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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION		DATE	
FROM		PAGES	
	Senate Peter Hall, Chair Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies		August 2, 2024
RE:	Removal of the Language 11 (second language) Requirement <i>(SCUS 24-76)</i>	1/1	

Action undertaken by SCUS on August 1, 2024, gives rise to the following recommendations:

Motion

That Senate approve the removal of the Language 11 (second language) requirement from the undergraduate admission criteria, effective Summer 2025.



OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
Student Services

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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	SCUS	DATE	June 11, 2024
FROM	Tom Nault		
RE:	Registrar & Executive Director Language 11 (second language) Admission Requirement for British Columbia Grade 12 Students		

Proposal

Simon Fraser University requires applicants graduating from the British Columbia (B.C.) High School Curriculum to complete a language 11 (second language) for admission consideration. A comprehensive list of language 11 courses from the B.C. Ministry of Education can be found here:

<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/languages/courses>.

SFU Undergraduate Admissions recommends that SFU remove the Language 11 (second language) requirement from the undergraduate admission criteria, effective for the 2025-2026 academic year (effective Summer 2025 admission term). This change would enhance the inclusivity and accessibility of Simon Fraser University for post-secondary education, align our admission policies with comparator institutions, and allow students greater flexibility in their pre-university education.

Motion

That SCUS approve and recommend to Senate, removing the Language 11 (second language) requirement from SFU's B.C. High School Undergraduate Admission Requirements, effective Summer 2025 (May 2025 intake).

Background

SFU requires prospective undergraduate students from the B.C. High School Curriculum to have completed a Language 11 (second language) course (or equivalent) as part of their admission requirements. This policy ([S78.90](#)) was implemented to ensure students have basic proficiency in a second language, which is believed to contribute to a well-rounded education and global competence. However, several factors necessitate a reconsideration of this requirement, including equity, accessibility, and alignment with other leading institutions.

1. Comparative Analysis:

A review of a sample set of comparator Canadian universities (see Table 1) highlights that many institutions do not mandate a second language course for undergraduate admission. Currently only SFU and The University of British Columbia (UBC) - Vancouver Campus programs, require a language 11 for admission. UBC, will be removing all grade 11 specific requirements effective their Fall 2026 intake,

including the language 11 (second language requirement). The University of Victoria, as well as the University of British Columbia – Okanagan Campus, do not require a language 11 (second language) for admission. Removing this requirement would align SFU with these institutions, therefore, the potential to increase our prospective student population to a broader range of applicants.

2. Equity and Access:

Students from smaller schools and school districts, may not have access to Language 11 courses. It is not uncommon for B.C. High Schools to not offer a language 11 course or present scheduling challenges for a variety of factors, including resourcing and teacher availability. This disproportionately affects students in their ability to be eligible to apply to SFU. We can assume that some students may not self-advocate and/or may be unaware of SFU's Language 11 course exception/waiver process (see 5 below), and thus, do not apply to SFU.

International students, and students studying outside of the B.C. Curriculum are not required to have a language 11 (second language) for admission to SFU. This includes students who may be applying from adjacent provinces including Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario.

College and University Transfer students (including those who have previously completed the B.C. High School Curriculum) are also not required to have a language 11 (second language) for admission consideration to SFU.

3. Disclosure of Sensitive Information:

The current process to apply for a Language 11 waiver may require students to reveal personal and/or potentially sensitive information that they may not wish, nor have, to disclose to another post-secondary institution. The current Language 11 waiver process may create discomfort for prospective students (and secondary school administrators), by requiring the disclosure information that is not requested/required in support of the admissions process by other institutions. Removing the requirement would no longer require students to reveal personal and/or sensitive information that they may not wish to disclose during the admission process and in their journey to becoming an SFU student.

4. Flexibility and Choice:

Eliminating the Language 11 requirement would provide students with greater flexibility in their high school course selection, allowing them to pursue subjects that are more aligned with their interests and career goals.

5. Impact to B.C. High School & SFU Undergraduate Admissions Administration

The SFU Undergraduate Admissions Department receives approximately 130-150 Language 11 course waiver and exception requests each Fall intake. Reasons are outlined in Table 3 below. Students requesting a waiver are required to fill out an online form and attach supporting document(s) provided by their secondary school administrator(s). Each request needs to be reviewed by the SFU Admission Appeal and Course Exceptions Committee, and each admission evaluation, both primary and alternate program, for an approved student is completed manually (i.e. is not an automated evaluation completed/programmed by a software system). This results in almost 300 manual evaluations, and approximately 100 hours spent on processing these requests each year. Student's admission offers are also delayed, due to the additional operational admin required to review the request, and manually adjudicate the application. The data in Table 2 suggests most cases received are approved and less than 2% are rejected due to lack of supporting documentation.

Table 3 provides information on the grounds under which the language 11 waiver requests are requested and approved by SFU Undergraduate Admissions.

Table 1: Language 11 (Second Language) Admission Requirement for a Sample of Canadian Universities

Reflects admission requirements for students applying from the B.C. High School Curriculum.

University	Grade 11 Language Requirement	Source
B.C. Universities:		
University of British Columbia	<p>Fall 2025 Admission A language 11 or waiver is required for the Vancouver Campus.</p> <p>A language 11 is not required for UBC Okanagan Campus.</p> <p><u>Effective Fall 2026 Admission</u> No Grade 11 requirements, including language 11 for both campuses</p>	<p>https://you.ubc.ca/applying-ubc/requirements/canadian-high-schools/#british-columbia</p> <p>https://you.ubc.ca/applying-ubc/blog/admission-requirements/british-columbia-and-yukon-new-grade-11-requirements-starting-september-2026</p>
University of Victoria	2024 - 2025 A language 11 is not required.	https://www.uvic.ca/undergraduate/programs/undergraduate-programs/pages/english
Alberta Universities:		
University of Alberta	2024 – 2025 A language 11 is not required.	https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions/undergraduate/admission/admission-requirements
University of Calgary	Website Information as of 2024: A language 11 is not required.	https://www.ucalgary.ca/future-students/undergraduate/requirements
Ontario & Quebec Universities:		
McGill University	Website Information as of 2024: A language 11 is not required.	https://www.mcgill.ca/undergraduate-admissions/apply/requirements/canadian

University of Toronto	Website Information as of 2024: A language 11 is not required.	https://future.utoronto.ca/apply/requirements/canadian-high-school/
University of Waterloo	Website Information as of 2024: A language 11 is not required.	https://uwaterloo.ca/future-students/admissions/admission-requirements
Wilfred Laurier	Website Information as of 2024: A language 11 is not required.	https://www.wlu.ca/future-students/undergraduate/admissions/requirements/canadian.html

Table 2: Language 11 Waiver Requests 2021-2024

Admission Intake Term	Total Language 11 Waiver Requests	Approved Waiver Requests by SFU Undergraduate Admissions	Total Admitted	Total Enrolled
Fall 2024	127	127	90	TBD.
Fall 2023	154	151	86	40
Fall 2022	139	136	85	35
Fall 2021	140	135	85	36

Table 3: Reasons for Language 11 Waiver Requests

Reasons have been obtained through the SFU Admissions Course Exceptions and Appeals online form from Fall 2021 to Fall 2024.

Reason	Percentage for Fall 2024	Percentage for Fall 2023	Percentage for Fall 2022	Percentage for Fall 2021
B.C. Ministry of Education Individual Case Education Plan (IEP) and/or result of a Psychoeducational Assessment	43%	51%	41%	43%
Disclosure of a Learning Disability /Accessible Learning Need	19%	16%	19%	11%
Scheduling Conflicts within the Secondary School	18%	7%	6%	6%
Medical Accommodation	2%	5%	1%	8%
Secondary School does not offer Language 11/12	5%	5%	4%	2%

Moved from Another Province; language 11 wasn't required in previous curriculum	2%	3%	2%	5%
International student who started B.C. 12 Curriculum; language 11 wasn't required in previous curriculum	3%	0	6%	6%
Family circumstances	<1%	2%	0	<1%
Other	<1%	7%	17%	15%

B.C. Government Definitions:

Individual Case Education Plan (IEP): An IEP is a written educational plan for special education students designed to describe programming modifications and/or adaptations and to indicate specific services provided. An IEP is a "living" process that has the potential to guide assessment, planning, collaborative communication and teaching. An IEP need not be a lengthy document but must include evidence of planning for student needs, demonstrate a plan to utilize varied instructional strategies and/or assessment procedures, and list clear goals for future activities and planning. It is necessary to have an IEP to focus a child's learning activities, aid in the facilitation of communication, and to provide inter-team and inter-agency accountability (2024. Government of British Columbia).

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/independent-schools/se_guide_iep_cmp.pdf

Psychoeducational Assessment: A Psychoeducational assessment is a detailed assessment of an individual's psychological and academic skills, learning style, and needs. This assessment is done for children who are experiencing learning difficulties. The assessment helps understand how to support the child best academically and socially/emotionally and gives the school guidelines regarding how to best teach and measure student success.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/independent-schools/special_ed_policy_manual.pdf

Calendar Entry

[N/A]

SFU Undergraduate Admission Websites would require edits:

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/admission/admission-requirements/canadian-highschool/bc-yukon.html>