

**REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO IMPLEMENT A
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE/ENGLISH INTERPRETING
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
PREPARED BY UW-MILWAUKEE**

ABSTRACT

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee proposes to establish a Bachelor of Science degree in American Sign Language (ASL)/English Interpreting. The program responds to the increasing demand to prepare students for educational and community interpreting. The program requires many ASL Studies program courses, therefore making a minor or double-major in ASL Studies feasible. The elevation of the existing Interpreter Training Program (ITP) submajor to a major will also more easily facilitate professional credentials and opportunities for graduates of the program. The current sequence is comprehensive in that it prepares students through a program of study that offers rigorous academics, experiential learning opportunities, and careful course selection so that graduates are qualified for one or both Wisconsin state interpreting licenses. Overall, this major requires a total of 120 credits (campus requirement). Some students will have varying needs for general education requirements (GERs) based on their Math, English and ASL placement. Program requirements are intended to streamline completion of GERs. These include foundational ASL language, knowledge, and skill development courses that prepare students for entry into the interpreting major. The interpreting major has a total of 58 credits. Students who apply during the spring admission period begin the 2-year sequence in the subsequent fall semester.

PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION

University Name

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Title of Proposed Academic Degree Program

American Sign Language/English Interpreting

Degree Designation(s)

Bachelor of Science

Mode of Delivery

Single institution

Face-to-face

Department or Functional Equivalent

Department of Teaching and Learning

College, School, or Functional Equivalent

School of Education

Proposed Date of Implementation

September 2023

Projected Enrollments and Graduates by Year Five

Table 1 represents enrollment and graduation projections for students entering the program over the next five years and those currently enrolled in the Interpreter Training Program submajor. It is anticipated that current submajor students will transfer to the ASL/English Interpreting major. By the end of Year 5, it is expected 20 new students will have enrolled in the program and 19 students will have graduated from the program. The average student retention rate is projected to be (90%) between year 3 and 4 for a cohort entering as juniors.

Table 1: Five-Year Academic Degree Program Enrollment Projections

Students/Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
New Students (JR)	12	15	15	20	20
Continuing Students	12	11	14	14	19
Total Enrollment	24	26	29	34	39
Graduating Students	12	11	14	14	19

Tuition Structure

For students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science degree in American Sign Language/English Interpreting program, standard tuition and fee rates will apply. For the current academic year, residential tuition, and segregated fees total \$4804.86 per semester for a full-time student enrolled in (12-18) per semester. Of this amount, \$4,045.66 is attributable to tuition and \$759.30 is attributable to segregated fees. Nonresident tuition and segregated fees total \$10,737.30 per semester for a full-time student enrolled in (12-18) per semester. Of this amount, \$9,978.00 is attributable to tuition and \$759.30 is attributable to segregated fees.

Students are assessed an ASL Lab Fee of \$50.00 for the following courses: EXCEDUC 305, 306, 349, 354, 359, and 364. Fees fund equipment and materials for the lab where students complete coursework, class activities, recordings, and group assignments.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

Overview of the Program

The program requires 120 credits including GERs. Of these, 40 are prerequisites specifically related to the major and 58 are major requirements, as detailed below. Students are encouraged to consider the Cultures and Communities Certificate and complete the ASL Studies Program for a double major.

Student Learning Outcomes and Program Objectives

Students who earn a Bachelor of Science in American Sign Language/English Interpreting will learn about language, culture, and how to facilitate conversations. We work to develop well-rounded interpreters who value and consider others' perspectives, who are culturally sensitive and empathetic practitioners who continually work to better themselves and the interpreting profession. The cohorts of students take courses together in sequence. Skills courses are designed to build off the prior semester, ensuring that students are advancing their skills and preparing to work in the community. Within the skills courses, students will have specialized areas of study regarding various interpreting settings, including:

Interpreting in K-12 Educational Settings
Interpreting in Post-Secondary Settings
Medical Interpreting
Mental Health Interpreting
Video Relay Interpreting

Field Experience:

Students are required to complete field experience hours throughout the interpreting program (final four semesters after program admission). In the first three semesters (Fall I, Spring I & Fall II), students are required to complete a minimum of 100 hours of fieldwork outside the class. Students will experience a variety of settings and types of learning experiences. In the seminars attached to the fieldwork, students discuss their experiences, any ethical issues, and the role of the interpreter.

