

Certification Preparation Program Guidelines for American Sign Language

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**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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I. Knowing the Content

American Sign Language (ASL) is identified as a world language in the Pennsylvania Public School Code. The professional education program provides evidence that American Sign Language certification candidates complete a program that includes the academic content area courses and required electives of a major in a bachelor's degree in American Sign Language.

ASL is a language distinct from spoken English with its own syntax and grammar and supporting its own cultures. ASL does not use sound to communicate, nor is ASL a written language; its users rely on expressive and receptive visual-spatial communication using handshape, location, movement, palm orientation, and non-manual signals (facial expressions). ASL teachers rely on these features in their instruction. American Sign Language is used to learn about content, to interact with the community, to gain knowledge and understanding of cultures that use American Sign Language, and to participate in these cultures. In addition, educators in training will develop insights into their own home languages and cultures.

The program shall require candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of and competence in teaching the fundamental concepts of American Sign Language to elementary, middle, and secondary school students (PK-12) including:

A. Interpersonal communication (conversations and visual presentations) in the target language at the advanced level including:

- engaging in formal and informal conversations;
- providing and obtaining information;
- expressing feelings and emotions; and
- exchanging opinions.

B. Interpretive communication (conversations and visual presentations) at the advanced level including:

- comprehending ASL on literal, interpretive, and critical levels;
- being able to rephrase, summarize, critique, or make personal applications of the communication conveyed through ASL;
- using comprehension and interpretation strategies;
- demonstrating an understanding that culture and language constantly change as a result of political, economic and social conditions;
- working with a variety of topics and using authentic ASL visual communications, including films and other visual texts;
- understanding main ideas and important details; and
- understanding sociocultural nuances.

C. Presentational communication (conversations and visual presentations) at the advanced level including presenting information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics, using ASL.

D. Structure of the language, including:

- demonstrating advanced knowledge of grammar and other systematic linguistic aspects of ASL including phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. Morphology includes vocabulary (e.g., word families, derivations, antonyms, and synonyms); and
- demonstrating how language features are used to carry out communicative

needs and how language is defined by social context.

E. Cultural understanding, including the relationships between the **perspectives** (value systems, attitudes, and beliefs of people from a target culture), **products** (things, both tangible and intangible, that are produced by members of a culture – e.g., literature, laws, music, systems of education) and **practices** (patterns of social interaction – e.g., what to do, when, where, and how) of the target culture(s) studied. U.S. educational practices and laws, particularly in relation to dual-language education of ASL users who are deaf or hard of hearing, form a part of this standard.

F. Immersion, including the major developments and characteristics of communities that use ASL, including:

- history and economics;
- religious and political systems; and
- literature, fine arts and other cultural symbols.

II. Performances

The professional education program provides evidence of a candidate's participation in sequential and developmental field experiences and student teaching, under the supervision of college personnel and cooperating teachers who are well trained, have interpersonal skills, and demonstrated competence in teaching. The program also provides evidence that the criteria and competencies for exit from the ASL certification program are assessed in coursework, field experiences, and student teaching and require candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and competence in fostering student learning through the following:

A. Management of the instructional environment including:

- communicating to students the rules of the classroom;
- conducting lessons at an appropriate pace;
- engaging students in learning;
- managing large and small group learning activities;
- providing a positive learning environment; and
- promoting appropriate student behavior.

B. Planned instruction including:

- developing sequential lesson plans with clear objectives and appropriate instructional strategies that address various learning styles and disabilities;
- developing a plan congruent with the PA Academic Standards and an existing curriculum, appropriate to elementary, middle, and high school levels; and
- accessing and developing resources and materials, including multimedia, necessary to achieve the instructional objectives.

C. Implementation of instruction including:

- articulating objectives to students;
- using the target language to the maximum extent possible in the classroom;
- implementing teaching strategies that meet the needs of students at elementary, middle, and high schools;
- implementing instructional techniques to engage students and guide their learning;

- integrating teaching strategies that assist learners to develop the three modes of communication: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational;
- integrating language with culture;
- integrating multimedia technology in instruction;
- teaching structural components of the language for meaningful communication;
- providing avenues for students to use the target language outside of the classroom setting; and
- integrating instructional techniques which help students to gain sociolinguistic competence and communicate appropriately in various target culture contexts.

D. Evaluation of instruction including:

- monitoring student progress in target language communication and cultural understanding using a variety of appropriate means of assessment;
- monitoring student progress in developing the three modes of communication: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational;
- using strategies to enable students to self-assess and monitor their own progress;
- interpreting the results of student performance and modifying instructional strategies accordingly;
- developing strategies to reflect upon instructional effectiveness; and
- providing clear and useful feedback to students on their progress and areas for improvement.

E. Working with special education staff and special education services, including understanding that management, planning, and implementation of instruction. Evaluation of PK-12 student progress may be performed in cooperation with Special Education staff and services for some of the PK-12 students in ASL classes.

III. Professionalism

The professional education program provides evidence that ASL Education candidates demonstrate knowledge of and competence in fostering professionalism in school and community setting including:

A. Making use of professional organizations, professional journals, conferences, and other resources for ongoing professional development;

B. Exhibiting integrity and ethical behavior, professional conduct as stated in [Pennsylvania's Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators](#) and local, state, and federal laws and regulations;

C. Establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with colleagues of the elementary, secondary, and higher education levels, including educators in Special Education, to improve student learning;

D. Communicating effectively with parents or guardians, special educators, other agencies, and the community at large to support learning by all students; and

E. Recognizing the importance of life-long professional development including:

- maintenance and enrichment of proficiency in the target language;

- awareness of important changes in ASL pedagogy; and
- awareness of important changes in Hearing Impaired PK-12 education.