

LANGUAGES, LITERATURES & CULTURES GRADUATE PROGRAM (LLAC)
DOCTORAL CANDIDACY REQUIREMENTS

The University of Calgary Doctoral [Candidacy Regulations](#) (“the Regulations”) govern the conduct of admission to doctoral candidacy at the University. This document establishes program-specific requirements associated with the conduct of admission to graduate candidacy in Languages, Literatures and Cultures (LLAC) under those *Regulations*.

A. Statement of Purpose

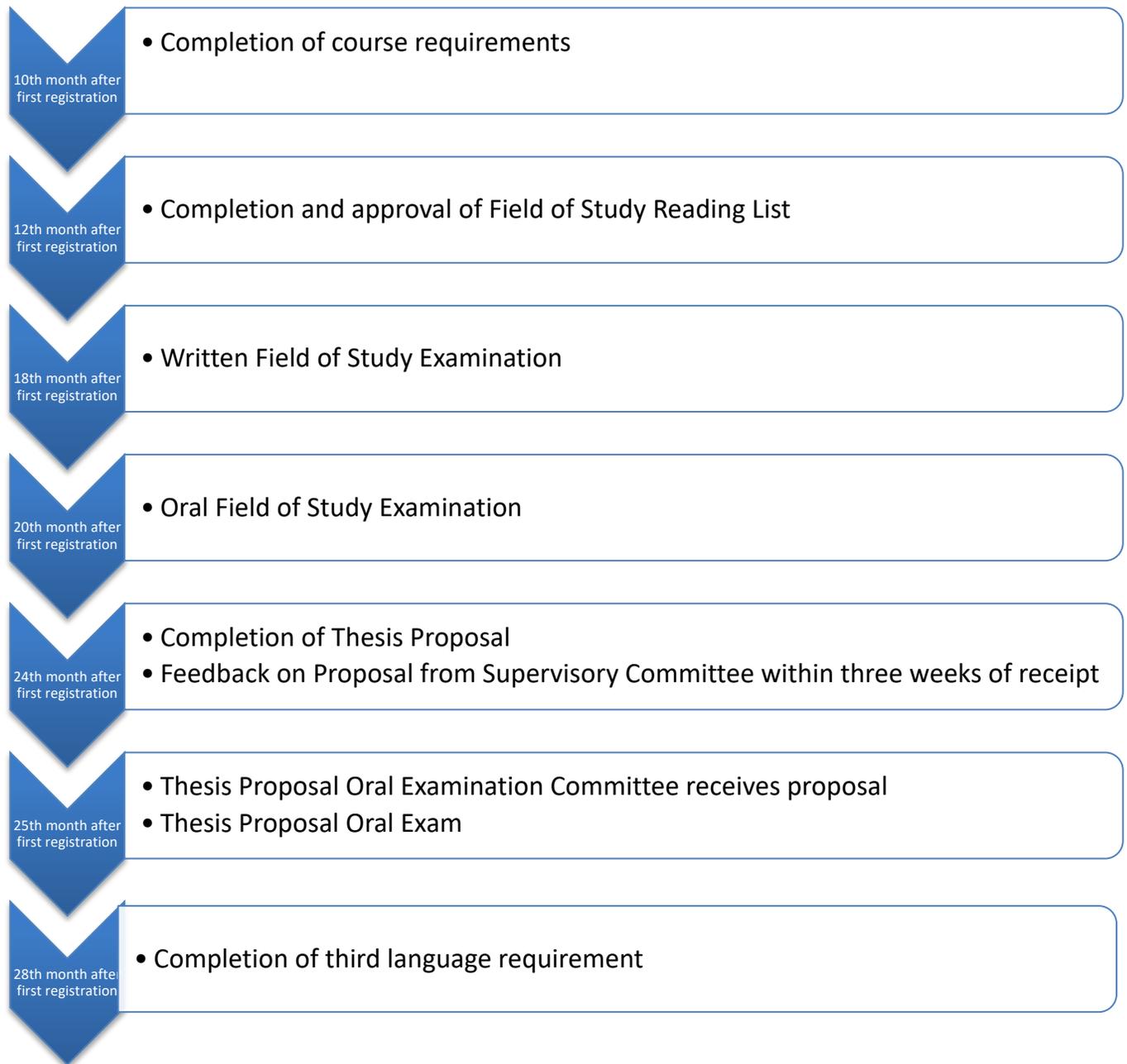
Admission into candidacy in the LLAC PhD Program requires students to have a solid academic foundation in the target language of study, in literary, cultural and /or linguistic theory, language pedagogy, applied linguistics, and, also, in their particular field or fields of research. It requires they have a well-developed plan for thesis research – a complete proposal with a cogent research question, an appropriate research methodology, and a statement of potential significant contribution to the field of enquiry. In addition, the successful candidate will possess the necessary technical skills and background preparation to be judged able to successfully complete the proposed research plan.

