



Assessment of Student Learning Plan (ASLP)

2019-2020 Academic Year

Reminder: All Department/Program Chairs are responsible for completing an ASLP form by the end of this academic year for each academic program in your department. This campus-wide (annual) form is used to document the ongoing program assessment activities in each department/program. The form is designed to align with the NECHE (New England Commission of Higher Education) accreditation- assessment standards. If you have questions about this form, or need assistance with your program assessment plans, please contact Susan King, Director of Academic Assessment, 780-4681, susank@maine.edu. **Please email this form by May 31, 2020.**

Overview Information:

College CSTH

Department Linguistics

Degree Program Linguistics B.A. (including general linguistics and concentrations in ASL/English Interpreting, Speech and Language Science, ASL Linguistics, French Linguistics, and Spanish Linguistics)

Contact Person for the Assessment Plan: Dana McDaniel

Current Date: May 29, 2020

List the date of the most recent academic program review/self-study: 2018/19
(Also, the ASL/English Interpreting program is currently in the re-accreditation process, which has been delayed due to Covid-19.)

Program Assessment Plan Information:

Do you have a Formal Program Assessment Plan? Yes **X** No

If **YES**, please attach your Program Assessment Plan/Cycle, or indicate the link on your website: _____. Then, complete **Step 3** of this ASLP form (see **pages 4-5**) to describe how the assessment results were used for program improvement purposes.

If **NO**, your department/program does not have a Formal Assessment Plan (beyond this academic year), please complete all sections of this ASLP form.

*(Please see assessment website for an example/template of a 3-year assessment plan)

Mission Statement:

1. Provide your program's mission statement in the space below or provide a link to the statement from your program's webpage.

<https://usm.maine.edu/linguistics/overview>

2. Briefly describe the ways in which your program's mission statement is aligned with the USM mission.

It emphasizes giving students knowledge, skills, and experiences that will prepare them for careers and civic participation.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

If your program has diversity, equity, and inclusion related goals, or a diversity, equity, and inclusion statement; please provide a link to the statement and/or goals. Then, briefly describe any assessment activities related to your program statement/goals regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion.

All of our job ads have a diversity statement. Any linguistics program will focus on diversity and inclusion as part of the cultural foundations of language. Our ASL/English interpreting concentration is the only program in the country that emphasizes equal inclusion of both Deaf and hearing interpreting students. "Our program has been designed from the beginning with every course equally accessible to Deaf and hearing students of interpreting" see:

<https://usm.maine.edu/linguistics/ba-linguistics-aslenglish-interpreting-concentration>

In addition, we have been accredited by the Collegiate Commission on Interpreter Education (CCIE) since December 2009. Part of the standards we are required to meet to maintain that accreditation include diversity within the curriculum on which we are fully reviewed every 10 years and must submit progress reports every two years. We are currently in our 10-year re-application process. In that context, we have done direct interviews with each of our alumnae and students of color regarding our sensitivity to diversity and how we can improve. In a

response to those interviews, we have added a series of on-line discussion meetings within LIN 336 Observational Internship where students and alumni of color are invited to meet with the students about issues of race and diversity from their personal experiences. This year's class was so popular that students requested an additional class during exam week, where we invited three interpreters of color (one from D.C., one from Boston, and one from Maryland). This was also very well received and the participants asked to make it an ongoing forum: https://video.maine.edu/media/Observational+Internship-Discussion+with+Chris+Robinson%2C+Lisa+Weems%2C+and+Yvans+Cator%2CJr.+mp4/1_t1II5vp5

Also, two of our faculty (one full-time (Judy Shepard-Kegl) and one part-time (Ann Swope) will participate in the Anti-racism Institute this summer.

