

SSD FACULTY INFO

DEAF AND/OR HARD OF HEARING

OVERVIEW AND DEFINITION

A Deaf person has a profound hearing loss in which there has been damage to the auditory pathway. Most deaf people use some form of sign language to communicate. The earlier the hearing loss occurs in life, the more serious its implications for a student's education. Students who have acquired American Sign Language consider it their first language and it is unlikely that they would have a complete command of the English language, which would be considered their second language. It is important to note that their grasp of the English language is not a reflection of intelligence but is a reflection of their command of their second language due to their inability to hear.

Persons who are hard of hearing have hearing losses ranging from mild to profound. These students experience difficulty hearing and may wear a hearing aid to amplify sound. A hearing aid does not cure the loss, but assists in better communication. Students may request a peer note taker in class to ensure vital information is not missed.

EDUCATION IMPLICATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Some students who are deaf or hard of hearing feel socially isolated from others. It has been found that even a mild hearing loss may result in a profound communication barrier (50% to 60% of communication can be lost). The emphasis should be on visual learning strategies for students who are hard of hearing or deaf. To enhance the learning environment consider the following:

- outline lessons at beginning of class and provide a list of content specific or technical terms to the student before each class
- reinforce verbal presentations with written text (overheads)
- eliminate background noise and other distractions
- use captioned films and videos where available
- if student relies on lip-reading, repeat comments made by other students in a discussion
- when speaking, face the students, try to avoid backlighting and remain in one place
- speak at a reasonable pace, clearly and in a normal tone
- restate or paraphrase it the student does not seem to understand

SUGGESTED ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

- extended time to complete the program
- reduced course load
- priority seating
- access to peer note taker
- provision of extended time for tests and exams (to be determined Office of Student Services)
- ensure all last minute changes regarding assignments are communicated in writing
- use of computer for completion of tests/assignments
- provision of advance reading materials and texts
- access to assistive technology devices such as captioning devices, FM systems or TTY