This handbook is a summary of the major policies affecting graduate students in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Northern Illinois University. Although care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the Handbook, it is important for students to know that they are also bound by the policies of the Graduate School and the Graduate Catalog. If there is any inconsistency between this Handbook and the Graduate Catalog, the policies in the Catalogue take precedence.

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Northern Illinois University offers graduate work relevant to theoretical, applied, and research interests. The various concentrations of study within the Master of Arts degree with specialization in Spanish or in French have been designed to offer coherent and significant learning experiences that provide a basis for many potential careers in a variety of both private and public fields.

All Master of Arts students in French receive grounding in literature, civilization, and culture of France and/or Francophone countries, are introduced into several key linguistic aspects of the French language, are taught the principles of translation theory and trained in translation practice. All Master of Arts students in Spanish receive grounding in literature, civilization, and culture of Spain and Latin America, are introduced into several key linguistic aspects of the Spanish language, are taught the principles of translation theory and trained in translation practice. Consistent with its commitment to theoretical and methodological diversity, the department supports an ample range of substantive and paradigmatic interests. It is possible for a student to focus on an orientation (literature, culture, translation, linguistics, or their combination), depending on personal or professional interests. Interdisciplinarity in the final M.A. project (thesis) is encouraged.

Every effort is made to maintain a personal atmosphere for graduate students and faculty. The Chair, the Coordinate of Graduate Studies, and other faculty members are easily accessible. Close working relationships with faculty members are encouraged through reading courses, thesis supervision, seminars, conference participation, and academic activities aimed at graduate students.

As a department within a state university, tuition and fees are reasonable. In addition, department-based teaching assistantships are available on a competitive basis. An assistantship provides a monetary stipend and a tuition waiver scholarship, covering in-state or out-of-state tuition, for the academic year. An assistantship does not provide payment of the student’s fees, however, which remains the responsibility of the student. A number of other assistantships and fellowships are also available through the Graduate School and other academic departments.

Admission to the Graduate Program in Spanish or French

Spanish or French majors, and persons with other academic background, are eligible for admission to the Spanish and French graduate program. Before entering the program, an applicant must have attained a bachelor’s degree from a four-year accredited college or institution, national or foreign. If the degree work does not include at least an introductory course on literary analysis, a survey of Spanish literature, and a survey of Latin American literature, these will be identified as deficiencies. Additional deficiencies might be identified previous to, or during, the formal interview. Such
deficiencies must be remedied before beginning the graduate program, by taking, for example FLSP 320, FLSP 321, FLSP 322 (or/and other courses in our catalog). Course credits taken for purpose of remedying deficiencies will not count toward the master's degree.

The Coordinator of Graduate Studies examines each applicant’s file. Admission to the graduate program is based on the applicant's undergraduate grade point average (G.P.A.), performance on the Graduate Record Examination (G.R.E.), letters of recommendation, writing samples, and other evidence of ability to succeed in the program. Ordinarily, the department requires an undergraduate G.P.A. consistent with the Graduate School requirements. The department prefers applicants with a G.P.A. of 3.0 or higher, and must provide special justification to the Graduate School is recommending admission to a student whose undergraduate G.P.A. is below 2.75. The applicant must also take the G.R.E. Generally, the department prefers a minimum score of 600, combining the verbal and analytical sections, with neither part below 300. Applicants are also required to submit two samples of their written abilities in Spanish or French, usually, but not limited to, copies of term papers, academic written assignments (substantive essays).

The “Application for Admission to the Graduate School” form can be obtained from the Graduate School at NIU, or from the website, www.grad.niu.edu. The completed application and all required supportive materials form — except for the writing samples, which can be sent directly to the Coordinator of Graduate studies at the Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures — should be submitted to the Graduate School. For G.R.E. testing dates, fees, and locations, write to Graduate Record Examinations, Educational Testing Service, P.O. Box 6000, Princeton, NJ 08541-6000, visit their website, or obtain this information from the Graduate School at NIU.

**Students-at-large**

A student with a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university, who has not been yet accepted by the Graduate School, may, with department approval, take graduate courses for credit as a student-at-large. No more than nine (9) semester hours (credits) of such courses will be applied to the master’s program in Spanish or French. The prospective student should be aware of the regulations regarding student-at-large status, as detailed in the Graduate Catalogue. The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at NIU is not obligated to accept a student-at-large for the master’s program, even if he or she has successfully completed courses in Spanish or French. The department urges all students-at-large who intend to take courses in the department before applying for formal admission into the program, to consult with the department’s Coordinator for graduate studies.

