Deaf and Hard of Hearing students

The University provides a range of support services for Deaf and disabled students. The guidelines provided here are general and may or may not be applicable to the student you are teaching.

Where possible you should have a discussion with the student about how you and your department can best support them during their time at University. Please bear in mind that this should be done discreetly. Reference to a student's disability in front of their peers may be embarrassing and have a negative impact on the student's confidence.

Terms such as "deaf", "partially hearing" or "hearing impaired" generally refer only to a person's impairment or degree of hearing but tell us little about how that person manages any given situation.

Further advice can be obtained from the Disability Coordinator for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students: e-mail disability@leeds.ac.uk.

Lecturing staff can support hearing impaired students by adapting their teaching methods in order to accommodate the needs to deaf students. The following advice is provided to enable lecturers to successfully teach hearing impaired students.
Clear Communication Principles

- **Speak clearly** with the natural rhythm of speech.
- **Face the person** when you are talking to them.
- Do not **obstruct** your face.
- Do not stand with your back to the **light**. This creates a silhouette and makes it difficult to see your face to lip read.
- If you are asked to **raise your voice**, do not shout as this distorts the sound and your lip pattern.
- Try to minimise **background noise**.
- **Gestures** may help.
- Always speak to the **deaf person**, not their support worker.

If the person cannot follow you:

- **Repeat** what you said.
- Try and **say it another way**.
- **Don't give up**.
- Give clues to the **context** of the conversation.
- If you both feel you are not communicating effectively, **write** it down.

Lectures

- Provide copies of lecture **notes/ handouts /OHTs** in advance. This will give the student the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the structure and content of the session. It also alerts the student to new vocabulary and allows them to gain more from your lecture.
- Write any important information on the board e.g. room changes, cancellations, assessment dates.
- Provide a glossary of **new vocabulary** in advance or write it on the board/OHP. Unknown words are impossible to lip-read.
- **Avoid walking** around the room while you are lecturing. The student may be relying on lip-reading and they cannot do this if you are not facing them.
- Outline the **structure** of the session, indicating what you will be covering, Refer back to this during the lecture, as this will
help the student to follow the content, argument, discussion etc

- Deaf students cannot **read and listen** at the same time. If you are asking students to refer to OHTs or handouts, then please leave time for the student to read this before continuing.

- **Idioms, proverbs and anecdotes** can be confusing to deaf students if they are unconnected to the subject matter.

- If you are using **video** material without subtitles then please try to obtain a transcript/gist summary for the student. The student may wish to make alternative arrangements to view the video with a support worker. Please discuss this with them in advance of the lecture. Provision for this can be made by contacting Disability Services.

- If you have been asked to wear a **radio aid microphone** then please repeat any questions from the student group. This equipment gives direct sound input from your microphone into the hearing aid and is designed to get around problems of distance and background noise. One of the problems with this is that the student will miss any comments made by the rest of the group.

**Group Work**

- The optimum size of group which includes a deaf person is **6-10 students**.

- Ensure a good level of lighting and arrange the group in a **semi-circle** so that the student can see everyone and therefore has a better opportunity to lip read.

- Ensure that the session is well **chaired**. Ask students to indicate when they wish to make a contribution so that the deaf student is aware of who is speaking.

- Use **visual information** to indicate the main points of the discussion i.e. flip chart, OHT. Designate a scribe to make a note of the main points.

- Where possible try to use a room with **good acoustics** so that there is less interference from background noise, so rooms adjacent to coffee bars and communal areas can be
avoided. It would be helpful to discuss this with the students concerned.

**Laboratory Work, Demonstrations and Tutorials**

- Do not stand **behind** the student when they are working or when you are giving an explanation e.g. during computer work. They may be relying heavily on lip reading.

- A deaf student cannot **watch** what you are doing and listen at the same time. Take time to explain what you are about to demonstrate. Give the student time to observe and leave any additional comments until you have completed the visual demonstration.

- Provide **written instructions** to support any practical work.

- Remember to attract the **attention** of the deaf student when teaching points arise.

**Tutorials**

- Ensure that the environment is **suitable** for the student (lighting, seating, acoustics)

- Follow the principles of clear **communication**.

- Use visual information to **support discussion**. Encourage the student to demonstrate their understanding by giving you feedback.