



## *Handbook for Interpreters*

DISABILITY SERVICES OFFICE  
WESTSIDE HALL, 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR  
910-962-7555

The University of North Carolina at Wilmington is open and accessible to students with disabilities. We are committed to providing assistance to enable qualified students to accomplish their educational goals, as well as assuring equal opportunity to derive all of the benefits of campus life. Disability Services has devoted much energy to meeting the requirements of Section 504, Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its amendments, and to the Americans with Disability Act of 1990. Disability Services serves as a full-time advocate for students with disabilities, as well as a resource for faculty, staff and administration.

## **INTRODUCTION/WELCOME**

The interpreter plays a critical role in the success of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. In addition to providing the communication link for students to interact with teachers and students in regular education classes, interpreters also make it possible for all students who are deaf or hard of hearing to gain access to all other school activities and services. The intent of this Interpreter Handbook is to offer guidelines and to clarify expectations and responsibilities of the interpreter and to give a basic understanding of some of the objectives, policies and procedures of the program. With the general information presented in the Interpreter Handbook and good judgment, interpreters should have a reliable guide as to what is expected of them. If you do not understand any of the material or if questions come up that are not covered in the Interpreter Handbook, it is your responsibility to contact the Disability Services office. From time to time it may be necessary to update sections of the Interpreter Handbook. Copies of updated sections will be sent to all interpreting staff.

We look forward to working with you here at UNCW and hope you will enjoy it as well.

## **DISABILITY LAWS IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

Individuals with disabilities are entitled by law to equal access to postsecondary programs. There are two laws that protect persons with disabilities in postsecondary education: The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Pub. L. No. 93-112, as amended) and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (Pub. L. No. 1001-336).

### **The Rehabilitation Act**

Title V. Of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is generally regarded as the first civil rights legislation on the national level for people with disabilities. Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act is a program access statute. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity offered by an entity or institution receiving federal funds.

Section 504 states (as amended):

No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States...shall, solely on the basis of disability, be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity provided by any institution receiving federal financial assistance.

Under Section 504, institutions were required to appoint and maintain at least one person to coordinate its efforts to comply with the requirements of Section 504 (Section 504 Coordinator). This individual of office has the ongoing responsibility of assuring that the institution/agency/organization practices nondiscrimination on the basis of disability and should be included in any grievance procedures developed to address possible instances of discrimination brought against the institution. At UNCW the established office is the ADA Compliance Officer, 910-962-3835.

### **The Americans with Disability Act (ADA)**

The ADA is a federal civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. There are four sections of the law: employment, government, public accommodations, and telecommunications. The ADA provides additional protection for persons with disabilities in conjunction with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA is designed to remove barriers, which prevent qualified individuals with disabilities from enjoying the same opportunities that are available to persons without disabilities.

Postsecondary institutions are covered in many ways under the ADA. Employment is addressed by Title I, accessibility provided by public in Title II, accessibility provided by private entities in Title III, telecommunications in Title IV, and miscellaneous items in Title V.

### **The ADA in Relation to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**

Institutions that receive federal funds (such as *UNCW*) are covered under Section 504. The ADA does not supplant Section 504, but those situations where the ADA provides greater protection the ADA standards apply. Therefore, postsecondary institutions must adhere to both the Rehabilitation Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY**

UNCW requests students notify Disability Services of any special accommodation needs. This notification will help ensure the quality and availability of services needed. Students are responsible for supplying the appropriate documentation to Disability Services prior to arrangements for special accommodations. A letter, written report or medical record from a professional (physician or audiologist) stating the student's disability and recommended accommodations is acceptable. All accommodations are discussed with a Disability Services counselor and the student, and in most cases with the respective faculty member(s) prior to or at the time the accommodation arrangements are implemented.

### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

#### **Hiring Procedure**

Interpreters are considered contract employees of UNCW.

