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## **ASLI Best Practice for Interpreters Working in Educational Settings**

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## 1. Introduction and Context

The Best Practice principles which are presented in this paper are based on extensive research and a wealth of experience shared by a group of interpreters whose work is predominantly in this domain. This guidance aims to describe best practice that will enable interpreters to execute their interpreting role most effectively and inclusively. It is presented in a way that is accessible and available to download for preparation of an assignment and/or as an aide-memoire. These are the revised best practice Guidelines for Working in Education, the previous paper now being out of date and no longer fit for purpose given new education legislation and the increase in on-line access to the teaching and learning environment. At the time of writing, amid the coronavirus pandemic, it is thought that the content of each section will remain pertinent for future use as teaching assumes a blended model of delivery.

This guidance is written for any interpreter working in an education setting with a deaf student. Though interpreters do handle education adjacent bookings, such as parents' evenings and teacher training, these bookings are not the focus of this guidance.

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## 1.1 Abbreviations and Definitions

**Terms are defined below for the purposes of this document.**

A deaf student - Any student accessing teaching delivered in English via a BSL Interpreter.

Education Institution - Any provider of education to students of any age (this includes schools, colleges and universities).

FE - Colleges of Further Education

HE - Higher Education institutions

CSW - Communication Support Worker - Uses a variety of skills and strategies to enable a student to access their educational environment.

TSLI - Trainee Sign Language Interpreter - Interpreters undertaking an approved training course and who are eligible to register with the NRCPD (criteria [here](#)).

RSLI - Registered Sign Language Interpreter - Interpreters who have successfully completed an approved training course and are eligible to register with the NRCPD (criteria [here](#)).

Co-worker - One of two, or more, interpreters working the same assignment.

SENCO - Special educational needs coordinator - a designated person who leads and coordinates provision for learners with special educational needs.

ToD - Teacher of the Deaf.

DSA - Disabled Students' Allowance - Support to cover the additional study related costs incurred due to disability.

SFE - Student Finance England

SLC - Student Loan Company

BSL - British Sign Language - BSL is a visual-gestural language with a distinctive grammar using handshapes, facial expressions, gestures and body language to convey meaning.

SSE - Sign Supported English - A communication method that uses the BSL signs in the word order of the English language.

SEE - Signed Exact English - A manual form of communication that is an exact representation of English grammar and vocabulary.

**The two sections that follow are included to provide context to the best practice guidance in this document. They are a brief introduction to the work of educational interpreters, and not intended to be a comprehensive summary of the field.**

## 1.2 The development of a profession

The role of a communicator working in schools is not a new concept but, prior to circa 1980s, it was not seen as a profession. As a result of educators in the field of deafness identifying the void of specialist support staff in Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) for deaf students, and as more deaf students were seeking professional qualifications themselves, the growth of the qualified Communication Support Worker (CSW) for Post 16 education developed (Green and Nickerson, 1993). However, the level of BSL achievement required to become a CSW at the time (level 2) was not that of a qualified Interpreter (Signature, n.d). This original CSW qualification is still acknowledged by Student Finance England (SFE) but now stipulates that the holder must have BSL Level 3; it should be noted that many CSWs are qualified Interpreters but choose to be employed as CSWs. As deaf students pursued fewer practical subjects and more vocational courses, the requirement for a higher standard of BSL support grew.

Different terms are often used to describe communication professionals choosing to focus their work in educational settings including CSW, 'university interpreter' or 'school interpreter' and, more broadly, 'educational interpreter'. Currently, CSW is a term often used to describe interpreters who work in schools and FE colleges, while 'interpreter' is used in universities and some FE contexts. Though these roles overlap, often in university contexts, the emphasis is on interpreting and language skills, to be able to interpret academic concepts and language successfully into the target language, and less on learning support or one-to-one support.

