

# LANGUAGE PLACEMENT at the UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

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*This document is intended to provide USD faculty with the most relevant information regarding the language placement policy and the mechanisms and criteria by which students are placed in language courses.*

## A. Language Placement at USD

1. Every student who wants to enroll in a language class **must go through the placement process before they are actually enrolled in a language course.**
2. Students who have transferred language courses from a different institution are automatically placed as per their Transfer Evaluation. Students who have satisfied the Core Curriculum requirement in language through an equivalency exam (AP, IB, CLEP, USD Competency exam) are automatically placed in Upper Division. Detailed information on equivalencies is posted at [www.sandiego.edu/cas/languages/equivalencies](http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/languages/equivalencies).
3. Students who have studied the language before, no matter where, when or for how long, are required to go through the placement process before they can enroll in any of the language courses offered by the Department of Languages and Literatures.
4. Students who have never studied the language they wish to enroll in or who may require academic accomodation due to extraordinary circumstances are advised to file a Request of Waiver of Placement instead of taking the placement exam. When approved, they are allowed to enroll in 101 courses only. Waiver requests can be filed online at [www.sandiego.edu/cas/languages/placement/101\\_waiver.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/languages/placement/101_waiver.php)

## B. The Language Placement Evaluation

1. The Language Placement evaluation is based on a Language Survey submitted by the student and on the results of a Placement Exam. In the Language Survey students declare their academic background in the language they wish to study and their personal language background, native language, exposition to other languages, etc. The Placement Exam is a multiple choice diagnostic exam covering Reading Comprehension, Grammar and Vocabulary.
2. The Placement Exam for Spanish, French and German is available online only and is hosted at Brigham Young University. The Placement Exam for Italian and Latin is available online only and is hosted at USD. The Placement Exam for Arabic, Chinese, Ancient Greek and Japanese is available in writing only and is administered by the Director of Placement. Online tests are accessible through the Department of Languages website at [www.sandiego.edu/cas/languages/placement/exams.php](http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/languages/placement/exams.php).
3. Every student who has gone through the placement process receives a placement evaluation usually referred to as "placement results". The placement evaluation assigns the student with a **Primary Placement** and an **Optional Placement**. The Primary Placement is the most suitable for the student to start his study of the language at USD. Some students are also offered the option of enrolling in a less or more advance course or Optional Placement.

4. Invalid, incomplete, or inconclusive tests or evaluations may require contacting the student to clarify the nature of the problem and whether a repeat test or evaluation is necessary.
5. Placement results are valid and enforced for the current academic year. Students who do not enroll in language courses after they have received their results have the option to take the placement exam again and receive a new evaluation. They may also transfer credit for courses they may have taken elsewhere, which will place them in the USD course immediately above the one they got credit for. **IMPORTANT:** USD students (not transfer students) who plan to take language courses at a different institution and then transfer credit to USD for these courses need to get permission in advance from the Chair of the Department of Languages. As a condition to be approved, students must take the placement exam so that they do not transfer credit and, most important, grades from courses below their current ability in the language.

### **C. The Language Placement routine**

Following is a summary of the process by which the Director of Placement arrives to language placement decisions:

1. Language surveys and placement exams are retrieved by the Director of Placement from the server at Brigham Young University, who is the provider of our tests for Spanish, French and German. For all other languages, surveys and exams are submitted online by students using the forms in the Department of Languages website or take the test in person at FH138A.
2. For every submission an evaluation is made by the Director of Placement based on the student's academic background, scores in equivalency tests when available, and the answers and score of the placement exam.
3. For students with no experience in the language they wish to study, the Director of Placement receives and verifies as needed required Request of Waiver of Placement forms submitted by students online, in person, or by email.
4. For every submission (both placement evaluations and requests for Waiver of Placement) a record is created in a database maintained by the Director of Placement including the student's information, language, date of the submission, and placement decision.
5. At regular intervals (usually every 48 hours) a file containing the most recent placement results is uploaded by the Director of Placement to Banner. The system then marks as satisfied in students' records language pre-requisites according to the results of their placement evaluations. This will allow students to enroll in the courses open to them and prevent them to enroll in less or more advanced courses.
6. A report from Banner is sent to the Director of Placement, who checks for possible invalid, duplicated or incorrect record updates.
7. The Director of Placement notifies students by email of their placement evaluation decision and the date and time when they will be able to enroll in the course or courses they place in.
8. It is the student's responsibility to find an open section of the course they placed in and enroll before the add/drop deadline.
9. Some courses, most notably Spanish 102 First Year, may require "manual enrollment" using an Add/Drop form filled in by the student and then signed or stamped by the Director of Placement. It is the student's responsibility to take this form to the One Stop booth to actually enroll in the course. Add/Drop forms may be required also for freshmen who are allowed to enroll in Upper Division courses; these forms must be approved and signed by the Director of each language section. The Department Chair may, too, approve and sign Add/Drop forms to

allow students enroll in language courses in special circumstances (usually to override enrollment caps, schedule conflicts, when the student is out of town, graduating seniors, etc.)

10. No other faculty or USD staff except for those noted in section 9 above should sign or approve students' Add/Drop forms or advise students to use this enrollment mechanism. Staff at the One Stop booth are aware of this rule and will reject Add/Drop forms not approved by the Department of Languages.

11. Students dissatisfied with their placement evaluations are welcomed to discuss their results with the Director of Placement. When the student requests to do so, the Director of Placement refers his/her case to the Department Chair. The Department Chair is the only person with the authority to revoke placement results once these have been sent to the student.