UNCW will generally contact interpreters based on certification, starting with those nationally certified, continuing through state-screened interpreters. Student preferences and seniority are also considered.

#### **Scheduling**

Disability Services will contact contract interpreters to work out class schedules. During the scheduling process, every effort is made to match the interpreter's skill level and preferences with the appropriate students, instructors and classes.

Your schedule will tell you the time, place, and type of class to which you are going. This will be your schedule for the entire semester but is subject to change by the Director of Disability Services. Any questions, problems, or concerns you have about your schedule should be discussed with the Disability Services office.

Interpreters must accept that Disability Services has no control over students adding, dropping, or withdrawing from classes. Scheduled hours could change at any time.

Interpreters should not accept outside assignments that would force them to leave early, or accept a UNCW assignment if they know they must leave early.

### **Time Sheets**

Time sheets are available in the Disability Service office.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

The interpreter will arrive on time for all assignments. Interpreters should notify Disability Services as soon as possible in the event he/she will be absent from an assignment.

### **Appearance**

Although there is no formal dress code, interpreters should follow the RID code of ethics regarding appropriate and professional attire. Interpreters should dress in a manner that is consistent with the general dress of instructors on campus. This does not include sweats, shirts with holes, mini skirts, mini shorts, and jeans that are worn out, have holes or are frayed in any manner. Some classes may require special consideration, and interpreters should dress accordingly (e.g. scuba diving, marine biology, ceramics). An interpreter should wear clothes that contrast skin color and are not distracting to the student.

### **Messages/Exchange of Information**

In the Disability Services office, there is a message center for interpreters. It is very important that you check this center often. This is where you will receive school mail, memos, possible schedule changes, and any non-emergency phone messages.

In case of an emergency phone call, every possible effort will be made to contact you wherever you are on campus. Therefore, it is important that the office know if your schedule class has been cancelled or changed location.

### **Student Responsibilities (Attendance and Punctuality)**

Students are responsible for getting to their classes on time. Students should be aware that interpreters are required to wait 15 minutes for classes up to 90 minutes long, and 30 minutes for classes longer than 90 minutes. Students are responsible for notifying Disability Services at least one day prior to missing class (except in the case of an emergency). Failure to attend class without notifying Disability Services may result in the discontinuation of services after the third occurrence, making it necessary for the student to make an appointment with the Director of Disability Services to discuss reinstatement.

For interpreter requests outside of regularly scheduled class times, students are to complete the Interpreter Request Form two weeks prior to the event (or as soon as they are aware of the need), but no less than 24 hours prior to the event.

Students should discuss any problems with their interpreter directly with the interpreter before coming to talk to a Disability Service staff person. In the event the problem is not resolved, the student should contact the Director of Disability Services.

### **Interpreter Responsibilities**

If it appears a student will not show up for a class, the interpreter is required to wait 15 minutes for classes up to 90 minutes long, and 30 minutes for classes longer than 90 minutes. After waiting the allotted time, the interpreter is to report to Disability Services by phone or in person. To minimize class disruptions, the interpreter should wait outside the classroom until the student arrives.

Interpreters are not to bill for cancellations with more than 24 hour notice. Announcements in class are considered 24 hours notice. In daily classes the day before is considered 24 hours notice. Interpreters should also ask the professor for a class syllabus, and any classes designated in the class syllabus as cancelled should be considered as notice.

If 24 hours notification is not possible, the interpreter will be paid for the assignment. However, if a documented good-faith effort to contact the interpreter at least 24 hours in advance is made and Disability Services is still unable to contact him/her, the interpreter will not be paid for the assignment.

For evening classes, the interpreter is free to leave after waiting the required time. Evening and weekend interpreters may consider exchanging phone numbers (if both agree) so that students may notify interpreters of an absence prior to class.

