

Guidelines for Working with Students with Hearing Impairments

Verbal Communication

The student should be given preferential seating directly in front of the instructor. The speaker should concentrate on speaking slightly slower and louder; however, shouting distorts the voice and makes comprehension more difficult.

- Face the class as much as possible and enunciate clearly.
- Repeat key points once or twice. Rephrasing a statement may also be helpful.
- Repeat and rephrase questions and comments made by other students in the room.
- Asking students to stand and pause slightly before speaking enables the person with a hearing impediment to quickly locate the speaker and facilitates speech reading.
- Never say “never mind” or “it’s not important”. The message conveyed to the person with a hearing disability is that he/she is not important.

Classroom Environment

The classroom should have good lighting and minimal background noise.

- Close classroom door to minimize hallway noise.
- Using overheads with the lights turned off puts the hearing-impaired at a disadvantage since he/she depends a great deal on seeing the speaker.
- It is unrealistic to expect those with a hearing loss to get much information from audiotapes, movies or videos unless they are captioned or supplemented with written information. Request a captioned copy when ordering videos from the library or seller. Captioning is accessed by using the Function (FUNC) key of the remote control to pull up the appropriate menu on the television screen. Further help in this area is available through the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities.

Written Aids

Having notes provided in advance would be optimal, but having a note taker is also strongly recommended to catch any additional notes. Advance copies of notes or lecture outlines allows the student to review what is to be said beforehand so that he or she is not always “catching up” on what the topic is.

- Whenever possible, supply a list of vocabulary words or terms to the student in advance. This eliminates confusion when acquiring new concepts and vocabulary.
- Many students with hearing disabilities need to receive assignments in written form in order to ensure proper understanding of the requirements.

Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)

Some students may request the use of an FM amplification system. Simply clip a small microphone as close to the throat as possible and attach the device to a belt or pocket. This system amplifies the speaker’s voice only, thus helping to filter out background noises.