In the final semester of the program, students have two internship experiences: one in a K-12 interpreting setting and the other in a community interpreting setting. Students complete 150-175 hours in the K-12 interpreting internship and approximately 240 hours in the community interpreting internship.

Upon completion, graduates of the program will have the ability to:

1. Exhibit verbal and interpersonal skills to enhance professionalism and marketability.

2. Convey a solid understanding of best practices/processes in the field by applying the Code of Professional Conduct to the interpreting profession by exhibiting integrity, confidence, critical thinking, and focus on analysis of problem(s) and solution(s).
3. Produce professional quality work that demonstrates bilingual/bicultural competence.
4. Model self-analysis skills and the ability to develop personal and professional goals related to ongoing professional development.
5. Provide interpreting services that reflect awareness of and sensitivity to culturally and ethnically diverse groups.
6. Plan and undertake a structured interview and use effective interviewing tools and techniques.

Program Requirements and Curriculum

Overall, the ASL/English Interpreting Program requires a total of 120 credits. Program requirements are intended to streamline completion of GERs. Credits will vary based on the student, based on their Math, English and ASL placement. We advise that they need a minimum of 120 credits and that they may need more. In terms of a 4-year plan, the first two years focus on GER, language courses, and interpreting foundation coursework. Service learning is infused throughout our program. Beginning with ASL courses, students are in the community, supplementing what is learned in the classroom. The value of the immersion experience is reflected in the ASL Living Learning Community in the residence halls.

The final two years, students are placed into a cohort model, which is designed to encourage students to develop a network of interpreting colleagues and become a support network during the program. Classes are taught that build skills in interpreting and transliterating for use in a variety of settings. Additional classes focus on content related to Deafness and the profession of interpreting, including ethics, community resources, and the interpersonal skills necessary for appropriate functioning within the interpreter role.

The four-semester practicum provides a necessary social and professional link with the Deaf community, and includes socializing with the Deaf and interpreter communities, doing community service, teaching and/or tutoring in sign, observation of professional interpreters, and hands-on interpreting experiences. This reflects the program's as well as the university's dedication to a multicultural mission, while at the same time allowing students to both practice their skills and enhance their learning. The goal of the program is to produce flexible, knowledgeable, culturally sensitive, and skilled entry level interpreters.

Program Admission Requirements:

EXCEDUC 348, Introduction to the Profession of Interpreting, with a grade of C or better;

EXCEDUC 352, American Deaf Culture, with a grade of C or better;

EXCEDUC 301, EXCEDUC 302, EXCEDUC 303, EXCEDUC 304, EXCEDUC 305, and EXCEDUC 306, American Sign Language I-VI. ASL I-II with a grade of C or better; ASL III-VI with a grade of B- or better;

EXCEDUC 320, Intro to Interpreting Skills: English to American Sign Language with a grade of B- or better;

EXCEDUC 321, Intro to Interpreting Skills: American Sign Language to English with a grade of B- or better;

58 credits complete;

Cumulative GPA of 2.5; and

Completion of Screening Interview, which occurs after application is submitted.

Table 2 illustrates the program curriculum for the proposed program. Students must satisfy the general education requirements of the University: Oral and Written Communication parts A and B, and Quantitative Literacy parts A and B, Foreign Language and breadth requirements (3 credits of arts, 6 of humanities, 6 credits of social sciences, 6 of natural sciences, 3 credits of cultural diversity, of which 12 credits are satisfied through program requirements). The program requires 58 credits of major course requirements.

