

ALS: ASL Interpreters

Version 1

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ACCESSIBLE LEARNING SERVICES

What is an ASL Interpreter?

An **American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter** is a trained professional who facilitates communication between individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and individuals who do not use sign language. Within Seneca Polytechnic, ASL interpreters bridge the communication gap between students, faculty, and staff, ensuring that students who are deaf or hard of hearing have full access to course content, discussions, and interactions.

ASL interpreters primarily translate spoken language into American Sign Language and vice versa. They provide real-time interpretation during lectures, seminars, group discussions, and other educational activities. This service helps students fully engage in the academic environment and supports their ability to succeed in their studies.

Role of ASL Interpreters at Seneca Polytechnic

- Facilitating Classroom Communication:** ASL interpreters ensure that students who are deaf or hard of hearing have access to all verbal communication in the classroom. This includes interpreting the instructor's lectures, class discussions, multimedia content, and any interactions between the student and other individuals. Interpreters play a vital role in conveying both the spoken and visual elements of the learning experience, ensuring the student receives the same educational opportunities as their hearing peers.
- Support for Group Work and Discussions:** In group settings, such as workshops, seminars, or group projects, ASL interpreters facilitate communication between students who are deaf or hard of hearing and other students or instructors. They interpret not only the spoken words but also non-verbal cues, body language, and visual aids, providing a complete understanding of the conversation and enabling the student to participate fully in collaborative activities.
- One-on-One Support:** ASL interpreters may also assist during individual meetings, such as accessibility counselling or academic advising sessions. In these cases, the interpreter ensures that the student can ask questions, express concerns, and engage in conversations related to their academic progress, all while maintaining confidentiality and professionalism.
- Interpretation During Campus Events:** ASL interpreters are often requested to interpret during special campus events, such as guest speakers, conferences, workshops, or extracurricular activities. This ensures that students who are deaf or hard of hearing can access the same opportunities for personal and professional development as other students.
- Providing Equal Access:** The core mission of ASL interpreters is to ensure that students who are deaf or hard of hearing can participate fully in their education. By removing communication barriers, ASL interpreters help level the playing field and ensure that all students have equal access to their learning environment.

Training and Qualifications of ASL Interpreters

ASL interpreters at Seneca Polytechnic are highly trained professionals who hold relevant certifications and credentials. They typically complete programs in interpreting or sign language studies and may have certifications from recognized bodies such as the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). These certifications ensure that the interpreter is skilled in both American Sign Language and interpreting techniques, which are essential for providing accurate and effective interpretation services in an academic environment.

How Accessible Learning Services Supports Students with ASL Interpreting Needs

Seneca Polytechnic's **Accessible Learning Services** department works closely with students who are deaf or hard of hearing to assess their individual needs and coordinate ASL interpreting services. The ALS team is responsible for ensuring that students are matched with qualified interpreters who can support their academic success. Here's how ALS helps:

- **Requesting Interpreter Services:** Students can request ASL interpreting services through the ALS office. They will be asked to provide

information about their courses, class schedules, and specific interpreting needs.

- **Collaborating with Faculty:** ALS collaborates with instructors to ensure that interpreters are available for all relevant class sessions, including labs, field trips, and any other academic events.
- **Ongoing Support and Communication:** ALS continuously monitors the effectiveness of the interpreting services provided and communicates with students and faculty to make adjustments as needed.

How to Request ASL Interpreter Services at Seneca Polytechnic

1. **Register with Accessible Learning Services:** Students who need ASL interpreting services need to register with ALS.
2. **Accommodation Letter:** Collaborate with your Accessibility Counsellor to ensure ASL Interpreting Services appears on your Accommodation Letter.
3. **Provide Course Information:** Students will need to share their class schedules, locations, and any specific details that will help the ALS team provide appropriate accommodations.
4. **Collaborate with ALS Team:** The ALS team will review the request and arrange for qualified ASL interpreters to be assigned. Students will be contacted to confirm the schedule and interpreter details.
5. **Provide Feedback:** After services are provided, students are encouraged to share feedback about the interpreting services. This helps the ALS team ensure that accommodations are meeting the student's needs and makes adjustments as necessary.

ASL interpreters are an essential part of the support services offered by Seneca Polytechnic's Accessible Learning Services. Their role ensures that students who are deaf or hard of hearing can fully engage with their academic experiences, participate in discussions, and access course material. By facilitating communication, ASL interpreters help create an inclusive, accessible learning environment that fosters academic success for all students.

For more information or to request ASL interpreting services, please contact **Accessible Learning Services** at Seneca Polytechnic.