B. All students in the LLAC Graduate Program at the doctoral level must successfully fulfill the following requirements:

1. All course requirements;
2. A Field of Study (FOS) examination
 - a. Written FOS examination (theory and breadth (including reading list));
 - b. Oral FOS examination (theory and breadth (including reading list));
3. An oral examination of the thesis proposal; and
4. A third language requirement.

Note: The language of all examinations is French for students pursuing a PhD in French.

Students are expected to complete candidacy requirements according to the following timeline.



1. Course requirements

Students pursuing a PhD program in LLAC must successfully complete all required coursework as stated in the Graduate Calendar entry.

Approved by the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures: May 1, 2018
 Approved by FGS Policy Committee: May 28, 2018
 Effective Date: May 28, 2018

2. Field of Study examination

Format of the Written and Oral Field of Study Examinations

The Field of Study (FOS) examination tests a PhD Student's knowledge of a field or fields related, but not identical to, their research. The FOS examination encourages the Student to develop both breadth and depth of knowledge within a given field or fields of enquiry. The written FOS examination, which is to be based on a Reading List, requires students to respond to two questions over the period of twenty days. The oral FOS examination, which is also based on the same Reading List, tests a PhD Student's ability to respond orally to questions that extend beyond (i.e., are different from) those on the written FOS examination. It requires that the students articulate their responses in a clear and concise manner and that they evaluate the results of previous research and rely on the relevant theories, methods, and results (from the Reading List) to substantiate arguments.

Reading List

It is the responsibility of the Student, in consultation with the Supervisor, to assemble a Reading List within 12 months after entry into the program. The Reading List, which should be assembled to ensure that students have both breadth and depth of knowledge in at least one, but no more than three, subject areas (including primary works, theory, methodology, and experimental findings, when appropriate), will normally contain approximately 75 entries (i.e., books, chapters in books, and journal articles). The Reading List is submitted in their final form to and unanimously approved (via email) by the members of the Supervisory Committee within two weeks of submission to the Supervisory Committee. The Supervisor is to share the approved Reading List with the Graduate Program Director (GPD).

Composition of the FOS Examination Committee and Scheduling of the FOS Examination

The Student's Supervisory Committee, one additional member from within the program, and one member external to the Program will make up the Written and Oral FOS Examination Committee. The external member is appointed by the Graduate Program Director, after reviewing the recommendation from the Student's Supervisor. The FOS Examination committee is to be formed by the end of the Student's 17th month in the program.

