



A MODEL PROGRAM TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATIONS TO COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO ARE HARD OF HEARING

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SUMMARY

The mission of the Student Access Center (SAC) in a postsecondary institution is to create a comprehensively accessible environment for students with disabilities through determination of eligibility, adherence to legal mandates, and offering a variety of accommodations. An estimated 400,000+ students who are hard of hearing or late-deafened attend postsecondary institutions in the United States. SAC personnel usually have limited experience and information about serving students who are hard of hearing, and may erroneously assume that such students do not need accommodations, as they may appear to communicate well with hearing people in one-on-one situations. Likewise, there is a tremendous range of awareness and acceptance of hearing loss within this student population.

The SAC can have an instrumental role in the recruitment, transition, retention, and graduation success of students. A model program may include services or components that cover transition, identification and eligibility, documentation and assessment, policies and procedures, accommodations, and student leadership and self-advocacy.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Assistive Listening Devices

ALDs utilize wireless technologies to amplify the speaker's voice via a lapel or independent microphone, and may be effective for students who have residual hearing.

Audiogram

A hearing test that charts hearing loss in terms of frequency of the sounds and decibel level or volume.

Auxiliary Services

Referred to as "appropriate accommodations" that can vary from student to student, situation to situation. Examples include oral interpreting, notetaking, and speech-to-text services.

Computer Assisted Real-Time Captioning (CART)

Computer Assisted Real-Time Captioning, which utilizes a transcription system like that used in the courtroom to prepare a verbatim transcript of what is being said as it happens in real time.

Typewell or C-Print-Systems

Systems that transcribe speech to text utilizing a laptop computer with abbreviation software to transcribe meaning-for-meaning in lectures and discussions.

Cued Speech

A visual phonetic alphabet defined by handshapes and location by the throat, chin, mouth and jaw, used in combination with speechreading.

Hard of Hearing

Individuals with hearing loss who do not communicate using sign language. Their preferred mode of communication is to utilize their residual hearing with or without amplification or assistive listening devices, speech, speechreading, and speech-to-text accommodations.

Speechreading

A means of communication in which an individual communicates by "reading" one's lip movements. Approximately 30% of the English language is formed within the oral cavity, not visible on the mouth. The ability to speechread may be affected by accents, facial hair, room acoustics, size, lighting, classroom set-up, familiarity with the topic, and the student's own speechreading ability.

Student Access Center (SAC)

A postsecondary program responsible for the provision of academic and support services to qualified students with disabilities.

Testing Accommodations

A typical modification, or test accommodation, such as extended time, that allows a student who has difficulty processing written language an opportunity to have additional time to read and comprehend the questions.

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

There are often misunderstandings regarding the legal mandates that apply to services received in K-12 and postsecondary education. In high school, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) governs disability services. In postsecondary education, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) governs disability services. IDEA accommodations are based on entitlement, and the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA are provided only if requested, and if the student is determined eligible. Thus, it is the postsecondary student's responsibility to self-identify, seek assistance from, and responsibility utilize services from the SAC.

Students utilize SAC services in different ways. Some may not be aware that such services are available or that they are eligible, some may choose not to register for services, some may register for services but may not be aware of, or be reluctant to use, services different than those they received in high school, and others may over-zealously demand services.

Because faculty and staff have the closest proximity to students potentially needing services, it is critical that they recognize signs of hearing loss including:

- Responses that are off-point or unrelated to questions or comments
- Voice volume that is too soft or too loud
- Frequent requests for information to be repeated
- Appearance of listening to class discussion, without actual participation

However, the ultimate responsibility and right to disclose one's disability lies with the student.

For students to be eligible for services, an audiogram must be obtained from a licensed audiologist. Some campuses also have speech and hearing clinics that can serve as a resource.

