

Date: October 3, 2024
To: Alex Underwood, Registrar, University of Arizona
From: Karthik Kannan, Dean, Eller College of Management
Subject: Eller BSBA Second Language Exception Request

Executive Summary

The Eller College of Management requests an exception to the university's second language requirement for students pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) degree. This exception will enable us to modernize our curriculum to better serve our students' career preparation needs in the rapidly evolving business landscape, particularly in artificial intelligence and digital technologies.

Our current language requirement places our students and our college at a significant disadvantage compared to peer competing business schools. Among peer business schools nationwide, 52% require no second language for business students, while leading institutions including the University of Michigan Ross School of Business, University of Florida Warrington College, and University of Wisconsin-Madison have eliminated these requirements entirely. Even within Arizona, ASU requires second language for only two specialized business programs—not their standard business degrees.

By removing this requirement, we can provide our students with the specialized technical skills that employers increasingly demand, ensuring they graduate with competitive advantages in today's technology-driven business environment rather than being constrained by outdated requirements that most top business programs have already recognized as counterproductive to student success.

Current Policy and Request

Current university [policy](#) states:

For all students in non-B.A. degree programs: second-semester skill level in a second language is required. Non-B.A. degree students may fulfill this requirement with one of the following options:

1. Scoring the equivalent of second-semester skill level on a proctored proficiency examination administered by The University of Arizona
2. Completion with a C or better of a second semester course at the post-secondary level
3. An [AP](#) (Advanced Placement), [IB](#) (International Baccalaureate) or [CLEP](#) (College Level Entrance Program) language score as listed below. (*Chart removed for brevity*).

The policy grants an exception for students in the College of Engineering. We request the same exception for all students pursuing a BSBA degree, as approved by our undergraduate curriculum committee.

Rationale: Enhancing Student Career Preparation

Current Curriculum Constraints

The Challenge: Our students need access to modern technical courses in artificial intelligence, data analytics, and digital business strategies to remain competitive in today's job market. However, our 120-credit curriculum operates at full capacity, preventing us from adding these essential courses without removing existing requirements.

The Solution: The eight credits currently allocated to second language requirements represent the most logical area for reallocation, as this requirement provides limited direct career value for most business students while the freed credits could accommodate high-impact technical coursework.

The current credit allocation demonstrates this constraint:

GENERAL EDUCATION + UNIVERSITY FOUNDATIONS: 46 credits

- Gen Ed categories: 23 credits (including ECON 200 as EP Social Science)
- University Foundations: 23 credits
 - Second Language: 8 credits
 - Math: 9 credits (3 units if placing into MATH 116, though MATH 100 placement is more common)
 - Writing: 6 credits (typically)

BUSINESS FOUNDATIONS/CORE COURSES: 55 credits (Essential courses in accounting, finance, management information systems, marketing, etc., excluding ECON 200)

MAJOR-SPECIFIC CORE COURSES: 18-22 credits (Fundamental concepts pertinent to individual departments)

This structure aligns with AACSB accreditation standards and matches peer business schools. However, it leaves students with limited flexibility—many BSBA majors have at most one additional elective, while others have no room for supplementary coursework.

Meeting Modern Business Education Needs

Today's business graduates need technical proficiency to succeed in an increasingly digital marketplace. We have identified opportunities to introduce courses that would significantly enhance our students' career prospects:

- **Required AI for Business course** at the Business Foundations level
- **Major-specific AI applications** tailored to each department's focus areas
- **Advanced data analytics** beyond basic statistical requirements
- **Digital transformation strategies** relevant across business functions

These additions support our strategic goal of becoming the "Nation's Premier Digital-First Business School" while providing students with highly marketable skills that employers actively seek.

The eight credits currently allocated to second language requirements could accommodate these valuable additions, directly improving our students' post-graduation opportunities and career advancement potential.

Analysis of Peer Institutions

A comprehensive survey of peer business schools conducted in May 2024 reveals that our current language requirement places our students at a competitive disadvantage:

Peer Institution Language Requirements:

- **52% require no second language** for business degree students
- **17% require second language only** for specialized programs (e.g., Global Business)
- **30% require second language** for all business students

Comparable institutions without language requirements include:

- Michigan State University, Broad College
- Purdue University, Daniels School of Business
- Miami University, Farmer School of Business
- Washington University, Olin Business School
- University of Michigan, Ross School of Business
- University of Florida, Warrington College of Business

- University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin School of Business

Arizona State University requires second language for only two business-related programs:

Major	Degree	College	Second Language Required
Business (Language and Culture)	BA	W.P. Carey School of Business	Yes
Global Management	BGM	Thunderbird School of Global Management	Yes

This data demonstrates that the majority of respected business programs have recognized that mandatory second language requirements do not optimally serve their students' career preparation needs.

Student Impact and Benefits

Granting this exception would provide several direct benefits to our students:

Enhanced Career Preparation: Students would gain access to cutting-edge technical skills that employers increasingly value, including AI literacy, data analytics, and digital business strategies.

Improved Flexibility: Additional elective space would allow students to pursue specialized coursework aligned with their career interests and market demands.

Competitive Advantage: Graduates would enter the job market with technical competencies that distinguish them from peers at institutions with more traditional curricula.

Better Resource Allocation: The college could redirect educational resources toward high-impact courses that directly support student career outcomes.

Conclusion

Eliminating the second language requirement from the BSBA program would enable the Eller College of Management to better serve our students by modernizing our curriculum to reflect contemporary business realities. This change would allow us to integrate essential technological content that mirrors the dynamic business environment our graduates will enter.

Rather than maintaining a traditional requirement that provides limited career value for most business students, we can offer specialized technical education that directly enhances our graduates' employability and professional advancement opportunities. This student-centered approach aligns with our commitment to preparing business leaders for success in an increasingly digital economy.

The requested exception represents a strategic investment in our students' futures, ensuring they graduate with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in modern business careers.