

**College of Liberal Arts
Educational and Policy Committee
Spring 2022**

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Recommendation for the CLA Language Requirement

Background - CLA Language Requirement

The language requirement in the College of Liberal Arts currently requires proficiency through Level IV in one world language (e.g. Spanish 101, 102, 201, and 202).

The School of Languages and Cultures administers a proficiency test in each of the languages that they offer in order to place students with previous experience in the language into the appropriate level. Once a student tests into a level (e.g. Spanish 201), they can demonstrate proficiency by passing the course for the level they test into and any additional courses required to pass level IV (e.g. Spanish 201 and 202). They then receive back credits for courses they tested out of but did not take at Purdue (e.g., Spanish 101 and 102). The same policy for back credits applies to students outside the College of Liberal Arts who choose to take language classes, and has been very popular with students. For a student who tests above Level IV, they must still take at least one advanced course in the language to receive back credits. For example, an advanced student of Spanish could take Spanish 301 and receive 12 back credits for 101, 102, 201, and 202.

The EPC was asked to review this policy because it seems to put international students in the College of Liberal Arts at a disadvantage. As the requirement has been applied to date, international students have not been allowed to fulfill the language requirement by demonstrating proficiency in the dominant language of instruction in their home country (which might or might not be the student's first language, depending on whether they speak a minority language at home). Nor have they been allowed to fulfill the requirement by demonstrating proficiency in English as a Second Language. They must therefore complete the language

requirement by demonstrating proficiency in a third language. For example, an international student from China may fulfill the language requirement by successfully completing Spanish 202, but not by taking a proficiency test and completing one advanced course in Chinese. A related issue is that many international students are speakers of languages that are not offered at Purdue (e.g. Korean, Turkish).

Arguably, international students from countries for which the TOEFL is required for admission have already shown proficiency in more than one language by passing the TOEFL with a score of 80 or above and by studying outside their home country. (We note that a higher level of English proficiency is required to receive this score than the equivalent level of Spanish proficiency required to pass Spanish 202.) Thus, a simple solution that would be inclusive of international students from a variety of different language backgrounds would be to allow CLA students who come from these countries to apply for a waiver of the language requirement. The waiver would mean that they do not have to take a third language and can instead take 12 credits of free electives within the College of Liberal Arts. We note that a similar policy is already in place at some peer institutions, including Indiana University. However, in the Purdue context, this simple solution still puts these students at a disadvantage because they cannot receive back credits for courses not taken at Purdue unless they study a third language.

This leads to the current proposal, which would:

- (a) allow international students who come from countries for which the TOEFL (or equivalent English proficiency test) is required for admission to receive a waiver of the language requirement if they do not wish to study a third language;
- (b) continue to allow both domestic and international students to fulfill the language requirement by passing a course at Level IV or above (with the exception that international students still cannot use their first language or the dominant language of their home country for this purpose);
- (c) remove the possibility of back credits for CLA students and instead require them to substitute free electives in CLA for any of the language courses they do not take at Purdue. In the case of international students receiving a waiver, this would be 12 credits of electives. In the case of a student who tests into Spanish 201 this would be 6 credits of electives to replace Spanish 101 and 102.
- (d) continue to allow students outside CLA to receive back credits in the same manner as before.

We relied on the input from Iñigo Sanchez-Llama, our SLC representative, and from Head of SLC Jen Williams, with whom we consulted, in our drafting and discussion of different proposals.

Proposal for Consideration by the CLA Senate

The language requirement can be satisfied by either:

(1) successfully completing a 3-credit hour language course at the 202 level or above;

- Continue to allow all CLA students to place out of the lower levels of a language and fulfill the language requirement by passing a course at 202 level or above. If a CLA student places into a course higher than 202, they will still need to take the course placed into in order to satisfy the language requirement.
- A CLA student completing the language requirement after placing into a certain level will not receive back credit for the previous courses in the language sequence.
- A CLA student will be required to substitute free electives in CLA for any of the language courses they tested out of and did not take at Purdue.
- A non-CLA student (including Degree+ students) placing into a certain level may receive back credit for the previous courses in the language sequence.
- Students who CODO into CLA who have already placed into a certain level and received back credit for the previous courses in the language sequence will retain their placement and credits once admitted in CLA.
- International students from countries for which the TOEFL is required for admission could follow the same procedure for a third language if they choose not to apply for a waiver (see below).

OR

(2) being an international student from a country for which the TOEFL is required.

- Allow international students from countries for which the TOEFL is required for admission to apply for a waiver of the language requirement by filling out a simple form affirming that they have passed the TOEFL with a score sufficient for admissions to Purdue (or equivalent English language test as allowed by Purdue admissions) when they were admitted to Purdue. The form would authorize CLA staff to access their admission records. They will be required to take 12 credits of CLA electives instead.
- Students who CODO out of CLA who have already placed into a certain level will receive back credit for the previous courses in the language sequence.