Table 2: Bachelor of Science in American Sign Language/English Interpreting Program Curriculum		
Prior to Admission or Unsequenced		
Program requirements (These meet general education requirements)		
THEATRE 111 (GER-Arts)	Theatre Games	3 credits
COMMUN 103 (GER-Humanities)	Public Speaking	3 credits
EXCEDUC 330 (GER- Social Sciences)	Deaf History	3 credits
EXCEDUC 352*(GER -Social Sciences)	American Deaf Culture	3 credits
Program prerequisites or support courses:		
EXCEDUC 301*	American Sign Language I	3 credits
EXCEDUC 302*	American Sign Language II	3 credits

EXCEDUC 303**	American Sign Language III	3 credits
EXCEDUC 304**	American Sign Language IV	3 credits
EXCEDUC 324	ASL IV Lab	1 credit
EXCEDUC 305**	American Sign Language V	3 credits
EXCEDUC 325	ASL V Lab	1 credit
EXCEDUC 306**	American Sign Language VI	3 credits
EXCEDUC 326	ASL VI Lab	1 credit
EXCEDUC 320**	Introduction to Interpreting: English to American Sign Language	3 credits
EXCEDUC 321**	Introduction to Interpreting: American Sign Language to English	3 credits
EXCEDUC 348*	Introduction to the Profession of Interpreting	3 credits
ED PSY 330	Introduction to Learning and Development	3 credits
EXCEDUC 300	The Exceptional Individual	3 credits
EXCEDUC 510 or 520	Classifiers -or- ASL Literature	3 credits
EXCEDUC 327	Classifiers Lab	1 credit
Academic degree program or major course requirements: Sequenced courses after program admission		
Fall I		
EXCEDUC 335	Educational Interpreting I	3 credits
EXCEDUC 345	Foundations of English to ASL Interpreting	3 credits
EXCEDUC 347	Foundations of ASL to English Interpreting	3 credits
EXCEDUC 349	Field Work: Interacting in the Deaf Community I	3 credits
EXCEDUC 358	ASL/English Linguistics I	3 credits
Spring I		
EXCEDUC 336	Postsecondary Interpreting I	3 credits
EXCEDUC 337	Video Relay Services Interpreting I	3 credits
EXCEDUC 338	Introduction to Healthcare Interpreting	3 credits
EXCEDUC 354	Field Work: Interacting in the Deaf Community II	3 credits
EXCEDUC 363	ASL/English Linguistics II	3 credits
EXCEDUC 371	Strategies for the National Interpreter Certification Exam	1 credit
Fall II		
EXCEDUC 359	Fieldwork: Interacting in the Deaf Community III	3 credits
EXCEDUC 365	Educational Interpreting II	3 credits
EXCEDUC 366	Postsecondary Interpreting II	3 credits
EXCEDUC 367	Video Relay Services Interpreting II	3 credits
EXCEDUC 368	Medical and Mental Healthcare Interpreting	3 credits

Spring II		
EXCEDUC 364	Fieldwork: Interacting in the Deaf Community IV	12 credits

Total Credits Following Program Admission	58 credit(s)
Total Credits	120 credits minimum

* With a grade of C or better

**With a grade of B- or better

Proficiency exams are required for graduation.

Assessment of Outcomes and Objectives

1. Exit interviews with graduating majors each spring semester;
2. Annual review of transcripts of graduating majors to collect data on time to degree, courses taken, other credentials completed, GPA, and grades;
3. Alumni surveys of undergraduate students at regular intervals to determine views toward their preparation for employment or advanced studies, track career choices, and solicit suggestions for improvement;
4. Enrollment data collection in undergraduate courses to monitor demand, areas of strength and weakness in curriculum;
5. Assessment of major using WEAVE
6. Interpreter performance exams

