

There's a Sign Language Interpreter in My Class ...

... What Should I do?

Working with a sign language interpreter may be unfamiliar to many people, this brief overview will offer some basic information for working with an interpreter and will help you know what to expect so the process can be as effective as possible.

A sign language interpreter makes communication possible between people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH) and people who can hear, interpreting between American Sign Language (ASL) and spoken English. The role of an interpreter is to provide communication access by accurately conveying the message; interpreters strive to remain unbiased toward the content of their work and not alter or modify the meaning or tone of what is conveyed.

The interpreter and person who is D/HH may discuss the logistics so that the individuals who are D/HH can see both the interpreter and the speaker. If you have any questions about or concerns about the setup, it is best to ask the person who is D/HH for his or her preferences.

If lighting needs to be adjusted for presentations, be mindful that the interpreter and person who is D/HH need to be able to see each other.

In order to prepare for the class, the interpreter may request access to course material; any relevant information is welcome including the syllabus, Power Point slides, and handouts used during class. If the majority of lecture material is online (i.e. ELMS, Canvas) adding the interpreter(s) to the online class account is an easy way to ensure access to those important documents.

It is important to talk directly to an individual who is D/HH and to look directly at the individual, not the interpreter. Interpreters will interpret the message in the first person. Participants can communicate directly with each other, it is not necessary to add "tell him" or "ask her" to the message.

Everyone is encouraged to communicate in his or her typical manner. If the interpreter needs clarification or requires more time for the interpretation, he or she will let the person(s) know. That being said, it is important to know that there is an interval of time between the communication and the interpretation; therefore, there may be brief delay before receiving a response. In order to give the person who is D/HH a chance to participate in the classroom, it is helpful if the professor facilitates 'turn-taking' by requesting students raise their hands.

Captioned media is REQUIRED to allow the student direct visual access to the information. If you are planning to show a movie or use other audiovisual materials, please contact the DHHS office one to two weeks in advance to get your media captioned.

Certified Sign Language Interpreters adhere to a Code of Professional Conduct as defined by the *National Association of the Deaf* and the *Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf*. The Code of Professional Conduct includes tenets about confidentiality, neutrality, and professional development. Interpreters are required to keep all assignment related information confidential and are not to offer advice, to add or to omit information to the message. For more information, please use the following link: [Code of Professional Conduct](#).

If there are questions or concerns regarding the interpreter's role and function, please contact the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Coordinator Cassandra Lytle in the ADS office at ext. 47209 or at dhhs@umd.edu.