

Support staff

You may come across some of the following staff at the University.



Interpreters are used by students whose first language is British Sign Language. Interpreters will voice over signed contributions from the deaf student and will sign the spoken information to the deaf students.



Note-takers will write as much as possible of what is said. This is necessary because a deaf student cannot watch an interpreter or lip-read at the same time as writing down information.



Electronic note-takers will type as much as possible of what is said on a laptop. The student can read the information on their own laptop and add their own comments in a separate window. They can save the notes and edit them at home.

All of the above staff will try not to miss information out. They will relay the message in the same way as it was originally said (eg sarcastically, as a joke, lazily etc).

Please contact us for further information

Disabled Student Support
Student and Learning Services
Floor 5, Owen Building
City Campus
Sheffield S1 1WB

Phone 0114 225 4778 (voice/text)

Fax 0114 225 2161

E-mail deafserviceteam@shu.ac.uk

Web <http://www.shu.ac.uk/services/sas/disability>

Websites

www.signature.org.uk – for information on sign language courses and fact sheets on working with deaf people

www.britishdeafassociation.org.uk – for information on the deaf community and sign language. Includes a handy fingerspelling alphabet

Booklet

The booklet *Group work a guide to working with deaf students* is available from the University student website (or in paper format from Student and Learning Services).

Note-taker training

It is possible to train as a paid note-taker or electronic note-taker at Sheffield Hallam University. Contact us at the address above.

Student and Learning Services

Guidelines for good communication with deaf students

This information can be made
available in other formats.
Please contact us for details.

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Guidelines for good communication with deaf students

General guidelines

- approach the student directly (eg not through a hearing friend or interpreter)
- get their attention (eg waving, tapping on the shoulder or moving into their line of vision)
- face the student, speak normally and talk to the student directly (many students will lip-read you but if they do not understand you they will tell you)
- The student may ask you to
 - write down information
 - repeat spoken information
 - type information on a computer
 - use mobile phone text (sms)
 - communicate through an interpreter
 - ask a note-taker to write down what you say
- be patient and allow extra time to communicate
- remember that a student cannot do two visual tasks at the same time (eg writing and lip-reading)

Good communication

Environment

- in group sessions try to sit in a circle and speak one at a time
- try to pick a quiet area with minimum background noise (eg an area where there is no fan or other people talking)
- avoid sitting near or in front of windows or lamps as this makes your face difficult to see
- good lighting is needed

Language

For some deaf students, English is not their first language. It may help if you

- use plain language
- use shorter sentences (but still with full sentence structure)
- repeat or rephrase information if you are not understood

Face and body expressions

- use natural lip movements, body language and gesture
- shouting will make it difficult to lip-read
- do not cover your mouth, chew gum or eat when speaking because it makes it difficult to lip-read
- be aware that moustaches and beards can make lip-reading difficult
- try to maintain eye contact during conversation

Working with support staff

- speak to students directly, not to support staff
- support staff will not take part in discussions or offer their own opinion
- interpreting or writing notes takes longer than listening. You may be asked to repeat or clarify what you have said.

Seating arrangements

Interpreters will normally sit opposite the deaf student, ie often next to the speaker. Note-takers may sit next to the student or in a different part of the lecture theatre, depending on what the student prefers.

Breaks

Be aware that both support staff and students will need regular breaks.

Time delay

Writing information down or interpreting takes time. The deaf student will not receive the information at the same time as it is spoken. Allow some time for the student to respond.