Diversity

The program recognizes that people have distinct cultural, linguistic, social, class, ethnic backgrounds, or national origin. We actively seek input, counsel, and involvement from many communities and from stakeholders who are under-represented in our field. The curriculum encourages interdisciplinary collaboration inside and outside the classroom through fieldwork seminars and field experiences. We strive to advance a diverse community of interpreters fluent in language and culture, engaging in critical thinking and service learning. For prerequisite major classes, students work with the Center for Community-Based Learning, Leadership, and Research (CCBLLR) where they volunteer in multiple settings with a variety of consumers. During their time in the major, students have a minimum of 100 hours of fieldwork each semester, working in various settings with diverse consumers. In the final semester of the program, students complete two full-time internships, both in K-12 and community settings, serving a wide range of populations.

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) American Sign Language/English Interpreting Program's purpose is to educate interpreters in the process of facilitating communication. Students will work towards integrating knowledge of cultural and language differences into their work by respecting the unique needs of each individual consumer in their communication. It is the role of the interpreter to provide communication without

bias or judgment, using language most readily understood by the consumers involved, guided and bound by the Code of Professional Conduct as developed by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID). UWM is dedicated to challenging the status quo by promoting innovation, strong partnerships, and multiculturalism throughout its programming. UW-Milwaukee, the UW-System's most diverse campus, has a robust array of academic and student support services that American Sign Language/English Interpreting students are encouraged to access including the UWM Student Success Center, The Dean of Students, The Office of Equity and Diversity, The Cultures and Community Program, and the Multicultural Student Centers.

Collaborative Nature of the Program

The interpreting program has several collaborations. Some highlights include the Sorenson Synergy Program available to our students. This unique opportunity allows interpreting students to visit the Sorenson Call Center in West Allis to observe Video Relay Interpreters at work and experience mock interpreting situations. The program has a well-established partnership with the UW-Milwaukee College of Nursing, which offers interprofessional educational opportunities for students of nursing and interpreting. In addition, we collaborate each semester with the UWM Theatre Department. Our Postsecondary Interpreting I and II courses require a semester long project, which requires script analysis and interpreting a play for the UWM Peck School of the Arts student productions.

The program is currently working with UW-Green Bay (UWGB) on a distance learning track. We are exploring a co-enrollment agreement, which will allow for a limited number of UWGB students to take GERs at UWGB while taking prerequisites via distance learning at UWM. UWGB students will be integrated with face-to-face students if accepted into the American Sign Language/English Interpreting major.

We currently have an articulation agreement with Northcentral Technical College (NTC). NTC students who have completed coursework in their Interpreter Training Program can transfer to UW-Milwaukee and complete an undergraduate degree as an American Sign Language Studies submajor.

Projected Time to Degree

1. If a student has no experience with American Sign Language (ASL), they will need to begin with ASL 1. It will take 4-5 years for completion.
2. For undergraduate or 2nd degree students, it is possible to complete the program in 4 years if a student begins their first semester at UWM with ASL 1 and commits to taking ASL courses over the summer.
3. If a student has background experience with ASL, and already has a bachelor's degree, they can shorten the timeline to program completion by taking the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) and receiving credit for the beginner ASL courses.

4. If a student is an undergraduate and has ASL fluency, they may be able to complete in 4 years without taking summer courses.
5. Students who meet the major and testing requirements will graduate with an endorsement from the American Sign Language/English Interpreting Program. Requirements are as follows: completion of all Education, BS: ASL/English Interpreting Program major professional courses with a B- or better and GPA of 2.75; B- or better in designated skills courses
6. Successful completion of two interpreting internships (K-12 educational interpreting & community interpreting internships)
7. Completion of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) course requirements with a C or better: ED PSY 330, EXCEDUC 300, COMMUN 103
8. Passing score on the Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation (CASLI) Generalist Knowledge Exam.
9. Passing score for at least one of the following interpreting performance exams: Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) – First pass Test of English Proficiency (TEP), then pass BEI Basic Performance Exam; Educational Interpreter Proficiency Assessment (EIPA) – 3.3 or higher; Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf: National Interpreter Certification (For eligible second-degree students).

