

What is meant by 'deaf or hard of hearing'?

There are different degrees and types of deafness, and different for deaf people or those with a hearing impairment to communicate. Some people use hearing aids, which are helpful but do not give perfect hearing. Hard of hearing people therefore usually also use lip reading to follow speech. For some deaf or hard of hearing people, technical aids may not always help and there may be alternatives to consider. An estimated 8.7 million people in the UK are deaf or hard of hearing and most rely on spoken English.

How can staff help?

- encourage students who have not already done so, to contact the Disability & Well-being Service, to draft an Individual Student Support Agreement
- when given an ISSA, please put into action the reasonable adjustments, or contact the Disability & Well-being Service to discuss any difficulties we may not have foreseen
- provide a discreet opportunity to discuss ground rules for communication with hearing impaired students
- speak clearly in normal speech rhythm and just a little more slowly
- make sure the individual is looking at you before you start speaking; a gentle touch on the shoulder or arm will capture their attention
- make sure you are visible and in a good light taking care not to obscure your mouth with your hands, food or microphone
- check regularly that you have been understood
- in meetings, classes and/or seminars, only have one person speaking at a time, repeat or rephrase questions or comments from other members of the group and keep background noise as low as possible
- in lectures and seminars, use visual methods to present complicated information
- keep background noise as low as possible
- for meetings, provide an agenda and stick to it, say explicitly when you are changing the subject, and provide notes where possible

- be sensitive to needs arising from unpredicted circumstances