If the final grade earned in a class is lower than a B this class taken as a student-at-large will not be applied to the master’s program in Spanish or French.

**International Students**

International students should examine the special instructions for admission in the Graduate Catalogue (http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/international/index.shtml). Those whose native language is not English should note in particular the requirements concerning the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Check please with the Graduate School at NIU for this requirement of the university.

**The Coordinator of Graduate Studies**
Each entering student must consult with the department’s Coordinator of Graduate Studies, in Watson Hall 113. The Coordinator will work with the student to plan his or her graduate program in Spanish or French and check that the requirements are being met. The Coordinator is available throughout the student’s career at NIU and should be consulted about any question or issue related to the program.

Course Requirements

Students complete their graduate requirements through course work, after which they prepare and defend an acceptable thesis, or perform an internship (and the accompanying internship paper).

Course Work

A minimum of 30 semester hours of credit are necessary in the thesis or internship track (including at least 3 semester hours for the thesis or internship itself). Students should take all their courses at the 500 level, if possible. The Graduate School requires a minimum of 15 credits at this level for all graduate students.

Students must maintain an overall G.P.A. of 3.0 or higher. If a student’s cumulative G.P.A. drops below 3.00, the student will be placed on academic probation for up to 9 hours, until the G.P.A. is raised to 3.00 or above (see the section on “Academic Standing” in the Graduate Catalogue for details). If the student fails to return the G.P.A. to 3.00 or better within this time, s/he will be academically dismissed. The accumulation of 6 hours of D, F, U, or WF will also result in dismissal from the Graduate School, regardless of the overall G.P.A. Only courses in which a C, or higher, is earned carry graduate credit and can be applied toward the degree. Thus required courses in which a D or F is earned must be repeated.

When special circumstances prevent a student’s completing the requirement of a course, the instructor may, at her or his discretion, assign a grade of “incomplete” (I). However, the students should diligently strive to avoid such grades by completing all the required work in their courses by the end of the semester. An incomplete, if the work is not completed prior to the beginning of the next semester, adds to the student's workload, and is likely to have a negative cumulative effect on the student’s progress. If the work is not completed by the date specified by the university each semester (see www.niu.edu for a calendar of dates), the grade is changed to an F, unless the instructor elects to submit a grade based on the work that was completed.

The department recommends that graduate students ordinarily take no more than 9 hours per semester in the fall and spring, and no more than 6 hours in the summer. Individuals who are employed outside the university full time should not enroll for more than 6 hours per semester. Similarly, full-time graduate students (9 credit hours in fall or spring, 6 in summer) should not be employed for more than 20 hours a week.

A student who is a teaching assistant at the department may request permission from the department to take an underload, enrolling for only 6 semester hours in the fall or spring. Such requests will normally be approved only for a student’s final semester(s), and only if the underload will not delay the student’s graduation.
International students on F-1 or J-1 visas are required by the Graduate School to register for a minimum of 9 hours during the fall and spring semesters.

Dating from the first course applied toward the requirements of the master’s program, a student has a maximum of 6 consecutive years in which to complete all requirements for the master’s degree. This includes all work taken as a student-at-large, as well as any transfer credit accepted toward the degree.

**Transfer of credit**

With the approval of the department and the Dean of the Graduate School, a student may transfer a maximum of 6 semester hours of graduate courses taken from other accredited colleges or universities, national or foreign. Credits earned through correspondence at other institutions cannot be transferred. Hours of graduate courses that were part of another degree cannot be accepted for transfer.

**Independent Study**

A student who wishes to study with more detail a specific topic not covered by the regular courses, may enroll in Independent Study for one, two, or three semester hours of credit. The student will work under the close supervision of a faculty member whose expertise covers the area in which the student’s interest lies. Both the consent of the instructor and the permission of the department must be obtained before registering for the Independent Study. No more than 3 hours of credit may be earned in this course.
Evidence of Mastery

In order to earn the master’s degree, students must evidence mastery and this is measured in two ways: thesis or internship. Both routes require an intensive collection of information and a scholarly, written analysis of that information, with close faculty supervision.

Thesis option

A thesis is intended to provide the student with the opportunity to grapple with a significant problem in one area of student’s choice: literature, culture, translation studies, linguistics, or a combination thereof. The student attempts to pose meaningful questions and systematically marshal a body of evidence to address these questions.