The program's requirements are designed to prepare graduates for Wisconsin's interpreter licenses. Upon graduation, students may choose to apply for one or both of the following:

- Department of Public Instruction's Educational Interpreter License, which allows an interpreter to work in K-12 educational settings.
- Department of Safety and Professional Services' Sign Language Interpreter License, which allows an interpreter to work in community settings other than K-12 education.

Program Review

The UW-Milwaukee Academic Program & Curriculum Committee reviews newly approved majors after 5 years. The committee then reviews programs on a ten-year cycle.

Accreditation

The Bachelor of American Sign Language/English Interpreting will be subject to Higher Learning Commission (HLC) review. The program aligns with but is not accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education Standards (CCIE) including overall program quality, student access to information, faculty credentials, curriculum, teaching-learning practices, knowledge/skills competencies, field experiences, outcomes, assessments, sustainability, and improvement.

JUSTIFICATION

Rationale and Relation to Mission

The Bachelor of Science in American Sign Language/English Interpreting contributes to the mission of the UW System through the preparation of culturally sensitive professionals with skills to facilitate communication for the Deaf and hearing communities. This fits the goal of the UW System mission to “to extend knowledge and its application beyond the boundaries of its campuses, and to serve and stimulate society by developing in students heightened intellectual, cultural, and humane sensitivities, ... professional ... expertise, and a sense of purpose.” The program works to develop well-rounded interpreters who value and consider others’ perspectives, who are culturally sensitive and empathetic practitioners who continually work to better themselves and the interpreting profession.

In accordance with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Mission Statement this program will address the following goals pertaining to diversity, quality, professional preparation, and collaboration:

1. Enhancing a diverse community of ASL/English interpreters fluent in language and culture, who engage in critical thinking and service learning.
2. Preparing highly qualified students for sustainable and meaningful employment in a growing profession.
3. Prepare students for professional work in a variety of educational and community settings.
4. Continue to develop and maintain model collaborative ventures and partnerships.

Additionally, UW-Milwaukee is currently collaborating with other institutions to create pathways and eventual entry into the American Sign Language/English Interpreting Program. These efforts align well with the goal of recruiting and attracting high quality students.

It is anticipated that a stand-alone major in American Sign Language/English Interpreting will be more visible as a degree option to prospective students and easier to market than the current ITP submajor in Education. The Education degree includes certification programs for classroom teachers for Pre-K-12 settings. The ITP is often overlooked within this context. The application process would also be made much clearer for university applicants seeking this program.

Furthermore, establishing the stand-alone major would change the program’s Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. Under the Education B.S. degree, the ITP is categorized as CIP Code 13, Education, defined as the following: “Instructional programs that focus on the theory and practice of learning and teaching, and related research, administrative and support services.”

The stand-alone major would allow the program to be classified under CIP code 16.1603, Sign Language Interpretation and Translation: “A program that prepares individuals to function as simultaneous interpreters of American Sign Language.” This classification would clarify reporting processes for the National Center for Educational Statistics, for which our current program is hidden.

