Starting a language from scratch at university

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MML Cambridge course choices: ab initio options

Languages in MML:

French – German – Italian – Portuguese – Russian – Spanish
ab initio: all except French

• Two languages, either two post A Level or one post A Level and one ab initio
• MML language and History
• MML language and Classical language
• MML language and Middle Eastern language

(additional languages in second and final years)
MML Cambridge ab initio courses

www.mml.cam.ac.uk

→ ‘Subjects’ → Year 1 Part IA Option A: ab initio

German – Italian – Portuguese – Russian – Spanish

Admission: A*AA; one modern language at A Level or equivalent
Teaching and assessment: first year ab initio

- Normally 4 - 5 hours contact hours per week (Faculty teaching in combination with College supervision)
- 20 teaching weeks / vacation study / language courses abroad
- Course book and own / online resources (Moodle worksites)
- A1: Use of FL (textual comprehension / writing / grammar)
- A2: Translation
- A3: Literature and Culture
- Oral examination
## Courses in Part I (first and second year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ab initio</th>
<th>post A-level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First year</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral A</td>
<td>Oral B</td>
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<tr>
<td>A1 Use of FL</td>
<td>B1 Use of FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>A2 Translation into and out of FL</td>
<td>B2 Translation out of FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>A3 Introduction to Literature and Culture</td>
<td>non-language module</td>
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<td><strong>Second year</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral B</td>
<td>B3 FL through Audiovisual Media plus Translation into FL (= one module)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B1 Use of FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>B2 Translation out of FL</td>
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</tbody>
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*plus 2 or 3 non-language modules*
Courses in Part II (Year Abroad and final year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ab initio / post A-level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year abroad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year Abroad Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Examination C [about Year Abroad Project]</td>
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<tr>
<td>C1 Translation into and out of FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>C2 Text and Culture: commentary in FL on text in FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>plus 3 non-language modules</td>
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Learning a language from scratch: preparation

How can students prepare to be interviewed about a language they haven’t started learning yet?

http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/applying/how
Learning a new language from scratch: preparation

How can they make a start?
Learning a new language from scratch

- → www.mml.cam.ac.uk
- → ‘Subjects’
- → language of choice
- → Go to ‘Undergraduates’ (or ‘Courses’)
- → Year 1 - Part IA Option A: *ab initio*
Elements taught and assessed

- Reading/listening comprehension
- Guided/free writing
- Grammar
- Translation in and out of the language
- Oral proficiency
- Literary analysis and commentary
The poetry slam is a US import that young Germans have found extremely attractive. Slam nights in Berlin – the capital of the German scene – are chaotic and lively. Not only do the new poets present their poems and stories, the audience also gets involved by making loud noises.