

**Handbook for Faculty and Adjunct Working with  
Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing  
Students**

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY – OKLAHOMA CITY

DISABILITY SERVICES AND DIVERSITY OFFICE

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**DISABILITY SERVICES  
AND DIVERSITY**  
at OSU-Oklahoma City

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## INTRODUCTION

This Faculty and Adjunct Handbook is designed to educate faculty and adjunct about working with students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and to provide suggestions and examples of accommodations that may be considered. The accommodations discussed in this handbook may not be applicable in every case, nor are these examples inclusive to meet all needs of students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The information included is general information for faculty and adjunct in postsecondary settings.

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## **DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY**

OSU-Oklahoma City requests that students notify the Disability Services and Diversity Office (DSDO) of any special accommodation needs. This notification will help ensure the quality and availability of services needed. Students are responsible for supplying the appropriate documentation to the DSDO as part of the accommodation process. A letter, written report, or medical record from a professional (such as a physician or an audiologist) stating the student's disability is acceptable. This information is confidential. All accommodations are discussed with the DSDO and the student. Once a deaf or hard-of-hearing student has requested accommodations from the DSDO, DSDO will send a completed "Notification of Student Disability Accommodations" form by email to the faculty member and the student requesting the accommodation.

## **ABOUT HEARING DISABILITIES**

No two people with a hearing loss experience the loss in exactly the same way. There are several types of hearing loss and various factors that determine the impact that the hearing loss has on language development. A person may be born with a hearing loss or may become hard of hearing due to an accident or illness later in life. If the age of onset occurs before the acquisition of language and the development of speech (by roughly two years of age), the individual may have language-based deficiencies that interfere with language syntax and vocabulary that is auditory-based. Because the usual way of acquiring language through auditory means is affected by hearing loss, visual learning of language takes the place of auditory learning. People who are deaf or hard-of-hearing vary widely in their hearing and language abilities. Understanding the nature and extent of the hearing loss and how it affects the student is imperative in providing appropriate accommodations. Often the best source of learning what accommodations are needed is to ask the student, or contact the DSDO. Although the staff will not be able to disclose information related to the student, they can discuss types of hearing loss and how it may impact some students.

People who are culturally Deaf are members of a distinct linguistic and cultural group. The members of this cultural group use American Sign Language (ASL) as their first language. Therefore, members of this cultural group are bilingual, and English is their second language. As with any cultural group, people who are Deaf have their own values, social norms, and traditions. Be sensitive and attentive to cross-cultural information in the mainstreamed classroom setting. Students who are culturally Deaf may use American Sign Language interpreters in the classroom setting.

## **SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ASL AND ENGLISH**

There are many linguistic differences between English and American Sign Language (ASL). As you evaluate your student's work, keep in mind that students whose primary language is ASL may unwittingly follow some of the linguistic characteristics of that language when writing in English. Some examples of the linguistic differences between English and ASL include:

- Plurals are signified in a variety of ways in ASL, whereas English adds an "s" on nouns and verbs.
- In ASL, the adjective is usually after the noun, whereas in English, the reverse is true.

- In English, verbs can indicate past, present or future. In ASL, only one form of verbs is used by establishing the timeframe first, and then all verbs will remain in that tense until the signer changes the timeframe.
- One sign in ASL can have several different meanings in English, just as one word in English can be translated into several different ASL signs.
- ASL does not have the verb "to be," but indicates this information in other ways, by use of non-manual markers.

## **COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING**

Although they may wear hearing aids, many hard of hearing students rely primarily on speechreading to access information. However, even highly skilled speechreaders usually comprehend only 30% of what is said, and fill in the rest with contextual cues. Students who rely on speechreading frequently miss comments from other class members and have difficulty understanding instructors who cover their lips, face the chalkboard, move around the classroom, or have facial hair.

People who use hearing aids usually do not hear sounds as others do. Hearing aids amplify all sounds and can amplify small noises, such as loud air conditioners, hissing fluorescent light fixtures, and traffic noise. This can be overwhelming to the hearing aid user. Sometimes people use hearing aids only to detect environmental cues because speech is perceived as jumbled and disjointed.

