



**SOUTH TEXAS
COLLEGE**



**Counseling and Student Disability Services
Interpreter Handbook**

Table of Content

Professional & Ethical Behavior	3
Code of Professional Conduct	3
Expectations	4
Assignment Cancellations/Forfeiting (for part-timers).....	5
Schedules	5
Time report	6
Appearance	6
First day of Class	6
Team interpreting	6
Request for Replacement	7
Monitoring	7
No-Shows	8
Professional Skill Building	8
Repetitive Motion Syndrome	10

South Texas College Policies for Interpreters

Roles and Responsibilities

Professional & Ethical Behavior

Interpreters at South Texas College serve as communication facilitators and cultural liaison between deaf and hearing individuals. Interpreter services are intended to provide students with hearing impairments the same opportunity to realize their academic potential, based on their own abilities and efforts, thus providing equal access. Note that the interpreter is *NOT* an instructor, note-taker, tutor, counselor, or advisor.

Interpreters should NOT:

- Participate in class discussions (i.e. laughing at jokes in the classroom).
- Answer student questions (i.e. if the student feels they need clarification or missed the instruction, the student should ask the instructor to repeat the instructions or clarify further).
- Engage in conversations with the students during class.
- Socialize with students while on the clock.
- Provide transportation to other students.

At times the interpreter may need to inform/educate the new students how to properly use an interpreter. Keep in mind you also want to advocate and promote autonomy at every opportunity so our final goal of independence for the students can be reached.

Autonomy: *the state of existing or acting separately from others; the power or right of a group or country to govern themselves.*

Code of Professional Conduct

Interpreters of South Texas College are expected to adhere to all federal, state, and municipal laws and ordinances as per Policy #4901. Employees shall also adhere to all College policies and procedures, as well as other guidelines and rules of all regulating agencies or entities having jurisdiction over college activities. Employees of South Texas College are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, courteous, respectful, and ethical manner in the performance of their duties and responsibilities, and in their interaction with colleagues, students, and the general public. An employee who engages in conduct prohibited by this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action and/or other adverse personnel action, including termination. The decision to discipline an employee should be made in accordance with Policy #4911 Disciplinary Action Procedures.

Interpreters must also adhere to The Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) according to the Board of Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) which states, the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID), shall govern the professional conduct of interpreters.

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

The full version of the Code of Professional Conduct may be obtained on the Texas HHS web site <https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/assistive-services-providers/board-evaluation-interpreters-certification-program/code-professional-conduct> or the RID web site at www.rid.org.

Expectations

The interpreter will:

- Interpret lectures, discussions, movies and all asides in the classroom setting.
- Render the message faithfully; do not attract undue attention to yourself.
- Observe the progress of a student and adapt or modify methods of communication.
- Re/direct all student questions or problems to the instructor.
- Serve as a liaison between deaf/hard of hearing students and instructors
- Will not discipline students.
- Report any occurrence or suspicion of academic dishonesty to CSDS.
- Limit personal conversations and personal cell phone use during class time.
- Prepare for class by reviewing textbooks, handouts, movies and materials ahead of time.
- Be punctual to scheduled assignments and notify lead interpreter and supervisor via text or phone call when arriving more than 15 minutes late to their scheduled work hours.
- Support deaf student's rights to equality in the classroom.
- Recognize when to educate/inform both students and faculty/staff regarding the appropriate use of interpreters.
- Wait 15 min for every hour of the class unless informed the student is running late.
- **Part-time interpreters** will notify lead interpreter of any deviation from scheduled work hours.

- **Full-time interpreters** will notify lead interpreter and SDS Coordinator of any deviation from scheduled work hours.
- Contact the Lead Interpreter or Coordinator of Student Disability Services if you have concerns.
- Maintain the confidentiality of information exchanged in an interpreting situation.

