

Overview

Providing interpreting and speech-to-text services is a commonplace accommodation in settings where an audience is comprised of several individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing who rely on different communication modes (e.g., ASL, lip reading, etc.). This type of accommodation most often occurs at large magnet events such as conferences. Dual accommodation for an individual student in a postsecondary setting occurs less frequently, but is appropriate under certain circumstances.

Before reading this Fast Fact, it may be helpful to read the related Fast Facts on speech to text services and interpreting services.

In what academic situations is it appropriate to consider providing both interpreters and speech-to-text services?

There are a number of special circumstances where providing both accommodations is advantageous and, in some instances, necessary.

- * **Highly technical and complex content:** Providing dual accommodations is generally used in upper level courses that are highly technical or complex in nature. They are also used in classes that are highly interactive. Examples of these courses include medical, legal and foreign language classes. In these settings, the student often relies on the sign language interpreter for the communication content, but references the speech-to-text service to capture the specialized vocabulary.
- * **Dual services are also appropriate during a dissertation defense:** During this very high stakes event, the individual is able to monitor how their signed communication is being voiced by viewing the real-time captioning, and be able to immediately clarify concepts and correct interpreter misinterpretations.

- * **Primary but not complete reliance on speech-to-text:** In this situation, the speech-to-text provider may be the primary provider of information for the student, with the interpreter assuming a smaller role, such as only voicing what the individual is conveying in ASL.
- * **More than one student who is deaf or hard of hearing:** When there are several students who are deaf or hard of hearing in a class, there is a good chance not all students will have the same communication accommodation need; hence the need for more than one accommodation.
- * **Campus-wide events:** During large events such as graduations or conferences, it is prudent to provide both interpreters and speech-to-text services if the campus expects a number of students (or their families and friends) who are deaf or hard of hearing. By providing both, event planners are able to create access for all and perhaps minimize a scramble to find providers for a last minute request for a specific accommodation



Since American Sign Language (ASL) is a language with its own grammar, vocabulary, and nuances, there are instances when there are not conceptually accurate signs available for the specialized vocabulary being presented. Speech-to-text services provide access to the highly specialized vocabulary while interpreters provide effective communication access to discussions and other classroom interactions. When allowing for both services, the individual has a more equitable learning experience.

Dual Accommodations: Using Interpreters and Speech-to-Text Services

Are there any special logistics to keep in mind when providing dual accommodations?

An important factor in the successful provision of dual accommodations is keeping the lines of communication open between all the parties involved during service provision. It may take some trial and error to determine how the instructor, the interpreter and the speech-to-text provider will work together. It is important to allow for flexibility. If the mode of instruction changes during the class, switching of roles may be necessary. A good example of this occurrence is when the instructor switches from a lecture to interactive group work.

The Law

Provisions from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 2010 Standards for Accessible Design suggest the key to ensuring effective communication involves considering the nature, length, complexity, and context of the communication, and the person's normal method(s) of communication. The most important person to involve in the discussion of accommodation planning is the individual who is deaf or hard of hearing.

For more information regarding speech to text services, please see the Fast Facts titled *Speech - to-Text Services: Remote Speech-To-Text Services*, *Speech -to-Text Services: Overview of Speech-to-Text Services*, and *Speech-to-Text Services: Hiring Qualified Speech-to-Text Providers*.

For more information regarding sign language interpreters, please see the Fast Facts titled *Sign Language Interpreters: An Overview*, *Sign Language Interpreters: Hiring Qualified Interpreters*, *Sign Language Interpreters: Using Interpreters as a Reasonable Accommodation for Testing*, and *Sign Language Interpreters: In the classroom*.

Resources

Americans with Disabilities Act: Requirements for Effective Communication

<http://www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm>