



# Texas Southmost College

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## Handbook For Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

### WELCOME

The Office of Disability Services welcomes you to TSC. This handbook was created in an effort to answer any questions that you have about utilizing interpreter services.

Part of the mission of our office is to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to all university programs and activities. Interpreter services are provided to give students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing the same opportunity to realize their academic potential.

### Requesting Services

An Interpreter will be assigned to each of your classes after you have registered and notified the counselor or the lead interpreter. We will provide interpreters for all academic settings directly related to a class.

### Interpreter Request Form

To request an interpreter, you need to complete the Interpreter Request Form as soon as possible or at least 48 hours prior to the event.

### Requesting Services Via Videophone/Relay TX

•If necessary, all information regarding the request may be left on voice mail through VRS or Relay TX. Please be sure to leave:

- Name, date, and time you called
- Exact location and date of event
- Beginning and ending time of event
- Name of contact person and phone number where they can be reached.

Disability Services Staff will contact you at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled event to confirm your request.

### Interpreting Services



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Interpreters follow a Code of Professional Conduct to protect the integrity of the profession, themselves and consumers. Let's discuss some of the most pertinent guidelines.

## **Code of Professional Conduct**

1. Interpreters adhere to standards of confidential communication.
2. Interpreters possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific interpreting situation.
3. Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific interpreting situation.
4. Interpreters demonstrate respect for consumers.
5. Interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns, and students of the profession.
6. Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.
7. Interpreters engage in professional development.

## **Confidentiality**

Interpreters hold a position of trust in their role as facilitators of communication. Interpreters realize confidentiality is highly valued and essential to protecting all involved. If facilitation of communication was not required the interpreter would not be present.

### **What is confidential?**

\* Information is confidential when an interpreter has become privy to information because of his/her presence as a professional.

### **Disclosure of Confidential Information**

- Interpreters sometimes need to share "confidential" information about students with the Director of Disability Services or his designee.

\* For example, it is important to notify the office of class cancellations, room and schedule changes, consecutive absences, or other matters that might affect interpreting services.

### **Respect for Consumers**

Interpreters render the message faithfully by:



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- 1.always conveying the content,
- 2.reflecting the spirit of the speaker,
- 3.and using language most readily understood by the person(s) whom they serve.

## **Content & Spirit**

Content: Before accepting an assignment an interpreter takes into consideration whether the subject matter is objectionable to them. If faced with an uncomfortable situation, the interpreter can either continue interpreting and try not to appear judgmental or ask to be replaced. Ethically, the interpreter cannot let his/her personal feelings become a deterrent to accurate interpretation.

Spirit of the Speaker: The affect of the interpreter should vary from classroom to classroom. Teaching styles and personality quirks transform the message as interpreters take on assignments. The delivery can range from bland to electrifying as we emulate the spirit of the speaker. Interpreters strive to render the message with dynamic equivalence.

## **Language Most Readily Understood**

Interpreters are expected to honor consumer requests or needs regarding language preferences, and render the message accordingly (interpreted or transliterated).

Do you depend mostly on lip-reading?

Do you prefer sign language with lip-reading?

When you speak in class, do you want the interpreter to voice for you or will you speak for yourself?

Work at keeping the communication open between you and your interpreter. If you discuss this at the beginning of the semester, you may avoid misunderstandings.

## **Consumer Requests**

Interpreters also show respect for consumers by honoring students requests in selection of interpreters while recognizing the realities of: qualifications, availability and, situation.

Students may request that an interpreter be replaced for the following reasons: skill, communication preference mismatch, personal reasons.

## **Problems with Services and Conflict Resolution**

If a student has a concern with an interpreter, the student should first give the interpreter an opportunity to resolve the problem or improve the situation.



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Open and direct communication between the interpreter and the student helps resolve most situations. Given the opportunity, most interpreters are willing to accommodate reasonable requests.

Here you can write to us about the problem and express any proposed solutions you may have.

## **Professional Development**

Interpreters should strive to further their knowledge and skills by:

- interacting with professional colleagues,
- reading current literature in the field,
- attending workshops and,
- participating in professional meetings.

Highly specialized situations arise, especially in the educational setting, which require subject-specific vocabulary. Interpreters have an obligation to be prepared for class, which may require outside study.

## **Evaluation Forms**

Toward the end of the semester, evaluation forms will be sent to you and faculty.

Interpreters can request less formal and/or more frequent feedback from the student.

## **Appropriate Manner & Conduct**

Counsel or Advise? Interpreters should not counsel or advise the student during or after the assignment. For example, dropping a course is an important decision that may affect your status as a student.

At times you may reach a critical yet, indecisive point and look to the interpreter for guidance. Dropping a course is a decision you should make after consulting with the course instructor and advisor.

However obvious or tempting it may be, interpreters are not qualified to counsel.

