

## Deaf of Hard of Hearing Fact Sheet

### What does 'deaf' or 'hard of hearing' mean?

- A person who is hard of hearing can have mild to severe hearing loss.
- People who are profoundly deaf may communicate with Irish Sign Language (ISL) or lip reading.
- Some deaf people use hearing aids or cochlear implants which allows for some level of verbal communication.
- Some hearing aid users can receive a signal from a Loop System which amplifies sound sources in large rooms such as lecture theatres or reception areas. The following symbol indicates the presence of a Loop System.



### How is a student's college experience impacted by being deaf or hard of hearing?

Difficulty	Possible impact in College
Accessibility of teaching and learning material & environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty keeping up with <b>aurally presented material</b> (e.g. lectures in the spoken word).</li> <li>• Difficulty in lectures where student may have to <b>simultaneously concentrate</b> on presentation slides, lecturer (for lip-reading), speed-text operator or ISL interpreter and their own notes.</li> <li>• Difficulty <b>reviewing lecture notes with minimal or no written content</b> included (e.g. images only).</li> <li>• Difficulty with <b>completing written work</b>, particularly if ISL is considered their first language.</li> <li>• Difficulty <b>completing assignments and exams</b> due to difficulties with written expression, reading comprehension and possibly misinterpreting ambiguous information.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty <b>following class discussion</b> in tutorials.</li> <li>• Difficulty <b>communicating within a group work</b> setting.</li> <li>• Difficulty with <b>oral presentations</b>.</li> <li>• Difficulty <b>socially integrating</b> with the class and may experience <b>feelings of isolation</b>.</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing the <b>use of an ISL interpreter/speed-text operator/note-taker/radio aid</b> if this is required.</li> <li>• Students who have been <b>recently diagnosed may experience emotional difficulties</b> and/or difficulties with practical tasks.</li> </ul>

To find out more, please visit:

- <https://www.ahead.ie/inclusiveteaching>

## How can you support a student who is deaf or hard of hearing?

### 1. Student-Centred Approach:

- If you are in doubt about how to support a student at any time, **ask the student** – they are the experts of their own needs!
- Create a space for students to **feel comfortable approaching you with any issues** (e.g. provide contact and student office hour details etc.).
- Implement any [classroom](#) and [exam](#) accommodations which were determined at the **student's Needs Assessment**.

### 2. Teaching and Learning:

- Be guided by [Universal Design principles](#) when designing coursework.
- Ensure all **essential information is available in written format**. Write out new vocabulary on the board with an explanation.
- **Provide the student with lecture notes and other materials in advance of class**. They can prepare for the class and establish what the lecture is about, as deaf or hard of hearing students may not hear all the information provided in the lecture.
- Provide the student (and the ISL interpreter or speed-text operator, if applicable) with a **glossary of terminology** to help the student understand the content. This allows the student and ISL interpreter to decide on a sign for a term which does not have one.
- **Provide a list of topics for discussion in advance of tutorials** to give the student an opportunity to prepare and understand the discussion taking place.
- **Permit the student to use Assistive Technology** in the classroom.
- Consider the **exam needs of the student for in-class or mid-semester exams** (e.g. does the student require assistive technology? Is the environment noisy?).
- Encourage students to **speak one at a time during groupwork**.

### 3. Communication:

- **Address and look directly at the deaf person**, not the interpreter.
- **Face the class when presenting** to allow the student to lip-read (do not stand under a light as this will create a shadow, making it difficult to lip-read).
- **Repeat any questions or comments** made in class by other students for the benefit of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Always ask the student if they require assistance** before doing so.