Students contemplating a thesis are advised to consult with the Coordinator of Graduate Studies for initial orientation. The student should explore topics for the thesis in consultation with faculty members who have substantive knowledge in the particular field. Once the topic is agreed on, student should write a five-to-six double spaced typed proposal containing an introduction, information on planned objective of project (thesis), a detailed structure, general information on the content of the different chapters, and an initial substantive bibliography of primary and secondary sources. The student should then choose one faculty member to serve as Chair of the thesis committee and two other faculty members to serve as members (readers) of the committee. The Chair (thesis adviser) must be a member of the graduate faculty in the Department. If there is no member of the graduate faculty who is a specialist in the area of interest for the student, the Chair of the department can request a one-time dispensation for another faculty member to serve as Chair of said committee.

A student is not to begin work on a thesis or enroll for thesis credit until a he or she has chosen a faculty member to serve as Chair of his or her thesis committee, and this faculty member has approved the proposal presented by the student. This decision should be also communicated to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies in written form to be filed in student’s file. Once the student enrolls in the first three hours of FLST 699 (French) or FLST 699 (Spanish), but has not completed the master’s degree in the first semester of thesis enrollment, continuing enrollment in FLST 699 or FLST 699 per term (including summer) as an audit is required until the degree is completed.

A thesis that involves translation to English from Spanish, from Spanish to English, to English from French, or from French to English (of literature / academic articles or books in the humanities) also falls under the FLST 699 or FLST 699 designation and students must follow all the Graduate School guidelines regarding the format of master’s theses, which can be obtained from the Graduate School internet site. In this kind of thesis project, student must accompany an introduction to the translated text. This introduction, at least 15 double-spaced pages long, in English, in Spanish, or in French, should explain the justification for the translation, the personal and/or academic importance of the project, and relate the translation experience in detail. A bibliography of primary and secondary sources must be also attached.

If the thesis research involves human subjects, special approval is required prior to the collection of any data. In many cases, this approval can be certified by the Department Chair. In other cases, formal review by the Graduate School’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) is required. In any event,
if this approval is not obtained, the Graduate School will not approve the thesis. Prior to commencing the research, students should consult the Office of Research Compliance website (http://www.orc.niu.edu/orc/human_research/index.shtml ) and the department’s Chair for assistance.

Members of the thesis committee should be involved in its development from the beginning. They must read the different thesis versions, as they are produced by the student, in a parallel manner to the chair of the committee, and let the student know of any suggestions, comments, which should be informed to the chair of the committee as well. It is likely that several drafts of the thesis may be written. The student thus should allow sufficient time for revision of the thesis between the time that rough drafts are submitted and the time the final copy is due to the Graduate School. The student must defend the completed thesis in a location open to the public prior to its submission to the Graduate School. Information on the defense date and title of thesis project will be circulated among other graduate students, instructors, lecturers, and faculty members in the Department, and also posted by the main office in Watson Hall.

An approved thesis is submitted to the Graduate School, along with a signed thesis-approval form. The format of the thesis must conform to the requirements of the Graduate School, which are contained in the booklet, The Graduate School Manual for Theses and Dissertations. The Graduate School can require revisions in style and form before the thesis is accepted.

**Internships**

Like theses, internships provide an opportunity for a student to evidence substantive mastery. Internships are designed as critically examined work experiences, involving at least 120 clock hours of work for each three semester hours of credit. A student embarking on an internship must have the site of the internship approved by the supervising faculty member, who must be a member of the graduate faculty. The student is required to obtain an evaluation of her/his work by a supervisor at the work site, or to provide the faculty member with contact information so that the faculty member may solicit such an evaluation. A student is then required to write a scholarly paper based on the work experience, the design of which is to be negotiated with the faculty supervisor. Graduate internships are graded on a letter-grade basis.

**Certificate of Graduate Studies in Spanish**

Students wishing to complete this Certificate (18 credit hours) should consult the Coordinator of Graduate Studies in Watson Hall 113. Student should hold a bachelor’s degree as a minimum.
Important Dates

Graduate students are responsible for ascertaining and meeting all of the deadlines imposed by the department or the Graduate School. These dates may be obtained from the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, and/or the Graduate School.

