

DASS Interpreter/Captionist Request Procedures for Students

I. Introduction

Southern Methodist University is committed to providing students an equal opportunity in higher education. The office of Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) works to assure that all University programs are accessible to students with disabilities in the University community. The University has adopted the following procedures governing the provision of Interpreter/Captionist services for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

II. Academically Required Events Scheduling

1. Students who have significant hearing loss and need the service of an interpreter or captionist must first submit documentation to DASS and be approved for accommodations. An online request form can be found at <http://smu.edu/alec/RequestForAccommodationsForm.asp>
2. Once approved, students should make individual requests for Interpreters/Captionists through the DASS office with specific information about the course (i.e. times, dates, duration, locations). Providing a schedule of their classes is needed at this time.
3. DASS will need as much advance notice as possible to ensure arrangements are made in a timely way. Ideally, students should make their requests at least 3-4 weeks before classes begin. Late requests will be processed in the order they are received.
4. Students have a responsibility to notify DASS as quickly as possible when they drop and/or add courses, since the arrangements for Interpreters/Captionists must be altered/adjusted.

III. Billing and Payment

1. Interpreters/Captionists will be hired at their current rate with SMU.
2. DASS covers payment for Interpreter/Captionists needed to ensure access in mandatory class activities, e.g., out of class assignments, required advising, and faculty office hours.
3. Other University departments are responsible for covering payment for Interpreter/Captionists as follows:
 - a. University-wide commencement events for student requests should be paid for by the Registrar
 - b. Revenue generating events (plays, camps, sports events) as well as non-revenue generating and Academic Department-sponsored events (lectures, forums, meetings, workshops, etc.) should be covered by the sponsoring department.
 - c. Individual commencement ceremonies should be covered by the individual school.
 - d. Student Groups: Reasonable accommodations for student group-sponsored events that are either open to visitors or the general student body must be supported, in planning and expenses, by the event's organizer or managing department. All student organizations must plan, advertise and conduct their activities consistent with University policies, which include the need to address ADA accommodations, when required.
4. DASS will assist in scheduling Interpreters/Captionists for all or some of the above listed events, and can send a memo to the department confirming the need for the accommodation. Payment will be transferred from the department to DASS, when appropriate.

IV. Non-Credit Events Scheduling

Students who need the services of an Interpreter/Captionist for special events, meetings, or appointments must submit a written email or in-person request to DASS for those services at least three (3) business days before the event is to take place. For example, if the event in question is on Monday, the student must contact DASS on the Wednesday before the event. If a student becomes

aware of an event less than three (3) business days in advance, the student should notify DASS as soon as possible. Services cannot be guaranteed without such advance notice.

V. Cancellation or change in schedule, absence or lateness

If the requested Interpreter/Captionist services are not needed by the student because he or she will not be attending the class or the event in question (e.g., due to a scheduling change, cancellation, illness, etc.), the student must cancel the arrangements by notifying DASS in writing (email to dass@smu.edu), by phone, or in person as soon as possible, preferably at least forty-eight (48) hours before the class or event is to take place, but at least twenty-four (24) hours before the class. If the cancellation is for a Sunday or Monday class, notification must be received before 4:00 PM on the Friday preceding the class. Call 214-768-1470. If no one answers, call 214-768-3648 and ask to speak to a DASS staff member who is currently in the office. Failure to provide at least 24 hours notice is considered a "No-Show".

If a student has not arrived within twenty (20) minutes after a class session or event is scheduled to begin, the Interpreter/Captionist will leave, and the student will be considered a "No-Show."

After three unexplained absences in a class of less than three hours, or two unexplained absences in a class of three hours or more, Interpreting/Captioning services will be suspended until the situation has been discussed with DASS. After a total of four unexplained absences in a class of less than three hours, or three unexplained absences in a class of three hours or more, services may be suspended for the remainder of the semester. Unexplained absences are understood to mean that the student did not attend class and did not notify DASS 24 hours in advance. The cancellation of an Interpreter/Captionist can only be accomplished through DASS. Continuing problems with unexplained absences will be dealt with on an individual basis and may result in suspension of services. If the student asks the Interpreter/Captionist to provide a service that has not been scheduled by DASS, the student will have the responsibility of payment for services.

In the event of inclement weather cancellations, every attempt should be made to make a decision about the need for Interpreters/Captionists as far in advance as possible.

In the case of departmental requests, if the cancellation is received less than the amount of time stated above, the sponsoring department will be charged accordingly.

VI. Definitions

A. Deaf: deafness generally refers to a physical condition characterized by lack of sensitivity to sound. Notated as deaf with a lowercase d, this refers to the audiological experience of someone who is partially or wholly lacking hearing. In legal terms, deafness is defined by degree of hearing loss. These degrees include profound or total deafness (90 dB - 120 dB or more of hearing loss), severe (60 dB - 90 dB), moderate (30 dB - 60 dB), and mild deafness (10 dB - 30 dB of hearing loss).

B. Hard of Hearing: Both severe and moderate deafness can be referred to as partial deafness or as hard of hearing, while mild deafness is usually called hard of hearing.

C. Interpreter: An Interpreter generally uses Sign Language to facilitate communication between a person who is hearing and a person who is deaf.

D. Transcriber/Captionist: These professionals use either meaning-for-meaning software or word-for-word software to facilitate communication through a computer between a person who is hearing and a person who is deaf.

E. Sign Language: Sign Language is a language which uses manual communication, body language and lip patterns instead of sound to convey meaning simultaneously combining hand shapes, orientation and movement of the hands, arms or body, and facial expressions to express fluidly a speaker's thoughts.