

Education AIDE for Deaf



Purpose of this Education AIDE for Deaf

We know education is hard enough without needing to do lot of advocating for better access or inclusion when learning. There are times where a deaf student would say enough and stop getting any further learning. Deaf Australia believe that every person should have their education where they want and in ways that benefit them the best.

For example, the accessibility in education for deaf individuals involves providing appropriate accommodations, such as sign language interpreters or captioning services, to ensure effective communication in classrooms. Having spaces for groups of deaf students to learn, mingle, collaborate are also vital, although insufficient currently in Australia. Accessible learning materials and technologies also play a crucial role in promoting equal educational opportunities for deaf students.

This guide is for deaf people (including hard of hearing and Deafblind) to help them support their needs for accessible education. There are steps and actions to guide you or a deaf student on getting the right supports to be the best student they can be. Sometimes we do not know where to start or what to do next, and this guide is designed to reduce the mental load for deaf students.

Deaf Australia can provide advocacy supports when a deaf student has exhausted the avenues to improve AIDE in their education. Remember you are not alone in this journey.

NOTE ON USE OF LANGUAGE

This resource uses identity-first language (e.g., 'deaf person'). But we recognise this approach may not suit everyone, and some would prefer person-first language ('person with disability').

It is up to you and others how you all would choose to identify. We encourage you to ask people what they prefer. We also acknowledge the deep (and complex) history behind all these terms.

People use 'accommodations', 'reasonable adjustments', or 'adjustments' to mean the same thing. Both NDIS and education system use either accommodations or reasonable adjustments.

Accommodations (also known as reasonable adjustments or adjustments) are actions or changes that support you to join in with your peer at any setting. The changes or actions need to be based on how it will assist you the best, not what others assumed you needed.

You should not feel bad or guilty for asking for accommodations at any time as you have the rights to fit or participate in the way that works best for you. Your rights are human rights, and you deserve to have the opportunity to always join in, to be included and enjoy all the good things in life.

You, as a deaf student, whether you rely on Auslan or hearing devices, do have the right to take part in all aspect of education. You have the right to take part in a way that can be compared to your peers in any educational setting. This means they should have remarkably similar choices and opportunities.

Legally, your educational provider must help you to join in education in an equivalent way to your peers. An education provider can be a school, TAFE, university, etc.

A list of possible accommodations for deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind students:

- Sign Interpreters
- Speech-to-text (CART, C-Print, TypeWell)
- Assistive listening device
- FM system
- Roger
- Oral interpreters
- Cued-speech transliterators
- Notetakers
- Videos with captions
- Braille machine and resources
- Text enlarging devices
- Hearing aids
- Cochlear implants
- Flashing lights
- Smart watch alerts
- Fire alert device
- Alerting doorbell
- Pager



When you go to a school, TAFE, university, or somewhere else, your institution should:

- Meet with you to discuss whether you need any accommodations.
- Make accommodations to ensure you get to have equal opportunity to participate in any class you take.
- Ensure that you're protected from being mistreated or discriminated during your study.

Creating your Action plan

Steps and actions to take to support your rights for accommodations when you study. Tick them off as you go through, or cross off any that is not required. It is important to keep track of what steps and actions you have taken to make sure your studies are happening without any limitations from start.

Step 1

Check your education institution to see what provisions they have in place for students with disabilities and students with CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) backgrounds.

Action 1 – Decide on what accommodations you need to help you to study without facing barriers or discriminations.

Action 2 – Explore options at several institutions to see which has the most that benefits you as a deaf student.

Action 3 – If possible, find both former and current students of those institutions you're looking at and ask them for their feedback or check reviews online.

Action 4 – Check each institution about their process to get the accommodations in place – some might be detailed, showing how easy or hard it may be for you to work out how long this will take.

Action 5 – select the best institution and ask them for contact person to support you with your enrolment. The contact person could be:

- Assistant principal
- Access and Inclusion Service
- Disability Liaison Officer
- Wellbeing Officer

Step 2

Find out the timeline and evidence needed with the accommodation request at the institution.

Action 1 – Confirm the paperwork required for you to request the accommodations that fit you the best and support your studies.

Action 2 – Check how long the process will take for them to approve the accommodations and put in place. You would need to submit as soon as you can once you have enrolled and before the classes start.

Action 3 – Consider any other events, activities, or programs outside the usual classroom schedule and put in requests for extra accommodations and alternatives in advance as well.

Action 4 – Check what evidence is needed and where you can those, such as:

- A letter from specialist
- A form for GP, specialist or other professional to fill.

Action 5 – Arrange appointments to get those evidence as soon as possible.

Action 6 – Make copies and send the evidence to the contact person along with the forms as required. Check with the contact person to ensure all the evidence are included and correct.