The qualifications required within these different titles also varies. An in-house sign support professional in a mainstream/private school may not be sufficiently qualified to register as a TSLI, whereas those in a specialist provision/specialist school/specialist college could well be either a TSLI or an RSLI. This is not a reflection of the expertise of the professional, but more perhaps, of the need of the student who relies on listening, lipreading and possibly some sign supported English (SSE). Where the role is named 'interpreter', more common with freelance professionals, formal interpreter training is required.

There are many different models of support for deaf pupils/students depending on their level of hearing loss and where they attend - it is impossible to detail every scenario but the most common, although not mutually exclusive, are:

Mainstream school

Private School

Specialist Centre Provision

Specialist School

Specialist College

Further Education College

Higher Education - in an FE college or University

A profoundly deaf BSL using student could be educated in any of the above, but the level and type of support they receive will vary. This support could be in the form of a Teaching Assistant who signs, a qualified CSW, qualified or trainee interpreters, Teachers of the Deaf (ToDs), specialist note-takers, specialist support professionals, learning mentors, SENCO's, disability advisors and class teachers/module tutors. The work done by these professionals varies and creates a complete package of support for a deaf student, of which an interpreter is just one part. The needs of each student, and so the type and level of support in place, varies greatly.

Where interpreters are employed in-house or by a local authority, they may benefit from support networks within their establishments which provide access to assignment preparation and resources as well as on-site feedback mechanisms. They may form close working relationships with ToDs, educational audiologists, note-takers and interpreting co-workers enabling the sharing of feedback to inform the interpreter's work. This leads to a more holistic approach in which the student benefits from an informed and organised support network. Interpreters may also have access to professional supervision and peer support when working in-house. Where student numbers fluctuate greatly each year, Universities most commonly favour the system of funding via the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and so book freelance interpreters through agencies and who do not benefit from the network described above.

If a student is awarded a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) it will stipulate from where the Interpreter is to be sourced. To ensure that a TSLI/RSLI meets the criteria for registration with Student Finance England (SFE), please refer to the Student Loan Company (SLC) practitioners document [linked here](#) (SLC, n.d). All agencies supplying interpreters in Higher Education will need to register with the said governing body and provide evidence of the interpreters'

qualifications and training to ensure continued registration and, ultimately, payment. In the instance that the student will be sourcing and employing an interpreter directly, who will be paid via their DSA, again the interpreter must meet and be able to evidence the qualification standards, training requirements and registration stipulated to guarantee they will be paid.

It should be noted that it is often the case that educators who have little or no knowledge of working with deaf people assume a member of their support staff who has BSL Level 2/3 is suitable support for their grassroots deaf learner. Language support professionals should have an academic qualification that is the same level or higher than the setting in which they are working (Napier, 2005: 185). This avoids the deaf person having to linguistically 'accommodate' a lower level of BSL. Without this, it can be asked 'who is learning?' – the student who has to lower their linguistic ability to accommodate the support professional or the support themselves as they develop their vocabulary from the deaf learner - a deaf student has the right to a suitably qualified communication professional.

It has been argued that working in education is more 'challenging' than working in another specialism, where bespoke workshops/training is more available e.g., Legal and Medical Interpreting. The challenge is not in terms of study, skill and ability, but more in terms of linguistic coping strategies and mental lexical gymnastics. This is often carried out without preparation meaning the content of a lecture could be more familiar to the student than the freelance Interpreter booked by an agency for that one lecture.

### 1.3 The role of an interpreter in educational settings

When working with a deaf student, the role of the professional 'educational interpreter' may fit in with the traditional understanding of the interpreter as a 'bi-lingual, bi-cultural facilitator' in some contexts, but may be better described as an educational professional with bilingual skills in other contexts. This means the professional interpreter's approach must flex to meet the demands of each individual student, setting and teaching style.

The flexible role an interpreter occupies with varied teaching styles and in different settings can be discussed using Llewellyn-Jones' and Lee (2014) role-space theory. Comparing the three parameters of interaction management, presentation of self and alignment can highlight the various ways in which an interpreter's role changes across different assignments.

