



To: Academic Coordinating Commission (ACC)

From: Education Leadership & Inclusive Teaching Department

Subject: EXCE Prefix Cancellation and Creation of New Prefixes

Date: 10/20/2022

The Education Leadership and Inclusive Teaching Department is requesting to eliminate the EXCE (exceptionalities) prefix due to student, staff, & community feedback.

The term “exceptionality”, when referring to people with disabilities, is being reconsidered by many scholars and advocates in disability studies. Some find the term exceptionality when referring to disability as stigmatizing and a form of ableism, as it portrays people with disabilities as being inspirational to able-bodied people based on their life circumstances. It can be perceived as objectifying disabled people for the benefit or gratification of the able-bodied.

While the term exceptionality is still used most often in the special education community, we define exceptional children as different from the norm, either above or below, in physical attributes or learning ability to such an extent that they need specialized educational services or physical accommodations. That definition isn't generally held by people outside of special education and can lead to misunderstandings.

To replace the prefix in our majors, the Department is proposing the creation of two new prefixes:

- ASLC – American Sign Language and Culture
- DIAD – Disability and Advocacy

Rationale for ASLC Request: ASL is a language and is independent from ability. Many Deaf people who are native users of ASL do not see themselves as disabled, and many native users of ASL do not have hearing loss. Deaf culture and ASL are not a disability; therefore, using exceptionality, special education, or disability and advocacy would be inappropriate.

Rationale for DIAD Request: Disability and Advocacy is a more current, socially accepted, and descriptive title.

The ASLC prefix will be used to replace the following EXCE courses:

- EXCE 101 – Elementary ASL/Culture
- EXCE 102 – Elementary ASL II
- EXCE 103 – Elementary ASL III



Department of Education Leadership and Inclusive Teaching

---

Miller Hall 200 - MS 9040  
516 High Street, Bellingham, Washington 98225  
(360) 650-3330  
<https://wce.wvu.edu/sped>

The DIAD prefix will be used to replace the following EXCE courses:

- EXCE 205 – Disability, Diversity, and the Mass Media
- EXCE 442 – Clinical Practicum
- EXCE 495 – Clinical Internship

Other Courses impacted:

- SPED 479 has EXCE 101 listed as a prerequisite course. This should be updated to ASLC 101.

Other Programs/Colleges Impacted: None

Sincerely,

M. Charles Lambert,  
Department Chair