A cochlear implant is very different from a hearing aid. A cochlear implant is a small, complex electronic device that is surgically implanted to provide a sense of sounds to a person with a hearing loss. Cochlear implants bypass damaged portions of the ear and directly stimulate the auditory nerve. Signals generated by the implant are sent by way of the auditory nerve to the brain, which recognizes the signals as sound. The implant consists of an external portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion that is surgically placed under the skin. Hearing through a cochlear implant is different from normal hearing and takes time to learn or relearn. However, it allows many people to recognize warning signals or understand other sounds in the environment, and can sometime assist in understanding conversations with others.

Often, students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing require assistance in order to communicate effectively with faculty and/or adjunct. For students who utilize sign language as a means to communicate, an interpreter may be necessary to convey spoken speech to the student who is deaf. Some students, primarily those who do not use sign language, will use speech-to-text services to display the spoken words in text format. These services include C-Print®, TypeWell®, and communication access real-time translation (CART) or similar systems. With the advent of new technology, some postsecondary institutions are turning to remote services to save on costs or even find a service provider for rural areas which may not always have them readily available.

During lectures, some students who are hard of hearing may need to have the instructor's speech amplified by an assistive listening device (ALD). This requires the instructor to wear a small wireless microphone that is compatible with the student's hearing aids. The assistive listening device is usually provided to the student through the DSDO. Other students may need to audio tape lectures so that they can play the tape back at a higher volume. Most students with hearing loss will likely need note-taking services as it is difficult to focus on the interpreter and/or the instructor while simultaneously taking notes. Students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may receive information using a combination of

methods, such as through an assistive listening device and speech-to-text transcription, or through an interpreter and a classroom note-taker.

Telephone communication for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing is no longer an obstacle. Most individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing have access to a video phone (VP) which allows them to utilize a Video Relay System (VRS) to make calls. Video relay calls are placed over a high-speed internet connection through a VP connected to a TV monitor or through a personal computer with a web camera. The deaf user sees an ASL interpreter on the monitor and signs to the interpreter, who then calls the hearing user via a standard phone line and relays the conversation between them. Hearing callers also may initiate a VRS call by calling the student's 10-digit number. The Communication Assistant (CA) will answer and inform you of their number and then place the call for you. Training for those who are interested in using VRS is available through the DSDO.

A VP is available for our deaf and hard-of-hearing students in the library on the fourth floor of the Learning Resource Center in group study room 5.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing students will also use text or email to communicate with instructors.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY AND ADJUNCT**

- Collaborate with the DSDO to provide authorized accommodations and support services in a fair and timely manner.
- Meet with the student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing, when necessary, to discuss access services and accommodations. If needed, complete a "Request for Interpreter" on-line at <http://osuokc.edu/DeafStudentServices/requestinterpreter> to arrange for an interpreter preferably at least five days prior to conferencing with the student.
- Review class material several weeks prior to the start of class each semester to ensure all media is captioned appropriately or needs to be sent in for captioning. See "Accommodations Related to Media" for additional information.
- The student's documentation of their disability is confidential information that is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), so it should not be shared with anyone who does not have a legitimate educational interest in the student's situation. You can also consider asking the student how the learning process is occurring. Having the student describe how they learn best might be helpful.
- Expect the student to be responsible for the same course content as all the other students in the class.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS**

- If requesting service, self-identify to the DSDO and provide documentation of disability as early in the advisement period as possible.
- Consult with DSDO to determine specific accommodation needs.
- Request accommodations for support services from DSDO.
- Maintain the same responsibility for academic standards, attendance, participation and behavior as is required of all students.

- Give timely notification of any needs for reasonable accommodations, i.e.: interpreter or notetaker, for special events such as field trips, extra class sessions.
- Notify DSDO if expected to be absent from class or when schedule changes are announced. The interpreter, note-taker, and CART provider are not a substitute for class attendance, nor are they responsible for student's missed classroom time.
- Self-advocate appropriately through DSDO for classroom/campus support.

## **CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Sign language interpreters and CART providers (service providers) are essential components of communication access in a classroom. Although there are some strategies that are unique to each profession, the guidelines listed below can promote effective communication, no matter what service is provided.

