

UMBC 201 Level Language Requirement

Information and Procedures for Requesting a 201 Level Language Course Substitution

As part of UMBC's graduation requirements, students are required to demonstrate competency in language study at the 201 level (L201). While UMBC views the L201 study of a language to be an essential component of a liberal arts education, it recognizes that otherwise qualified students with language-based learning disorders, deafness, or hearing/speech/communication impairments may find the conditions of the L201 Language Proficiency General Education Program (GEP) requirement to be a barrier to degree completion due to the functional limitations of a disability.

Please note: a 201 level language substitution is not an option if proficiency in a language is deemed essential to a student's major program or course of study or is a prerequisite for a required class.

To facilitate success in coursework, UMBC provides students with disabilities reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations in the classroom and also encourages the use of academic support services such as tutoring, supplemental instruction, and meetings with faculty or teaching assistants. However, when a documented disability that affects language acquisition would significantly interfere or prevent a student from being able to learn a language second level, the student may formally request to be considered for an L201 language course substitution through the Office of Student Disability Services (SDS). An L201 language course substitution is an academic accommodation that must be approved by SDS through an interactive evaluation process between SDS and the student.

In order to establish eligibility for an L201 language course substitution as a disability accommodation, students may refer to the procedures outlined below.

- **The student must be registered with the Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) and have on file (or submit) documentation of their disability diagnosis and limitations that demonstrate clearly how their disability impacts their speech/language skills.** Appropriate documentation of a language-based learning disorder is typically in the form of a psychoeducational or neuropsychological assessment report that includes data on the student's skills in phonological awareness, decoding, auditory information processing, working memory and comprehension. Preferred documentation includes specific discussion and assessment of the student's ability to learn a language at the 201 level.
- **A student can submit their request for an L201 language course substitution through the SDS *Accommodate* online software portal, can submit it in writing to SDS through an email or letter if already registered with the SDS office, or can shared this request verbally with an SDS disability specialist during an office appointment.**
- **The written request should:**
 1. State the difficulties the student has had with learning a language due to their disability limitations;
 2. Identify any and all attempts to take language courses, including American Sign Language (ASL); and
 3. Describe support services and accommodations utilized during any previous language course attempts (e.g. tutoring, meeting with instructors one-on-one, etc.).
- **If language courses were taken at other higher education institutions, the student's transcript should be submitted to the UMBC Registrar so that an official record of course**

attempts and grades are part of the documentation review. If a waiver or substitution of language study was granted in high school, please submit the corresponding documentation to SDS as part of the request (this information may be noted on a student's high school IEP) if it can be obtained. Please note that a waiver/substitution at another institution does not guarantee eligibility for an L201 language course substitution at UMBC.

- **Although not required, supporting documentation from a student's prior second language instructor(s) can accompany the student's substitution request.** Such a letter should outline the student's progress or lack thereof with the course material, the student's performance as compared to peers, state whether the student requested assistance or attended office hours for support, and any additional pertinent feedback.
- **Documentation from UMBC's Learning Resources Center, or another institution's similar academic success center, regarding participation in tutoring, use of/or other learning supports for foreign language courses may be useful.**
- **Once the student's course substitution request is submitted, all relevant information will be reviewed by an SDS Disability Specialist who will respond to the student within two weeks with the status of the request.** If additional information is needed to complete the processing of the request, such as additional disability documentation, the Disability Specialist will notify the student.
- **The SDS Disability Specialist will complete a final review of all requests with the SDS team, considering all supporting documentation and information obtained, to decide whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant a UMBC L201 language course substitution based on disability.**
- **The Disability Specialist will notify the student of the decision.** If the L201 substitution request is granted, the Disability Specialist will notify the University Registrar in writing and will document the L201 substitution in the student's online advising record.
- **If approved, the student will be instructed to meet with their Academic Advisor to plan for registration of the appropriate substitute course.** The student must select from an approved substitute course that carries a Culture GEP designation in order to meet UMBC graduation requirements.
- **Note:** The [L201 FAQ](#) section of the Modern Languages, Linguistics & Intercultural Communication (MLLI) website has helpful information targeted to prospective students, current students, and international students. <https://mlli.umbc.edu/l201-faqs/#L201> SDS, students should make sure they have read and understood the basic information regarding the UMBC L201 Language GEP Requirement. Information may be found in the UMBC catalog.