

**Foreign Language Placement Testing Procedures and  
Opportunities to Earn IUP Foreign Language Credits through Testing**  
**Updated Spring 2024**

**Why take a placement test?**

Students with previous foreign language experience will need to determine which level of foreign language class to take at IUP. This is usually determined by taking a placement test in the appropriate language. This test will accurately place students into the correct language class and may result in exemptions from lower-level classes. Exemptions help to fulfill the foreign language requirement for those majors that require it and can also help to complete course requirements for foreign language majors, minors, and certificates. It is in a student's best interest to do placement testing as early as possible in their IUP careers as it can save time and lead to opportunities and credit for those with more advanced foreign language abilities.

Most students with **previous foreign language study** take a foreign language placement test as part of Summer Orientation. Once a student takes a placement test as an incoming freshman, exemptions for lower-level classes should be noted on their transcript, and students will be directly enrolled into the appropriate class level in their first semester at IUP. **Only students with very little or no prior foreign language experience should register for 101.**

If a student **transfers** into IUP, a credit evaluation should have recorded any previous foreign language courses and their IUP equivalents on their transcript. Students who have already received credit or exemptions for IUP foreign language courses are required to take the next course in the appropriate foreign language sequence. As language classes can vary greatly between institutions, transfer students are highly encouraged to take the placement test or consult the placement testing coordinator.

There are other reasons why students may need a placement test at a later point in their college careers. Sometimes students change majors and find themselves needing to complete a foreign language requirement. Others may decide to add a foreign language major, minor, or certificate. **Students may request a placement exam if 1) they did not take the placement test when they entered IUP (either as a freshman or transfer student) 2) they have not transferred any foreign language courses into IUP OR begun the IUP foreign language course sequence.** Placement testing cannot be used as a substitute for a failed course or to avoid taking a course in the sequence. Special circumstances should be discussed with the department chair. Students should enroll in appropriate courses promptly, as **language competency tends to decrease over time without consistent study.** Students not enrolling in a course within one academic year may need to review independently to ensure success in their language sequence.

The **Spanish** placement test is a written (typed) test, monitored electronically. It will take about an hour, and no books, phones, or other resource materials or assistance from other individuals may be

used. Once placement is determined, any necessary prerequisite overrides will be processed so that students may register for the next course in the language sequence.

**Spanish** Placement test questions should be directed to: Dr. Christina Huhn ([huhn@iup.edu](mailto:huhn@iup.edu))

**French and German** placement tests are done online using *WebCape*. The online tests may take anywhere from ten minutes to an hour, as the system will determine when it has enough information to make a placement. For questions and to set up the test, please contact:

- French: Dr. Jean-Louis Dassier ([dassier@iup.edu](mailto:dassier@iup.edu)).
- German: Dr. Heide Witthoft ([heide@iup.edu](mailto:heide@iup.edu)).
- Placement into other languages course sequences is handled on an individual basis.

**Advising notes:**

**Enrollment in a language course that is not aligned with a student's ability level often results in low performance and frustration.** Please see the *IUP*

*Undergraduate Catalog* for restrictions on taking lower-level language classes after more advanced study has been completed, or if a student has a very high level of language ability.

- Students who developed language proficiency by growing up in another country or being raised in a home where they acquired a second language should begin by taking a placement test in the appropriate language. These advanced students or students who have an extended background in the language have the option of **ACE credits**. See separate flyers – a placement test is required as an initial step.
- Students pursuing a **Certificate** will need to take at least **six** credits of language study at IUP, regardless of any exemptions earned for advanced speaking proficiency through ACE Credits.
- Additional credit options through **College-Level Examinations (CLEP)** and **Advanced Placement (AP)** are available here: <https://www.iup.edu/orientation/placement-testing/equivalency-resources/index.html> or by contacting the Office of Orientation or the Office of Transfer Credit: <https://www.iup.edu/admissions/transfer/index.html>