

Working with Sign Language Interpreters

Tip Sheet

How do I request services?

To request interpreting services, please fill out [the form located at go.ncsu.edu/interpreter-form](https://go.ncsu.edu/interpreter-form), and our team will respond to your request within 2 business days. For any questions about making requests, please contact Deaf* Services at deafservices@ncsu.edu in the [Office of Equal Opportunity](#).

What is the role of a sign language interpreter?

The job of a sign language interpreter is to effectively and accurately convey classroom/event content through the use of sign language in group or one-on-one settings. The interpreter does not change the content in any manner, but rather provides the most accurate and precise translation possible. As a result, the interpreter may interpret more than just spoken words, such as inflection, tone of voice, cultural background, and subject context, all play a part in authentic interpretation between languages.

Do interpreters adhere to confidentiality?

Interpreters adhere to the [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Code of Professional Conduct \(CPC\)](#). The key tenet of the CPC is confidentiality. Interpreters cannot share private information about clients, students, professors, or anyone with whom they work.

How are interpreters assigned?

At NC State, interpreters will generally work in teams of two. If a meeting is less than an hour, or there is not a lot of expected interaction, such as an appointment at the testing center, one interpreter may be sufficient. The Coordinator may seek additional details about a scheduled event or meeting to best determine the number of interpreters that may be required.

What do I need to do when working with interpreters?

It is important to provide preparation materials to the interpreters in advance. Interpreters are subject matter experts in interpreting from ASL to English and English to ASL, and need to study vocabulary, concepts, names, etc., in advance to provide equitable communication access.

What should I know if my class utilizes small group discussions or group projects?

Interpreters may need to sit in between students and/or move around to be able to hear all of the comments. Please remind your students to speak one at a time, and identify themselves before speaking. The interpreters may ask for clarification as needed in order to accurately interpret the information.

What kind of material do interpreters need to prepare for assignments?

Provide a list of specialized vocabulary, if applicable. Some other suggestions for prep materials include: Scripts, Research articles, Chapter summaries, Powerpoint presentations, Abstracts, Books, Audio/Visual Media, Pre-recorded lectures, TED Talks, ASL Vlogs, Podcasts, hyperlinks, etc.

Please email prep materials to deafservices@ncsu.edu in the following format:

Interpreter materials for [course name/number and instructor / or event and date]

Examples:

- Interpreter material for MAT 1123 - Elrod, or
 - Interpreter prep for Chancellor's Address - May 5, 2025
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What if we make changes to the script, slide deck, or other prep materials before the event?

Inform the Coordinator of any lesson changes, script changes, etc., to ensure effective communication access. If the changes happen immediately prior to the event, please ensure you have copies of the materials available for the interpreting team.

How does the instructor or event coordinator acknowledge an interpreter's presence and expertise appropriately?

The interpreter(s) will introduce themselves to the Professor or individual running the meeting prior to the start of the event. While the interpreters are there to facilitate communication, they are human, you are welcome to say hello and exchange pleasantries. There may be times when the interpreters need to ask for clarification from the Professor or from the students, they may briefly interrupt and ask for clarification before continuing their interpretation. Unless the interpreters ask you to slow down, there is no need to adjust your pace or volume.

Learn more about interpreting.

If you are interested in learning more about sign language interpreters, please review the following:

- ["Not All Interpreters Are Created Equal," by Corey Axelrod](#)
- [Interpreting - National Deaf Center](#)