

Executive Summary: Second Language Requirement Committee

Purpose

The Second Language Requirement Committee was established by the Provost to conduct a comprehensive review of the second language requirement for bachelor's degrees at the University of Arizona. The primary objectives were to assess the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of the current second language proficiency requirements on students' academic and professional development. The committee aimed to ensure that the second language requirement remains relevant and beneficial to the University of Arizona's diverse student body, preparing them for success in a globalized society.

Scope

The committee's scope included:

- Evaluating the current second language proficiency requirements for both B.A. and non-B.A. degree programs.
- Reviewing the philosophical need for this requirement and its potential inclusion within the cultural competency requirements of the new general education curriculum.
- Comparing the second language proficiency requirements with those of peer institutions.
- Considering various methods for students to demonstrate proficiency, including exams, course completions, and alternative assessments.
- Assessing the alignment of the requirement with the university's educational goals and student needs.
- Recommending potential modifications to the current policy, if necessary.

Final Recommendations

The committee recommends that all bachelor's degrees should have a graduation requirement regarding language/cultural competency. The requirement should be university-wide and could be satisfied through various methods, including high school coursework, proficiency exams, AP credits, and study abroad programs. The committee also proposed splitting the requirement into two policies: General Education Foundations and Additional Language Requirement for BA Degrees, to ensure appropriate language competency for all graduates and ensure consistency of General Education requirements regardless of degree program.

The committee's work aimed to create a more consistent and fair approach to the second language requirement, ensuring that it aligns with the university's educational goals and prepares students for success in a globalized world. The final recommendations will be incorporated into policies for review by Shared Governance groups, with the goal of implementing the new policies effective with the fall 2026 semester.

Recommended Policy Overview

General Education Foundations Second Language Requirement

- Second Semester competency – similar to the current non-BA requirement.
- Can be satisfied through coursework, including High School coursework in a 2:1 ratio – the same consideration currently used by the College of Engineering.
- Additional ways of satisfying include Study Abroad and multilingual learning experiences, proficiency exams, etc.

Bachelor of Arts Second Language Requirement

- Fourth Semester competency or an additional second semester competency beyond the Foundations requirement.

- Expands existing BA requirement to allow for multiple languages to satisfy the competency requirement.
- Additional ways of satisfying include Study Abroad and multilingual learning experiences, proficiency exams, etc.
- Moves the requirement to a degree-specific university level requirement.

Meeting Overviews

Meeting 1: October 4, 2024

- **Provost's Call to Action:** Emphasized the importance of language and culture components in education and the need for a thorough reassessment of the second language requirement, which had not been reviewed for 26 years.
- **Breakout Sessions:** Discussed the goal of the second language requirement, challenges, and support for general education.
- **Data Needs and Next Steps:** Identified data collection needs and planned future meetings.

Meeting 2: November 1, 2024

- **Review of Learning Outcomes:** Discussed the importance of language learning in building metalinguistic skills and career proficiencies.
- **Next Steps:** Planned to gather more input from advisors and faculty, and to draft a policy framework.

Meeting 3: November 22, 2024

- **Peer Benchmarking:** Reviewed second language requirements at peer institutions and considered alternative assessment methods.
- **Policy Challenges:** Discussed the challenges of implementing a language requirement across different colleges and degree programs.
- **Next Steps:** Agreed to gather more input and finalize recommendations.

Meeting 4: December 6, 2024

- **Second Language Learning and Cultural Competency:** Discussed the importance of second language learning and cultural competency for students. Reviewed peer benchmarking data and discussed possible recommendations and next steps.
- **Language Requirement Options:** Considered various options for the language requirement, including doing nothing, removing the engineering exception, and allowing colleges or departments to determine the requirement.
- **Policy Challenges:** Discussed challenges of implementing a language requirement across different colleges and degree programs, including financial implications and potential unintended consequences.
- **Next Steps:** Planned to draft a policy framework and gather feedback.

Meeting 5: February 14, 2025

- **Determined Structure of Requirements:** Accepted the proposal to split the requirement in two policies: General Education Foundations and Additional Language Requirement for BA Degrees
- **Implementation of Requirements:** Discussed the complexities of language proficiency testing and the inclusion of high school coursework.

- **Study Abroad and Cultural Competency:** Considered non-language ways to satisfy the requirement, such as study abroad programs.
- **Next Steps:** Finalize the policy draft to begin the official review and approval process.

Appendix:

- Charter Document
- Membership Roster
- Draft Policy

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