

FACULTY AND STAFF HANDBOOK

Deafness and Hard of Hearing

Description

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing rely upon visual input rather than the auditory input when communicating. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing do not all have similar characteristics. Some have a measure of usable residual hearing and use a device to amplify sounds. Some choose to speak; others use very little or no oral communication. The causes and degrees of hearing loss vary across the deaf and hard of hearing community. In general, there are three types of hearing loss:

1. Conductive loss which affects the sound-conducting paths of the outer and middle ear.
2. Sensorineural loss that affects the inner ear and the auditory nerve and can distort sounds even if they are heard.
3. Mixed loss that results from both a conductive and sensorineural loss.

The student's age at the onset of deafness and the degree of the hearing loss (deaf or hard of hearing) may affect English language skills, speech development, and cultural identification. Deafness cuts off many traditional avenues to general information (radio, television, overheard conversations, etc.)

Common accommodations include, but not limited to:

- Sign Language or oral interpreters
- CART (Communication Aided Real Time Translation) services
- Assistive listening devices
- TTY's, volume control telephones
- Signaling devices (flashing light to alert individuals to a door knock, ringing telephone, etc.)
- Note-takers
- Captions for films and videos
- Preferential seating

Arranging for Accommodations

After receiving an Accommodation Letter from the Student Access Office, the faculty member will be contacted by the student to discuss how the accommodations listed in the letter will be arranged. In some cases the SAO will contact the faculty before the semester starts to arrange the use of an interpreter, CART services, etc.

Suggestions

The following strategies can enhance learning for students with a hearing disability.

- If requested, reserve front row seating for deaf and hard of hearing students. An unobstructed line of vision is necessary for students who use interpreters and for those who rely on lip reading. If an interpreter is used, the student's view should include the interpreter and professor.

- When working with a deaf or hard of hearing student, keep your face within view of the student and speak in a natural tone.
- Recognize that many deaf students are second language users of English. American Sign Language, which has a very different grammatical structure, may be the student's first language. Therefore, you may see grammatical and sentence structure errors in their written assignments. Encourage students to use the Writing Center and work with proofreaders to correct their work.
- Use visual aids and the chalkboard to reinforce spoken presentations when possible.
- Repeat the comments and questions of other students, especially those from the back rows and acknowledge who has made the comment so the student and/or interpreter can follow the conversation.
- If requested, provide a copy of your notes or assist the student in identifying a notetaker.

When possible, provide the student and the interpreter with class outlines, lecture notes, lists of new technical terms, and printed transcripts of audio and audiovisual materials.

- Request and use open or closed caption videos and films.
- Do not hesitate to communicate with the student in writing or e-mail when conveying important information such as assignments, scheduling, deadlines, etc.