WHAT IS HEARING IMPAIRMENT?

Deaf, hearing impairment (HI) and hard of hearing refer to those who have none to some hearing, are able or unable to use it for speech and language development, as well as communication purposes. While the speech sounds range between 60 – 8,000 Hz, the degree of hearing loss can be classified into five levels.

- **Mild (26-40 dB):** difficult to identify soft sound such as whispering
- **Moderate (41-55 dB):** unable to hear clearly what others are saying during conversation
- **Moderately severe (56-70 dB):** unable to clearly hear loud noises such as telephone ring
- **Severe (71-90 dB):** can only hear very loud noises and sounds such as shouting
- **Profound (over 90 dB):** difficult to perceive any sound

Students with hearing impairment may present the following concerns:
- poor or limited responses to environmental sound and external stimulation
- looking attentively and intensively at the presenter’s face and mouth when listening
- misunderstanding of verbal exchanges and frequent repetition required when following rapid interaction
- severe language and articulation problems in learning

Although hearing aids do not improve normal hearing to the users, they can help improve a hearing impaired person’s ability to communicate effectively in many daily life situations by amplifying sound and directing it into the ear canal. Assistive listening device, including FM systems, personal amplifiers, listening/alert device and audio device, help a hearing impaired to function better in daily communication situations. It can be used with or without hearing aids to overcome barriers of communication settings, such as background noise at a distance. Alternative communication devices help people to express themselves in alternative ways, such as a text to speech application.

DIVERSABILITY

The SEN & Diversability Team (DA) of the Counseling and Wellness Center is the primary contact with students who declare their SEN with the University. DA supports students from the very first step of the SEN declaration through completion of study at HKUST. DA officers meet with each declared student individually to map out a reasonable academic accommodation plan (aka IEP / Individualized Educational Plan) and to assess the needs for available resources and suitable support services.

SUPPORT SERVICES AT HKUST

Personalized and reasonable accommodations are arranged to each declared student based on the individual needs. Confidential data obtained from a student with SEN is used to enhance the coordination work with different parties for providing personal and support services. The data collected will be handled with strict security and confidentiality and in compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance of Hong Kong. The below lists out some of the possible accommodations to address the special needs of students with hearing impairment:

- allow assistive technologies in classes & testing
- an alternative format for listening components in testing
- hearing aids for listening assessments
- assistance with lecture notes
- preferential seating in classes to sit near instructor or under a loudspeaker
- sign language interpreter for severe cases
DARE is a group of enthusiastic students who want to empower the HKUST campus community to positively impact the support to students with SEN. The role of the ambassadors is to cultivate a campus where everyone’s diverse abilities are appreciated and where everyone feels accepted and nourished.

No matter how much you know about SEN, where you are from, and who you are, you can be a part of DARE if you want to contribute to campus inclusion!

(Special thanks to DARE for the great contribution to the production of this leaflet series!)

TIPS TO COMMUNICATE

Successful communication requires the efforts of all people involved in a conversation. Here are some good communication strategies with people with hearing impairment:

- speaker and listener to face each other directly
- positioning at the side of the listener’s better ear if the hearing impaired hears better in one ear than the other
- speaking naturally, clearly, slowly, distinctly; but without exaggerating mouth movements
- avoiding using complex sentences
- avoiding loud sounds and distortion of sounds when possible
- providing pertinent information in writing whenever possible
- finding a different way of saying the same thing when clarification is needed

CONTACT US

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