

# American Sign Language—English Interpreting, BS

Website (<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/asl/>)

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American Sign Language (ASL) is estimated to be the third most used language in the United States, and its visibility in society is on the rise in recent years. There are between 500,000–2,000,000 Deaf, DeafBlind, or hard of hearing people in the United States who use ASL as their primary language and a large number of non-Deaf signers who use or learn ASL as a second language. A disproportionate percentage of Deaf Community members experience socioeconomic disadvantage due to their dual status as members of both a cultural linguistic minority group and a disability group. As a result, there is a broad societal misunderstanding of Deaf, signing people's minority language and culture—their lived experience—which creates barriers to educational and economic opportunity. While state and federal legislation enables improved civic engagement by Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind individuals, there is continued need to elevate quality of life, equity, and the rich contributions of the diverse members of the American Deaf Community.

The curriculum in the NU American Sign Language and Interpreting program addresses social inequalities and contributes to cultural resilience by raising awareness of the minority population of ASL users: Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind individuals. Students acquire the complex skills of ASL-English interpreting through intensive faculty instruction and direct student support and guidance, which is similar to training in other practice professions (such as law, medicine, and social work).

Professional ASL-English interpreting is an important service that supports Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind people's efforts to participate, be recognized, and contribute to civic society equally at all levels. There continues to be a shortage of qualified sign language interpreters in all domains of civic life since the emergence of the profession in the early 1960s. There is ongoing need for advancing research on ASL and on sign language interpreting to contribute to the growing literature.

The Bachelor of Science in American Sign Language-English Interpreting curriculum is a rigorous program of study that integrates a foundation of ASL and Deaf studies with intensive interpreting skill development. This program is designed to assist students in acquiring competence in ASL, developing an understanding of the diverse American Deaf Community and its culture, and applying linguistic, analytic, and sociocultural skills and knowledge in order to contribute to civic engagement and social justice for Deaf citizens. The major in ASL-English Interpreting is a sequence of courses in linguistic, cognitive, human relations, and ethical decision-making skills as well as the sociocultural knowledge necessary to prepare students for future state or national credentialing as professional ASL-English interpreters. The program offers a wide array of courses as well as volunteer, internship, and practicum opportunities to learn from Deaf citizens' lived experiences through community and industry connections and research. To supplement ASL and Deaf cultural learning, students have the option to do an ASL immersion semester through our Gallaudet University semester study option by the end of the

sophomore year or a co-op with a Deaf community-based organization. Academic and co-op advising and discussion with the program director is required for students electing these options.

The program also has alternative, combined majors (<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/asl/program/american-sign-language-combined-majors/>) for students who want to master ASL and cultural skills to work alongside and on behalf of Deaf, hard of hearing, or DeafBlind people in the disciplines of human services, psychology, linguistics, or theatre/arts.

## ACADEMIC PROGRESSION STANDARDS FOR ASL-ENGLISH INTERPRETING MAJORS

- To begin the interpreting skills course sequence (INTP course numbers 3510 and higher), students must pass an ASL competency assessment at the intermediate/advanced level and maintain a minimum 2.750 GPA in all AMSL, INTP, and DEAF courses as well as maintain a minimum 2.500 overall GPA.
- Due to the fiduciary responsibility of professional sign language interpreters, there are technical, ethical, and dispositional standards required of progression to graduation in the ASL-English interpreting program. An individual must be able to meet the following competency standards to continue to graduation:

- Human relations
- Communication ability
- Cognitive skills
- Ethical conduct

### **Human Relations**

Students must demonstrate collegiality by showing respect and courtesy to colleagues, consumers, employers/site placements, and taking responsibility for one's work. Compassion, integrity, motivation, effective interpersonal skills, and concern for others are personal attributes required of those in the interpreting profession. The student must be able to work under supervision of a site instructor or preceptor; this is essential to ensure rights, safety, and privacy of interpreting clients/consumers. The student must exercise good judgment and promptly complete all responsibilities in the classroom and practical fieldwork settings. The ability to establish culturally competent relationships with individuals and groups and to respond effectively to clients who have different language and cognitive capacities is critical to interpreting practice.

### **Communication ability**

The student must communicate verbally in order to elicit information and to convey that information to others. Each student must have the ability to read and write accurately and comprehensively in English. The student must be able to thoroughly comprehend and fluently use ASL and speak the English language so as to facilitate communication with Deaf and hearing community members and stakeholders, including colleagues, instructors, and other students. The student must also be able to present information in a professional, logical manner and to articulate decisions that enable effective interpreting.