Administrators, faculty and staff need to understand that students with disabilities are not the sole responsibility of the SAC, but are the responsibility of the entire college. Efforts need to be made to educate campus personnel through training, one-on-one emails, phone calls, and public relations. The SAC specialist also may write letters to faculty describing the accommodations used by students in their classes, and faculty members may include statements on their class syllabi to inform students with disabilities of SAC services.

Appropriate accommodations may include:

Priority registration

Early registration will allow students the benefit of making wise choices regarding schedule, course load, and teachers. When the SAC has the students' schedule well in advance, they are better prepared to plan for accommodations such as captioning, oral interpreting, and captioned media.

Preferential seating

Some students benefit from sitting near the front/side of the classroom to follow lectures and discussion. This is a personal decision and responsibility of the student.

Notetaking

Students benefit from notetaking services, as they are unable to speechread or read captioning while simultaneously taking notes. A notetaker may be a student in the class, or hired from outside, with pressure-sensitive or carbonless paper provided by the SAC. Notes may be sent electronically to the student afterward. This may be a paid or volunteer service, or with incentives such as priority registration and bookstore vouchers.

Tutoring

This is not a legally mandated service, but some SACs provide this service as a benefit to the student. If a student utilizes tutoring services within another department of the college, the SAC needs to provide access and accommodations.

Testing accommodations

Hearing loss may affect one's use of the English language, and thus may affect one's test-taking skills. Testing accommodations are considered on a case-by-case basis, and some accommodations may include extended testing time, a private testing room free of distractions, and in unusual circumstances, oral or essay exams rather than multiple choice formats.

Hearing assistive technology

Students should be educated on various ALD options. However, be aware that some students may be unfamiliar with and perhaps reluctant to use such auxiliary aids as FM Systems as they may be seen as aesthetically unappealing to students unused to them. SAC staff need to ensure that the equipment loaned to students is in excellent working condition and also should be able to provide orientation to students on the equipment.

Oral interpreters/cued speech

Oral interpreters sit directly in front of the student and mouth the speaker's words without sound. The interpreter may substitute words with better

visibility for speechreading, and use body language/ gestures to supplement the message. Cued speech interpreters may also be used. These are not common accommodations, and such interpreters are not always easily found.

Speech-to-Text services and captioned media

Both are useful for individuals who rely on printed English to understand what is being said. They may include CART, C-Print and Typewell, all different forms of software programs to provide speech-to-text services. Transcript copies may be given to the student via hard copy or electronically. Speech-to-text services may be provided remotely from any location that is equipped with an internet line or phone line. If the service is provided remotely, it is beneficial for the instructor to wear a lapel microphone, consistently repeat all spoken comments and questions, and be provided cooperative support from Information Technology professionals. It is also important to provide captioning for media, online coursework, and materials. To ensure that the captioning of media becomes college-wide policy, it is crucial to communicate to administrators the importance of this accommodation.

When purchasing materials, look for an icon identifying that a product has been captioned. To broadcast the captions, a captioning decoder must be used. All televisions 13 inches or larger manufactured for use in the USA after 1993 have captioning features embedded and can be turned on using the menu options. Personally taped programs also should have retained captioning and can be viewed by turning on the captioning feature.

Academic waivers and substitutions

Some courses may be inaccessible to students, such as foreign language courses. SACs should have policies on how course waivers and substitutions can be requested and an equivalent course considered. Some colleges may offer instructional support and remediation that go above and beyond what is legally mandated to promote student success and retention.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

Transition to Higher Education

- Develop relationships with stakeholders including students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors, resource/ itinerant teachers, and vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors.
- Conduct outreach to schools and VR through college fairs, high school and campus site visits, awareness activities, exhibits, student panels, and partnerships.
- All college acceptance and admission materials should include prominent and easily identifiable

information about SAC services and information regarding the self-disclosure process such as a self-disclosure form, addressed and stamped postcard, or website contact for the SAU office

- Develop an active working relationship with the local VR office. Regularly scheduled meetings should take place, and a VR counselor could be designated to work with all students with disabilities at a particular college.
- Consider offering an orientation course with academic credit, designed to educate students about the variety of accommodations available, diversity, time management, and interactions.

