

# UNM DHHS Interpreter Handbook



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# Welcome

Welcome to UNM!

You are an important part of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services/ Accessibility Resource Center (DHHS/ARC). As a professional Signed Language Interpreter you provide vital services to students who are Deaf or hard of hearing at UNM. With this position comes a responsibility both to the student and to DHHS/ARC. These guidelines will outline what is expected of you and what you can expect from DHHS/ARC. They are not meant to cover every situation you may encounter but to give you basic information necessary to complete your work. It is hoped these guidelines will benefit students, staff, and Signed Language Interpreters to the fullest.

All interpreters employed at UNM are to follow the Code of Professional Conduct issued by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

## Mission Statement

Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) recognizes individuals with disabilities as an integral part of a diverse community and is committed to the provision of comprehensive resources to the University community (faculty, staff, and student) in order to create equitable, inclusive, and practical learning environments.

## Contact Information

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 7:30am-7:00pm

Fridays: 7:30am-6:00pm

Summer 7:00am-6:00pm

DHHS General number: 277-6605 or 277-3506

DHHS email: [dhhs@unm.edu](mailto:dhhs@unm.edu)

Website: <http://arc.unm.edu/dhhs>

## Staff

Amanda Butrum, Associate Director

Office phone: 277-2698    Email: [ajbutrum@unm.edu](mailto:ajbutrum@unm.edu)

Helen Arenholz, Staff Interpreter

Office phone: 277-6605    Email: [helenarn@unm.edu](mailto:helenarn@unm.edu)

Tommi Tejada, Staff Interpreter

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## Interpreter Job Descriptions

All Sign Language interpreters are required to have a current Interpreter License in order to work as per New Mexico state law.

**Associate Director:** Works with faculty, staff, and students to ensure that Deaf and hard of hearing persons have equal access to all programs offered at UNM. In addition, coordinates interpreters, and oversees all academic accommodation offered to Deaf and hard of hearing students. Academic accommodations include, but are not limited to: signed language interpreting, real time captioning, notetaking, and assistive listening devices.

**Staff Interpreters:** Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services has two staff interpreter positions. Staff interpreters are permanent employees of UNM. They interpret for classes, meetings, and other workshops or events offered by UNM. In addition, they provide mentoring for newly hired or recently graduated on-call Interpreters and to the Signed Language Interpreter Training Program's practicum students.

**Certified Signed Language Interpreter:** These positions are "On-Call Employees" of UNM and work as needed. There are no guaranteed hours and you can only work a maximum of 1020 hours annually. Interpreters in these positions are certified and interpret for classes, meetings, and other workshops or events offered by UNM that cannot fit into the staff interpreter schedules.

**Pre-Certified Signed Language Interpreter:** These positions are "On-Call Employees" of UNM and work as needed. There are no guaranteed hours and you can only work a maximum of 1020 hours annually. Pre-

certified interpreters must be candidates for certification and are in placed in carefully chosen interpreting assignments when deemed appropriate.

## **Pay Scale**

- Signed Language Interpreter A - \$30.00 per hour
- Signed Language Interpreter B - \$35.00 per hour
- Signed Language Interpreter C - \$40.00 per hour
- Pre-certified Signed Language Interpreter - \$20.00 per hour

## **2 Hour-Minimum**

If an interpreter is asked to accept an assignment that is less than 2 hours in length and it is the only assignment that you will have for that day you may claim 2 hours on your time sheet. This will hold true if the reason for not having more than one class is due to scheduling and not to conflicts with your availability.

## **Cancellations**

If an assignment is cancelled with less than 24 hours' notice you will be paid for the class. In the event of a student no-show, wait the appropriate amount of time (30 minute per hour of class time). Once you have done that, you are free to leave the assignment. However, you must email or call DHHS immediately to report the no-show. Any delay in reporting the student no-show to DHHS may result in loss of payment.

Examples of how much time to wait:

- 50 minute class – wait 25 minutes
- 1 hour & 15 minute class – wait 40 minutes
- 2 hour class – wait 1 hour
- 2.5 hour class – wait 1 hour & 15 minutes

## **Professionalism in Classroom**

There is sometimes a fine line between what is appropriate and what is not. If a professor asks you to do something and you don't feel comfortable doing it you must consider whether or not it would be best to talk to the professor now or just comply and talk with the professor after class. The important thing is that we are able to develop a working rapport with our consumers (hearing and deaf) and colleagues while maintaining

professionalism. If you ever have any questions regarding professional behavior in the classroom, please do not hesitate to ask DHHS.