University Program Array

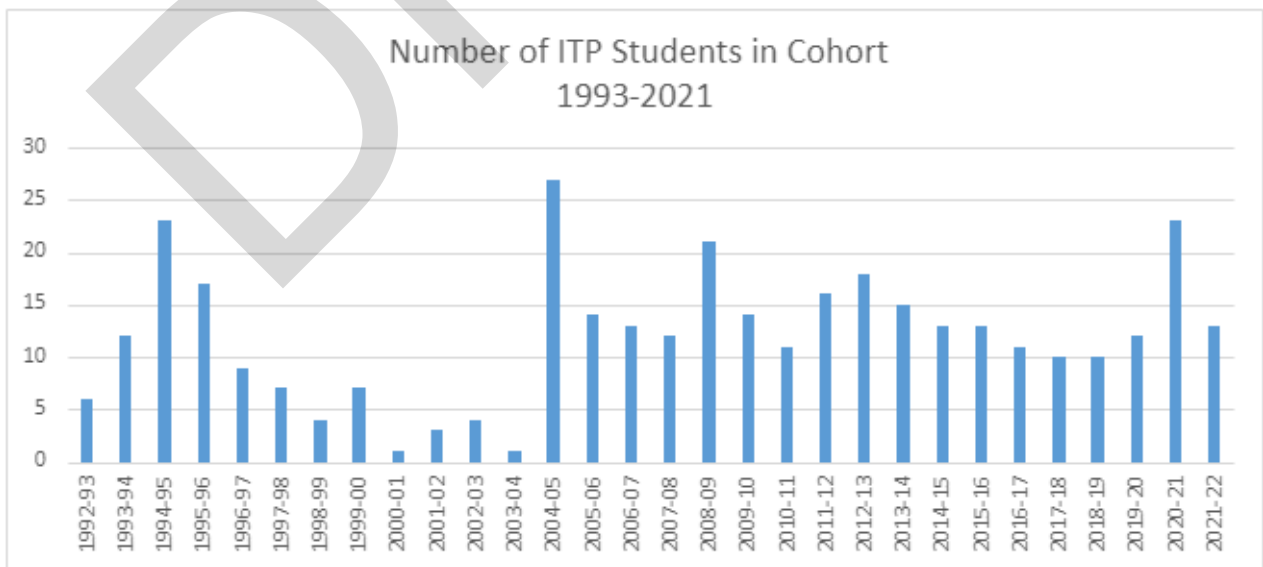
The interdisciplinary network of faculty collaborators in American Sign Language/English Interpreting come from across the schools, colleges, and departments at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Students across the UW-Milwaukee campus already pursue the ITP submajor alongside other programs and certificates in the School of Education, which include the ASL Studies submajor and Autism Spectrum Disorder certificate. At the College of Letters and Sciences, students often complete the Cultures and Communities certificate while completing ITP coursework.

Other Programs in the University of Wisconsin System

UW-Milwaukee offers the only bachelor’s-level program for ASL/English interpreting in the state of Wisconsin. There is no duplication of other programs in the UW System. This is significant because a bachelor’s degree is required to be eligible for national certification testing. Our interpreting program is aligned with both state licenses, which offers graduates more options upon graduation in terms of employment.

Need as Suggested by Current Student Demand

The ITP began in 1975 and has been running cohorts since that time. Initially, it began as a certificate program and then it was changed to a submajor in Education in 1993. Since the inception of the submajor, the program has awarded over 300 B.S. degrees in Education/submajor Interpreting Training Program.



Need as Suggested by Market Demand

As more hearing and Deaf people learn sign language, the range of careers open to that skill has broadened. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics says a career as an interpreter is growing much faster than average, with 19% growth predicted through 2028. The bureau notes that ASL interpreters are especially sought-after. Employment of interpreters and translators is projected to grow 24 percent from 2020 to 2030, much faster than the average for all occupations. According to the website "Discover Interpreting":

"Because the demand for skilled interpreters far exceeds the number of qualified professionals, nationally certified interpreters can find work all over the United States. Credentialed interpreters are constantly in demand in educational settings from pre-school through graduate school. These interpreters are part-time or full-time employees of their school district or university and are often employed with benefits. Qualified interpreters are also in demand in medical, legal, mental health, theatrical, governmental, and religious settings, among others. Interpreters may be on staff in these settings, they may work through an interpreter referral agency, or they may be privately contracted."

In a recent survey of the past five graduating classes, 80% of ITP graduates were working as interpreters and 76% reported finding work within three months of graduation. In general, the interpreting and translation field is growing much faster than other occupations, and ASL interpreters are especially sought-after.

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