- Remember to communicate directly with a student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- In using demonstration and visual aids, hearing students are able to listen to the instructor and, at the same time, watch what is being explained. Brief but frequent pauses while using visual aids and demonstration are appreciated by the service provider and the student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing. Doing this will allow the student time to see what is being said and then watch the demonstration. Most likely students in the classroom who are trying to take notes also will appreciate these pauses.
- It always helps to write general class announcements on the board to make sure all involved are aware of the change.
- Writing new vocabulary words on the board or overhead, or sharing notes with the service provider prior to the class is helpful.
- Question and answer periods may create challenges for effective communication. Allowing one person to talk at a time enables the service provider to identify who is talking.
- It is useful for the service provider and the instructor to become acquainted at the beginning of a course. Exchanging contact information is beneficial, especially if the teacher needs to cancel a class or make a change in a class time or location.
- Remember, service providers are ethically bound to convey everything you and the other students say. The student who is deaf has the right to hear everything, just as hearing students do.
- The service provider is there to facilitate communication, not evaluate the teacher or the student.
- Disagreements with service providers, if they occur, should be discussed in private away from the student and if not resolved, brought to the attention of the Interpreter Coordinator in the DSDO.

### **Working with an Interpreter**

An interpreter's role is to provide communication access between a student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing and hearing persons who do not use sign language. The interpreter signs what is being spoken, and voices what is being signed. As an instructor working with students who are deaf, you may have the new experience of teaching with an interpreter at your side. In the beginning, this new experience may

seem a bit strange, but adjustment to the situation will be easier if you bear in mind the following guidelines:

- Generally, the interpreter will stand beside you or sit at the front of the classroom. This enables the student to maintain eye contact with both you and the interpreter. This is important for good student/instructor rapport.
- Wherever the interpreter stands or sits, there must be good lighting.
- If requested, the interpreter should be provided with a copy of the course syllabi and any course handouts throughout the semester. This will enable them to be familiar with vocabulary related to the course.
- The interpreter will sometimes need to adjust to your pace, and sometimes it will be necessary for you to adjust to the pace of the interpreter. This is to ensure that the student receives your message in full. The interpreter will let you know if you need to modify your pace.
- For classes with small groups of students, arranging the chairs in a semi-circle allows students to see each other, which may have a positive impact on student involvement in class discussions.
- Please inform the interpreter when an off-campus activity such as a field trip or a class meeting will occur so that they can make sure that the DSDO is aware of the plan. Students are responsible for requesting a service provider, if needed. However, often times, students are not aware of specifics/details related to trips and/or changes in the regular class meetings which will require information from the instructor.
- When using a projector, videos, slides, or films, it is sometimes necessary to reduce or turn off classroom lights. Please advise the interpreter beforehand so they can be prepared.
- Sign language does not contain signs for every word in the English language, especially specialized jargon. Usually the interpreter will have to fingerspell such words using the manual alphabet.
- Because they need to focus on the interpreter, students who are deaf may have difficulty taking their own notes in class. Another student in the class may volunteer as a note-taker for the student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing. It also might be helpful to share a copy of your notes or lecture outline with the student.
- The interpreter will interpret faithfully, conveying the content and spirit of the teacher. They will not counsel, advise, or interject personal opinions. Interpreters follow a “Code of Professional Conduct” which involves a strict confidentiality policy.
- The interpreter works with the instructor, but it is not their responsibility to teach, take roll, discipline, keep records, or see that the student is in class or lab.
- The interpreter is not a student of the class and should not participate in the class activities or discussions.
- The interpreter does not tutor the student and is not permitted to discuss anything about the student with the instructor or other students in the class.
- It is the student's responsibility to pay attention to the teacher and the interpreter.
- If the student fails to show up for class 15 minutes after a 1.5 hours long class has begun, the interpreter will leave.
- If the student fails to show up for class 30 minutes after a class longer than 1.5 hours has begun, the interpreter will leave.

