

American Sign Language Motion

Intent of Motion: To allow students who are proficient in American Sign Language the opportunity to request approval for BA clearance from the CAS Associate Dean for Humanities. The procedure would be consistent with that established for other languages not currently taught at U of O. This motion would not change the ability of departments to specify required or recommended languages specific to an academic major.

Motion 1: to accept American Sign Language (ASL) as fulfilling the BA second language requirement. Given that the U of O does not currently offer ASL at a level that would meet the BA requirement, the CAS Associate Dean of Humanities will determine whether or not a student has demonstrated proficiency at a level equivalent to the third term of the second year.

Academic departments would continue to have the ability to identify specific foreign languages (i.e. in Art ^{Envy} History ^{History}, Classics, Music) or skills (i.e. reading competency, conversational ability) as part of the stated requirements or recommendations for completion of a specific major.

Current Practice

Proficiency in a foreign language for the Bachelor of Arts degree at UO is determined by:

1. C-/P or better in the third term of a second-year language, or a higher level course taught in the foreign language. (UO credit, AP credit, CLEP credit, transfer credit).
2. Satisfactory completion of an examination administered by the appropriate department, showing proficiency at the equiv. second year level.
3. Students who wish to demonstrate proficiency in a language not taught at the University of Oregon are directed to the College of Arts & Sciences Associate Dean of Humanities.
4. An appropriate score from an Achievement test in foreign languages
5. English as a second language will clear the BA requirement if there is evidence on a transcript of formal education in the first language, and after completion of the UO writing requirement.

Relevant Chronology

1994: Substitution procedure/policy established by a Provost appointed committee for students needing to request course substitutions for either the BA or BS requirements based on a documented disability.

1994: Undergraduate Council discussion regarding whether or not to allow American Sign Language (ASL) to meet the BA language requirement. Motion: to NOT accept ASL as meeting the BA requirement. Passes 7 yes, 3 no, 1 abstention.

1995: Senate Bill 475, Ch. 687, sec 3: If the State Board of Higher Education determines that enrollment is sufficient to make an American Sign Language class economically viable and if qualified instructors are available, the board may offer to students courses for credit in ASL at any institution of higher education within the State System of Higher Education. Such courses shall satisfy any second language elective requirement.

1995 approx: Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer agreements specifically include ASL as meeting second language requirements at Oregon Community Colleges.

Fall 1997: All UO applicants graduating from high school Spring 1997 or after must show evidence of completing two years of a second language. ASL meets the second language admission requirement.

April 1997: A brief discussion at the UGC in response to a request to re-visit the issue of ASL counting for the BA. Committee agreed to review again if a request came from an academic department.

1998 approx: Western Oregon University, Faculty Senate votes to allow ASL to count for their second language BA requirement. This decision was based primarily on SB 475.

January 2000: ASUO requested discussion of the ASL issue, and reported via the UGC chair that the Linguistics department would bring forth a proposal. Copies of the older minutes on this issue were disseminated to the Council.