In school classrooms, interpreters have the opportunity for high interaction management as they are often able to engage with those in the classroom to affect the pace or turn-taking in the interaction. In these settings, the interpreter is often treated and seen as a member of

educational staff (referred to as sir/Ms, introduced to the class, given breaks with teaching staff) and so has a high level of presentation of self. Lastly, they may have ample opportunity to align with the deaf student(s) and all others in interactions where there is a relaxed teaching environment.

In contrast, when working in the more formal setting of a university lecture theatre, the interpreter may have little opportunity to affect the pace of the interaction or seek clarification. Where teaching is delivered primarily through front-led lectures to large cohorts, interpreters may not have the opportunity for even formal introductions, occupying what may be seen as an auditor role. Similarly, alignment is limited where very little two-way communication or feedback is taking place. In these ways, this level of formality parodies conference interpreting. Where interpreters have more direct communication with the student(s), presentation of self may be higher, and the interpreter and student will have a greater level of alignment.

Student preferences may also dictate the interpreter's approach. They may ask for the interpreter to be introduced to the class or they may prefer complete discretion and more inconspicuous interpreting. They may communicate their needs independently or request the interpreter advocate on their behalf. No two students are the same and so the interpreter's approach is likely to reflect this.

In this way, the role-space enacted by an interpreter working in educational settings can vary greatly student-to-student and class-to-class. Professionals must be prepared to adapt their working methods, accordingly, potentially occupying different role-spaces over the course of one day. The best practice principles detailed in the next section aim to describe many of the considerations interpreters should make to achieve effective interpreting across this varied domain.

As with any booking, interpreters must abide by the codes of ethics/conduct of professional bodies to which they have agreed, such as the National Occupational Standards (NOS) (2017) or the NRCPD Code of Conduct (n.d.). In educational settings, these may be supplemented by the setting's own codes of conduct and complaints procedures and so interpreters must strive to work within these parameters. Where this results in a conflict with employer expectations, the interpreter should seek to mediate this as best as they can, seeking advice from their regulatory body. They must not act in breach of the ethical principles underpinning their professional practice.

Interpreters should continually reflect on their role, seeking feedback from the deaf student on their preferences and needs. If the interpreter is not able (for whatever reason) to meet the needs of the deaf student, they should consider withdrawing and/or finding suitable support.



## 2. Preparing for an assignment in an educational setting

- 2.1. Where complex jargon, specialist knowledge, and carefully designed curriculums and teaching plans are being interpreted, preparation is essential to delivering a high-quality service. Preparation should be done using a variety of information sources and include organising optimum conditions for effective interpretation whilst considering individual student's preferred ways of working.
- 2.2. Where possible, the interpreter should review the content and delivery method of the session in advance of the booking. The types of materials being used will vary depending on the educational setting but generally, the interpreter should ask to review the following:
- A lesson plan or brief session summary including lesson aims and objectives and how the student will be assessed.
    - This allows the interpreter to make interpreting and linguistic decisions that align with the teacher's aims.
    - If being assessed in written English it may be pertinent to include reference to key English vocabulary in the interpretation.
  - A description of how the session will be conducted.
    - Planning effective interpreting conditions requires knowledge of the teaching methods being used such as front lead lecture, group work, pair work, class discussions and computer tasks.
  - A copy of any presentation slides and any handouts such as books, leaflets, articles or worksheets,
    - Any specialist vocabulary, jargon, diagrams and models can be reviewed to ensure the interpreter has enough understanding and appropriate vocabulary to interpret the session effectively.
  - A copy of/links to, any videos or other media being used in the class.
    - Pre-recorded texts can be linguistically dense and so prior knowledge will reduce the cognitive load on the interpreter.