Two years ago (2017-18), Linguistics took in all languages. With that expansion of our department came an increase in diversity. In addition to our Deaf faculty, our part-time faculty now include faculty who are Native American, Franco-American, Asian American, Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African. Although we don't have formal assessments regarding diversity, we have instituted a policy of one faculty meeting each semester that invites all part-time faculty to participate and share their experiences. Our goal is for the department to be equally inviting and welcoming to all faculty. Similarly, it is our goal to attract a diverse student body, particularly heritage speakers of the languages that we offer. We are developing a Critical and Community Languages Program and starting in the Fall, we will have a Wabanaki Languages minor. A third to half of the students in our Wabanaki courses are members of these heritage communities. Similarly, our Somali courses have attracted high school and college students from the Somali community. As these programs are so new, we are just beginning to develop any formal assessments. One additional side benefit is that students in our previously available concentrations are taking advantage of a variety of the language courses that we are now offering. We are planning on formally assessing the number and demographics of students who take these language courses.

Assessment of Student Learning: Program Assessment Steps

Step 1: Program-level Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)

- a. Please provide the **URL** for your **program-level student learning outcomes** as published on your department's website:

<https://usm.maine.edu/linguistics/overview>

- b. Please provide the **URL** of your **curriculum assessment map** showing when your student learning outcomes are assessed and in which courses:

<https://usm.maine.edu/linguistics/overview>

If your program's curriculum assessment map is **not** published, please complete the template (on page 6 of this document), and include it with your ASLP, or attach your own version.

- c. Please list the program learning outcomes which were assessed since the submission of your last ASLP (May 2019).

The following are the ones that apply specifically to the ASL Linguistics and ASL/English Interpreting Concentrations. The numbers in parentheses indicate the outcomes each assessment corresponds to. We are still working on developing additional assessments for the other outcomes. Currently, our focus has been on using external assessments like ACTFL OPI for transfer credit and initial placement.

American Sign Language Assessment (ASLA) or American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) (#9)

Pre-Intermediate Interpreting and Advanced Classes (must achieve a 2 or higher) We are currently testing all students upon completion of ASL 202 Intermediate ASL II on the ASLA, whether or not they are majors. The goal is to get a snapshot based upon external assessment of where our students are as they transition from their prerequisite ASL classes into higher levels of the major.

Pre-Placement in Practicum 1: (must achieve a 3 or higher on the ASLA). All practicum students have now passed this benchmark.

Written NAD/RID Exam (#13; #17; #18; #21): Taken prior to Practicum 1 and must be passed for entry into practicum. All Practicum I and II students now satisfy this requirement.

Formal Interview and Portfolio prior to Practicum (#13; #14; #15; #16; #17; #18; #20; #21): Demonstration of the above, plus presentation of student's portfolio demonstrative evidence of competencies in English, ASL, and interpreting. All

candidates for practicum were interviewed and assessed in individual meetings (November, 2019).

Outcomes testing (#19; #20; #22): Upon completion of Practicum 1 and Practicum 2, students have traditionally been tested on two videos: 1. ASL to English (minutes); 2. English to ASL (20 minutes). Students then receive a process mediation regarding the video of their choice. Results of these outcome studies do not figure into students' grades but rather inform faculty regarding curriculum needs and issues. *This outcome assessment was not performed in 2019-2020.* Instead, we used the previous testing materials in classroom assignments and are in the process of developing a set of new outcomes testing materials.

Maine licensure (#13; #18): The application for Maine licensure must be filled out and in the student's portfolio before completion of Practicum 1. Only students remaining in state are required to apply for licensure. One exception is that students entering specialized practica (for example, medical interpreting) must have their licensure before placement. Licensure assures sufficient course work in ASL, interpreting, ethics and Deaf culture to meet the state requirement to interpret. All students in Practicum submitted their licensure applications to us and several of those staying in state have already submitted for the 2020-2021 year.

Until last July, all graduating students met all the requirements for licensure before graduation. Currently, they all meet them except for one requirement. Last July, Maine Licensure was changed to require a score of 3.5 specifically on the ASLPI to qualify for conditional licensure. Our students are currently only required to achieve a 3 or higher on either the ASLPI or ASLA. We prefer the latter because the feedback is more extensive. However, licensure only recognizes national assessments, so the ASLA is not accepted. Therefore, if they have not already done so, currently our students need to take the ASLPI before they can get Maine licensure.

