

American Sign Language program technical requirements

American Sign Language is a visual language. Expression involves the hands, arms, torso and face. Reception involves the eyes.

The student must possess the fine motor skills to adequately articulate ASL signs. These signs consist of specific handshapes, movements, locations, and palm orientations. In addition, the student must be able to produce all of the letters of the manual alphabet and classifier handshapes. These skills are vital. Like spoken languages, ASL has minimal pairs: the change in one parameter changes the meaning of what is being conveyed. It is also imperative that the student be capable of producing non-manual markers and facial expressions because a large part of ASL grammar is conveyed on the face and upper body.

These standards evaluate one's ability to execute a series of physical movements and do not require prior knowledge of ASL. In the event you are subject to an evaluation, all signs and handshapes will be demonstrated for you to copy. Designated ASL faculty members will administer the evaluation.

Assessment of a student's ability to meet these requirements will use a series of evaluations in the following three categories:

1. Visual ability
2. Parameters of Sign Language
3. Manual alphabet

A student must be able to pass evaluations in all three categories to be eligible to take any American Sign Language course under the prefix ASL.

1. Visual ability

All ASL classes are conducted without voice. Any accommodation that introduces verbal communication violates the academic integrity of the course. During class, signs are demonstrated by the instructor and through the use of media displayed on a screen. Students frequently participate in interactions with their classmates. A student must be able to visually receive information in the classroom. Therefore, a student must have at least the following visual ability:

- Able to read the manual alphabet when signed at a distance of 10 feet

2. Parameters of American Sign Language

The student must produce each of the signs listed. The signs will be demonstrated on tape or in person one at a time. The student will be allowed 15 seconds to produce that sign and repeat it once. Each item will be marked correct or incorrect.

Passing is defined as no more than 3 incorrect productions for this entire section. **Some of the signs below fit into more than one of the parameter categories. This will not affect the evaluation.**

Movement

School
Clean
Paper
Sit
Chair
Borrow

Supervise
Take-care-of
More
Number
Only

Orientation

Your
My
Cook

Here
Shelves

Placement

Mother
Father
Girl

Boy
Hat
Fine

Shape

Green
Blue
Restaurant

Arizona
Cafeteria

3. Manual alphabet

A significant amount of information in ASL is transmitted through fingerspelling. Therefore, the student must be able to produce every letter of the ASL manual alphabet (A-Z). This production must be at a reasonable pace. An average student will achieve a pace of one letter per second by the end of their first semester of ASL. For this evaluation, the student is allowed significantly more time.

For this segment, the letters will be demonstrated in person or on tape. The student will be allowed a maximum of 10 seconds to reproduce each letter. The student must be able to hold each letter for three seconds.

A student will pass this segment if they can accurately produce at least 23 of the 26 letters in five minutes or less.

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