The Written FOS Examination requirement must normally be fulfilled during the first 18 months after entry into the program, and the Oral FOS Examination requirement must normally be fulfilled during the first 20 months after entry into the program, except when unforeseen circumstances prevent the Student from meeting the course requirements within the first 10 months in the doctoral program. Program notice for each of the Written and Oral FOS Examination is forwarded to the Student and to the FOS Examination Committee.

a. Written Field of Study Examination

Upon initiation by the Supervisor, the members of the Supervisory Committee will craft three questions related to the approved Reading List. These questions should be broad in scope and should require students to synthesize knowledge, apply theory, and/or demonstrate understanding of methodologies. The student is given choice to answer two of the three questions. Upon receiving the questions, students will have twenty calendar days to submit written, essay-style responses to both chosen questions. The length of each essay will be approximately 20 pages (12-point font), excluding references, figures, and tables.

Approved by the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures: May 1, 2018

Approved by FGS Policy Committee: May 28, 2018

Effective Date: May 28, 2018

The Examination Committee will have up to three weeks to read and evaluate the essays. At the end of this period, they will meet to discuss the outcome. The student will not be present at this meeting. A member of the academic staff appointed by the Graduate Program Director serves as the Neutral Chair of the discussion. The Neutral Chair is not a member of the examining committee and is non-voting.

Before the meeting begins, each member of the Examination Committee will submit constructive written feedback on the student's written performance to the Neutral Chair.

Before any discussion of the Student's performance, each examiner must provide a non-binding recommendation (pass/fail) of the Student's performance on the written examination by secret ballot. This procedure provides the committee members with a frame of reference upon which to base a full discussion of the Student's written performance. The final vote, which is provided orally, is taken after the Committee's discussion.

The evaluation of the written work should be based on the following criteria:

- clarity and organization in responding to the questions that were posed;
- ability to evaluate the results of previous research and rely on the relevant theories, methods, and results to substantiate arguments.

Outcomes of Written Field of Study Examination

Every effort should be made to reach a unanimous recommendation. Should the outcome of the final vote include at most one negative vote, the student will pass. A student who does not pass the written FOS examination will have the opportunity to retake the examination as outlined below. The Graduate Program Director will share the results of the Written Examination along with feedback provided by Examination Committee members with the Student within two days of receiving the result.

Retakes of Written Field of Study Examination

After the first failed exam, the Student will be entitled to retake the exam no sooner than two months and no later than six months from the date of the first examination. A second failure on the Written FOS Examination requires the Student to withdraw from the program. The graduate program must send the *Recommendation of Required Withdrawal from Graduate Program for Failure to Maintain Academic Progress* to gpoform@ucalgary.ca.

b. Oral Field of Study Examination

Although the Written and Oral Field of Study Examination take place approximately one month apart, the scheduling of both examinations will take place at the same time. The Oral FOS examination should be scheduled to take place no more than one week after the vote on the Written FOS examination. The Oral FOS Examination will only proceed if the Student has passed the Written FOS Examination.

Approved by the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures: May 1, 2018

Approved by FGS Policy Committee: May 28, 2018

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A member of the academic staff appointed by the Graduate Program Director serves as the Neutral Chair of the examination. The Neutral Chair is not a member of the examining committee and is non-voting.

Questions, which are usually asked in rounds, will be based on the Reading List. The Oral FOS Examination is not designed to be another examination of the Written FOS Examination responses. That is to say, examiners should ask questions that are different from those on the Written FOS Examination. The Oral FOS Examination should not exceed two hours (excluding requested breaks and deliberation time for the Committee members). Examiners are encouraged to ask clear and succinct questions. The Student will be given reasonable time to answer, and should feel free to ask for questions to be repeated or rephrased. If the Student has understood the question and cannot answer, the examiner should pass to another question, and not attempt to extract an answer by prolonged interrogation or by leading the Student. The Neutral Chair will ensure these guidelines be followed during the exam.

At the end of the examination, the Student is asked to withdraw from the room. Before any discussion of the Student's performance, each examiner must provide a non-binding recommendation (pass/fail) of the Student's performance on the oral examination by secret ballot. This procedure provides the committee members with a frame of reference upon which to base a full discussion of the Student's overall examination performance. The final vote, which is provided orally, is taken after the Committee's discussion.