### **Pagers and Cell Phones**

Interpreters should take care of personal business at times other than when on assignment. Because pagers interfere or distract from fluency in interpreting, the interpreter is expected not to wear a pager during an assignment. Cellular phones and pagers should have audible rings and beeps turned off. If the interpreter is team interpreting or has a short break, s/he may want to check the number during this time. However, responding to calls or pages during an assignment is not permitted.

### **Substitutions**

When the interpreter accepts classes for the semester, it is expected the interpreter will maintain that schedule of classes throughout the semester. However substitutions may be needed from time to time. Requesting a substitute in order to accept an off-campus interpreting assignment is not considered an appropriate request. Exceptions may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

When a substitute is needed the interpreter is responsible for making a formal request by completing an interpreter substitution form. The interpreter substitution request must be received by Disability Services at least four full working days in advance. At that time Disability services will be responsible for finding substitutes.

### **Interpreter/Student Interaction**

Interpreters should not have conversations with deaf students or other students during class time. Visitation should be done before and after the class. If a student (non-deaf) asks for information about what interpreters are doing, the interpreters should let the student know s/he is not able to discuss it during class, but could answer before or after the class. When answering questions about interpreting from faculty and other students, the interpreter should keep in mind confidentiality issues regarding the student who is deaf or hard of hearing by providing only general information.

Interpreters should be careful when talking with students (both deaf and hearing) before and after class. Interpreters should not discuss anything related to class. Comments made may influence the students' class work and their original ideas. As a result, the work the students provide is not 100% their own.

### **Preparing for Classes**

Interpreters are encouraged to prepare for class by reviewing the materials and reading the text the class is using. If you want to borrow a copy of the book the teacher is using to prepare for class, please contact Disability Services.

Every effort should be made to use standardized signs for technical and specialized vocabulary, and to communicate such information to team members and interpreting staff.

### **Freelance Interpreting**

Interpreters may contract with outside agencies as long as such appointments are outside normal working hours and no conflict of interest is involved.

### **Due Process**

If Disability Services receives a complaint about an interpreting situation from students, faculty or staff, the interpreter involved will meet with the Director of Disability services. If this specific complaint continues, the decision may be made to terminate the interpreter's services.

### **Inclement Weather**

If the weather appears hazardous, please refer to the inclement weather policy for UNCW.

### **Other Interpreting Assignments**

During the semester, there will be times you will be asked to interpret for such events as dorm meetings, lectures, and pep rallies. As these requests come in, Disability Services will contact interpreters to determine who is available.

All interpreter requests for anything outside of regularly scheduled classes should go through Disability Services. We need to know about scheduled extracurricular activities for several reasons: statistics for funding and to lessen the chance of double-booking of interpreters. Students are aware of this procedure.

## **Professional Development**

Nationally certified interpreters are expected to maintain their certification through participation in the RID Certification Maintenance Program, or if NAD certified, to follow their procedures for maintaining certification. All other interpreters are expected to maintain their state-level certification. Interpreters, regardless of their certification level, are encouraged to join professional organizations, attend workshops, and keep abreast of issues, standards and practices within the interpreting profession.

## **Health Tips**

Interpreters are encouraged to maintain good health habits on a routine basis. Attention to diet, exercise, and positions when seated or standing can help prevent syndromes associated with overuse (cumulative trauma disorder).

Just as an athlete warms up before engaging in physical activity and cools down afterward, interpreters should physically prepare themselves with simple exercises for a few minutes before interpreting, during the day, and at the end of the day. One such exercise involves gently moving each wrist up and down and from side to side. Another is a handshake exercise, to be done with a partner. Another suggestion is to squeeze a soft tennis ball, or manipulate Silly Putty. When seated for interpreting, sit straight in the chair. Do not cross your legs. This helps prevent stress on the back and shoulders. Other interpreters have suggested that prior to interpreting in a cold classroom, run hands under warm water, or a hand dryer. Wearing thin gloves (liners) after interpreting can also be effective.