Here is a list of some examples of the things that interpreters should avoid doing:

- Interpreters filling out an evaluation of professors form meant for students
- Interpreters participating in the class (e.g. raising their hand to answer questions)
- Interpreters showing up late and making an entrance
- Interpreters asking students if they did their homework
- Interpreters not interpreting student's questions or comments

### **First Day/Week of class**

The first day of class you should plan on arriving early in order to introduce yourself to the student and the professor. With the student's permission, a letter will have been sent to the professor, prior to the first day of class, explaining the interpreting process, but you still may want to give a brief explanation about your role as the interpreter.

### **Probationary Period for Students and Interpreters**

The first three weeks of each semester is considered a probationary period during which time the Deaf/hard of hearing student can determine whether the interpreter assigned to the class meets his or her communication needs. Should the student feel her/his needs are not being met, s/he will need to contact the Associate Director to discuss assigning a new interpreter.

Should the interpreter feel that an assignment is inappropriate, either because it does not match that interpreter's skill level or because the interpreter feels s/he lacks knowledge or familiarity with the subject matter, s/he needs to notify the Associate Director to discuss assigning a replacement interpreter. The Deaf/hard of hearing student will be notified.

After the three week probationary period is up, the interpreter is considered on contract with UNM to provide the assigned service. The interpreter will only be removed from this assignment if the student drops out of the class or if the interpreter performs a gross breach of the RID

Code of Professional Conduct or another standard of behavior for UNM employees.

## **Procedures**

### **Absence**

Please notify DHHS as soon as you know you will be absent. Due to the nature of your job, if you are not there in class to interpret it will impact the student's ability to participate fully in their class. It is vital that you contact DHHS immediately so a substitute interpreter can be arranged. It is always easier to find a substitute the day before the class instead of the morning of the class. Unfortunately, we do not always know that we will be sick. However, if you feel ill, it is best to contact DHHS during business hours as soon as possible to arrange for a substitute right away rather than waiting until the last minute.

- ❖ In cases other than illness, please notify DHHS as soon as possible when you are unable to interpret for an assignment. Failure to do so will result in a "no-show." Two "no-shows" will result in the interpreter's dismissal.
- ❖ In cases of illness, please call DHHS as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to notify DHHS of your illness by 7:30 a.m. of the day you need a sub.
- ❖ Repeated absences without prior approval or repeated last-minute cancellations will be documented.
- ❖ Please inform DHHS if there are any classroom changes in your assignment. This assists us when scheduling a substitute interpreter.

### **Punctuality**

Professional interpreters are expected to arrive with enough time to deal with traffic, find parking, find the room, arrange seating and sit down before the assignment begins. During the first week of class, this is especially important so that you may introduce yourself to the professor and the student and arrange seating for yourself. If you cannot make it to class on time regularly, then you need to excuse yourself from that class. Note your tardiness on your timesheet. If you are more than 10 minutes late you should subtract .25 hours from your timesheet; 30 minutes late subtract .5 hours and so on. You should always be punctual for class. Repeated tardiness will result in dismissal.



## **Dress Code**

**Why have a dress code?** Imagine you just attended an all day workshop presentation in Sign language. How do your eyes feel? Now, put yourself in the student's shoes. When a Deaf or hard of hearing student has to watch an interpreter for any length of time their eyes become tired. The reason interpreters traditionally wear solid colors that contrast with their skin tone is to reduce the eye fatigue of our clients. Patterns are distracting and bright colors reflect light which make the eyes tire faster.

**What is UNM's interpreter dress code?** Casual business attire in muted colors that contrast with your skin tone is essential. Remember, your behavior and appearance in the classroom reflects on the students, DHHS, and academic interpreters in general. It is important to use good judgment while dressing for work. If the class you are interpreting has specific dress requirements please follow those guidelines. They are there for your safety. We understand that you may have to go from one class to another and their dress requirements may not be the same. Do the best you can. Here are some general guidelines:

**Shirts/Tops** - Solid shirt/blouse that contrasts with your skin tone. No low cut necklines. No loud colored print or solid shirts (bright red, yellow, magenta, green e.g.). No t-shirts or sweatshirts.

**Pants/Skirts** – Please wear nice work pants/skirts. No ragged or worn jeans. No mini-skirts or skirts with high slits. Shorts are permitted in summer for PE classes and occasionally for classes in rooms without air conditioning. Shorts should be an appropriate length for work.

**Jewelry** – Limited jewelry, nothing flashy. Reflected light and movement are visually distracting. No more than one ring per hand, earrings should not dangle, and necklaces should not interfere with signing.

**Grooming** – Be professional and neat. Hair should be out of the face. Men should be clean-shaven or with facial hair short and well-trimmed. Nails - Any color used should be neutral and match your skin tone. Nails should not be so long that they affect the shape of your signs or make clicking noises.

## **Team Interpreting**

Taken from the *RID Teaming Standard Practice Paper, 2007*

Team interpreting is the utilization of two or more interpreters who support each other to meet the needs of a particular communication situation. Depending on both the needs of the participants and agreement between the interpreters, responsibilities of the individual team members can be rotated and feedback may be exchanged.

The decision to use a team rather than an individual interpreter is based on a number of factors, including, but not limited to:

- length and/or complexity of the assignment,
- unique needs of the persons being served,
- physical and emotional dynamics of the setting,
- avoidance of repetitive stress injuries (RSIs) for interpreters.

### The Team Process

All team members are actively engaged in the process. They may be providing direct interpretation services, actively working between the two languages or functioning in a supporting role. This support is necessary to enhance the team's performance and assure accurate communication takes place and may include:

- monitoring the overall setting
- assuring appropriate and timely transitions
- supporting/cueing other team members as needed.

At times, more than one team of interpreters may be needed. Some factors determining the number of interpreters needed are:

- size of the audience
- setting
- communication preferences of presenter(s) and audience type and interactivity of presentation
- special communication needs of those in attendance (including, but not limited to, the need for tactile, oral or close visual range interpretation)
- dynamics of the scheduled events (concurrent sessions, off site tours, etc.)

When two or more interpreters are working together, the team will need a sufficient amount of time prior to the assignment to determine placement, roles and how to provide support to each other.

## **Prep-time Guidelines**

On-call interpreters are able to schedule prep-time as needed for specific classes at UNM. All prep-time must be requested and then approved by the Associate Director for DHHS by the third week of the semester. Any prep-time appearing on a time sheet that is not pre-approved will not be paid.

Prep-time is to be used:

- reviewing signs to be used for class-specific vocabulary
  - reading the assignments in order to appropriately interpret the classroom lectures
  - meeting with your team to discuss sign choices and course material
  - previewing videos
- 
- In the event that the subject matter in the classroom is such that the interpreter needs to read the assignments, the interpreter will need to first ask the professor if they have a desk copy of the book that they can borrow. If they do not, then DHHS will purchase the text books and loan them to the interpreters. At the end of the semester, please return any borrowed books so that they may be added to the DHHS library for use by future interpreters or returned to the UNM Book Store for a refund.
  - Defer to the student(s) for their sign choices for vocabulary and concepts.
  - If an interpreter needs to view a video prior to a class/event the DHHS office will provide the interpreter with a room and the necessary equipment.
  - On-call interpreters scheduled for assignments lasting less than two hours need to use the balance of their two hour minimum to prepare for the assignment. Additional prep-time must be approved by the Associate Director.
  - On-call interpreters scheduled for one-hour classes separated by a single hour-long break are to use their break as time to prepare for an assignment. Additional prep-time must be approved by the Associate Director.

It is expected that interpreters will adhere to Tenet number 2.0 - Professionalism of the RID Code of Professional Conduct when preparing for both classroom and non-classroom assignments at UNM. By providing

prep-time, DHHS is building in time for the interpreter to understand concepts and vocabulary used during lectures thus being able to “render the message faithfully by conveying the content and spirit of what is being communicated...” (RID Code of Professional Conduct, pp. 3)

### **Timesheet Instructions**

DHHS will emailed a reminder when timesheets are due. The email will include directions and dues dates. Pay periods are every two weeks. Please remember to:

- Email the completed time sheet to [astime@unm.edu](mailto:astime@unm.edu)
- Make sure you attach the time sheet to the email

## **RID Code of Professional Conduct**

### Tenets

1. Interpreters adhere to standards of confidential communication.
2. Interpreters possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific interpreting situation.
3. Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific interpreting situation.
4. Interpreters demonstrate respect for consumers.
5. Interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns, and students of the profession.
6. Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.
7. Interpreters engage in professional development.

