

Communication

Students who are hard of hearing vary in their levels of hearing loss, using whatever residual hearing they have. To understand speech they use speech reading (lip reading), which alone only allows about 30% understanding; therefore, they use other strategies, including technology, to participate fully. Here are some strategies and accommodations that hard of hearing students may use in the classroom:

- Reading lips
- Sitting near the front of the room
- Hearing aids
- Interpreters
- Assistive listening devices
- Note takers
- Real-time captioning

Many students use a combination of the above.

Tips for Instructors

Use good communication techniques:

- ✓ Repeat or rephrase questions/comments from the class before responding.
- ✓ Face the class and speak naturally at a moderate pace.
- ✓ Avoid the temptation to pick up the pace when time is short.
- ✓ Do not speak while writing on the board.
- ✓ Lecture from the front of the room and avoid pacing around.
- ✓ Point out who is speaking in group discussions. Hard of hearing individuals often hesitate to participate in discussion because they fear interrupting someone who may be talking, or fear answering a question that has already been answered. A circular seating arrangement for group discussions is also beneficial.
- ✓ Do not stand in front of a window where shadows will impede speech reading.
- ✓ Beards and mustaches should be trimmed around the mouth in order not to impede lip-reading.
- ✓ If you have concerns about the student's ability to hear, discuss them privately, not in front of the whole class.
- ✓ Encourage open communication about effective teaching strategies.

Provide classroom services:

- ✓ Provide handouts, such as syllabi, lesson plans and assignments to the interpreter ahead of time.
- ✓ Write announcements and assignments on the board.
- ✓ Write proper names, technical vocabulary, formulas, equations and foreign terms on the board.

- ✓ Always use captioned films/videos. A written transcript is not considered equal access. If you have uncaptioned materials, please contact DSS ahead of time to get it captioned before using it in class.
- ✓ Reduce or eliminate as much background noise as possible, i.e. discourage students from engaging in side conversations that may hinder the hard of hearing student from hearing the lecture.
- ✓ Use Power Point, overheads and other visual aids.
- ✓ Help find seating near the front if requested by the student.
- ✓ Be familiar with interpreters and how to work with them in class.
- ✓ Support the student in advocating for communication access.

****Reminder: Even with hearing aids and/or assistive listening devices, people who are hard of hearing will still be working hard to hear.***

As with all students, hard of hearing individuals must adhere to the same policies and expectations outlined in the course syllabus.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504, post-secondary educational institutions must “furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to ensure effective communication with individuals with disabilities”.

For information regarding closed captioned videos, please contact Disability Support Services.