Note: The above information comes from a presentation by Chiropractor Peter Biondi (Franklin Park) at the Illinois Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Convention, June 7, 1986.

## **Ethics and Confidentiality**

Interpreters are expected to adhere to the RID Code of Ethics. They are to provide interpreting services to the best of their ability and not allow personal feelings to interfere in the interpreting process. When interpreters socialize with students outside of the classroom, the interpreter should keep all information about interpreting assignments confidential, regardless of how inconsequential the information may seem. For reference, the following is the RID Code of Ethics:

- Interpreters/transliterators shall keep all assignment-related information strictly confidential.
- Interpreters/transliterators shall render the message faithfully, always conveying the content and spirit of the speaker, using language most readily understood by the person(s) whom they serve.
- Interpreters/transliterators shall not counsel, advise or interject personal opinions.
- Interpreters/transliterators shall accept assignments using discretion with regard to skill, setting, and the consumers involved.
- Interpreters/transliterators shall request compensation for services in a professional and judicious manner.
- Interpreters/transliterators shall function in a manner appropriate to the situation.

- Interpreters/transliterators shall strive to further knowledge and skills through participation in workshops, professional meetings, interaction with professional colleagues, and reading of current literature in the field.
- Interpreters/transliterators, by virtue of membership or certification by the **RID**, Inc., shall strive to maintain high professional standards in compliance with the Code of Ethics.

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See Addendum A for suggested phrases to maintain confidentiality

## **OUR STAFF**

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Director, Disability Services  
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## **ADDENDUM A**

### **Suggested phrases to maintain confidentiality**

- I am not at liberty to say.
- I am sorry, that information is confidential.

- I am not sure.
- I don't know.
- I only see the student in class.
- I don't know the student personally.
- I am not able to discuss that information.
- I can't answer that question, but I would be happy to interpret if you would like to ask the student directly.
- The student could probably answer that better than I could.
- OFFICE could probably answer that question for you. Let me give you their phone number.
- I am sorry; I am not able to step out of my role of interpreting during class time.
- If you have concerns you would like to address concerning the interpreter in your class you might want to talk to the OFFICE. Let me give you their phone number.

## **ADDENDUM B**

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**ADA-** Americans with Disabilities Act (Pub. L. No. 101-336) is the law that protects persons with disabilities.

**Age of Onset** – The age at which a person starts to lose hearing.

**ALDs (Assistive listening devices)** – Devices that use a microphone positioned close to the speaker's mouth to transmit speech to the receiver worn by the student, either via a loop, headphones, or an ear bud. ALDs help overcome the problems of distance and surrounding noise.

**ALD-** Assistive Listening Device for personal use.

**ALS-** Assistive Listening System for groups of people.

**Amplification-** The use of hearing aids or any other mechanics used by a person with a hearing impairment to amplify sound.

**Amplified Phone-** Phones equipped with volume controls on the handset.

**ASL (American Sign Language)** – A natural visual-gestural language with syntax, structure, and grammar rules different from English.

**Audiogram-** A graph used to record the results of a hearing evaluation.

**Audiology-** The science of hearing, including the evaluation of hearing impairments and the rehabilitation of people with hearing impairments.

**Closed-Captioning Decoder** – A device which allows closed captioning to be seen on a television screen.

**Compatible Phone-** A phone which generates an induction signal that can be picked up by a hearing aid telecoil. Federal law requires that all corded phones sold in the United States must be hearing aid compatible.

**Conductive hearing loss-** The loss of sound sensitivity produced by abnormalities of the outer and /or middle ear.

**Cued Speech** – The use of handshapes and placements around the mouth to aid in the recognition of spoken words – used in some parts of the country extensively, and not much in other areas.

**Cued Speech Transliterater** - Transliterators translate from spoken language to the visual mode of communication Cued Speech. Transliterators provide real-time access to all information occurring in the classroom.

**Cumulative trauma Disorder** – A painful physical condition, such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, that is caused by overuse and repetitive motion without sufficient breaks for resting.

