

# WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY



## WORKING WITH A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

Western Sydney University's Disability Service coordinates Sign Language Interpreters to enable deaf and hard of hearing students equal access to programs. The role of the Sign Language Interpreter is to facilitate communication between deaf students and their hearing lecturers, tutors, and peers.

Sign Language Interpreters are bound by a Code of Professional Conduct which means the interpreter will interpret everything that is signed or spoken in the room — including private conversations, environmental sounds, etc. Everything communicated in the room will be kept confidential. The interpreter will sign what is spoken and speak what is signed, conveying meaning and intent.

Interpreters working at the University may work in the following situations:

- In lectures with the deaf student as part of a larger group of hearing students;
- In a class or tutorial, workshop, or laboratory session with hearing students;
- In an interview, on a one-to-one basis;
- During practicums or field study activities

### TIPS FOR WORKING WITH SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

- Provide Disability Support Services with access to class location details, induction requirements and other relevant information.
- Ensure lighting and seating arrangements are appropriate for clear communication to take place. Make sure the line of sight is clear between the student and the interpreter at all times.
- Maintain eye contact with the deaf student and not with the interpreter.
- Always directly address the student who is deaf.
- Make sure your message is spoken clearly so the interpreter can communicate it.
- If requested, spell out unfamiliar names or terms (i.e. Name of a medication, scientific term).
- If written material is present, please allow time for the deaf or hard of hearing student to read before continuing. Deaf people are unable to watch the interpreter and read at the same time. It is important to remember if presentation slides are being used or if the student needs to take notes.
- Be prepared to pause while you are speaking.

If you have any enquiry about Sign Language Interpreter services, please contact your campus Disability Advisor or Disability Support on **1300 668 370 (option 5)** or [disabilitysupport@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:disabilitysupport@westernsydney.edu.au)