- 2.3. If working with a student more regularly, wider context preparation materials could be useful such as module or course handbooks, previous lecture notes, word glossaries or curriculum outlines.
- 2.4. If the student is delivering a presentation, arrange a meeting with them to view their presentation and materials and ensure all technical vocabulary and the student's core arguments/content is understood. If a meeting is not possible, arrange for the presentation materials to be sent to you prior to the booking.
- 2.5. Materials may be provided by the student or educational institution directly or via the booking intermediary. Requests for these materials should be made, initially, to the contact who has booked the interpreter.
- 2.6. All preparation materials must be treated as confidential, not be shared or used for any purpose other than preparing for the assignment.
- 2.7. Interpreters should use these materials alongside their own prior knowledge to prepare for the assignment.
- 2.8. When working closely with deaf students, interpreters must maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times.
- 2.9. Interpreters should ascertain the student's preferred ways of working with an interpreter. The interpreter should consider:
  - where the student prefers the interpreter to work
  - how the student would like group work to be handled
  - whether the student will sign or voice their contributions to the class
  - whether the student would like subtitled videos to be interpreted or would prefer to read the subtitles
  - whether the student would like quotations or longer texts, presented on a slide or handout, to be translated into BSL
  - whether the student requires/requests signed exact English (SEE), sign supported English (SSE), BSL, or has any other linguistic preferences or needs (this could include avoidance of profane language or needing simplified BSL)

- 2.10. Alongside reviewing materials provided, interpreters should prepare for a booking by meeting with the tutor/teacher before the session, where possible, to arrange optimal working conditions, especially over long bookings.
  - Discussions could include negotiating breaks, agreeing on seating arrangements and clarifying issues linked to the preparation materials.
  - Due to the varied content and duration of bookings in educational settings, interpreters must use their professional judgement when agreeing working conditions such as the regularity of breaks, the need for a co-worker, etc.
- 2.11. Interpreters should, where possible, aim to build good working relationships with teaching staff.
- 2.12. Interpreters must be aware of the need for mandatory safeguarding training before working in educational settings.
- 2.13. Interpreters should be prepared that for certain institutions other training may be required before accepting the assignment.
- 2.14. Interpreters should consider their health and safety, especially when working in hazardous settings such as workshops, laboratories or outdoors. If appropriate, interpreters should request a risk assessment and wear the appropriate PPE if required.
- 2.15. Where necessary, interpreters should refer to, and follow, ASLI's Lone Working Guidelines (n.d) found [here](#).
- 2.16. Interpreters should consider the subject matter of a booking and its potential impact on them personally. Where sensitive topics are being taught, interpreters have the right to withdraw from / not accept bookings that could affect their wellbeing.

### 3. Remote working

- 3.1. Due to the outbreak of Coronavirus and the disruption it has caused to children and young people's education, many educational settings have arranged for lectures, tutorials, classes etc. to be held online. To successfully interpret these sessions, knowledge of the relevant technologies as well as student and institutional preferred ways of working is essential. Interpreters should also seek comprehensive preparatory materials and work closely with co-workers whilst taking care of their own wellbeing.

For comprehensive general remote working best practice principles, please see guidance from ASLI [here](#) (ASLI, 2015) and DCAL [here](#) (DCAL UCL 2020).

- 3.2. Educational settings are turning to various platforms to facilitate online study, for example, Microsoft Teams, Blackboard, Zoom and moodle as well as other systems created by the institutions themselves. Interpreters may be asked to register with such systems in advance of a booking.
- 3.3. Interpreters should make no assumptions that the same system is being used across all bookings with the same student as technology is changing rapidly and institutions often use multiple technologies, for example viewing the presentation material on one platform whilst interpreting on another.
- 3.4. Interpreters may have very little control of the interaction during online classes and so may have to rely on tools such as the platform chat facility, an open phone line or text messaging to ensure effective co-working, clarification and communication, takes place.
- 3.5. Establish a line of communication with the session leader/host, where possible, before the session to agree the best way to seek content clarification or raise awareness of any technical issues during the session without causing a major interruption.
- 3.6. Interpreters should ascertain the student's and the institution's favoured ways of working concerning introductions, muting microphones, 'chat' facility usage, camera usage and eye breaks.
- 3.7. With less opportunity for face-to-face preparation, interpreters should make good use of preparation materials prior to the booking as remote lectures rely heavily on on-screen resources.

