

National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes

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# Campus Accessibility Guide

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**NDC**  
National Deaf Center  
on Postsecondary Outcomes



**IDEAs**  
that **Work**  
Office of Special Education Programs  
U.S. Department of Education



# Campus Accessibility Guide

In recent years, more deaf students have attended college. The extent of institutional readiness to serve these deaf students could affect their retention, graduation, and future success.<sup>1</sup> Postsecondary institutions are responsible for providing deaf students with access to all of its sponsored programs, services, and activities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 specify institutional responsibilities, whether the individual is a visitor, a faculty member, or an enrolled student.<sup>2</sup>

Deaf individuals face barriers in higher education for many reasons, including a lack of experienced professionals coordinating accommodations and general campus community awareness. These barriers can be reduced by integrating accessibility into the framework of the institution. Research suggests that a student is more likely to succeed if systems are put into place prior to the student arriving at the institution.<sup>3</sup> Designing an accessible environment and creating a culture that meets the needs of deaf students is critical for them to assimilate into the campus environment.

## ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND EVENTS ON CAMPUS

Accessibility is not limited to the classroom. Rather, accessibility applies to the institution's full range of programs and opportunities, including course-related activities outside of the classroom, student activities and organizations, campus events, and housing. Establishing protocols outlining responsibilities for departments and including explicit procedures for arranging accommodations frames the expectations for access. This protocol should be available on the institution's website and through the appropriate office on campus (e.g., human resources, disability services, ADA coordinator).

As institutions work to create an accessible campus environment, it is also recommended that they offer awareness training to improve faculty, staff, and administration interactions with deaf individuals. Institutions are encouraged to do a self-evaluation of access for deaf students in various departments to identify areas of concern and follow up with training opportunities.

1. Cawthon, S. W., Schoffstall, S. J., & Garberoglio, C. L. (2014). How ready are institutions for students who are deaf or hard of hearing? *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 22(13). Retrieved from [www.nationaldeafcenter.org/institutional-readiness](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/institutional-readiness)
2. National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes. (2017). *Equitable access guide: Understanding legal responsibilities for institutions* (2nd ed.). Retrieved from [www.nationaldeafcenter.org/eag](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/eag)
3. Martin, N. (2006). Strategies which increase the likelihood of success at university of students with Asperger syndrome. *Good Autism Practice Journal*, 7(2), 51–60.

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# Campus Accessibility Checklist

This self-evaluation tool is designed for institutions to assess the level of access to campus programs and services for deaf students. The checklist identifies common access situations for deaf individuals (including deaf students, staff members, faculty members, and visitors) that may need to be cross-checked for any barriers. Institutions can use this checklist to evaluate the level of accessibility in various departments, programs, and services across campus.

## TIPS ON USING THIS TOOL




- Remember to fill out the date(s) of the review and the names of the reviewers.
- Indicate strengths or weaknesses in the right column using the plus (+) and minus (–) symbols.
- The last page of the checklist offers space to write additional departments or access checks that are unique to the institution.
- When assessing an area, consider all accommodation options that should be made available. If only one accommodation is used, note additional accommodations that could provide access for a variety of deaf individuals. Accommodations may include (but are not limited to) the following: sign language interpreting, speech-to-text services, assistive listening devices, captioned media, testing accommodations, and note taking.





The following is an example of how to use this tool:




 <b>CAMPUS EVENTS</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (–) WEAKNESSES</b>
Staff is familiar with procedure for procuring accommodations requested for events	<b>(+)</b> The Orientation and Commencement coordinators said they collect information from deaf individuals and submit a request to the DS office using the online form. <b>(–)</b> Other departments hosting events do not seem familiar with request procedures.
Advertisements for campus events (e.g., commencement, sporting events, special guest lecturers, parent orientation) have disability inclusion statements and information on how to request accommodations for said events	<b>(–)</b> Walked around campus and saw several flyers for different events. Checked our campus' events calendar webpage—there was no information on how to request accommodations.





**Date(s) Reviewed:** \_\_\_\_\_


**Reviewer Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

 <b>ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (-) WEAKNESSES</b>
Public access televisions with streaming video offer open or closed captions (e.g., in student union, library, gym)	
Videos on campus websites are captioned	
Public video phones or captioned phones are available	
Visual fire alarms are in all buildings	
 <b>ADMISSIONS/REGISTRAR OFFICE</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (-) WEAKNESSES</b>
Communication resources are readily available at the front desk or entrance (e.g., pen and paper, computer-aided communication, text messaging)	
Staff is familiar with procedure for procuring accommodations requested for appointments	
 <b>CAMPUS EVENTS</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (-) WEAKNESSES</b>
Staff is familiar with procedure for procuring accommodations requested for events	
Advertisements for campus events (e.g., commencement, sporting events, special guest lecturers, parent orientation) have disability inclusion statements and information on how to request accommodations for said events	