### **1.0 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Tenet: Interpreters adhere to standards of confidential communication.

Guiding Principle: Interpreters hold a position of trust in their role as linguistic and cultural facilitators of communication. Confidentiality is highly valued by consumers and is essential to protecting all involved. Each interpreting situation (e.g., elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education, legal, medical, mental health) has a standard of confidentiality. Under the reasonable interpreter standard, professional interpreters are expected to know the general requirements and applicability of various levels of confidentiality. Exceptions to confidentiality include, for example, federal and state laws requiring mandatory reporting of abuse or threats of suicide, or responding to subpoenas. supervisors, interpreter team members, members of the educational team, hiring entities).

### **2.0 PROFESSIONALISM**

Tenet: Interpreters possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific interpreting situation.

Guiding Principle: Interpreters are expected to stay abreast of evolving language use and trends in the profession of interpreting as well as in the American Deaf community. Interpreters accept assignments using discretion with regard to skill, communication mode, setting, and consumer needs. Interpreters possess knowledge of American Deaf culture and deafness-related resources.

### **3.0 CONDUCT**

Tenet: Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific interpreting situation.

Guiding Principle: Interpreters are expected to present themselves appropriately in demeanor and appearance. They avoid situations that result in conflicting roles or perceived or actual conflicts of interest.

### **4.0 RESPECT FOR CONSUMERS**

Tenet: Interpreters demonstrate respect for consumers.

Guiding Principle: Interpreters are expected to honor consumer preferences in selection of interpreters and interpreting dynamics, while recognizing the realities of qualifications, availability, and situation.

### **5.0 RESPECT FOR COLLEAGUES**

Tenet: Interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns and students of the profession.

Guiding Principle: Interpreters are expected to collaborate with colleagues to foster the delivery of effective interpreting services. They also understand that the manner in which they relate to colleagues reflects upon the profession in general.

### **6.0 BUSINESS PRACTICES**

Tenet: Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.

Guiding Principle: Interpreters are expected to conduct their business in a professional manner whether in private practice or in the employ of an agency or other entity. Professional interpreters are entitled to a living wage based on their qualifications and expertise. Interpreters are also entitled to working conditions conducive to effective service delivery.

### **7.0 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Tenet: Interpreters engage in professional development.

Guiding Principle: Interpreters are expected to foster and maintain interpreting competence and the stature of the profession through ongoing development of knowledge and skills.

# Campus Logistics

## Parking

- Interpreters will be issued parking permits by DHHS/ARC.
- Interpreters must use these permits only as directed.
- Permits cost DHHS/ARC money and interpreters are responsible for their proper use and can be held liable in the event of misuse (such as resale or loss).
- Parking permits are to be used in conjunction with UNM DHHS interpreting assignments only. If on campus for any reason not related to interpreting for DHHS, interpreters agree not to use the On-Call Parking Permit.
- Please return any unused permits to DHHS at the end of each semester and/or upon the cancelation of the events/classes for which the use of these permits was intended.
- Any lost parking permits will not be replaced. In the event that you lose your parking permits, you will be responsible for making arrangements for your own parking while working at UNM.

## Lobo ID

All UNM employees need to be sure they have a Lobo ID card. This is your official identification card for all UNM campus business.

To get a new Lobo Card:

- Request the authorization memo from DHHS and bring it with you to the Lobo Card Office.
- Bring a government-issued form of identification with you, such as your driver's license, passport, or military ID.

## Johnson Center

The Johnson Center offers a wide variety of recreational programs available to you, including a fitness center, use of the basketball courts, and a lap pool. There is a nominal cost for on-call interpreters to use Johnson Center. If you are interested in using the Johnson Center, DHHS will provide you with a proof of employment memo.

# Student Policies

## Student No-Show Policy

What is a No-show? A student will receive a no-show when they are absent without notifying DHHS to cancel their interpreter or captionist before the beginning of their class.