Performance on the Oral FOS Examination will be judged on the Student's ability to:

- clearly and concisely respond to the questions posed; and
- summarize and critique relevant previous research from the student's reading list.

Outcomes of Oral Field of Study Examination

Passing the Oral Field of Study Examination

Every effort should be made to reach a unanimous recommendation. Should the outcome of the final vote include at most one negative vote, the student will pass. If the final vote is not a pass, an assessment of the student's oral performance as well as suggestions for improvement should be conveyed in writing to the student. A student who does not pass the oral FOS examination will have the opportunity to retake the examination as outlined below.

Failing the Oral Field of Study Examination

Should the outcome include two or more negative votes, the committee's recommendation to the Graduate Program Director will be *fail*. In the case of a fail,

- **The Neutral Chair** must inform the Student of the Committee's recommendation immediately following the vote of the examination committee. The Neutral Chair will submit the final recommendation of fail as well as a written report to the Graduate Program Director within one working day of the completion of the examination.

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Approved by FGS Policy Committee: May 28, 2018

Effective Date: May 28, 2018

- **The Examiners** write brief memos to the Graduate Program Director explaining the reasons for their votes and submit these memos within five working days from the date of the examination.
- **The Graduate Program Director** may uphold the fail in the case of a clear fail or refer to FGS for decision in the case of an unclear fail. If the GPD upholds the fail, after consultation with the Supervisor, the Graduate Program Director then summarizes the essential points from the memos to the Student, copied to the Supervisor and FGS (gpoform@ucalgary.ca).
- **The Graduate Program** must send the *Notice of a Failed Candidacy Component* to the Student within ten working days from the date of the examination. The *Notice* and the post-exam memos must be kept in the Student's file. If there is an appeal, the Notice and supporting documents must be submitted to FGS (gpoform@ucalgary.ca).

Note: In instance of a potential of a conflict of interest such as when the GPD is a member of the examining committee, the School Director or a designate will substitute for the GPD.

Retakes of Oral Field of Study Examination

After the first failed oral FOS exam, the Student will be entitled to retake the exam no sooner than two months and no later than six months from the date of the first examination. A second failure on the Oral FOS Examination requires the Student to withdraw from the program. The graduate program must send the *Recommendation of Required Withdrawal from Graduate Program for Failure to Maintain Academic Progress* to gpoform@ucalgary.ca.

Appeal of Failed Field of Study Examination Results

In the case of a failed oral FOS examination, the Student has the right to appeal directly to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) following the procedures described in the *Graduate Calendar* under [Academic Regulations – Appeals – Appeals Against Faculty of Graduate Studies Rulings](#).

3. Thesis Proposal Oral Examination

By the 24th month after entry into the program, the Student must submit a Thesis Proposal to the Supervisory Committee for feedback. The Committee will have three weeks to provide concrete written feedback to the Student. Students are strongly encouraged to start the proposal as soon as they have completed the FOS Examinations and submit it to the Committee prior to the 24-month deadline. They are also encouraged to discuss drafts of the proposal with members of the Supervisory Committee prior to this formal submission.

Normally, the thesis proposal should be presented in a consistent scholarly format, double-spaced, and be approximately 20 pages in length (not including references, figures, and tables). The following thesis/dissertation format is a useful guideline:

- (i) Thesis statement;

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- (ii) Theoretical framework;
- (iii) Review of literature;
- (iv) Methodology followed and research plan;
- (v) Verifiable and projected conclusions;
- (vi) Timeline;
- (vii) Bibliography (approximately 25 titles, comprised of theoretical foundations for the thesis research, primary texts, or existing research on the topic).

The Thesis Proposal Oral Examination must take place by the twenty-fifth month after entry into the program. The Thesis Proposal Oral Examination tests the PhD Student on their preparedness to conduct research of high and significant quality and novelty in a particular field of study. It also examines the Student's methodological, theoretical and critical abilities, as well as enquiry-specific knowledge. The expectation is that the Student will have a clearly-defined and well-defended research plan.