The lead interpreter will:

- Keeps detailed and accurate records of interpreter's schedules.
- Will adjust interpreter's schedules as necessary to ensure that deaf/hard of hearing students have an interpreter or interpreters for his or her class if changes arise.
- Provide/participate in mentoring peer interpreters and interns for skill development.
- Overlook part time interpreter's schedules.
- Review daily calendar assignments and complete activity logs or other documents required.
- Available 24/7 to receive calls related to last minute schedule changes etc.

Assignment Cancellations/Forfeiting (for part-timers)

- If cancellation by student is less than 24 hours, compensation will be honored if still available for assignment.
- If not needed elsewhere for a different assignment by lead interpreter, interpreter has option to forfeit hours from cancelled assignment.
- Maximum of 2 hours will be compensated for any cancelled class longer than 2 hours. **Interpreter must notify lead interpreter of cancelled class and/or report to CSDS office to get compensated.**

Schedules

All regular full-time staff are required to work the equivalent of 40 hours per week. When necessary, campus offices or departments may be kept open during hours and days outside the typical 8AM-5PM Monday through Friday work schedule. SDS Coordinator will schedule the 40 hours per week based on needs of students, the office or department as per Policy #4510. Interpreter schedules are made prior to the beginning of the semester. Interpreters will be assigned to classes on the basis of their signing skill level and the requirements of the class. Since students may drop classes at any time throughout the semester, schedules and hours are subject to change.

Opportunities to interpret for other assignments will occur throughout the semester, including substituting for another interpreter in a class, outside class meetings, public lectures and performances, graduations etc.

Interpreters will be called for assignments based on the type of assignment and interpreter availability. Interpreters are to accept assignments only from the Lead Interpreter and SDS

Coordinator. If a student requests interpreter services directly from an interpreter, the interpreter should refer the student to Lead Interpreter to schedule the interpreting appointment.

Time Reporting

Time Adjustment Request Forms (TARF) are available in the office and can be obtained from the Supervisor, Lead Interpreter or Secretary. Interpreters should verify time cards on a weekly basis on **TimeClock Plus**. The interpreters should use the available time clocks at their designated area in order to clock in/out of their assignments or correct missed punches. Clock in and out at a computer should only be used when there is not time clock readily available.

Appearance

Interpreters should dress in a professional manner. Know where you are being sent and dress accordingly. Attire should be comfortable, clean, neat, and not distracting. Solid colors that contrast with the interpreter's skin complexion are recommended. Avoid wearing clothing with busy prints and/or stripes. Business attire should be worn when interpreting for formal events. Fingernails should be kept trimmed and nail polish should be neutral in color and avoid flashy jewelry. If in doubt, check with the Lead Interpreter.



First Day of Class

The Interpreter should:

- Arrive 10-15 minutes early to introduce themselves to the instructor and student.
- Ascertain student's preferred mode of communication.
- Work with the instructor and the student to determine the preferred placement within the classroom.
- Obtain a syllabus (optional).
- After class has been dismissed, solicit feedback from the instructor regarding any issues that might have come up during the class. Encourage continued open communication throughout the semester
- Promptly communicate any changes in class room, instructor or class hours to the Lead Interpreter.

Team Interpreting

An interpreter will be assigned a team interpreter when the assignment...

- Involves several deaf participants

- Has intensive lectures
- May require additional support

In some cases the team might need more than two interpreters in order to work simultaneously during the assignment and addressing different client needs.

Team interpreters are expected to support one another on assignments at all times. Both interpreters are on duty and thus, the task of interpreting should be equally distributed between both team. When one interpreter is rendering the message, the co-interpreter should be providing support, assistance, and/or feeding information as needed. Cues for requesting assistance and alternating roles should be agreed upon prior to the start of the assignment. The team must agree upon the time on which they will alternate their roles. The co-interpreter is responsible for keeping time and informing their team when it is time to change. **Both interpreters will work the entire assignment unless there is an emergency or otherwise approved by the Lead Interpreter and Supervisor.**

The Lead Interpreter should be informed in case of...