- 3.8. If students are not required to keep their video on throughout the class, interpreters should establish a method of communication with the student possibly via a 'chat' facility, text or a separate video call.
- 3.9. Where blended use of live in-class teaching and remote teaching is used, multiple links may be needed (to connect to the student, the lecturer and/or the classroom). Interpreters may benefit from multiple screens to have a larger view or all participants.
- 3.10. Co-workers should work closely together to support each other in preparing before a booking and reflecting on its success afterwards.
- 3.11. Lectures can be long sessions (two hours or more), so interpreters should ensure optimum physical conditions by having a comfortable seating arrangement, utilising breaks well, and staying hydrated. Interpreters should be mindful of the risks of working at a screen. Follow government advice to reduce eye strain and prevent injury (Health and Safety Executive advice can be found [here](#) (HSE, 2013)).
  - Special attention and caution should be paid when using additional lights. Prolonged direct exposure to bright lights can cause permanent damage to the eyes.

## 4. Linguistic considerations

- 4.1. Working in education requires high level linguistic coping strategies to handle unknown, specialist vocabulary in the subject being studied. Teaching can be fast-paced and dense with carefully chosen language designed in preparation for assessment in English. Interpreters should use a variety of interpreting strategies to meet the demands of this setting whilst working closely with teaching staff and students.
- 4.2. Interpreters should have an academic qualification that is the same level or higher than the setting in which they are working.
  - This avoids the Deaf person having to linguistically ‘accommodate’ their interpreter and will enable the interpreter to more easily search for semantic equivalents. (Napier 2005:185)
- 4.3. Interpreters should make linguistic choices based on the needs of the individual, adjusting their output and register accordingly.
- 4.4. To inform this, interpreters should have a “deep knowledge of both languages, both cultures and the cultural differences involved” (Scott Gibson 1990:255).
  - They should be able to recognise children’s/students’ “variable language exposure during childhood” (Markschark and Sapere 2005:13) and understand how this has impacted their incidental world knowledge.
- 4.5. Interpreters should make conscious strategic omissions and switch between free interpretation (moving away from the source language) and literal interpretation (staying close to the form of the source language). This is an essential strategy to “give access to academic jargon or subject-specific terminology” (Napier 2005:175).
- 4.6. Fingerspelling can also be used effectively to convey unfamiliar source language words.
  - Ideally, a new term can be fingerspelled in order to reference the form, and the meaning then explained.
- 4.7. Interpreters have a duty to retain technical language in their interpretations, where appropriate, where a student will require this for assessment.

- 4.8. Ideally, interpreters should handle subject material they are familiar with / have an understanding of. Specialisms within educational interpreting may help with this (Napier 2005:184)
- 4.9. Where this is not the case, interpreters should use preparation materials to learn specialist vocabulary, if available, and gain an understanding of the subject matter.
- 4.10. Interpreters and students should work together to discover or create agreed signifiers for specialist vocabulary.

## 5. Work Experience/Placements

- 5.1. Work experience is often an integral part of a chosen course. This can be for any level of study: year 10 and year 11 at school, Btech, Apprenticeship, the new T Levels, Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses.

In principle, the type of support is similar to working via Access to Work assignments with varying levels of formality, albeit the funding is different, but the key to a successful support experience relies on the preparation and adaptability of the interpreter and their working relationships with the student and educational institutions. These best practice tips are pertinent across all work experience/placement environments.

- 5.2. Successful support relies on the interpreter's ability to adapt to the placement environment - especially if they have previously worked with the student in a classroom.
- A less formal environment could lend itself to a more relaxed approach to support, yet maintaining the professionalism required for the role. Supporting a student on a work placement in a Supermarket, for example, could require an interpreter to integrate more with the staff, be flexible with their role in terms of explaining to the student, as opposed to a social work domain where the support would be more formal and unobtrusive – both require high levels of professionalism, compliance with our code of ethics and beliefs in 'do no harm', but the setting dictates the approach to be taken.
- 5.3. Interpreters should ask for preparation materials and information as normal. Depending on the age of the student, these may be given via an agency, a member of the teaching staff or come from direct contact with the student.
- 5.4. Preparation for work placements should include sourcing the following:
- the placement location and timings of the day
  - the student's name and contact details
  - the name and contact details of a nominated member of staff at the workplace
  - the name and contact details of a nominated contact at the educational institution