Identification and Eligibility

- Implement a process for identifying students with disabilities, especially during the acceptance or orientation period.
- Train faculty and staff to identify and refer students to the SAC.
- Faculty and staff should also include access statements in their course syllabus and other materials.
- Encourage students to willingly self-disclose and request accommodations from instructors by developing a rapport, teaching advocacy, and fostering relationships with more experienced students who are actively disclosing and utilizing accommodations.

Documentation and Assessment

- Conduct an intake interview with the student should be held to review accommodations used in high school, communication technologies available, and strategies that can be used.
- It is crucial for the SAC service provider to establish a rapport with the student, and to follow up with regularly scheduled meetings, printed information, and copies of the program's policies and procedures.

Policies and Procedures

- Have written policies and procedures in place that outline steps to obtain appropriate accommodations (e.g. documentation needed to be eligible for services, requesting services in a timely manner, and responsibly utilizing services). These policies should address faculty/student responsibilities, notetaking, speech-to-text captioning, oral interpreting, equipment loans, and captioned media.
- Refer frequently to these policies and procedures, and have students review and sign these documents. These documents will protect the institution in case a student fails to use services responsibly.

Determination of Appropriate Accommodations

- Meet with the student to conduct an intake interview to determine preferred mode of communication, describe available accommodations, and teach the student how to request and use them.

- Refer students to campus and community resources. Students can be introduced to other students who also use accommodations and participate in campus clubs or organizations. Follow-up meetings should be conducted.

Working with the Administration

The cost of providing access and accommodations is often an ongoing administrative and budgetary concern. It is often cost effective to hire full or part-time staff rather than contractual staff. In addition, it is prudent to keep in mind that the cost and responsibility of providing legally mandated services is the responsibility of the whole college, and everybody benefits. Some programs have utilized creative strategies for maximizing resources, such as a cost-sharing plan between the college and vocational rehabilitation, and collaborative “loaning” of personnel among institutions.

Student Leadership and Self-Advocacy

Students benefit from leadership development opportunities, such as invitations to educate the college community about working with hard of hearing students, participation in campus clubs and organizations, interactions with other such students and alumni, and mentoring programs.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

C-Print:

<http://www.ntid.rit.edu/cprint/>

Captioned Media Program

provides a free-loan media program, with more than 4,000 open captioned titles:

<http://www.cfv.org/>

Cued Speech:

<http://www.cuedspeech.org/default.asp>

Information on assessing the communication tools of hard of hearing persons:

<http://www.mcpo.org/greg/index.htm>

Free templates on policies and procedures regarding access services and accommodations such as interpreting, captioning, faculty responsibilities, notetaking, students, and parents:

www.pepnet.org

Free templates of letters written to faculty members describing the accommodations that may be used by hard-of-hearing students enrolled in their classes:

www.pepnet.org

Jacksonville State University

Disabled Student Services Website:

<http://www.jsu.edu/depart/dss/index.html>

National survey of salaries and fees for interpreters and captionists:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/DisplaySummary.asp?SID=918554&U=91855478570>

Northern Illinois University

University deaf/hard of hearing program serving ~ 40 students with hearing loss.

<http://www.niu.edu/caar/index.shtml>

Speech-to-Text Services Network

organization to focus on development of qualifications for service providers:

<http://www.stsn.org>

Tips for Faculty and Staff- free guide for faculty and staff working with deaf and hard-of-hearing students:

www.pepnet.org

Typewell: <http://www.typewell.org/home.html>

William Rainey Harper College

Hard of hearing/deaf program in a community college serving ~ 50 students with hearing loss.

<http://goforward.harpercollege.edu/page.cfm?p=2979>

For more information contact:

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