




**PEPNet**

Advancing educational opportunities for  
people who are deaf or hard of hearing



# **Assessing Accommodation Needs in Postsecondary Settings**

PEPNet-Midwest Regional Roundtable  
Michigan State University  
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## Objectives for Today

- Learn of the different aspects of assessment – and why it is important to assess for accommodations
- Overview of tools needed for assessment
- After the assessment – what's next for the student and the DSS office

## Three Perspectives in Assessment

- Legal Obligations/Mandates
- The Disability Support Services office and/or assessor
- The student (may also include parents, high school teacher of the Deaf, etc)

## Legal Obligations/Mandates

- **Americans with Disabilities Act**

- Title II, Subtitle A is intended to protect qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability in the services, programs, or activities of all State and local governments. It additionally extends the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability established by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, to all activities of State and local governments, including those that do not receive Federal financial assistance.

- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974**

- "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . ."
- (<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>)

## Legal Obligations/Mandates

### Definition of Disability

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual
- A record of such an impairment
- Being regarded as having such an impairment



Institutions should consider establishing reasonable standards for documenting one's disability from professionals such as a physician, psychologist or other qualified diagnostician.



***The Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education enforces both Section 504 and Title II of ADA.***

## Issues Affecting Assessment: DSS

- Deafness is a low-incidence disability
- Legally obligated to provide reasonable, cost-effective accommodations
- There is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach to assessment
- Need to know what accommodation choices are available for a variety of students
- Basic documentation may not show a clear picture of accommodation needs
- Campus may not have access to accommodations
- Assessor may not have D/HH expertise
- Consider the generation of students

## Issues Affecting Assessment: Student

- Student may or may not be knowledgeable about services/needs
- Individual student needs will vary over time and in different situations
- Student may not have immediate access to records
- The audiogram may not tell the whole story
- Student may not be a good “fit” for the program or school

## Tools and Procedures for Assessment

- Basic understanding about
  - Hearing loss and accommodations
  - “Best Practices”
  - Understanding of Rehab Act, Section 504 and ADA
- A thorough assessment tool
- Complete and verified documentation
  - Audiogram
  - IEP, records of services previously used
- Have your school’s policies available

## Tools and Procedures for Assessment

- Meet student and have appropriate accommodations present, if needed
- Sufficient time to complete the assessment
- Build your referral and resource base
  - Audiologists
  - VR counselors
  - PEPNet Outreach Sites and specialists
- Be flexible and ask questions!

## Types of Accommodations

- Interpreters
  - ASL/Transliterators
  - Cued Speech
  - Oral
  - Remote Interpreting



- Speech-to-Text Services
  - Real-Time Captioning (RTC)
  - C-Print, Typewell
  - Voice Recognition
  - Remote STS

## Types of Accommodations

- Notetakers (paid or volunteer)
- Open/Closed captioned materials
- Taped lectures
- Preferential seating
- Assistive Listening Devices
- Exam accommodations
  - Extra time (time and a half, double time, etc.)
  - Private/semi-private room
  - ASL Interpreter



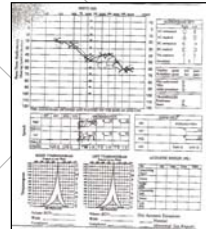
## Assessing Appropriate Accommodations

Six assessment factors to consider:

1. History
2. Personal Profile
3. Literacy Skills
4. Visual vs. Aural
5. Accommodations in the Classroom
6. Student Preference

### 1. History

- Hearing loss history
  - Audiogram
  - Changes in hearing loss over time
  - Changes in aids
- Previous use of services and accommodations
  - In other educational programs
  - At home and in the workplace
  - Consider all environments where accommodations were used



The History “pieces” will connect with all assessment factors!

## 2. Visual vs. Aural

### Visual

- Uses speech to text or interpreting services
- Relies more on notetaking, speech-reading and closed/open captions
- Depends on visual cues, communicating in sign and/or using notes

### Aural

- High speech recognition score, large gain using hearing aids on audiogram
- Use of ALD and amplified devices – successful use?
- Preferred communication mode in different situations

A STUDENT MAY BE “MIXED” – Are both Visual and Aural!

## 3. Literacy Skills

- Onset of hearing loss - Prelingual/Postlingual
- History of language acquisition
- Writing sample
- Student self-assessment
- Educational records
  - IEP
  - College placement exams
  - ACT/SAT scores



## 4. Personal Profile

- Understanding of their hearing loss
- Communication assessment
  - How do they prefer to communicate?
  - Communication in different settings (groups, with family, in the community, etc)
- Perceptions about college life
- Personal goals about academics and related to disability
- Attitude about service providers
- Other disabilities?

## 5. Accommodations in the Classroom

The success of accommodation(s) may depend on the context of the class/environment

- Physical setting and format
- Primary speaker
- Demands on the student
- Universal Design in Education



*Gather information before the schedule begins about the class format*

*Allow for experimentation*

*Follow-up with student – assess changes as needed*

## 6. Student Preference

Weighing the essential requests, individual abilities and reasonable, appropriate accommodations

– Otherwise qualified

### Issues:

- Budget
- Availability of services
- Close, personal relationship
- Past accommodation use
- Type of environment

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## What is “Appropriate”?

Students must request accommodation(s) , but we have a responsibility to determine what is appropriate...

- Speech-to-Text services and an interpreter?
- Speech-to-Text services with transcript and notetaker?
- Assistive Listening Device and interpreter?
- Extra time on exams and class assignments?

## It doesn't end after the intake...

Important pieces to make it all fit together:

- Be flexible and allow experimentation
- Get reliable, supporting documentation
- Develop an intake procedure
- Ask questions!
- Check-in with students

## Questions?

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