Format of the Thesis Proposal Oral Examination

The examination should normally not exceed two hours (excluding requested breaks and deliberation time for the Committee members). The Student makes a 10- to 20-minute presentation, introducing the reasons for the work, research questions, and the expected contributions derived from the proposed thesis chapters. This presentation is included in the allotted two-hour period. The presentation is then followed by examiners' questions on the Thesis Proposal.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies (through *My Gradskills*) and the Student Success Centre offer several workshops and resources to help students prepare for such examinations. Students are invited to consult <http://www.ucalgary.ca/mygradskills/> and <http://ucalgary.ca/ssc/> for complete information on sessions and materials available.

Composition of the Thesis Proposal Oral Examination Committee

The Examination Committee is normally composed of the Supervisory Committee, one additional member from within the program, and one member external to the Program. This external member is appointed by the Graduate Program Director, upon the recommendation of the Student's Supervisor. The additional Examination Committee members may have also served on the FOS Examination Committee. A member of the academic staff appointed by the Graduate Program Director serves as the Neutral Chair for the examination. The Neutral Chair is not a member of the examining committee and is non-voting.

Scheduling of the Thesis Proposal Oral Examination

The Thesis Proposal Oral Examination must be completed before the end of the 25th month in the program. Once a Student is prepared to schedule the Thesis Proposal Oral Examination, the Supervisor must notify the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Program Administrator (GPA) of this decision. The Supervisor should schedule the exam and send the GPA the precise details (date, time and committee members). The GPA will arrange a room for the exam.

The Supervisor is responsible for establishing the appropriate times for the Examination. The Supervisor circulates the Thesis Proposal to all members of the Examination Committee at least three weeks before the Oral Examination. A dated hard copy is printed and placed in the Student's file.

Process of the Thesis Proposal Oral Examination

Questions, which are usually asked in rounds, will be based on the proposal, including the works listed in the bibliography. Examiners are encouraged to ask clear and succinct questions. The Student will be given reasonable time to answer, and should feel free to ask for questions to be repeated or rephrased. If the Student has understood the question and cannot answer, the examiner should pass to another question, and not attempt to extract an answer by prolonged interrogation or by leading the Student. The Neutral Chair will ensure these guidelines be followed during the exam.

At the end of the examination, the Student is asked to withdraw from the room. Before any discussion of the Student's performance, each examiner must provide a non-binding recommendation (pass/fail) of the Student's performance on the oral examination by secret ballot. This procedure provides the committee members with a frame of reference upon which to base a full discussion of the Student's overall examination performance. The final vote, which is provided orally, is taken after the Committee's discussion.

Outcome of the Thesis Proposal Oral Examination

The Student will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Preparedness to conduct high quality research and depth of knowledge in the specific field;
- Clarity of presentation;
- Ability to orally defend the following:
 - Originality of research contribution;
 - Soundness of research methodology;
 - Relevance of research contribution;
 - Feasibility in the broader field of enquiry.

Passing the Thesis Proposal Oral Examination

Every effort should be made to reach a unanimous recommendation regarding the Student's performance on the oral examination. Should the outcome of the final vote include at most one negative vote, the Student will pass. If the final vote is not a pass, an assessment of the student's oral performance as well as suggestions for improvement should be conveyed in writing to the student.

Failing the Thesis Proposal Oral Examination

Should the outcome include two or more negative votes, the committee's recommendation to the Graduate Program Director will be *fail*. In the case of a fail,

- **The Neutral Chair** must inform the Student of the Committee's recommendation immediately following the vote of the examination committee. The Neutral Chair will submit

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the final recommendation of fail as well as a written report to the Graduate Program Director within one working day of the completion of the examination.