 <b>ACADEMIC ADVISORS</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (–) WEAKNESSES</b>
Staff is familiar with procedure for procuring accommodations requested for appointments	
Staff is familiar with different alternative communication strategies (e.g., pen and paper, computer-aided communication, text messaging)	
 <b>CAREER/JOB PLACEMENT CENTER</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (–) WEAKNESSES</b>
Communication resources are readily available at the front desk or entrance (e.g., pen and paper, computer-aided communication, text messaging)	
Staff is familiar with procedure for procuring accommodations requested for all activities	
Advertisements for career planning programs and services (e.g., job fairs, interview workshops) have disability inclusion statements and language to request accommodations	
 <b>FINANCIAL AID OFFICE</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (–) WEAKNESSES</b>
Communication resources are readily available at the help desk or entrance (e.g., pen and paper, computer aided communication, text messaging)	
Programs and services are accessible to deaf students (e.g., captioned videos, accommodations for informational events and workshops upon request, queue system)	
Staff is familiar with procedure for procuring accommodations requested for appointments	
 <b>FOOD SERVICES/CAFETERIA</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (–) WEAKNESSES</b>
Food workers are familiar with different communication methods (e.g., text, gesture, communication cards, paper and pen)	
Staff is familiar with procedure for procuring accommodations requested	

 <b>HEALTH CENTER/COUNSELING SERVICES</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (–) WEAKNESSES</b>
Communication resources are readily available at the front desk or entrance (e.g., pen and paper, computer-aided communication, text messaging)	
Staff is familiar with procedure for procuring accommodations requested for emergencies or urgent appointments	
Staff is familiar with alternative communication methods (e.g., text, gesture, communication cards, paper and pen) if interpreter or captionist is not requested or available	
 <b>LIBRARY</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (–) WEAKNESSES</b>
Help desk communication strategies are readily available (e.g., pen and paper, computer-aided communication, text messaging)	
Videos and DVDs have captioned versions available	
Procedure is available to request and receive transcripts for audio-only files and videos with captions	
 <b>POLICE/CAMPUS SECURITY</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (–) WEAKNESSES</b>
Text-to-911 campus emergency service is available	
Front desk communication strategies are readily available (e.g., pen and paper, computer-aided communication, text messaging)	
E-mail or text alerts are sent for campus incidents (e.g., assault, campus lockdown, fire, inclement weather)	
Emergency preparedness training is offered (e.g., cultural sensitivity, awareness of deaf students in buildings, limitations of emergency systems, accessible alerting devices)	

 <b>RESIDENCE HALLS</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (-) WEAKNESSES</b>
Dorm rooms are accessible (e.g., visual fire alarms, doorbells with light option instead of sound)	
Resident advisors are familiar with different communication methods (e.g., text, gesture, communication cards, paper and pen) for when interpreter or captionist is not requested or available	
Activities are inclusive for deaf residents (e.g., captioned movie night; requested accommodations for events, meetings, and workshops)	
 <b>STUDENT ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (-) WEAKNESSES</b>
Student organizations are familiar with procedure for procuring accommodations requested for activities	
Advertisements for student activities (e.g., clubs, Greek life, graduate student socials) have disability inclusion statements and language to request accommodations	
 <b>STUDY ABROAD OFFICE</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (-) WEAKNESSES</b>
Programs and services are accessible to deaf students (e.g., videos captioned, informational events and workshops offer accommodations upon request)	
Staff is familiar with procedure for procuring accommodations requested for appointments and related events	
 <b>TESTING CENTER</b>	<b>(+) STRENGTHS / (-) WEAKNESSES</b>
Communication resources are readily available at the front desk or entrance (e.g., pen and paper, computer-aided communication, text messaging)	
Staff is familiar with procedure for procuring interpreting services requested for tests and exams	

 TUTORING LAB/WRITING CENTER	(+) STRENGTHS / (–) WEAKNESSES
Front desk communication strategies are readily available (e.g., pen and paper, computer-aided communication, text messaging)	
Staff is familiar with procedure for procuring accommodations requested for appointments	

## ADDITIONAL DEPARTMENTS

UNIT/DEPARTMENT:	(+) STRENGTHS / (–) WEAKNESSES
Staff is familiar with procedure for procuring interpreters or captionists for appointments and related events	
Staff is familiar with different back-up communication strategies (e.g., pen and paper, computer-aided communication, text messaging)	

UNIT/DEPARTMENT:	(+) STRENGTHS / (–) WEAKNESSES
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