

MA PORTFOLIO AND COMPREHENSIVE EXAM INSTRUCTIONS French and Spanish K-12 Teaching Tracks - Updated Fall 2019

The culminating experience for your degree is the MA Comprehensive Exam, which combines a **written MA portfolio** with an **oral presentation**, followed by questions from the graduate faculty on topics related to your presentation and courses. The comprehensive exam lasts approximately one hour and is completed in the last semester of your enrollment at Appalachian. These guidelines will help you collect and draft materials for your portfolio and prepare for your oral presentation.

Note: Because our K-12 MA program leads to M-level teacher licensure in North Carolina, certain aspects of the written portfolio and the oral presentation are dictated by NC Dept. of Public Instruction (DPI) requirements. Candidates in K-12 teaching are advised to read these instructions carefully and work with their instructor in the Product of Learning course (LLC 5525) to make sure their portfolio meets all current DPI M-level licensure requirements.

A. Content and Format of the MA Portfolio. Candidates for the K-12 teaching track should prepare a portfolio that is organized around the first 5 of the 6 NC Professional Teaching Standards:

1. Teachers Demonstrate Leadership.
2. Teachers Establish a Respectful Environment for a Diverse Population of Students.
3. Teachers Know the Content they Teach.
4. Teachers Facilitate Learning for their Students.
5. Teachers Reflect on their Practice.
6. Teachers Contribute to the Academic Success of Students

The core of the written portfolio consists of artifacts that demonstrate mastery of these standards and reflections on how these artifacts were developed and (if relevant) implemented. The artifacts you include can come from courses taken as a part of your MA program as well as materials and accomplishments that come of the practice of teaching. The following brief descriptions provide some ideas for artifacts that may be used in each section; in the Product of Learning course you will work with a mentor to collect and organize the appropriate materials.

Standard 1: Teachers Demonstrate Leadership. Artifacts demonstrating teacher leadership may include:

- School improvement project (developed in CI 5585, Teacher Leadership and School Improvement), which contains a detailed plan for school improvement.
- Examples of leadership at a particular school or district, include advocacy projects for language education.
- Any publications or sharing of teaching materials, including via blog, teachers pay teachers, or other social media platforms.
- Participation in professional activities and organizations (e.g. FLANC, SCOLT, ACFTL, AATF, AATSP).

Standard 2: Teachers Establish a Respectful Environment for a Diverse Population of Students. Artifacts demonstrating respect for diverse populations may include:

- Reflective diversity project (developed in CI 5045, Advanced Topics in Diversity) where they explore their own attitudes, biases, and gaps in knowledge about students' cultural and learning differences.
- School improvement project (from CI 5585), if this project focuses on an underserved population.

- Initiatives undertaken at a particular school or district to enhance or teach about any aspect of diversity, including linguistic diversity.
- Teaching materials designed to encourage dialogue around diversity and/or engage diverse populations in language learning.

Standard 3: Teachers Know the Content they Teach. This section should include materials from your French or Spanish content courses:

- At least one paper written in French or Spanish on a topic of relevance to Francophone or Spanish-speaking cultures, and demonstrating a high level of proficiency in the target language (ACTFL scale: Advanced High).
- Other artifacts that document how the standards for the MA in Romance Languages have been met through assignments and teaching-related applications developed for the Product of Learning, including activities, lesson plans and instructional units. These may be materials developed in French or Spanish courses, or materials developed for use in the classroom that draw on concepts covered in French and Spanish content courses.

Standard 4: Teachers Facilitate Learning for their Students. Artifacts demonstrating facilitation of learning may include:

- Original research project from LLC 5601 (Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition), showing the use of data to inform teaching.
- Statement on second language acquisition and best practices in language teaching (developed in LLC 5590 and LLC 5601).
- Any materials, data, or evidence from a particular school or district demonstrating facilitation of learning.

