



## Guidelines for Communication between a Hearing Person and a Person with a Hearing Impairment

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### INTRODUCTION

Successful communication occurs when one person understands what the other person has said; but when one person is deaf or has a hearing impairment, this can be problematic.

Communication with a person who is deaf can generally be achieved through a sign interpreter. A person who is not deaf but has a hearing impairment, usually requires other strategies in order to understand what is being said. Even with the assistance of hearing devices, other strategies will improve the person's degree of hearing.

If you are conducting a conversation, teaching or learning in a classroom or presenting a tutorial paper where a person or people with a hearing impairment are involved, you will find the guidelines overleaf most useful.

There are also several services provided for students with a hearing impairment to facilitate their access to information during lectures. A student may use more than one of these services, which include:

- AUSLAN interpreters;
- personal FM systems;
- induction loops; and
- laptop typist note-takers.

A brief introduction to these services is included in this fact sheet.

## **GUIDELINES FOR A HEARING PERSON WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH A PERSON WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT**

- Get the person's attention before you speak.
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace.
- Don't put obstacles in front of your face or stand with your back to a sunlit window or bright lights – the person may be reliant upon lip reading.
- Use facial expressions and gestures.
- Give clues when changing the subject.
- Re-phrase when you are not understood.
- Don't shout.
- Avoid noisy background situations.
- Be patient, positive and relaxed.
- Talk to the person with a hearing impairment, not about them.
- When in doubt, ask the person for suggestions to improve communication.

## **GUIDELINES FOR A PERSON WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH A HEARING PERSON**

- Pick the best location to communicate – avoid areas that are poorly lit and noisy.
- Anticipate difficult situations and plan how to minimise problems.
- Communicate to hearing persons how best to talk to you.
- Pay attention to the speaker.
- Look for visual cues to what is being said.
- Ask for key words/information to be written down.
- Provide feedback that you understand or have failed to understand.
- Don't bluff or pretend that you have heard.
- Arrange for breaks if discussions or meetings are lengthy.
- Provide positive feedback when the speaker is doing well.
- Try not to interrupt too often.
- Set realistic goals about what you can expect to understand.

## **AUSLAN INTERPRETERS**

Students who are deaf, or have severe hearing impairment, may use an AUSLAN interpreter in lectures. The interpreter stands at the front of the theatre and signs the lecture for the student. Sign language does not cater for scientific or other subject related terms, so it is necessary for the student to be provided with a glossary of terms prior to lectures so that appropriate hand signals for the specific terms can be arranged with the interpreter.

## **FM SYSTEMS**

This is a two-part system. The transmitter unit has an attachable lapel microphone and is worn by the lecturer. The receiver is worn by the student who uses headphones or a personal induction loop if they have a compatible hearing aid. If a student is using an FM system they will provide the lecturer with the transmitter unit at the start of each lecture. The lecturer should ensure this unit is switched on. When on, the transmitter will continually send a signal. If lecturers wish to have a private conversation whilst wearing the FM transmitter they should turn the device off.

## **INDUCTION LOOP**

Several lecture theatres at UTAS have inbuilt induction loops that feed from the theatre's amplifier. Induction loops provide transmission of sound to people with hearing aids. The lecturer must use the lectern or lapel microphone provided in the theatre in order for the induction loop to function. If you are unsure how to use the amplifier in these theatres, please contact Asset Management Services for instruction.

## **LAPTOP TYPISTS**

The Disability Service employs Laptop Typists who attend lectures and transcribe the lecturer's spoken words. The student sits beside the typist and can read the lecture content in real time from the screen and the notes are emailed to the student after the lecture.

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

For further information about any of these services contact Student Services:

Hobart	6226 2697
Launceston	6324 3787
Cradle Coast	6430 4949