

Hearing impairment

This is when your hearing is affected by a condition or injury. Some people are born with hearing loss, while others may develop it as they get older.

People who are Deaf or hearing impaired will use a range of communication methods that may include speech, sign language, finger spelling, residual hearing and lip reading or a combination of these.

Top Tips for Academic Staff

- Even if someone is wearing hearing aids, it does not mean that they can hear perfectly; they may still need to lip-read.
- Ensure you have the listener's attention before you start speaking
- Ensure you have face-to-face contact if speaking to them directly
- Try not to move around the room too much or turn away from your audience
- Speak clearly, but not too slowly and don't exaggerate your lip movements as this can make it harder to lip-read
- Allow time for the student to adjust to unfamiliar lip patterns
- Ensure the room is well lit and the student can see your face clearly – try not to stand in front of windows which will put your face in shadow
- Use natural facial expressions and gestures
- Don't shout – it can be uncomfortable for hearing aid users and will look aggressive
- If the student doesn't understand what you've said, don't keep repeating it, try re-phrasing it instead
- Write unfamiliar names or terminology on the board for clarification
- Provide any instructions or information for in-class tasks and assignments in writing
- Be aware that background or residual noise can be very distracting; you may need to set ground rules for class and group discussions
- Consider seating arrangements so that the student has a clear view of the other students and any support workers such as a Note-taker or Communication Support Worker
- Use a microphone or wear a radio aid if asked

Students who are Deaf or hearing impaired may have a support worker to interpret sessions into British Sign Language (BSL). If the student is using communication support:

- Always remember to speak directly to the person you are communicating with, not the interpreter
- There may be a short delay in the interpreter completing the translation to BSL, so try to monitor the pace of discussions to ensure that a BSL user has an opportunity to contribute
- Provide as much information as possible in advance of lectures and seminars so that the Communication Support Worker can prepare specific terminology.

For further information please visit www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

If you have any queries, please contact your Learning Support Coordinator