Judy Shepard-Kegl and Anne Marie Baer (our assessment person for the ASLA) are conducting a research project comparing results on the ASLA and ASLPI. We offer any students who take the ASLPI on their own a free ASLA examination within two weeks. It is our feeling that the conditional licensure requirement is set too high and that ASLPI is unreliable as the single

source for assessment. Twice in the past year, they have suspended testing—first for a backlog and now because of the COVID crisis. ASLA has continued testing and we are staying with that assessment as an option for entry into Practicum.

It is highly recommended that students take the EIPA Knowledge Test (#13; #17; #18; #21). Pre-practicum students have also prepped for this exam in their class and a few are planning to take it over the summer. Again, the change in licensure has excluded ability for the EIPA to count as a qualification for conditional licensure because the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf no longer offers the ED:K-12 Certification that recognized passing the EIPA at 4.0 or above, plus the knowledge exam and K-12 certification. We are negotiating with Maine licensure on this issue.

It is highly recommended that students take the RID NIC performance examination within 2 year of graduation. (#15; #18). Several graduates are already planning to take this test this coming year. Several previous graduates took it and are awaiting results. The test is currently in transition. The older version of the test is currently available and a new version of the test is expected to be released in the next few months. Many students are awaiting the release of the new test.

We had been working on bringing the BEI (Board of Examination of Interpreting) test to Maine from Texas (#13; #17; #18; #21). This examination is expected to eventually become an additional credentialing option for interpreters nationally. Judy Shepard-Kegl and Kelly Fitzgerald took this test August 2017 (Shepard-Kegl: Master's level (passed), Fitzgerald: beginning level (plans to re-take)). While we are encouraging students to take this test (and several have and others are scheduled to do so), the BEI is still a regional exam and new licensure procedures will not recognize it, so because bringing the test here would require \$10,000 per year and establishment of a testing and rating team, our plans to bring it to Maine have been put on hold until such time as it is nationally recognized. Judy Shepard-Kegl is on the RID Legal Task for developing the Legal Certification Exam and in that context RID representatives have indicated that RID is in the process of determining which tests may be recognized, BEI among them. We await their decisions.

IN SUMMARY:

One effort last year past year was to upgrade the requirements for interpreter licensure in the state of Maine. Those changes were passed July 2019. In the process of this upgrade, the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation instituted a policy that non-nationally recognized credentialing cannot count for licensure. This impacts three components of our assessment options here at USM:

1. Because RID recently stopped offering the ED:K-12 certification that recognized >4.0 on any EIPA exam and passing the written test, EIPA testing can no longer lead to certification in Maine. Currently, only the RID exams (NIC and CDI) are recognized. While we still strongly recommend the EIPA for all graduates and educational interpreters, this change combined with the cost of this test will reduce the number of applicants taking the EIPA.
2. The new licensure law will require >3.5 on an ASL language assessment for any pre-certified interpreters. Since the ASLA (American Sign Language Assessment; one tester) that we use here at USM is (parallel to but) not nationally recognized, only the ASLPI (American Sign Language Proficiency Interview) will be accepted as evidence of ASL skill. The ASLA (which is the same as the ASLPI but with one rater rather than three) but gives more detailed feedback. We will still offer both and will continue with the ASLA at the end of ASL 202, but we expect that many students may opt to take the ASLPI because it will also satisfy the licensure requirement.
3. Since the RID/NAD National Interpreter Certification written exam will be required for conditional licensure, our student will already have fulfilled that requirement before taking Practicum.

Step 2: Assessment Methods Selected and Implemented /Summary of Results

- a. **Identify the assessment measures (evidence of student learning) that were used to determine whether students achieved the stated learning outcomes for the degree.** Please check all the measures used since the submission of your last ASLP (May 2019), on the chart below. Also indicate when you implemented the assessment activity.

