

Proactive Planning

TS
Tip Sheet

Overview

Being proactive means “creating or controlling a situation rather than just responding to it after it has happened.”¹ A proactive approach is especially effective for postsecondary institutions when developing plans for creating campus-wide access for deaf students. In the past, institutions may have taken a “wait-and-see” approach to the planning of accommodations for students with disabilities. However, many institutions are now taking a proactive approach to planning how students with disabilities will access the full spectrum of programs and events available on campus.

Initial Meeting

When scheduling an initial meeting with a deaf student, inquire about their communication preferences for the meeting so that appropriate accommodations can be scheduled if necessary. At the initial meeting, it is critical to review with the student their past accommodation preferences and what they anticipate needing for the upcoming semester. Accommodation usage can change dramatically for deaf students moving from the K–12 environment to the post-secondary setting. Larger class sizes, an increased number of speakers, and a faster pace can lead students to request accommodations they have not previously used in order to achieve effective communication.

Policies and Procedures

Developing policies and procedures in advance that outline how access will be provided through the disability support services office is an important step in proactive planning. By having clear policies and procedures in place for students and service providers, institutions can potentially avoid misunderstandings and negative consequences that can arise from a lack of written documentation and clear policies. Consider the following:

- How will students request accommodations and how much advance notice will be required?
- How will the institution handle last-minute requests?
- What happens if a student receiving access services (e.g., interpreters) has excessive absences?
- What is the process if a student prefers a different interpreter or speech-to-text provider than the one assigned?
- How will student complaints be addressed?

Sign Language Interpreters

Qualified interpreters are often in high demand and can have their schedules fill up quickly. A critical component to planning in advance is knowing the resources available in your area. Consider the following:

- Are there interpreter referral agencies in your area, will you need to contract with individual interpreters, or will your institution hire staff interpreters?
- Can you consult with other institutions in your region to locate interpreters and determine prevailing wages?
- Does your state require interpreters to be certified, licensed, or have specific credentials?



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- If the local pool of interpreters is unable to meet institutional demands, how will your institution meet student needs?

Determining available local resources is just the first step in securing interpreters. Institutions also need to determine if the available interpreters are qualified to provide effective communication in the setting in which they will be working. The steps involved in how to determine and hire qualified interpreters can be found in [Hiring Qualified Sign Language Interpreters](#).

Speech-to-Text Service Providers

Speech-to-text services is an umbrella term that covers real-time access to information via the written word. The two basic categories are verbatim (CART) and meaning-for-meaning (C-Print© and TypeWell). Maintaining a list of these providers allows for greater flexibility in scheduling services. In addition, it can be helpful for institutions to develop policies on how the transcripts from the service provider will be used. Consider these questions:

- Will transcripts generated by the captionist be provided to the student?
- Will faculty or other campus staff be able to utilize these transcripts?

Finally, institutions are responsible for hiring qualified speech-to-text providers to meet the demands of the higher education setting. The steps involved with hiring qualified speech-to-text providers can be found in [Hiring Qualified Speech-to-Text Service Providers](#).

Captioned Media

Offline or postproduction captioning has become a hot topic on many campuses. A video must have verbatim, time-synced captions in order to be accessible. At a minimum, all videos should be captioned, including not only course-based content, but also media on the institution's website that is streamed for public access. Many institutions are moving toward the practice of captioning all media used in courses, whether or not a deaf student is registered. This practice prevents incidents in which media lack captions and decreases the need for last-minute requests for captioned material. In addition, some institutions have policies in place that require all media purchases to be accessible to students with disabilities.

To learn more about offline or postproduction captioning, refer to [Why Captions Provide Equal Access](#) and [Creating Offline Captions](#).

Related Resources

- Visual Fire Alarms: www.nationaldeafcenter.org/firealarms
- Assistive Listening Systems: Choosing the Right Technology for Your Campus: www.nationaldeafcenter.org/alscampus
- Disability Services Handbook Templates: www.nationaldeafcenter.org/handbooktemplates

Additional resources on this subject may be available at www.nationaldeafcenter.org/resources.

Reference

- ¹ proactive. In *OxfordDictionaries.com* Retrieved January 11, 2019 from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/proactive>



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Additional resources can be found at www.nationaldeafcenter.org