

**French for Heritage Speakers Placement**  
**Department of French**  
**School of Languages and Cultures**  
**10/06/15**

### **1. Description**

The term heritage speaker refers to second or third generation immigrants raised in a natural environment where the minority language was spoken in addition to the majority language. Typically, heritage language learners do not receive formal instruction in the home language until later in life (high-school or college) but have good oral skills. This, however, is not always the case and there is a wide range of proficiency variability across the bilingual continuum. For this reason, all students exposed to French during early childhood or adolescence, and who self identify as heritage language learners are required to make an appointment with the Chair of the Department of French for a formal interview to determine appropriate placement.

The above criterion of what constitutes a heritage language learner is based entirely on previous linguistic background (exposure to the family language during early childhood or adolescence – generally before the age of 14) and not on ethnic or cultural background. Students who immigrate to the United States past the age of 14 typically have a fully developed native grammatical system, and are recommended to enroll in content language courses.

### **2. Placement Procedure**

Students exposed to French in a natural setting before the age of 14 are recommended to make an appointment with the Chair of the Department of French. This is regardless of their level of proficiency in French or language of instruction in high school. Based on the results of the interview, the department will recommend placement in either one of the French content courses or in lower levels of French instruction (FR 101, 102, 201 or 202). Students placed in a lower-level language course should complete the regular language sequence (FR 101- FR 202) if they are interested in completing a Major or Minor in French.

### **3. Questions and Concerns**

Any questions or concerns regarding the Heritage Language placement should be sent to the Chair of the Department of French. For specific questions regarding placement tests (dates, testing hours and location, required documentation) please contact Jason Baumer, SLC Language Testing and Placement Coordinator at [jbaumer@purdue.edu](mailto:jbaumer@purdue.edu).