Action 7 – Check with the contact person for what supports and services the institution has available, like note-taking services, lecture recordings, and others. Some may be available, but it is ideally to ask in advance for access to those to see if any extra supports are needed.

Step 3

Consider and identify possible barriers and limitations at the institution when you start to study, because having education is more than getting information from teachers and completing assignments. There could be excursions, projects, and programs you could participate to enhance your education experience.

A barrier or limitation is something that stops or makes it difficult for you to learn or participate with your peers. It is important to understand that a barrier is NOT something you do or caused by being yourself as a deaf student. A good accommodation should remove either barrier or limitation to you taking part in your own education.

Action 1 – Communication: consider what barrier you can identify with communication, such as accessing to interactions through verbal, written, visual, auditory, or electronically. And work out how it is barrier to your learning.

Action 2 – Curriculum: Consider how a classroom materials, activities, assignments, exams, or other things that could prevent you from getting full benefit and work out how it is stopping you from learning.

Action 3 – Social-emotional: Consider what happen when you socialise with others, any type of interaction is being restricted by what form and how it impacts on your feelings and learning.

Action 4 – Physical environment: Consider the layout, building, classroom, or other areas on the campus that could be a barrier for you and explain why it is affecting how you can participate and learn.

Action 5 – Events: Consider activities, events, and programs outside the classroom that you will gain more from and what barriers there could be and why not considering them can impact on how you can participate and learn.

Step 4

Consider what accommodations that you could suggest or that the institution might offer and think about the possible issues or benefits each would bring for you and others. Do not think about the difficulty in getting those accommodations or possible costs as it is not your responsibility.

Action 1 – Make a list for each area from previous step and add any others that was not listed and identify possible accommodations you can have to assist with your learning. Examples like:

- Communication: Auslan interpreters, captions, note-taking, adjusted presentations (for Deafblind), deaf guest speakers
- Curriculum: recordings provided before lectures, flexible deadlines, extra supports for writing or exams, contents to cover deaf & deafblind aspects
- Social-emotional: smaller groups or selected partners for activities, DAT arranged for both staff and students, access to other deaf students or staff on campus
- Physical environment: choosing placement of Auslan interpreter in room, natural or more lighting, flashing lights for emergency, reserved seating

Action 2 – Make an appointment with the contact person to go over the accommodations and sum up the most appropriate ones that fit with both your studies and institution's requirements. Remember to have the supports organised before the meeting, such as interpreter or supporting person. You might need to have several meetings to ensure you are being 'heard' with your requests and allow negotiations to happen with right people supporting you.

Action 3 – Ask for confirmation on paper with accommodations to be provided by when and how. Ensure that your lecturers, teachers, or other teaching staff have been informed about you and the accommodations you require.

Action 4 – Make agreement for those accommodations that could be either not provided for or cancelled at the last minute and the alternatives in place. Ensure the teaching staff have this information as well to reduce confusion or miscommunication, which could affect your learning program.

Action 5 – Remember that you can refuse any type of accommodation that you will not feel comfortable with or help with your learning and ask for better alternatives. Get them to agree and have it written on paper for future evidence. Sometimes they will suggest some accommodations that they have used in past that they find more suitable for all so consider those and ask lot of questions before agreeing to one or more.

Action 6 – Ensure that all the paperwork will be sent to you, including the contact details of direct teaching or support teams, accommodations provided for what area in the institution for what time, ways you can use those accommodations, and any other possible issues arising – complaints, cancellations, etc.

Step 5

When the education time starts, it would help if you were available to meet each teaching staff to ensure they know who you are, your accommodations, and any other things that needed to be discussed before a class starts. Make some agreements on how to contact for issues or help directly will benefit you as well.

Action 1 – Make a list of the teaching team, identify their roles, their offices, and contact details. Contact each to arrange a meeting time with a suitable communication support (such as Auslan interpreter).

Action 2 – During the meeting, check with them about the accommodations and requirements in place inside the classroom or specific activity. Check for access to notes, recordings (with captions or accessible transcripts), and other supports. Confirm how you will approach when experiencing some difficulty or discrimination in their classroom/lecture.

Action 3 – For the assignments and exams, work out the arrangements weeks before the actual event to ensure you will be marked fairly.

Action 4 – During the study period, do consider any changes or renew the accommodations with both your contact person and teaching team so all will be aware of what is affecting you and possible changes required. The changes could be a small or large but needed to happen to make your learning effective. You do not need to keep the same accommodations if they are no longer working for you.

Action 5 – At the end of course or term/semester, approach those teaching team and share your feedback. And ask for theirs as well on you and the accommodations. Arrange more meetings to ensure the next studying period happen smoothly with appropriate accommodations in place without delay. Check that accommodations and supports are still available and follow up with the contact person if there is any issue or change in your studying program.