Avoiding a no-show

- To avoid a “no-show,” you must contact DHHS. It is not necessary to give a reason for the absence.
- You can contact DHHS 24 hours a day:  
[dhhs@unm.edu](mailto:dhhs@unm.edu) or 277-6605
- You must call before the class starts.
- When calling DHHS to report an absence please include:
  - 1) Name of class (for example: Math 110)
  - 2) Class time and day (8:00am to 8:50am)
  - 3) Name of interpreter (it would be helpful if you can remember)

If you will be late for class, please notify DHHS so we can instruct the interpreter/ captionist to wait for you. They have been instructed to wait 25 minutes per hour of class time. If you do not arrive within that time frame, the interpreter/captionist will contact DHHS and may be re-assigned for that day.

It is the student's responsibility to notify DHHS to cancel the interpreter/ captionist prior to the start of class if:

- You plan to miss class
- Room, day, or time of class is changed
- You are adding or dropping a class
- You are canceling any other activity for which an interpreter/captionist was requested

When you know you will be absent from class, notify DHHS immediately. If you are sick and do not know when you will be well enough to return, the Associate Director will cancel the interpreter/ captionist. It is the student's responsibility to call to request services be reinstated.



## **No-Show**

1. If a student is absent from class without notifying DHHS/ARC before a class begins they will be emailed a reminder notice about the no-show policy
2. If a student is absent a fourth time from class without notifying DHHS/ARC before the beginning of class, an email will be sent notifying the student that the interpreter will be suspended and a meeting with the program specialist will need to be scheduled.
3. If a student is absent fifth time from class without notifying DHHS/ARC before the beginning of class, an email will be sent notifying the student that the interpreter will be cancelled and a meeting with the program specialist will need to be scheduled
4. If the interpreter is suspended or cancelled, it is the student's responsibility to arrange a meeting with the Program Specialist to discuss the reinstatement of their interpreter accommodation.

# Student Agreement Form

## *Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services*

[dhhs@unm.edu](mailto:dhhs@unm.edu) / 277-6605 v/tty

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the policies and procedures of DHHS. Please read the following and sign your name in the space below.

- The transcripts/notes I receive from my captionist/notetaker are for my academic use only. I may not share the notes.
- I must request an interpreter or captionist in a timely manner.
- I understand that all questions and comments will be directed to the professor, not the interpreter. I also understand that the interpreters will sign and voice every question and comment made during class.
- The interpreter/captionists will only wait for me for 25 minutes per hour. If I do not show up, a reminder about the no-show policy will be sent to me.
- If I am absent a fourth time from class without notifying DHHS prior to the beginning of class, the interpreter/captionist will be suspended.
- If I am absent a fifth time from class without notifying prior to the beginning of class, the interpreter/captionist will be cancelled.
- If my interpreter/captionist are suspended or cancelled, I understand that it is my responsibility to arrange a meeting with the Associate Director to discuss the reinstatement of the interpreter/captionist.

By signing this policy I understand that I am responsible for the above policies and procedures, as well as the procedures outlined in the Student Handbook.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DHHS Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send a letter informing my professor about my accommodations:

Please Initial:      Yes \_\_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_\_

## **Interpreter Agreement**

### **DHHS Terms of Employment**

Upon being hired as a Signed Language Interpreter for the University of New Mexico

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to abide by the following:

- The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Professional Conduct:
  1. Interpreters adhere to standards of confidential communication.
  2. Interpreters possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific interpreting situation.
  3. Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific interpreting situation.
  4. Interpreters demonstrate respect for consumers.
  5. Interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns, and students of the profession.
  6. Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.
  7. Interpreters engage in professional development.
  
- I recognize that from the time I arrive at the University campus or assignment setting until the time I leave, I am viewed as an employee of UNM and my behavior must, at all times, reflect the professionalism expected from an employee. I will conduct myself as a professional at all times while at UNM.
- I understand that I am expected to arrive to an assignment with enough time to deal with traffic issues, finding a parking space, finding the room, arranging seating and sitting down before the assignment begins.
- In the event of a student no-show, I understand that after I have waited the appropriate amount of time, I am free to leave the assignment. However, any delay in reporting the student no-show to DHHS may result in loss of payment.
- I have read the Interpreter Handbook and agree to adhere to all the policies and procedures outlined in that handbook.

By signing this form I understand that I am responsible for and agree to all of the above.

Interpreter Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_