Deadlines for submission of the following items are particularly important:

- Application for graduation, including Advisor/Coordinator’s signature and Bursar’s receipt for fee payment\(^1\)
- Post-defense version of thesis
- Department’s report of the thesis defense
- Three final corrected copies of the thesis, after receiving Graduate School approval to produce these copies

Approximate DEADLINES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to do</th>
<th>Graduation Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submit Application for Degree</td>
<td>Half a year before Graduation Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit results of oral defense form to the Graduate School</td>
<td>About two months before Graduation Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronically Submit post-defense version of the thesis for Graduate School review</td>
<td>About 1.5 months before Graduation Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit comprehensive exam results form for maststudents</td>
<td>About 2 weeks before graduation Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{1}\) Check on the Graduate School website for exact dates. The deadline for submitting the application for a degree is usually 6 months before the date of graduation. The results of the
Setting up the Committee

1. Before completing 18 credits of class work, the student should meet with the Coordinator for Graduate Studies (henceforth “Coordinator”) to formally start the M.A. thesis writing process. At this time, possible topics for the M.A. thesis / Translation and the choice of a possible thesis director will be discussed.

2. The student identifies the Committee Director (“Director”).

3. The student then proceeds to produce a written prospectus with the help of the Director.

4. After having his/her prospectus approved by the Director, the student will select, among the faculty members of the department, the other two members of the Thesis / Translation Committee in consultation with the Director.

Writing the Thesis / Translation

1. The student starts writing his/her thesis or translation seeking advice from the Director at regular intervals.

2. The student is to provide each committee member with rewritten chapters or translation sections after they have been evaluated by the Director.

3. Throughout the writing process, the student is to follow the NIU thesis guidelines, which can be found at http://www.grad.niu.edu/grad/thesis/thesis_guidelines.pdf.

4. A thesis written in the target language needs a one page abstract in English; a thesis written in English needs a one page abstract in the target language.

Setting up the Defense

1. The student should consult with his/her Committee members about deadlines and about setting the defense date.

2. The defense should take place at least two weeks before the deadline established by the Graduate School, i.e., two weeks before the date to submit the post-defense version of the thesis electronically (see Graduation Deadlines).

3. At least three weeks prior to the defense date the student must provide each member of the Committee with a copy of the document to be defended. At this time the student must also deliver to each member of the Committee information on the classes he/she took within our department (see Portfolio and Summary of Courses below).
4. Two weeks before the defense the student will receive one question from each member of her/his committee. Based on these questions, the student will prepare for the final examination part of the defense. These questions will deal with select subject matter from the courses the student took during his/her M.A. studies. The student will respond orally in the target language to these questions during the defense.

**The M.A. Thesis Defense**

1. The Defense is a professional event for all parties involved.

2. The student may invite other faculty members, fellow students, family and/or friends to the defense, which may be open to the public if the student so wishes. All of the guests present during the defense may address questions to the candidate at the end of the session.

3. The Defense has the following parts:
   - a 20-25 minute presentation of the thesis in the target language
   - a question and answer segment concerning the thesis
   - a final oral examination based on the candidate's M.A. course work in the target language

4. Once the formal defense is finished, the Director will request that the student and his/her guests leave the room to give the faculty members of the M.A. committee time to deliberate. When the student is called back for the results, no guests will be allowed to return to the room.

5. The defense will generally last between one hour and one hour and a half.

6. Any M.A. defense celebrations should be reserved for post-defense and should take place elsewhere.

**Responsibilities of the Director and Committee Members**

1. Once a chapter of the thesis or a section of the translation has been approved by the Director, the student will provide copies of the chapter to the other committee members.

2. The other members of the committee should return the work with comments to the student within two weeks of its receipt.

3. The other members of the committee should share with the student copies of any written messages sent to the Director, related to the thesis /translation.

4. It is crucial that the Director and the other Committee members communicate regularly with each other on all questions pertaining to the thesis / translation the student is preparing. Any suggestions given to the student by any of the committee members should also be communicated to the Director in a prompt manner.

**Portfolio and Summary of Courses**

It is strongly advised that students keep all class materials until after graduation (syllabi, reading lists, reading assignments, written papers, graded quizzes, examinations, presentation notes, etc.). These
materials will not only be the basis for the defense examination but will also form the core of the student’s portfolio.

The summary of the courses taken by the student should follow this model:

1- One course per sheet
2- On each sheet list the title of the class (e.g. FLSP 538)
3- Include the name of the professor who taught the class
4- Note when the class was taken (semester and year)
5- List all the readings (articles and books) assigned for this class
6- Include the title of the final paper written for this class and a brief description of its contents or, in the case of a translation class, include a brief description of the source language original

For the Portfolio only:

7- Summary of courses
8- One artifact for each class. In the case of a translation class, include the original and the translation.
9- Turn in Portfolio to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies