More Information on Language Study:

Ordinarily these tests include written, aural comprehension, and oral elements and may vary according to the level of placement being sought. However, specific details about the tests are not made available, nor are the tests published. These tests are intended primarily to facilitate the placement process.

Students without prior language background would ordinarily have to devote a total of six courses to mastering an East Asian language to the required third-year level. However, in order to satisfy the language requirement and complete the degree within the standard two years, students often undertake an intensive second-year summer program between their first and second years, at the Harvard Summer School or another approved program. RSEA has no funding for summer study; however, we encourage students to apply for funding from area centers (e.g., the Asia Center, Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Korea Institute, and Reischauer Institute for Japanese Studies) and from outside sources. Students should specify in their funding applications that the language study is required to fulfill the RSEA degree requirement. Students engaging in language study away from Harvard should plan to take a placement test upon their return.