopkins University
- University of Maryland

**Massachusetts**

- Boston College
- Boston University
- Clark University
- Harvard University (Law & Radcliffe College)
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Tufts University

**Michigan**

- Michigan State University
- University of Michigan
- Wayne State University

**Minnesota**

- University of Minnesota

**Mississippi**

- University of Mississippi

**Missouri**

- St. Louis University
- University of Kansas City
- University of Missouri
- University of Missouri-Columbia
- Washington University

**Nebraska**

- University of Nebraska
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**New Hampshire**

- University of New Hampshire

**New Jersey**

- Drew University
- Fordham University
- New School for Social Research
- New School for Social Research (Graduate Center)
- New School for Social Research (Graduate School of Business)
- New School for Social Research (Graduate School of Law and Public Policy)
- New School for Social Research (Graduate School of Public Affairs)
- New School for Social Research (Graduate School of Urban Planning)
- New York University (Law School)
- New York University (School of Social Science)
- New York University (Steinhardt School of Education)

**New York**

- Columbia University
- Cornell University
- Fordham University
- New York University (Graduate School of Arts & Sciences)
- New York University (Graduate School of Business)
- New York University (Graduate School of Education)
- New York University (Graduate School of Law)
- New York University (Graduate School of Library and Information Science)
- New York University (Graduate School of Natural Sciences)
- New York University (Graduate School of Nursing)
- New York University (Graduate School of Public Health)
- New York University (Graduate School of Social Work)

**North Carolina**

- Duke University
- North Carolina State University
- North Carolina State University (Graduate Division)
- North Carolina State University (Graduate School of Business)
- North Carolina State University (Graduate School of Public Health)
- North Carolina State University (Graduate School of Social Work)

**North Dakota**

- University of North Dakota
- University of North Dakota (Law School)
- University of North Dakota (Graduate School of Business)
- University of North Dakota (Graduate School of Education)
- University of North Dakota (Graduate School of Engineering)
- University of North Dakota (Graduate School of Fine Arts)
- University of North Dakota (Graduate School of Health Sciences)
- University of North Dakota (Graduate School of Humanities)
- University of North Dakota (Graduate School of Law)
- University of North Dakota (Graduate School of Medicine)
- University of North Dakota (Graduate School of Public Affairs)
- University of North Dakota (Graduate School of Social Work)

**Ohio**

- Ohio State University
- Case Western Reserve University
- Cleveland State University
- Eastern Kentucky University
- Eastern Kentucky University (Graduate School of Business)
- Eastern Kentucky University (Graduate School of Education)
- Eastern Kentucky University (Graduate School of Engineering)
- Eastern Kentucky University (Graduate School of Fine Arts)
- Eastern Kentucky University (Graduate School of Health Sciences)
- Eastern Kentucky University (Graduate School of Humanities)
- Eastern Kentucky University (Graduate School of Law)
- Eastern Kentucky University (Graduate School of Medicine)
- Eastern Kentucky University (Graduate School of Public Affairs)
- Eastern Kentucky University (Graduate School of Social Work)

**Oklahoma**

- University of Oklahoma
- Oklahoma State University

**Oregon**

- Oregon State University
- Portland State University

**Pennsylvania**

- University of Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania State University
- Temple University
- Pennsylvania State University (Graduate School of Business)
- Pennsylvania State University (Graduate School of Education)
- Pennsylvania State University (Graduate School of Engineering)
- Pennsylvania State University (Graduate School of Fine Arts)
- Pennsylvania State University (Graduate School of Health Sciences)
- Pennsylvania State University (Graduate School of Humanities)
- Pennsylvania State University (Graduate School of Law)
- Pennsylvania State University (Graduate School of Medicine)
- Pennsylvania State University (Graduate School of Public Affairs)
- Pennsylvania State University (Graduate School of Social Work)

**Rhode Island**

- Brown University
- Rhode Island School of Design

**South Carolina**

- University of South Carolina
- University of South Carolina (Graduate School of Business)
- University of South Carolina (Graduate School of Education)
- University of South Carolina (Graduate School of Engineering)
- University of South Carolina (Graduate School of Fine Arts)
- University of South Carolina (Graduate School of Health Sciences)
- University of South Carolina (Graduate School of Humanities)
- University of South Carolina (Graduate School of Law)
- University of South Carolina (Graduate School of Medicine)
- University of South Carolina (Graduate School of Public Affairs)
- University of South Carolina (Graduate School of Social Work)

**Tennessee**

- Vanderbilt University
- Tennessee Technological University

**Texas**

- University of Texas
- Texas Tech University
- Southern Methodist University

**Virginia**

- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- George Mason University

**Washington**

- University of Washington
- Washington State University
- Pacific Lutheran University

**West Virginia**

- West Virginia University
- Marshall University

**Wisconsin**

- University of Wisconsin
- University of Wisconsin-Madison
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
- University of Wisconsin-Stout
- University of Wisconsin-Platteville
- University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

**Wyoming**

- University of Wyoming

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1. Both French and German required for the M.A. at Princeton.
2. Procedures vary greatly from department to department.
3. "F/G" for the Graduate Faculty of Political Science, Philosophy, and Pure Science. In the Graduate School of Public Affairs, other languages may be substituted; otherwise, the details are identical. The School of Engineering and the School of Journalism did not specify.
4. The School of Business Administration did not require.
Table I (Continued)

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*Note: A & M C = Agricultural & Mechanical College, U = University, C = College, Inst. = Institute.*
Foreign Language Entrance and Degree Requirements

language requirement; 21.6% (26) indicate various departmental options, though all departments have some requirement; just 2.4% (3) report that only some departments have a requirement.

6. In almost one half (52) of the schools the requirement for the Ph.D. degree is a reading knowledge of French and German but, increasingly, the pattern is becoming French or German plus one other modern foreign language. Twenty-seven schools have this regulation, with a few of them specifying Russian as the other choice. There are, however, several graduate schools which require—or in which certain departments require—only one foreign language for the Ph.D. degree. The notation “oth” (for “other”) appears sometimes in Column 6 either because of a different general requirement or because of various exceptions which are sometimes allowed. A school may have a generally uniform requirement yet, in individual cases, or upon petition by the student, allow the substitution of an ancient language for a modern one, or an Oriental language for a European one, or some other European language for French or German, etc. Another alternative which exists in a few institutions is a thorough command of one foreign language in place of reading ability in two.

7. Nearly one fourth (29) of the schools reported that it is possible, in the school at large or at least in some departments, to waive the Ph.D. requirement in one foreign language and to substitute other work for it, such as additional technical training in a field allied to the student’s major. The subject most commonly substituted is statistics, for students majoring in economics, education, sociology, etc. There are also instances where a strong minor, e.g., in chemistry, can replace one language for students who take their degree in such fields as agriculture, bacteriology, physics, or zoology.

8. For the Ph.D. candidate, language proficiency is verified by a reading examination in 90% (107) of the schools, only 10% (11) indicating the acceptance of course work or of undergraduate language credit, usually as an alternative.

9-10. From the many institutions where Ph.D. candidates take foreign language reading examinations we sought further information about the way in which these examinations are conducted. A few schools (indicated by question marks in Columns 9-10) have procedures which vary greatly from department to department. In nearly all schools the student is allowed to use a dictionary during all or part of the examination. In 44% (52) of these schools the selection of passages for translation is a task assigned to the language department. In another 20% (24) the selection of passages is handled by the student’s own department. The remainder have other systems of selection, such as a committee with members from the two departments concerned or, in a few cases, an independent ex-
A grading board not under the control of any department. The grading of the examinations is most frequently performed by the language department (85 schools, or 72%), far less often by the student’s own department (8 schools, or 7%), and in some instances by an interdepartmental committee or university examining board.

Much information was collected as to when the Ph.D. language requirements had to be satisfied, but owing to its complexity it has not been tabulated in Table I. Only a small number of universities have a deadline for fulfilling the requirement in the first of two foreign languages. In most institutions the requirement in both foreign languages must be satisfied before the student begins writing his dissertation (or before he is admitted to candidacy for the degree, or before his “preliminary” or “comprehensive” examination, or by the end of his second year of residence). The wording for this rule varies greatly from place to place, but the general principle holds true in 80% of the schools having Ph.D. programs. (This figure includes a few schools, not more than four or five, which have an earlier date for meeting the requirement, and two or three others which occasionally allow postponement of the language examinations.) But there are also twelve nonconforming institutions which permit the examinations to be taken very late in the Ph.D. candidate’s studies—e.g., a year or a semester prior, or even immediately prior, to the awarding of the degree. One of the very largest universities in the United States makes only this stipulation: that the student must pass his language examinations at least seven months before he receives his degree. This means that he may complete all his course work, take his preliminary and oral examinations, write and turn in his dissertation, and then take his foreign language reading tests. Seven months later he may become a Doctor of Philosophy, without ever having read a foreign book in connection with his graduate courses or his research program.

II

TABLE II. Requirements in Schools with Master’s Program Only

Section II will be devoted to 38 colleges and universities which grant the master’s degree, but not the Ph.D., and which reported some kind of foreign language requirement for: the M.A. and/or the M.S. degree. Nearly all these schools grant both degrees.

1. Among these schools 16% (6) report a uniform admission requirement. This may be a reading knowledge of one foreign language or one or two years of undergraduate credit. Fifty percent (19) of these schools require a foreign language for admission in only some departments. In these instances, chemistry is almost always one of the departments, but English, history, and physics also appear frequently.
**Foreign Language Entrance and Degree Requirements**

**TABLE II**

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS IN SCHOOLS GRANTING THE M.A. AND M.S. DEGREES BUT NOT THE Ph.D.**

[The columns here correspond to Columns 1-4 in Table I. For the explanation of the columns and symbols see p. 24.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>FL</th>
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*All institutions listed in Table II have some form of FL requirement. Questionnaires returned from 45 other institutions which grant a master's degree (but not the Ph.D.) revealed no FL requirement. These are: Ariz.-Arizona State C; Calif.-Long Beach State C, Los Angeles State C of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sacramento State U, San Diego State C, San Francisco State C, San Jose State C, Cal.-Western State C; Conn.-Fairfield U, Hillfield C, of Bridgeport, Western U, Iona; Iowa-Drake U, Kansas-Fort Hays State C; Mass.-American International C, Suffolk U, Mass.-Northwestern U, H. F. J.-Norwich C of Engineering, F. Mass.-New Mexico C of A & M, Arts, New Mexico Highlands U, New Mexico Western C; N. Y.-Queens C, V. Car.-A & T C of North Carolina, East Carolina C, Women's C of the U of North Carolina; Ohio-Kent State U, Ohio U, of Akron, U of Toledo, Texas-Westminster C; S. Car.-South Carolina C of Charleston; Tenn.-Memphis State C, U of Chattanooga; Tex.-Baylor C, Hardin-Simmons C, Midwestern U, Our Lady of the Lake C; Wash.-Seattle U, Portland State C, Washington State U, Western State U, Women's C of the U of Washington, Wisc.-Menomonee Falls C, Milwaukee C. In addition, 21 other institutions should be noted. No reply was received, but they probably belong to the category of Table II, and probably most have no FL requirement. These are: Alabama State C, U of Arkansas, Atlanta U, Benjamin Franklin U, C of the Pacific, Columbia C (S., Car.), East Tennessee State C, Fisk U, Florida A & M U, Hawaii C, Illinois Inst. of Technology, Oberlin C, U of Portland, St. Bonaventure U, St. John's U, St. Lawrence U, St. Mary's of the Lake Seminary, Seton Hall U, Southern Methodist U, Yeshiva U, Xavier U.*

1 Grants only the M.S.
2 Also has an FL requirement for some M.S. departments.
3 Also has an FL requirement for some M.A. departments.
4 Grants only the M.A.
Claude P. Viens and Philip Wadsworth

SUMMARY TOTALS
FOR MASTER'S DEGREE (TABLE II—38 INSTITUTIONS;
TABLE T—121 INSTITUTIONS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Table II</th>
<th>Table I</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>1. FL entr. req. for all depts.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. FL entr. req. for some depts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. No FL entr. req. for any dept.</td>
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<td>4. Uniform FL degree req. for M.A. &amp; M.S.</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>5. Uniform FL degree req. for M.A. only.</td>
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<td>6. Uniform FL degree req. for M.S. only.</td>
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<td>7. FL degree req. for some depts. only.</td>
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<td>8. FL degree req. specifies any one FL.</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. FL degree req. specifies French or German.</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. FL degree req. satisfied by reading exam.</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. FL degree req. satisfied by college credits.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. FL degree req. satisfied by exam or credits.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FOR PH.D. DEGREE (TABLE I ONLY—121 INSTITUTIONS)

1. Uniform FL degree req. in all depts. | 92 | 118*
2. FL degree req. in all depts. (but not always same req.). | 26 | 24
3. Req. specified in French and German. | 24 | 24
4. Req. specified in French or German, plus one other FL. | 27 | 27
5. Req. in French and German, but alternatives possible. | 28 | 118
6. Req. stated as two FLs, unspecified. | 19 | 19
7. Req. is something other than 3–6 above. | 20 | 20
8. Permit substitution of other work (e.g., statistics) for one FL. | 29 | 29
9. Req. tested by reading exam (without dictionary). | 15 | 15
10. Req. tested by reading exam (with dictionary for all or part). | 92 | 118
11. Accept course work or undergraduate credit in lieu of exam. | 11 | 11
12. Reading exam prepared by FL dept. | 52 | 52
13. Reading exam prepared by major dept. of student. | 24 | 24
14. Exam prepared jointly by FL and student's major depts. | 26 | 26
15. Exam prepared by a special board. | 18 | 18
16. Preparation of exam varies among depts. | 12 | 12
17. Exam graded by FL dept. | 85 | 85
18. Exam graded by major dept. of student. | 8 | 8
19. Exam graded jointly by FL and student's major depts. | 10 | 10
20. Exam graded by a special board. | 4 | 4
21. Grading procedure varies, depending on dept. | 11 | 11

* Three institutions reported that not all departments had the FL requirement for the Ph.D.: State U of Iowa, Harvard U (with Radcliffe C), and U of Minnesota.

2. A uniform language requirement for obtaining the M.A. degree is reported by 40% (15) of these schools, while 24% (9) require a language for the M.S. degree. Instead of a uniform requirement there is more often a departmental one. Twenty of the schools indicate that one or
more departments require language proficiency for the master's degree, but not all departments. Chemistry, again, is the department cited most frequently, but English, history, and physics are also mentioned from time to time.

3. In the 18 schools where there is a uniform requirement for one or both degrees, two thirds accept proficiency in any one modern foreign language; the other third specify that the language must be French or German. A few schools indicated that they sometimes make exceptions to the rule, allowing Spanish, Russian, or an ancient language as alternatives.

4. Where a language is required for the master's degree, two thirds of the 18 schools test proficiency by reading examination only, while the remainder accept course work or undergraduate credit in the language. Either of the two procedures may be used in a few of these schools, as well as in certain others which do not have a uniform degree requirement.