

Dual Accommodations

Serving Deaf & Hard of Hearing Students

Providing two services - interpreting and speech-to-text services, for example - is a common accommodation in settings where an audience is comprised of deaf or hard of hearing individuals who rely on different communication modes. This often occurs at large events such as conferences and graduation. Dual accommodation for an individual postsecondary student happens less frequently, but can be appropriate in some cases.



When to Consider Dual Accommodations

There are situations where providing dual accommodations is beneficial and necessary.

- **Technical and complex content:** Generally, upper level courses that are highly technical, complex (medical, legal and foreign language courses) or interactive may be suitable for dual accommodation. Here, students may rely on an interpreter for the communication content and the speech-to-text service to capture specialized vocabulary.
- **High stakes events:** In high stakes events like a dissertation defense, a student can monitor how their signed communication is being voiced by viewing the real-time captioning on the screen, enabling her to immediately clarify concepts and correct interpreter misinterpretations if necessary.
- **Multiple deaf or hard of hearing students:**
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 major events such as graduations or conferences, it is advisable to provide interpreters and speech-to-text services if a number of students, their families, or friends are deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Supplemental services:** The speech-to-text provider may be the primary provider of information for a student, with the interpreter assuming a smaller role, voicing what the student is signing in ASL, for example.

Handling Logistics

Keeping the lines of communication open between all the parties is critical to the successful use of dual accommodations. It may take some trial and error to determine how the instructor, the interpreter and the speech-to-text provider will work together. Flexibility is key. If an instructor switches from a lecture to interactive group work, for example, services may need to change as well. The most important person to involve in the discussion of accommodation planning is the person who is deaf or hard of hearing.

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