## Working with a CART Provider

- A CART provider types on a stenotype machine as words are spoken and the text appears on a computer monitor.
- A CART provider's role is to provide communication access between a student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing and hearing persons via the typed word using a computerized abbreviation system.
- CART providers cannot honor requests to refrain from captioning/transcribing parts of lectures, conversations, or instructions.
- The CART provider occupies the space of one (1) person and may need access to an electrical outlet. In some classes, there may be two (2) CART providers assigned due to the duration of the class or the difficulty of the lecture.
- The CART provider is not a student of the class and should not participate in the class activities or discussions.
- The CART provider does not tutor the student and is not permitted to discuss anything about the student with the instructor or other students in the class.
- If requested, the CART provider should be provided with a copy of the course syllabi and any course handouts throughout the semester. This will enable them to be familiar with vocabulary related to the course.
- CART providers are generally quiet and cause little distraction. However, any distractions caused by the novelty of having a service provider in the class will quickly wear off.
- CART providers follow a "Code of Ethics" which involves a strict confidentiality policy.
- If the student fails to show up for class 15 minutes after a 1.5 hours long class has begun, the CART provider will leave.
- If the student fails to show up for class 30 minutes after a class longer than 1.5 hours has begun, the CART provider will leave.

## **Working with a Remote CART Provider**

The use of remote CART services is increasing in use by postsecondary institutions. Remote services allow campuses without access to local service providers to better meet the needs of students. Many students prefer the feeling of independence and the service provider can be located far away from the lecture site, even in another state. The lecturer wears a microphone and the speech is sent over the internet to the transcriber. The transcriber's transcript is sent back over the internet to the reader at the lecture site.

## **Notetaking Services**

Notetaking services are a vital service for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Watching an interpreter or speechreading an instructor does not allow the student time to take notes. Many students use note-takers on a regular basis to supplement interpreted class lectures and labs. For some classes that utilize "hands-on" instruction, notetaking may not be as important as in a class where a lecture is the primary mode of instruction. Notetaking is a service that must be rendered when requested by a student with a documented disability. A note-taker is not a teaching assistant. If a student misses class for any reason, the note-taker is not responsible for taking notes. Upon returning to class, the student is responsible for obtaining notes from another source.

Most students with hearing loss will require a note-taker during class time, since it is impossible to take accurate notes while visually following an interpreter or trying to speechread the teacher. We encourage the student to advocate for themselves in requesting a volunteer from the class to serve as a note-taker. In some instances, the teacher will be asked by the student to secure a volunteer note-taker. If both of these efforts fail, the DSDO will assist in securing a volunteer note-taker. It is helpful for the teacher to check notes from the note-taker periodically to ensure the student is getting accurate information.

### [Assistive Listening Devices \(ALDs\)](#)

Students who use a hearing aid may have difficulty understanding speech due to competing background noise. Hearing aids have a tendency to enhance all sounds at the same time, thereby drowning out the sounds of speech. Several amplification systems are available to improve hearing ability in large areas, such as lecture halls and auditoriums, as well as in interpersonal situations (i.e., group discussions and instructor conferences).

These systems work by delivering the speaker's voice directly to the ear (with or without personal hearing aids), thus overcoming the negative effects of noise, distance, and echo, thereby improving comprehension. The DSDO has a FM System and several Roger Pens available for checkout for students wishing to use an ALD.

The use of an ALD by a student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing helps the student hear the instructor more clearly. It is relatively simple to use. For the FM System, the instructor wears a transmitter that is attached to a small mic worn on the lapel or clipped on a belt, but never dropped in a shirt pocket. The student wears a receiver with individual volume control and a headphone, loop, or ear bud.

For the Roger Pen, the student could utilize the Pen in several ways. The Pen could be worn around the teacher's neck using a lanyard or depending on the situation and classroom setup, kept at the student's desk. The student would wear a receiver with individual volume control and a headphone or ear bud. The Roger Pen is also suitable for students who have cochlear implants.

These systems are designed to enhance the hearing acuity for the wearer. No other person in class is distracted or affected, and the instructor is free to move around the classroom. Instructors should be careful to turn off their microphone when not lecturing.

### [ACCOMMODATIONS RELATED TO MEDIA](#)

- One accommodation is to provide Captioned Media (such as videos or sound clips) for a student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- For information on how to caption your media, see [Media Captioning](#) for Individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

Our goal at OSU-Oklahoma City is to provide equal access to all students through consultation and support to faculty/staff as they make their learning environments accessible for students with disabilities. If you have any additional comments or questions, please contact the Disability Services and Diversity Office.