### **Cognitive Skills**

The student must show evidence of progression toward effectively integrating academic and world knowledge during simultaneous and consecutive interpretation, using appropriate cultural adjustments while managing internal and external factors and processes that result in accurate and reliable interpretations in both ASL and English.

**Ethical Conduct**

The student must demonstrate self-awareness and discretion by monitoring and managing personal and professional behaviors and integrity by avoiding conflicts of interest and adhering to values reflected in the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) professional code of conduct.

**Program Requirements****American Sign Language-English Interpreting Major Requirements**

To begin the interpreting skills course sequence (INTP course numbers 3510 and higher), students must pass an American Sign Language (ASL) competency assessment at the intermediate/advanced level and maintain a minimum of 2.750 GPA in all AMSL, INTP, and DEAF courses. Students must also maintain an overall minimum 2.500 GPA.

Students with prior ASL skills may be allowed to waive up to the first four AMSL courses by taking the language placement assessment. Waived courses must be replaced by electives.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>American Sign Language</b>		
AMSL 1101	Elementary ASL 1	4
AMSL 1102	Elementary ASL 2	4
AMSL 2101	Intermediate ASL 1	4
AMSL 2102	Intermediate ASL 2	4
AMSL 3101	Advanced ASL 1	4
AMSL 3102	Advanced ASL 2	4
<b>Social and Cultural World</b>		
DEAF 1500	Deaf People in Society	4
DEAF 2500	Deaf History and Culture	4
<b>Linguistics</b>		
LING 1150	Introduction to Language and Linguistics	4
DEAF 2700	ASL Linguistics	4
<b>Interpreting</b>		
INTP 3500	The Interpreting Profession	2
INTP 3510	Interpreting Inquiry Texts	4
INTP 3515	Interpreting Narrative Texts	4
INTP 3550	Interpreting Scripted Texts	4
INTP 4510	Interpreting Expository Texts	4
INTP 4515	Interpreting Persuasive Texts	4
<b>Interpreting Practicum</b>		
INTP 4995	Interpreting Practicum	4
<b>Ethics</b>		
INTP 4650	Ethical Decision Making	4
INTP 4651	Ethical Fieldwork	2
<b>Research Capstone</b>		
INTP 3970	Research Methods for Interpreting and Translation	4
INTP 4940	Interpreting Research Capstone	4

**American Sign Language-English Interpreting GPA Requirement**

Minimum 2.750 GPA required in all AMSL, INTP, and DEAF courses  
Minimum 2.500 overall GPA required

**American Sign Language-English Interpreting Credit Requirement**

Complete 84 semester hours in the major.

**Experiential Liberal Arts**

All undergraduate students in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities are required to complete the Experiential Liberal Arts Requirement (<http://catalog.northeastern.edu/undergraduate/social-sciences-humanities/#ela>).

**Program Requirement**

129 total semester hours required

**Plan of Study****Four Years, No Co-op**

Year 1							
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours	Summer 1	Hours	Summer 2	Hours
DEAF 1500	4	AMSL 1102	4	Vacation	0	Vacation	0
AMSL 1101	4	MATH 1215	4				
ENGW 1111	4	LING 1150	4				
INTP 1000	1	Elective	4				
Elective	4						
		17	16	0	0		
Year 2							
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours	Summer 1	Hours	Summer 2	Hours
DEAF 2500	4	AMSL 2102	4	Vacation	0	Vacation	0
AMSL 2101	4	DEAF 2700	4				
INTP 3500	2	Elective	4				
Elective	4	Elective	4				
		14	16	0	0		
Year 3							
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours	Summer 1	Hours	Summer 2	Hours
INTP 3510	4	INTP 3515	4	Vacation	0	Vacation	0
ENGW 3315	4	INTP 3550	4				
AMSL 3101	4	AMSL 3102	4				
Elective	4	Elective	4				
		16	16	0	0		
Year 4							
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours	Hours			
INTP 4650	4	INTP 4515	4				
INTP 4510	4	INTP 4995	4				
INTP 4651	2	INTP 4940	4				
Elective	4	Elective	4				
INTP 3970	4						
		18	16				
Total Hours: 129							