

WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS TIP SHEET

FOR DEFENSE SUPERVISOR

Is your student giving a defense? Will ASL-English interpreters be present? Then this tip sheet is for you.

TOP TIPS

1. Be prepared to provide materials, in coordination with your student, to the interpreting team so they can adequately prepare for specific content. Materials such as:
 - a. Student's thesis,
 - b. Student's presentation slides (PowerPoint, etc.),
 - c. Visual and audio materials, if using (videos, YouTube clips, voice-over recordings, etc.). *Please check if closed captions are available for visual materials and if not, inform the interpreters.*
2. The interpreting team will set-up near the student presenting and / or projector screen. Due to the visual nature of ASL, sight lines are critical and your assistance to ensure unobstructed views of the speaker and the interpreter(s) is appreciated.
3. When possible the interpreting team will arrive to the room where the defense is taking place ahead of time to ensure that lighting, sight lines, and placement of the interpreting team is best suited for everyone.
4. The interpreters will switch who is actively working approximately every 15-20 minutes. Try to ignore the interpreters when this occurs.
5. Please look and speak directly to Deaf person in the first person and do not ask the interpreter to "tell him/her, ask him/her, etc." Similarly the interpretation into English you hear will also be in the first person.
6. You do not need to slow down your speech or break it into chunks; just speak normally. The interpreters are trained to interpret between two different languages distinct in their grammar and modality. This process does however take a brief processing time in order to simultaneously interpret the conversation. This means there will be short pauses during the conversation and in between speakers' comments.
7. Interpreters will not participate in the conversation taking place. Please do not directly engage the interpreter(s) while they are working. If you have comments, questions, or feedback for the interpreter(s) please wait until the defense is finished and then bring it to their attention. Interpreters are open to having debriefing discussions.

For more detailed information, please check out the SMU [Deaf Academics & Interpreters](#) webpages, specifically the [Work with an Interpreter section](#).

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the SMU Faculty of Science staff interpreter, Ashley Campbell at:

ashley.n.campbell@smu.ca or 902-496-8761