<u>Check Assessment Methods Used this Academic Year</u>	<u>When Implemented</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Artistic Exhibition/Types of Performance	Fall	Spring Summer
<input type="checkbox"/> Class assignments/Exams/Papers (completed in course)	Fall	Spring Summer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capstone Project (written project, non-thesis paper)	Fall	Spring Summer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive or licensure exam (created by external org)	Fall	Spring Summer
<input type="checkbox"/> Exit Exam (created by department or program)	Fall	Spring Summer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exit Interview (individual or indiv self-reports of outcomes)	Fall	Spring Summer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employer meetings/discussions on student outcomes (interpreting)	Fall	Spring Summer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus Groups (self-reports of outcome attainment; accreditation)	Fall	Spring Summer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internship/Fieldwork (evaluations of performance; interpreting)	Fall	Spring Summer
<input type="checkbox"/> Oral Performance/conference presentation	Fall	Spring Summer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Portfolio of student work (interpreting)	Fall	Spring Summer
<input type="checkbox"/> Reflection Essays (self-report of outcome achievement)	Fall	Spring Summer
<input type="checkbox"/> Research Papers (used for course & program assessment)	Fall	Spring Summer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supervisor/Employer Evaluation (performance outside of class)		
-interpreting	Fall	Spring Summer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student Survey information (student self-reports on outcomes)		
-interpreting	Fall	Spring Summer
<input type="checkbox"/> Thesis/Dissertation (used for course & program assessment)	Fall	Spring Summer
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: please explain		
<p>Many of the above involve the interpreting program and were ramped up this year especially because we are in the midst of our 10-year re-application for accreditation.</p>		

b. **Briefly describe the implementation process** (i.e. where were students assessed, what courses, what class levels, or any other specific details, etc).

The results for all students are reviewed upon receipt and at year's end at meetings of the director of the ASL/English Interpreting program, the coordinator of the ASL program, and some other interpreting and ASL faculty. The results are correlated with students' performance in practicum and in the advanced ASL courses and have informed changes in the required levels as a result.

Outcome #9 was measured during the fall semester --all students completing ASL 202 were administered the ASLA. This assessment is externally scored. Additional students take the exam at their own discretion upon acceptance at USM for placement in courses above ASL 202 and prior to the Practicum Interview in November.

Outcomes #13; #17; #18; #21 are must be completed prior to Practicum I and are verified during the spring semester (November) as well as at the end of Practicum I and II.

Outcomes #13; #14; #15; #16; #17; #18; #20; #21 are completed prior to the Practicum Interview in November prior to Spring Semester. They are verified during the fall semester. This assessment is externally scored.

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Outcomes #13; #18 are completed prior to the Practicum Interview in November prior to Spring Semester and are verified at that time. This verification is done by the interview team consisting of the (coordinator of the ASL/English interpreting concentration; Deaf ASL faculty; Interpreting faculty; and occasional stakeholders (interpreting agency directors, etc.) They are also double checked by the ASL/English Interpreting Coordinator at the end of Practicum I and II.

- c. **Provide a brief summary (numerical or narrative) of your assessment results** (e.g., . an illustration of the rubric-based scores, percentage of those who met the learning outcome you assessed, number of students assessed and findings, copies of instruments or rubrics used, etc.)

We do many assessments over the course of a school year and because we are in the midst of our 10-year accreditation evaluation we have processed even more. These would be best viewed in the context of our accreditation application, which includes summarized results, surveys, rubrics, etc. Our student are meeting our outcomes and more. The only dip appears to be taking the ASLPI, which is now required for conditional licensure. We need another year to follow the numbers on this.

- d. **Provide a brief summary of what your program learned or concluded from the evidence you collected** (e.g., did your program meet the expected goal or benchmark, does the new knowledge raise additional questions, do you need to collect additional types of data, did you get insights about the assessment procedures or about teaching and learning in your program?, etc.)

We found in general that most of our students are falling above our benchmarks for progress. They are achieving on average a 2.5 on the ASLA (2.0 required). We have made the requirements of the 2.0 firm. For students not meeting this benchmark, and for student not concentrating in ASL/English Interpreting or ASL Linguistics, we have added a new set of courses *ASL 305 Practical ASL I* and *ASL 306 Practical ASL II*. These courses focus on ASL fluency and conversation and provide students ASL courses to take in the interim before they achieve the ASLA benchmark score or as an alternative to the more advanced courses populated primarily by majors.