**Deaf person**- One whose hearing loss makes it impossible for him/her to understand speech with or without the use of hearing aids.

**Decibel**- A unit for expressing the intensity (loudness) of sounds.

**Degree of hearing loss**- The extent of hearing impairment usually categorized as “slight”, “mild”, “moderate”, “severe”, or “profound”.

**Dual Party Relay**- Three way telephone access system linking Deaf and Hard of Hearing callers using an agent who has access to both parties.

**Etiology of hearing loss**- The cause of a hearing loss.

**Frequency**- It is the subjective impression of highness or lowness of a sound (pitch).

**Hard of hearing person**- One whose hearing loss makes it difficult, but not impossible, for him/her to understand speech with or without the use of hearing aids.

**Interpreter**- A trained professional, fluent in both English and American Sign Language, who is bound by a code of ethics to facilitate communication between deaf and hearing persons.

**Notetaker** – a person, typically a student in the class, who takes notes and provides them to the student with a disability. Notes include lecture information, diagrams and notes from class as well as threads of class discussions.

**Open Caption** – Text that appears on the television screen that conveys the spoken information – does not require a decoder.

**Oral Interpreting** – A form of interpreting in which the interpreter mouths without voice what is being said so the person who is deaf or hard of hearing can speech read more easily.

**Real Time Captioning**- Captioning that is provided simultaneously as a spoken word using a computerized software program.

**Residual Hearing**- Any usable hearing that a person may have.

**RID** – Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, the organization responsible for testing and certifying interpreters, and the formation of the Code of Ethics.

**Section 504** - Section 504 is part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Pub. L. No. 93-112, as amended). It protects the civil rights of people with disabilities in many environments including college settings.

**Sensorineural hearing loss**- The loss of sound sensitivity produced by abnormalities of the inner ear or the eighth cranial nerve pathway beyond the inner ear to the brain.

**Speech reading (also known as lipreading)** – The process of watching a person’s mouth movements and facial expressions to ascertain what is being said. Speech reading ability varies from person to person and can be influenced by factors such as the amount of useable hearing a person has and their knowledge of spoken English. Other factors can include the amount of light and the noise level of the environment.

**“T” Switch**- A switch on a hearing aid that is compatible with telephone use, allowing the user to cut off all competing sounds.

**Tactile Interpreting** - A form of interpreting with individuals who are deafblind which involves them receiving information by placing their hands on the interpreter’s hands during the interpretation.

**TTY or TDD** – A telecommunication device used by persons who are deaf who cannot communicate on the telephone. A typewriter-like unit prints the conversation on a screen or paper so that it can be read, and enables the user to type responses back on the keyboard. A TTY must connect with another TTY or a computer.

**Type of loss**- The nature of a hearing impairment, usually classified as “conductive”, “sensorineural”, or “mixed”.

## ADDENDUM C

### **WORKING WITH DEAF AND/OR HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS**

Most hearing impaired and deaf students will be working with a sign language interpreter using American Sign Language or ASL. The sign language interpreter is a trained professional whose job overlaps considerably with your own. Their job is to understand complex materials and break that material down into a format that their student can comprehend. The interpreter is not responsible for the student's attendance, preparation, behavior or performance. Neither do they relay messages to, take notes for, or make deliveries to the student.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### COMMUNICATING THROUGH AN INTERPRETER

