

C. Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Is there a difference between deaf, Deaf and hearing impaired?

Answer: Yes. Generally, the term deaf refers to those who are unable to hear well enough to rely on their hearing and use it as a means of processing information, according to the National Association of the Deaf. When Deaf (uppercase) is used it may refer to a particular group of deaf people who share a language — American Sign Language — and a culture. Hearing impaired, also referred to as hard of hearing, generally is used for individuals who have some hearing, are able to use it for communication purposes, and who feel reasonably comfortable doing so. Hearing loss can range from mild to moderate. Many deaf people find the term hearing impaired offensive.

Question: Do people who are deaf or hearing impaired use service animals?

Answer: Yes, in some cases. While most people associate the use of service animals with those who are blind or have mobility disabilities, deaf or hard of hearing people use hearing dogs and other animals to alert them to sounds, such as someone knocking on a door or a driver honking a horn.

Question: What if I'm showing a movie in class. Are all movies captioned these days?

Answer: If it is an older movie or video on DVD or film, chances are, it's not captioned. Most newer releases have subtitles. Another option is to order movies from sources that do captioning, such as CMP and Tripod.org. Both of them get permission from studios to caption movies, which costs about \$35 a minute. However, the titles can be limited because many studios won't release movies for captioning because there is no real profit in it.

Question: What's the difference between subtitles and captioning?

Answer: They're similar. The difference is that captioning has additional features, such as identifying speakers and noting any sound effects, like gunshots.

Question: What do I do if I get a note before class that an interpreter has called in sick?

Answer: Work with disability services now — before this happens — to develop a procedure in case an interpreter calls in sick. Here are some options.

- Ask the DS office to send over a tape recorder and tape the class. Later, the interpreter can meet with the student to interpret the tape.
- Arrange for the student to take the same class at another time when the interpreter may be available.
- Arrange for a note-taker. If the student isn't already using one, find one in class.

Question: If a qualified interpreter is not available, is it better to have a lousy interpreter or none at all?

Answer: If no qualified interpreter is truly available, a less qualified interpreter with supports will suffice. Or you can explore other accommodations. (See previous question.)

Faculty Training Tips

Question: I'm concerned that an interpreter may unfairly be giving a student the answers to a test. What should I do?

Answer: Most often, interpreters are not needed for written tests. But some institutions allow deaf and hard of hearing students to take exams with the help of an interpreter. Signed questions and answers can be beneficial to a student who has a slow processing ability and poor reading and writing skills. You should establish ground rules, such as whether the student can ask clarifying questions, and under what terms on the test the interpreter can finger spell. By establishing ground rules, you can alleviate your concerns.

Question: A student who is deaf has requested extended time on tests as an accommodation. I don't understand why. What should I do?

Answer: This can be an accommodation if the student's tested levels of reading, writing and vocabulary are low, or he is slow at processing information. Ask your DS provider if slow processing speed is documented and/or whether past records indicate that extended time on tests helped. Extended time should NOT be needed for lab experiments or short answer/fill-in-the-blank exams — tests that are not heavily language-based.

Question: A student claimed he needed a "noise-free" environment for tests. Is this a legitimate request?

Answer: Could be. It depends on the test setting and the student's condition. With hearing aids, background noises may be magnified and distracting to students. Think about noises you automatically screen out that students with hearing impairments may not be able to.