We are still in the midst of collecting data on the ASLA versus ASLPI scoring. Our preliminary findings are that the ASLA is comparable to, perhaps a bit easier at the 2 and 3 levels but is harder at level 5. ASLPI appears to treat level 3.5 as a cut off that is geared to Deaf ASL teachers and may make it more difficult for hearing signers to achieve that goal.

In addition, with the shift to on-line given the COVID crisis, we are collecting data on all students currently taking the ASLA/ASLPI at the end of *ASL 202 Intermediate ASL II*. Typically, moving above this level requires both a B in the course and 2 or greater on the ASLPI or ASLA. Given that PASS/FAIL was given as an option this past Spring, only the score of 2 remains as a requirement for these students. We are carefully examining student test results from this Spring to note any discrepancies. This far, the results have been good. All students tested have achieved the ASLA score of 2 thus far. This speaks well for the conversion of our ASL classes to an on-line venue.

Step 3: Using the Assessment results to Improve Student Learning

- a. Who interpreted or analyzed the results that were collected this past year? (check all that apply)

Program instructors/faculty
 Faculty committee
 Ad hoc faculty group
 Dept Chair/Program Director/Dean

- Faculty advisor
- Students (assistants, interns)
- Other: please explain

b. How did they evaluate, analyze, or interpret those results? (check all that apply)

- Used a rubric or scoring guide(s) for an assignment, paper, etc.
- Scored exams/tests/quizzes
- Used professional judgments (no rubric or scoring guide)
- Compiled or reviewed survey results
- Reviewed qualitative methods (interviews, focus groups, open-ended responses)
- External organization scored/analyzed data (licensure, comp exams)
- Other: please explain

c. Indicate how the program will use (or has used) the results (check all that apply):

- Assessment procedure change (student outcomes, curriculum map, rubric, evidence collected, sampling procedure, communications with faculty, etc.)
- Course changes (course content, courses offered, new course, pre-requisites, course requirements, etc.)
- Course pedagogy changes (teaching)
- Personnel or resource allocation changes
- Program policy changes (admission requirements, student probation policies, course feedback forms, etc.)
- Student's out-of-course experiences (co-curricular requirements, program website, program handbook, student workshops, etc.)
- Student Advising experiences (advisor-advisee relationship, communication of changes or expectations, etc.)
- Results indicated no action needed, students met expectations
- Other: please explain

- d. Briefly explain each of the program changes/improvements indicated above.

We make various adjustments to the curriculum each year based on the results. We considered course assessments and end-of-course feedback from students who had taken LIN 311 (Phonetics) and LIN 312 (Phonology and Morphology). A consistent theme was that the students didn't have enough of a basic phonetics foundation for LIN 312 without having taken LIN 311 first. To address this issue, we will make LIN 311 a prerequisite for LIN 312. We won't be able to fully assess the effects of this change until the year after next year, since we will need to waive the prerequisite in the fall for students graduating next year.

In response to COVID, we have obviously made changes in the course venue. Our department is particularly impacted because we cover all the languages at the university, spoken and signed. Such courses require special adaptations to allow for interaction and monitoring. The spoken language instructors experimented with small group Zoom sessions and various online resources. All of our signed language instructors are Deaf and before the university went on-line, they were teaching face-to-face classes of up to 25 students using direct method. Learning a signed language in 2D versus 3D already poses many challenges, especially for new learners. Teaching ASL requires the instructor to scan a class of over 20 students constantly as they teach. Anyone that has experienced a Zoom meeting on-line can see that the bottom-line is that for an on-line language class (spoken or signed), the cap needs to be lowered. What is going to happen is that a teacher who teaches a language class actually breaks it into 2-3 parts and teaches multiple sections. We are developing work-arounds with an ASL teaching consultant that we hired (Dr. Amy June Rowley) using GoREACT to bring more face-to-face work into the classes. And, now for the Fall, we are moving all these classes to Brightspace as well.

