



University
of Exeter



Evening language programme 2026/27

Course title: British Sign Language Level 1 – on campus

Course descriptor/objectives

The course is designed to enable the learner to communicate with Deaf people in British Sign Language at level 1 standard within a range of everyday topics. The course leads to the Level 1 Award in BSL, accredited by the Signature Award Body. The qualification comprises three units: introduction to British Sign Language, conversational British Sign Language and British Sign Language at school, college or work.

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- understand and use a limited range of simple words and sentences in BSL
- take part in simple conversations in BSL
- give and understand simple directions in BSL
- give and understand simple descriptions in BSL

Topics to be covered:

- meeting people
- using numbers
- weather
- transport
- directions
- people, animals and objects in the home
- interests and activities

- food and drink
- getting around

Key teaching methods:

- demonstration
- pair/group work
- questions and answers
- receptive skills from teacher and videos

In seminars, participants will have to engage in practical exercises and group interaction in order to develop relevant language-specific learning strategies. The role of the instructor is to facilitate this process, provide useful tools and encourage participants to become independent learners and basic users of the language, too.

Language-specific information:

Sign language is a visual means of communication using gestures, facial expressions, and body language. It is primarily used by people who are Deaf or have hearing loss. In the UK, the official and most used sign language is British Sign Language (BSL).

BSL has its own grammatical structure and syntax, independent of spoken English. The language uses hands to create signs, but also incorporates gestures (i.e. head, arms, and body movements), facial expressions, and body language to convey meaning.

Mouth patterns play a vital role in BSL; they accompany signs to provide additional information and clarify meaning, particularly for nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

A finger alphabet supports communication of proper names, foreign words, or terms that do not have an established sign.

Prerequisite:

This course is suitable for learners who have no prior knowledge or experience of BSL. Candidates will gain competence and confidence in the two skill areas of production and reception of BSL. BSL competence standards include requirements for candidates to have sufficient sight, manual dexterity, facial and body movement to produce and receive BSL.

No pre-enrolment interview required.

The course will prepare participants for a qualification accredited by Signature, the leading UK awarding body for British Sign Language. To achieve the full certificate in BSL, you must pass all three units BSL101/BSL102/BSL103.

All exam components are covered within the course fee.

Progression route:

Successful candidates can apply for a place on a Level 2 in BSL course scheduled to start in the following year.