- Upcoming test dates
- Room changes
- Student absent/tardy

Request for Replacement

If the interpreter is not able to make it to an assignment, due to an emergency or personal reason, please inform the Lead Interpreter **as soon as possible** to allow enough time for them to find a replacement for the assignment.

It is important to maintain professionalism when accepting and committing to your schedule. Interpreters are expected to abide by the CPC's when accepting assignments both on and off campus.

In order to ensure the best possible services for our students, the interpreter is responsible for determining whether or not s/he is able to perform the duties required by the assignment. Student, interpreter preference, will also be taken into consideration for reasonable interpreter placement.



Monitoring

The Lead Interpreter and SDS Coordinator may monitor an assignment at any time and without notice to ensure the assignment continues to be appropriate for the student, the interpreter and faculty member. These visits will be random or scheduled. Surveys will also be sent to faculty and students regarding interpreter's performance.

No-Shows

The *Part-time Interpreter* is responsible to give the Lead Interpreter **advance notice as soon as possible** if they will not be able to make it to their scheduled assignment. *Full-time Interpreter* must notify both the Lead Interpreter and SDS Coordinator **in advance as soon as possible** if they will not be able to fulfill their scheduled assignments.

If a student is in a class in which the interpreter has not shown up, the student should wait ten minutes, then contact the Lead Interpreter. Another interpreter will be sent to the assignment depending on availability. Interpreter no-shows will not be tolerated and appropriate disciplinary actions up to termination may be taken.

If a *student* does not show at the beginning of class, the interpreter should follow the handbook procedures (*see expectations, pg.3*) in deciding the appropriate amount of time to wait. Interpreters are encouraged to use their own judgment on the least disruptive place to wait for students.

In the event of a no-show, the interpreter must contact the Lead Interpreter immediately after the waiting period is over. The interpreter may be reassigned at that time.

Professional Skill Building

As stated in the RID Code of Professional Conduct, it is essential that interpreters strive to continually develop their skills and remain competent in order to practice in their field by obtaining the appropriate certifications through either the RID (national testing) or DARS Board of Evaluators for Interpreters (BEI) within the State of Texas.

**Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
Department of Deaf and Hard or Hearing Services (DHHS)**

www.dars.state.tx.us

4900 N Lamar, Suite 2169, Austin, TX 78751

PO Box 12904, Austin, TX 78711

(512)-407-3250 Voice

(512)-813-9855 VP

(512)-407-3251 TTY

Holding membership in professional organizations is also highly encouraged. Some that may be of interest are:

Texas Society of Interpreters for the Deaf (TSID) www.tsid.org PO BOX 684728, Austin, TX 78768	Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) www.rid.org 333 Commerce Street, Alexandria VA 22314
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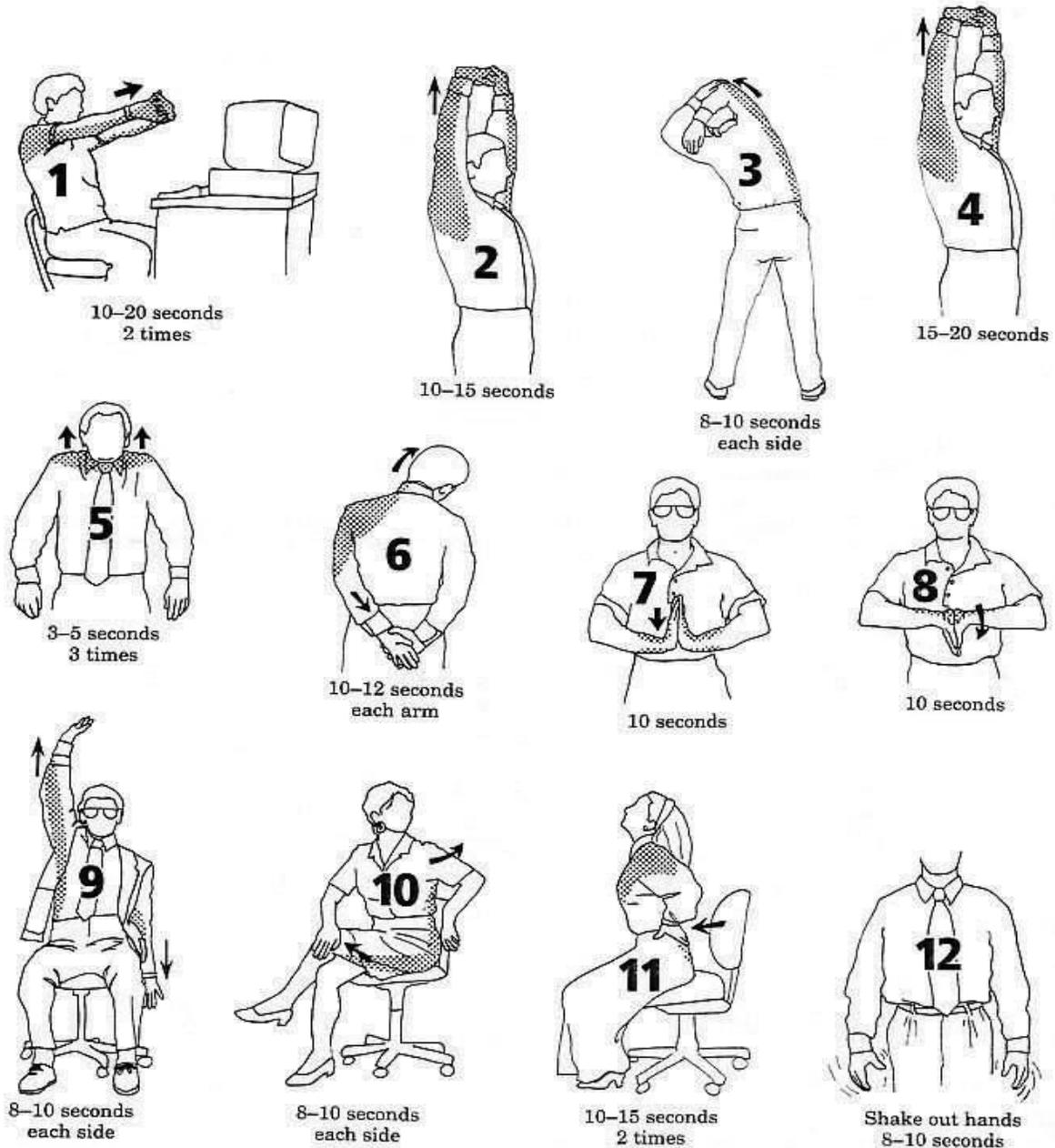
(512) 360-8743	(703) 838-0030 Voice (703) 384-5163 VP (703) 838-0459 TTY (703) 838-0454 Fax
<p align="center">National Association of the Deaf (NAD) www.nad.org 8630 Fenton Street, Suite #820, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301) 328-1788 Voice/VP (Sorenson) (301)587-1788 Voice/VP (ZVRS) (301) 338-6380 Voice/VP (Convo) (301) 587-1789 TTY (301)587-1791 Fax</p>	<p align="center">Rio Grande Valley Interpreters for the Deaf (RGVID) https://tssid.org.rgvid RGVIDsecretary@aol.com</p>

Interpreters can keep current or update their skills in a variety of ways, including workshops, conferences, college courses, independent studies.

Repetitive Motion Syndrome

Every effort will be made to provide an environment in which the interpreter can work comfortably. Interpreters are encouraged to do anything necessary to prevent interpreting related injuries. Performing warm-up exercises is one way of taking care of yourself.

Repetitive Motion Syndrome Exercises



*Last updated by SDS Coordinator on 5/31/17.