Arabic Placement

All students with some prior knowledge of Arabic, regardless of where it was acquired, must take a placement exam to determine their level before they can register for any Arabic class beyond ARAB 101. The scope and coverage of language coursework varies greatly by institution and program.

Placement Exams

Who should take an Arabic placement exam?

- Students who seek admission into the Arabic program and have completed Arabic courses outside the UW.
- Students who have studied on their own or outside the UW or who have acquired Arabic through residence in or travel to an Arabic speaking country.
- Students who have studied abroad and who want to do one or both of the following:
  a) convert credits to fulfill the NELC language requirement.
  b) register for the next level of Arabic.
- UW students who have a gap of one year or longer between taking Arabic courses.
- Students who did not receive a passing grade of 2.0 in the third quarter of a level but wish to continue to the next level in the program.
- Students who wish to waive the Arabic language requirement for their NELC degree.

I took an Arabic placement exam in my previous program; can I substitute these results for a NELC Placement exam?

No. No other exams are accepted in lieu of the NELC placement exam.

What does the exam for placement into Intermediate Arabic cover?

This exam covers the material that University of Washington Arabic students cover in the First Year of Elementary Arabic (101, 102, 103): all of Alif Baa’ and al-Kitaab Part One, 3rd edition, GU Press. It includes sections on reading, listening, vocabulary and grammar. The test takes two hours and consists of handwritten responses on a printed test.

What does the exam for placement into Advanced Arabic courses cover?

This exam covers material that Arabic students cover in Intermediate Arabic (201, 202, 203). Effective Autumn quarter 2013, Intermediate Arabic (201, 202, 203) will cover Part Two of al-Kitaab, 3rd edition, GU Press, 2013. It includes sections on reading, listening, vocabulary and grammar. The test takes 2 hours and consists of handwritten responses on a printed test. See Arabic Language Program Overview section (below) for details on what the Arabic courses cover.

What does the 3rd Year Placement Exam cover?

The 3rd Year Placement Exam covers the material that University of Washington Arabic students cover in three quarters of Arab 401(Current Issues in Arab Media). It includes sections on reading, listening, vocabulary, and grammar. The test takes 2 hours and consists of handwritten responses on a printed test. See Arabic Language Program Overview section (below) for details.
Do placement exams fulfill the NELC Arabic language requirement?
Placement exams serve to place students into the appropriate level OR to verify the level of work completed in non-UW courses. Students seeking to transfer Arabic credits from another institution may receive UW/NELC Arabic credits if they pass the appropriate placement exam.

Deficiency Exam

Who should take the Arabic Deficiency Exam?
Students who have learned Arabic informally, at home, in high school, or through residence or travel in an Arabic-speaking country may take the Arabic Deficiency Exam to satisfy the UW admission requirement for two units of high school foreign language study.

Placement into ARABIC 102, 103, 202, 203, 402, 403
A student with any background in Arabic who wishes to join the second or third quarters of Elementary, Intermediate, or Media Arabic must take the final exam with the current class (i.e., a student who wants to enter 202 would take the 201 final exam). This must be approved by the instructor and arranged in advance. Arabic final exams are given on the Saturday after the last day of instruction every quarter. A score of 75% or better is required before permission to enroll in the next quarter of Arabic is granted.

Does the Arabic Deficiency Exam fulfill the UW language requirement for a degree?
No. No language credits are earned by passing the Arabic Deficiency Exam. The exam serves only to establish a student's knowledge of two units of Arabic at the high school level for UW admission.

What does the Arabic Deficiency Exam cover?
This exam covers the material that University of Washington Arabic students cover in the first two quarters of Elementary Arabic: Alif Baa'and Lessons 1-8 of Al-Kitaab Part One, 3rd edition. It includes sections on reading, listening, vocabulary and grammar. The test takes 2 hours and consists of handwritten responses on a printed test.

What is the minimum passing grade on an Arabic placement deficiency exam?
Arabic placement or deficiency exam. The minimum passing grade is 75%.

How many times can I take an Arabic placement deficiency exam?
Students can take the exam twice and are allowed only one attempt per calendar year. For example, if a student does not pass the test the first time, it may be taken again the following summer. If a passing score is not achieved on the second attempt, no further attempts are allowed. When are the Arabic placement deficiency exams offered? Arabic placement exams are offered beginning two weeks after the end of spring quarter, up until two weeks before the beginning of autumn quarter. (weekends excluded). Exams will be graded after the exam period closes. Students are advised to take the test as soon as they return from summer study abroad programs or elsewhere. You will be notified of the results by the Testing Center via email. Students who wish to continue studying Arabic at UW should contact the NELC Advisor if they have any questions.

Where do I go to take an Arabic placement deficiency exam?
The exams are administered by the University of Washington's Office of Educational Assessment (OEA). The OEA is located on campus in Schmitz Hall. Testing is not allowed off-site, abroad, or at any other institution. Students must schedule an appointment with the Testing Center ahead of time. There is no walk-in testing.

Can non-matriculated or Access students take Arabic classes at UW?
Arabic classes are not available to non-matriculated or Access students. Auditing is not permitted. Registration is first come, first
Are there courses in Colloquial Arabic?
NELC does not offer courses in Colloquial Arabic. Many of our students travel to the region in which they are interested, where they continue their study by "living" the language. They find little difficulty using their strong MSA basis to learn the dialect of the country where they work and live. It has been pedagogically proven that it is much easier for students to learn Colloquial Arabic after they have had training in MSA.

Can native speakers of Arabic take Arabic courses at UW?
Students who are native speakers of Arabic cannot enroll in ARAB 101, 102, 103; 105, or ARAB 201, 202, 203, 205; or ARAB 401 (Current Issues in Arab Media). The UW defines a “native speaker” as anyone who has received instruction in school through the seventh grade in the language.

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