Standard 5: Teachers Reflect on their Practice. Reflections are included both in this section and throughout the portfolio. In this section, candidates should include:

- A reflection on coursework in French or Spanish, highlighting key concepts and experiences that transformed their knowledge about the target language and culture(s).
- A reflection on LLC and CI coursework that addresses student learning, effective practices of instruction and assessment, and each of the five Master's-level standards for teachers.
- If not included in artifacts for Standard 4, the statement on second language acquisition and best practices in language teaching (developed in LLC 5590 and LLC 5601) may be relevant for this standard as well.

In the written reflections for each Master's-level standard, candidates will describe how a key concept or activity learned in a graduate class was adapted by the candidate for use in teaching.

Note: while the portfolio does not require artifacts for Standard 6 (Teachers Contribute to the Academic Success of Students), candidates currently teaching in the NC public school can choose to include artifacts showing student growth if desired.

B. Content and Format of the Oral Presentation. The content of your oral presentation is largely up to you, but you should keep the following guidelines in mind as you prepare:

- Your presentation should last 20-25 minutes; you should practice beforehand to make sure that what you want to say fits roughly within this time frame.
- One portion of your presentation should be given in French or Spanish (as appropriate); this section typically lasts 5-8 minutes.
- While you may use notecards to help you organize your thoughts, you should speak freely in your presentation rather than reading from a prepared script.
- You are encouraged to prepare a PowerPoint or similar presentation to help organize your presentation.
- Your presentation should include the following key elements:
 - Brief introduction to and reflection on your course of study (2-3 minutes)
 - Discussion of your approach to language teaching, thoughts on SLA, and understanding of current issues in language education (app. 4-5 minutes)
 - Identification and discussion of 1-2 overarching themes from your FRE or SNH content courses. (app. 10-12 minutes)
 - It is strongly suggested that you identify 2 themes or ideas, and that at least one include a discussion of issues related to the cultural and literary productions of the French or Spanish-speaking world.
 - The committee will be looking for you to make “big picture” connections between the courses you have taken.
 - Discussion of your artifacts for Standards 1 & 2 and reflection on insights from CI/LSA classes. (app. 4-5 minutes)
 - Closing reflection on how your course of study at Appalachian has impacted your teaching. (app. 2-3 minutes)

C. Other Important Details regarding Comprehensive Exams.

1. Format and Submission:

Your MA Product of Learning is a written project, but it is not an MA thesis as defined by the Graduate School, so you do not need to worry about following thesis guidelines. One copy for our archives (e.g. a 3-ring binder) is sufficient. Students interested in submitting the PoL in an alternate format, including an all-online format, should consult with the director of graduate studies. You may also need to upload your PoL to the College of Education’s TK20 portal for DPI assessment purposes; please consult with the graduate director regarding instructions for any TK20 uploads.

Committee members need to receive your completed PoL at least 10 days before the date of your oral presentation, to give everyone time to read and prepare questions and comments. Once you submit your PoL for faculty to read, you may not add or modify it prior to your MA exam.

2. Timing of your MA Exam:

You should complete your MA exam near the end of your last semester of study, but in advance of the deadlines as set by the University Registrar. Exam results are due in Registrar’s Office by Reading Day each term—which is **before** the regular period of final exams. Please schedule your MA presentation early enough to allow for the final documents to be processed and checked by the Registrar. You should contact the members of your MA committee early in the semester you plan to graduate to schedule your oral presentation and provide them with a reminder of the date as it approaches.

If you need additional time, you can take your exam at the beginning of the following semester and delay graduation to the end of that semester. In this case, the university will charge you the equivalent of one credit hour for the term in which you take your exam.

4. Who attends your MA Comprehensive Exam?

The graduate director and other professors who have agreed to serve on your MA committee will attend your oral presentation. K-12 MA candidates must also have at least one currently practicing public school K-12 teacher attend their oral exam. For current teachers, this can be a colleague from your school or district; if this is not feasible, you should talk with the graduate director about other options for K-12 representation at your exam. The department chair and all other members of the Graduate Faculty are invited to all MA exams and may attend as well.

In addition to these individuals, you are welcome to invite other guests to your presentation. We especially encourage you to include other graduate students in your invited audience.