

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 8, 2020

TO: UA Faculty, Academic Advisors, Student Support Personnel, and Students

FROM: Neel Ghosh, Chair, Undergraduate Council
Abbie Sorg, Senior Program Manager, Curricular Affairs

RE: **Amendment to General Education Foundations Second Language Requirement**

In January 2020 the Undergraduate Council (UGC) received a proposal from the University-wide General Education Committee to clarify and simplify the policy requiring proof of proficiency to satisfy the Second Language requirement for U.S. and international students whose primary language is not English. The updated policy was reviewed and approved by the Undergraduate Council, College Academic Administrators Council, and Faculty Senate during the Spring 2020 semester. The updated policy can be found at <https://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/second-language-requirement-undergraduate-degrees>.

The new policy is effective beginning with the Summer 2020 semester.

Updates to Second Language Requirement (full policy can be found in the General Catalog):

U.S. students who are speakers of a language other than English (e.g. Spanish, American Sign Language, Navajo) may satisfy the requirement through a proficiency exam administered by the appropriate department.

International students whose primary language is not English and who had to prove English proficiency to be admitted to the University have thereby fulfilled the Second Language requirement.

All questions about language proficiency exams should be directed to the department that will evaluate proficiency. If you want to be tested in a language that is not taught by a UA department, contact:

Department of Linguistics
Douglass Building, Room 200E
The University of Arizona
PO Box 210028
Tucson, AZ 85721-0028
Phone: (520) 621-6897
Fax: (520) 626-9014

Justification/Rationale

- The previous policy identified specific exams that could be used to provide proof of proficiency for international students; because there are now multiple ways for international student applicants to demonstrate English language proficiency, and because UA is likely to continue to adapt admissions policies in the future, the policy language should be flexible to align with admissions policies.

- The intent of the current policy, which is that students whose primary language is not English, and who have demonstrated sufficient English proficiency to be admitted to UA, have met the General Education Foundations requirement to demonstrate proficiency in two languages.
- The term “native speaker” is problematic to experts in linguistics and second language acquisition, and is unnecessary when “speaker” will suffice.

Questions about Second Language requirements should be addressed to **Abbie Sorg**, Senior Program Manager for Curricular Affairs, at 621-4052, or asorg@arizona.edu.