## **Appropriate Manner & Conduct**

Interject Personal Opinions? At times, while on assignment an interpreter may find him/herself interpreting information with which he/she disagrees. It may pertain to a personal value or conviction. The significance of the interpreters' viewpoint may tempt him/her to express his/her own opinion. However, to insert their own opinion is clearly a violation of the Code of Professional Conduct.

Interpreters may however, explain their role to faculty and students. In addition, sharing information with the student about how to access a note taker and/or tutor is permissible.



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As cultural differences need to be considered when attempting to render a message faithfully, the interpreter may interject cultural understanding.

## **Questions During Class Time**

\* If you have a question during class time, raise your hand and ask the instructor to repeat or expand on the information presented. Please do not try to talk to the interpreter while they are working. The interpreter cannot listen to the instructor, interpret and understand what you are saying at the same time.

\* More importantly, the interpreter is not the instructor. An interpreter's only function is to facilitate communication and cultural understanding between individuals who would otherwise have difficulty communicating.

## **Respect for Consumers**

Respect for Consumers also includes: Hearing Students, Faculty, Staff, and Visitors

Interpreters should conduct themselves in an unobtrusive manner and exercise care in choice of attire. An explanation of demeanor and appearance are highlighted in the Interpreter Handbook.

## **Demeanor**

Demeanor: An interpreter should strive to maintain a professional attitude toward their profession. This means that the interpreter should show pride in the profession by: being on time (preferably early) for all assignments, being dependable and reliable in all phases of their profession and, have an attitude that enhances communication.

The presence of a disruptive interpreter who dictates the situation with his/her attitude does not add to successful communication between the parties involved.

## **Appearance**

Appearance: Interpreters should dress in a manner appropriate to their status as professionals in a university environment. Attire should be clean, neat, and not distracting.

It is suggested that the interpreter wear clothes that are comfortable, in solid colors that contrast with skin color. Fingernails should be kept trimmed and any polish should be neutral in color.

At times an interpreter may be called upon to interpret for faculty or administration meetings, public performances sponsored by the university, or other formal occasions. In these situations formal "business attire" should be worn.



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## **Team Interpreting**

There are times when two interpreters might be needed. The reason for this is twofold:

To prevent injury or mental fatigue and maintain accuracy. Interpreters are at risk for various wrist, arm and shoulder problems if they interpret too long. Also, after 20-30 minutes the number of mistakes an interpreter makes begins to increase.

To provide support to the partner. When an interpreter is not physically interpreting he/she is still attending to the class to ensure information is not missed or misunderstood.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Relationships with a variety of people will inevitably develop, and positive professional relationships and networking within the profession are strongly encouraged. However certain personal relationships with students are unacceptable within the context of a working relationship. Examples of this include but are not limited to interpreting for: \* family members or \* romantic interests. Interpreters will not be placed in assignments that could threaten to compromise their commitment to the Code of Professional Conduct.

## **Attendance**

### Arriving Late/No Shows

If you will be arriving late for class you should call the Office of Disability Services and leave a message. If you do not call, the Interpreter will return to the Office of Disability Services after an allotted time. The interpreter should wait for 15 minutes for the first class hour and an additional ten minutes per hour thereafter.

If you do not show-up within the specified times as shown in the chart, your interpreter may be reassigned.

Class = 1hr Wait 15 min. after scheduled start time.

Class = 1.5 Wait 20 min. after scheduled start time.

Class = 2hrs Wait 30 min. after scheduled start time.

Class = 2.5 Wait 40 min. after scheduled start time.

Class = 3hrs Wait 45 min. after scheduled start time

## **Attendance**



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**Planned Absences:** If you have an appointment or meeting and will miss class, you should advise Disability Services by email, phone, or leave a note in the office as soon as you know you will not be attending class. When contacting to let the Office of Disability Services know that you will be absent, please make sure to provide the following information: your name, class name, class time and, date of absence.

## Unexpected Absences

If you will be absent from class, you should let the Office of Disability Services know immediately. If you miss three (3) consecutive classes during the semester without notifying the Office, your interpreting services will be suspended. To reinstate interpreting services in your class you must see the Disability Services.

## Interpreter No Show

If a student is in a class in which the interpreter has not shown up, he/she should wait fifteen minutes, and then contact the Office of Disability Services. A substitute will be sent if one is available. All interpreter no-shows will be documented and appropriate follow-up will be taken.

## Review

1. To request an interpreter a student needs to complete an Interpreter Request Form.
2. Any communication between a student and interpreter is considered confidential.
3. If a student has a concern with an interpreter they should immediately file a report.
4. Interpreters should not counsel or advise during or after an assignment.
5. Personal relationships with students are unacceptable for interpreters.
6. If my class is 3hrs long, the interpreter waits for 30 min. before leaving.
7. If my class is 2hrs long and the interpreter is 15 min. late, the student needs to wait 15 more min. before reporting to Disability Services.
8. If a student has any questions regarding the class, he/she should ask the instructor for information.
9. A student should keep open and direct communication between themselves and the interpreter.
10. Each student is ultimately responsible for his/her academic success and /or failure.