- **The Examiners** write brief memos to the Graduate Program Director explaining the reasons for their votes and submit within five working days from the date of the examination.
- **The Graduate Program Director** may uphold the fail in the case of a clear fail or refer to FGS for decision in the case of an unclear fail. If the GPD upholds the fail, after consultation with the Supervisor, the Graduate Program Director then summarizes the essential points from the memos to the Student, copied to the Supervisor and FGS (gpoform@ucalgary.ca).
- **The Graduate Program** must send the *Notice of a Failed Candidacy Component* to the Student within ten working days from the date of the examination. The *Notice* and the post-exam memos must be kept in the Student's file. If there is an appeal, the *Notice* and supporting documents must be submitted to FGS (gpoform@ucalgary.ca).

Note: In instance of a potential of a conflict of interest such as when the GPD is a member of the examining committee, the School Director or a designate will substitute for the GPD.

If the Student fails the Thesis Proposal Oral Examination, they may be required to prepare a revised thesis proposal, addressing the concerns raised by the Examiners in their reports and summarized by the Graduate Program Director in a memo that accompanies the *Notice of a Failed Candidacy Component*.

Retakes

Only one retake of the Thesis Proposal Oral Examination will be permitted. The retake must take place no sooner than two months and no later than six months from the date of the first examination. Normally, the composition of the committee will remain the same.

In reporting the results of the second examination, the committee will be limited to recommending either a pass (i.e., no more than one negative vote) or a fail.

A recommendation of *fail* requires that, within five working days:

- **Each Examiner** must submit a confidential written report to the Graduate Program Director, copied to the Supervisor, detailing the reasons for their vote.
- **The Neutral Chair** must also submit a written report of the examination procedures to the Graduate Program Director.

If the Graduate Program Director upholds the recommendation of *fail*, the Student will be required to withdraw from the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The graduate program must send the *Recommendation of Required Withdrawal from Graduate Program for Failure to Maintain Academic Progress* and supporting documents to gpoform@ucalgary.ca.

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Appeal of Failed Thesis Proposal Oral Examination

In the case of a failed thesis proposal oral examination, the Student has the right to appeal directly to the Faculty of Graduate Studies following the procedures described in the *Graduate Calendar* under [Academic Regulations – Appeals – Appeals Against Faculty of Graduate Studies Rulings](#).

4. Third Language Requirement

All students must demonstrate, at a minimum, reading comprehension of a language other than English and the target language of the PhD program, at a level sufficient for the use and understanding of scholarly material. This language will normally be related to the Student's thesis research. As such, the language requirement should normally be met before the Student completes the Thesis Proposal Oral Examination.

The language requirement is deemed to have been satisfied when the Student has successfully completed one of the following:

- (i) a 4th semester language course at the University of Calgary or at another accredited institution, with demonstrable proficiency at the B1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR);
- (ii) a language-proficiency examination designed specifically for graduate students by a relevant academic designated specialist. Such an examination tests the Student's reading proficiency, by testing their understanding of a scholarly article;
- (iii) a B1 Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) examination, when available.

Students have a total of twenty-eight months from entry into the program to complete the language requirement. Failure to complete the requirement within this time frame requires the Student to withdraw from the program.

C. Extension to Candidacy Requirement Deadline

A student who does not complete any single component of the candidacy requirements by the end of their 28th month in the program must have an extension request approved by FGS. When requesting an extension, the Student and Supervisor must discuss an approximate date of the Thesis Proposal Oral Examination and plan the extension request based on that date. Once a date has been determined, the extension request form (available at <http://grad.ucalgary.ca/current/managing-my-program/registration>) should be completed, with an explanation of the reasons for the delay. The extension request must be signed by the Supervisor and the Graduate Program Director.

The completed and signed form should be submitted to the GPA to be sent to FGS for approval. Please note that the form should be submitted by the end of the 27th month in the program, so as to allow time for processing.

Approved by the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures: May 1, 2018

Approved by FGS Policy Committee: May 28, 2018

Effective Date: May 28, 2018