1. Talk to and make eye contact with your student, not the interpreter. The interpreter is not part of the conversation and is not permitted to voice personal opinions or enter the conversation. Face the student and speak to him/her in a normal manner. Don't make comments to the interpreter which you don't mean to be interpreted to the student. The interpreter interprets everything that is said or that happens.
2. Remember that the interpreter is a few words behind the speaker. Give the interpreter time to finish before you ask questions so that the student can ask questions or join in the discussion.
3. Treat the interpreter as a professional. It is courteous to introduce the interpreter to the group and explain why he/she is attending.
4. Provide good lighting for the interpreter. If the interpreting situation requires darkening the room to view slides, videotapes or films, auxiliary lighting is necessary so the student can see the interpreter. The student must be able to see their interpreter at all times.
5. Make sure the student does not miss vital information. Allow extra time when referring to manuals or texts since the student must look at what has been written and then return his/her attention to the speaker.
6. Slow down the pace of communication slightly. Many speakers talk too fast. Allow extra time for the student to ask or answer questions.
7. Repeat questions or statements made from the back of the room. Remember the student is cut off from whatever happens outside their visual area.

8. Let the interpreter and student know beforehand if special activities are happening. There may be a need for extra interpreters. A drama performance, debate, or large group activity are examples of this need.
9. Avoid unnecessary pacing and speaking when writing on a chalkboard. Write or draw on the board, or overhead projector, than face the class when speaking.
10. Students who are deaf or hearing impaired will benefit from front-row seating. An unobstructed line of vision is necessary for students who use interpreters. This view should include the interpreter and the professor.
11. Repeat questions and remarks of other people in the room.
12. When possible provide the student with class outlines, lecture notes lists of new technical terms and printed transcripts of audio and audio-visual materials.
13. Get the student's attention before speaking (a tap on the shoulder, a wave, or other visual sign). Speak slowly and clearly, but don't yell, over pronounce or exaggerate.
14. The student will also require a notetaker as they cannot look down to write notes and watch the interpreter at the same time.
15. At times you may need to allow the interpreter to catch up with you. Some concepts that you can express in a few words may take many signs to express.
16. **Do not have lower expectations for your deaf and hearing impaired students. They need patience, understanding and extra support services, not lower standards.**

**Disability Service would like to thank the interpreters and students for their input in the formation of this document.**

**ADDENDUM D**



**DISABILITY SERVICES:  
INTERPRETER SERVICES GUIDELINES**

1. All deaf and/or hard of hearing student who wish to have interpreter or amplification support and accommodations should contact Disability Services, Westside Hall, 910-962-7555.
2. All students in the above category are encouraged to also apply for services through the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, so that DVRS and UNCW resources can be combined in services to these students.
3. All students referenced above are to furnish UNCW with documentation of their disability, the functional limitations that will impact their participation in their UNCW curriculum and what accommodations they may need.
4. Interpreters will be paid according to DVRS/RID guidelines depending on certification and experience to include time and one half rates for evening and weekend services unless prior approval allows for a different arrangement.
5. Interpreters will be compensated for student class no shows if not given 24 hours prior notice of absence.
6. Interpreters will be expected to be on time, and to coordinate coverage of absences with their assigned students and the Director of Disability Services at UNCW. Three (3) incidents of non-compliance with these guidelines may result in termination of interpreter contracts.
7. Interpreters will be expected to work in compliance with the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf code of ethics in the provision of interpreting services.
8. Interpreters will be expected to contact their student(s) assigned to them prior to the start of each term, and to help prepare their teachers(s) re: best practices for teaching their students(s). UNCW Disability Services will assist in this responsibility via printed materials and direct contact.
9. Interpreters will turn in time sheets weekly.
10. Student will agree to communicate with their assigned interpreter(s) re: any changes in their schedules. Failure to comply with contracts(s) or failure to notify their interpreter and Disability Services in advance of absences will result in suspension of interpreter support services after the third incident until mandatory counseling the Director of Disability Services insures compliance.
11. Students are strongly encouraged to utilize the University Learning Services along with their interpreter(s) according to student need and interpreter availability.
12. When interpreter coverage is logistically impossible or temporarily unavailable, Disability Services will arrange for teacher accommodations and student support via videotaping of the class or other reasonable/effective accommodations as suggested by the student and/or instructor.

**I have read and understand the guidelines.** Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Interpreter \_\_\_\_\_