

Hearing impairment

Services and advice from Enabling Services

- Recommendations for special examination arrangements are possible, including extra time to allow for slower speed of language processing, alternatives to audiotape presentation of materials, etc.
- Assistive technology – the student may be entitled to the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs). Computers and other equipment, such as amplifying equipment (radio aids), are all within the scope of the DSAs.
- We recruit suitable people as note takers, interpreters, lip speakers and communication workers
- Disability Awareness training for staff working with the student can be arranged on request.

Some points to note:

- Hearing impairment is extremely variable. Hearing may or may not vary with the pitch of the speaker's voice. Students who lip-read can find unfamiliar accents challenging.
- Try to make student aware you are there as they may not have heard you approach.
- Lighting conditions can affect a hearing impaired person dramatically if they lip read. Do not speak to a hearing impaired person while standing with your back to a window or standing in front of a major light source, as your face will be in shadow.
- Some people with hearing impairment also have limited auditory memory capacity, which may mean that they struggle with very long sentences or large amounts of auditory material, so please provide a supporting handout (ideally in advance) whenever appropriate.
- Please repeat something if requested. Sometimes it helps to re-phrase.

- Please do not shout – it makes people look angry and distorts the lip pattern. Louder is not necessarily clearer.
- Only use pen and paper as a last resort, unless the student has indicated that is their preference.

Notes on lip reading:

- Lip-reading is a very difficult task even under the best of conditions. The lip-reader may be able to read one word in three on the lips, but that would be doing very well, more typically the lip-reader can only “read” about one word in eight. This means that they often miss crucial information, particularly key words in a sentence, but they will not know what they missed, since they could not hear/lip-read it.
- Try not to move around too much while talking, especially if lecturing, as it is hard to lip-read a moving person.
- Try not to cover your mouth or eat while speaking.
- Lip-reading is especially hard when you have no idea what the topic is, when jargon is unfamiliar, or when the speaker meanders around the topic(s) without an obvious, logical structure.
- Try not to walk away or turn to the board while speaking.
- The student cannot lip-read and take notes at the same time, since it is not possible to look at the face and write at the same time. If you ask them to read material from a screen as well, it is likely they will not be able to do this.
- Copies of presentations are usually useful for a lip reading student.
- Assistance dogs are working animals, not pets. Please do not greet the animal while working and especially do not greet the animal before the person. A suitable area needs to be identified for the dog's toilet needs.
- Speak directly to the student, not their assistant, even if the assistant is "voicing" the student's replies.

If you are concerned about a student with a hearing impairment or if you require more information on how to support them, please contact Enabling Services for more information.