Our ASL classes this past Spring were completely asynchronous, with optional synchronous sessions. Students do not tend to attend optional sessions. Upon querying the teachers and students, there is consensus that at least an hour of class time needs to be virtual face-to-face. We could accomplish this by breaking into small groups and meeting one hour each during the class hours, with the rest of the class asynchronous. This is a plan we will explore and develop over the summer and implement in the Fall.

For two years prior to this, we experimented with an approach to students who do not test into practicum but are close. The experiment consisted of allowing them to do the practicum with the stipulation that they would focus on certain skills. Performance of the students given this option fell sufficiently below others who had met the requirements for admission to practicum. We made the decision that in future years the entry requirements for practicum will be strictly followed without exception. Last year and this current year that policy was strictly enforced, and the level of practicum students was more consistent and promising of successful outcomes. All students successfully completed Practicums I and II.

A year ago, we experimented with allowing students who did not pass the NIC written test or the ASLA at > 3.0 to fulfill those requirements anytime up to the beginning of Practicum I (at the beginning of Spring semester). The students who passed these tests late, as a whole were weaker than the other students in the class, but they did pass Practicum. We have decided to accept these scores as long as the tests are scheduled and scores are received before the beginning of Practicum 1. We will not accept them once the semester has started.

Last year, we focused upon an early stage in the curriculum when students must achieve an external ASLA or ASLPI score of 2.0 to move from intermediate to advanced ASL classes or intermediate-level interpreting classes. This has proven to be a very reliable predictor of success in advanced classes. Students who do not achieve a 2.0 or above must retake this assessment and receive at least a 2.0 before moving on. Unfortunately, short of re-taking classes, there were no courses specifically geared to tuning up their skills in the intervening year. In the Fall, we will launch two new classes ASL 305 Practical ASL I and ASL 306 Practical ASL II. These courses serve multiple purposes, including providing a bridge to these students needing remedial work. They focus on conversation and building fluency and therefore fill a niche for all students. While the advanced classes are still required for majors, non-majors and Deaf studies minors can opt for these classes to fulfill their ASL language requirements as well.

A year ago, we experimented with allowing someone who had failed the ethics component of the Practicum interview and who had passed the above ASLA and NIC written exams late to enter practicum. This outcome, while the

student passed, was not successful. Placements had to be modified, etc. This year, individuals who did not pass the Practicum Interview ethics component were not admitted to Practicum the following Spring. Most of them took LIN 336 Observational Internship and or LIN 434 Pre-Practicum. They came out much the stronger for it. We will remain firm in our requirement that the ethics portion of the Practicum interview must be passed.

In the past three years, we have also modified the curriculum for LIN 434 (Pre-Practicum), a course that isn't required for the major, for students who do not test into practicum. The course has students focus on their ASL/interpreting enhancement skills and preparation for the RID written exam. Last year, when it was fully implemented, it was very successful and we have decided to continue this practice. We have also allowed students completing Pre-Practicum to have their prerequisites assessed early, leaving only the ethics component for the Practicum Interview. This year, with the COVID crisis, this course had many Monday classes impacted and is offering a few extra sessions on preparation for the NIC knowledge exam over the summer, but it still has provided a strong foundation for Practicum I.

- e. Indicate when the program improvements (noted above) will be implemented or if you already made program changes (e.g., during the summer months, beginning of the fall semester, etc.). All changes have already been implemented.

The timing for implementation has been indicated above.

Other Assessment Activities: Briefly describe any additional assessment-related activities being done at the course level (e.g., common assignments and/or assignment rubrics for use across different sections of required courses, examining student progress in entry-level, capstone, or other courses, other assessment projects implemented by individual faculty, etc.)

We have been working on assessing our introductory course, LIN 185, and another linguistics course that all our majors take, LIN 313 (Syntax), using pre- and posttests, as well as course exams and other assignments. LIN 313 is now a Learning Assistant course. Both courses have had relatively high DFW rates in the past and we believe we are seeing steady improvement, but plan to do a more systematic investigation.

No assessment activities: If your program did not engage in any assessment activities this past academic year, please explain, and please indicate what assistance you need.

Reminder: Please complete and submit this form by May 31, 2020.