

Career Profile: American Sign Language (ASL)

Career Opportunities for Interpretation:

There is a shortage of ASL interpreters, and it is a profession mandated by law. There are opportunities to interpret both on BYU campus and throughout the community, by interpreting for public forums, school functions, etc. It is an ideal job for those looking for part-time work. Salaries are lower in Utah than elsewhere. BYU pays certified interpreters \$12 per hour, but those with a college degree in Deaf Studies are paid more. Top interpreters make \$30 per hour or more.

The following are programs in Utah for students wanting to emphasize in different areas of ASL. For programs outside Utah, research will have to be done on a school by school basis.

Interpreter Certification:

Those looking for a career in ASL interpretation need to certify with the state of Utah. For information on this certification, go to www.aslterps.utah.gov. There you will find information on prices, requirements, and scheduling.

Salt Lake Community College (SLCC):

- 2 year Associate's Degree in ASL/Interpreting
- Prepares students to pass the Utah State Interpreter Certification test

Utah Valley State College (UVSC):

- Offers classes to help students prepare for the Utah State Interpreter Certification Test
- Minor in Deaf Studies

Brigham Young University (BYU):

- Offers classes in ASL but no certification exam training
- Students can take ASL classes at BYU and go to UVSC or SLCC for interpreting classes
- Students are required to take ASL 101, 102, 201, and 301 (202 and 302 are optional), but these classes are also offered at UVSC and are slightly less expensive

Becoming an Interpreter:

In Utah, students do not need to complete the Interpreter Training Program before taking the certification test. Students can take the BYU classes and pass the test without a degree in American Sign Language (ASL), and receive an official interpreting license. However, BYU does not guarantee that all students who take ASL 431 and 432 will automatically pass the test. For an Interpreter Training Program, contact SLCC. That Associate's Degree is specifically engineered to help students pass the certification test. UVSC also has classes to help pass the test, without offering an Associate's Degree.

Teaching ASL (as a foreign language) to hearing students:

Students wanting to teach hearing students ASL need to enter the program at the University of Utah (UofU). That program started in 2003-2004, and it allows students to gain a Teaching License from the State of Utah, endorsing them to teach ASL. The program is an emphasis in the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department, so the program requires many CMDIS credits, as well as ASL classes.

Teaching ASL to Deaf children:

Utah State University (USU) has the best program to teach Deaf children. Graduates from this program teach general subjects (math, reading, science, etc.) to Deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Getting a Master's associated with ASL:

USU is the only school in Utah with a Master's program. They allow students to receive a Master's of Education (M.Ed) in Deaf Education.

Other Options:

UVSC only offers a minor in Deaf Studies, and it is the only minor offered in Utah. They are currently preparing for offering a four year degree.

Contact Information:

Interpreting:

Melanie Zirbel, Academic Advisor, Salt Lake Community College, (801) 957-4482,
www.slcc.edu/pages/1051.asp

Teaching ASL to hearing children:

Jeff Pollock (Deaf), Acting Program Director, University of Utah, jpollock@sa.utah.edu
Jared Bennett, Undergrad Advisor, University of Utah, (801) 581-6725,
www.health.utah.edu/cmdis/ASL%20Major.htm

Teaching ASL to Deaf children and getting a Master's Degree:

Freeman King, Director of Teacher Training Program in Deaf Education, Utah State University, (435) 797-1343, www.coe.usu.edu/comd/deafed.html

Other Options:

Bryan Eldredge, ASL Program Coordinator, Utah Valley State College, (801) 863-8529,
www.uvsc.edu/asl/index.html

BYU Contact Information:

Karen Cottle, ASL Secretary, Brigham Young University, (801) 422-2873

Judy Saunders, ASL Club Advisor, Brigham Young University, jrs1@redrock.net

All of the information on this sheet has been compiled from an interview with Karen Cottle, ASL Secretary at Brigham Young University, Utah Valley State College's website, and www.aslterps.utah.gov.