- a work placement brief detailing the purpose of the placement and what is expected of the student – independent working, office environment, client-facing etc.
  - attendance evidence requirements such as college sign-in records, workplace sign-in records or timesheets and who is required to sign them
  - what would happen with future bookings should the placement break down part way through.
- 5.5. Ensure any safety issues have been addressed, where appropriate, in a risk assessment.
- 5.6. Dress appropriately for the setting matching formality and safety requirements of the workplace.
- 5.7. When multiple interpreters are covering a placement, where possible, assist in providing preparatory information to colleagues.
- 5.8. Plan travel arrangements and check if these will be paid for in expenses and by whom.
- 5.9. Interpreters may have to ensure they have been accounted for in planning in breaks. Ensure regular breaks, as well as a lunch break, have been arranged and that they are adhered to.
- 5.10. When claiming expenses, interpreters should check payment and evidence requirements – keep receipts or quote inclusive rates.

## 6. Exams

- 6.1. Prior to undertaking any Exam support, there are fundamental checks which need to be carried out to protect both the integrity of the exam itself and also the reputation of the communication professional undertaking the support. Guidance is available via the JCQ regulations for many national qualifications, but it should be noted that Universities are their own Exam Boards and therefore may not be accustomed to the best practice guidance available for schools and FE and make local arrangements. The following guidance could be used to advise institutions of best practice when working from an oral/written source language to a visual/spatial transient target language.
- 6.2. Interpreters must be aware of OFQUAL and JCQ regulations regarding the interpretation of formal exams and assessments - they can be viewed [here](#) (JCQ 2019 p59).
  - As of writing (February 2021), many official exams have been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic and as such up to date OFQUAL advice is unavailable.
- 6.3. Interpreters should assess whether the subject matter of the exam is within their experience before accepting a booking.
- 6.4. Prior to the exam, interpreters should be aware of:
  - the total length of the exam which may include access arrangements for additional time
  - the room layout. Ensure it is acceptable given the length of the exam (consider ventilation, space, lighting, heating)
  - who to report to on arrival.
- 6.5. Exam formats vary therefore, interpreters should be aware of the type of exam being delivered and the type of support required. Possible formats include written exam papers, multiple-choice papers, practical assessments and VIVAs.
- 6.6. Interpreters should meet with the invigilator(s) before the exam and ensure roles are clear. **Interpreters are not exam invigilators.**
- 6.7. If there is an amanuensis or other exam support staff, arrange to meet early to check how you will work together.

- 6.8. To comply with exam guidelines, interpreters should be prepared to show the invigilator any personal items taken into the exam room, such a water bottle or mobile phone.
  - N.B. Any materials relating to the exam taking place will not be permitted.
- 6.9. The interpreter should switch off their phone and offer to place it in view on the invigilator's table.
- 6.10. The interpreter should have access to the paper before the exam to prepare – usually with the invigilator in the room, prior to the student arriving.
- 6.11. Where a modified paper is being taken, ask for both copies of the original paper and the modified version as mistakes can happen in preparing the modified version.
- 6.12. Interpreted exams should always be recorded on video as evidence that best practice has been followed - this protects the interpreter should the university or student question the support given.
  - The educational institution is responsible for providing and working equipment to record the exam.
  - Ensure both the interpreter and the student are in the view of the camera.
  - Ensure the camera begins recording before the exam instructions and papers have been given.
  - Ensure the camera continues recording until after the paper has been collected and is in possession of the invigilator.
  - All recordings should be held by the educational institution's exam office only until results are no longer subject to appeal.
- 6.13. Interpreters should not explain on behalf of the invigilator. If the student asks a question, for example, to clarify exam rules or check the time, interpreters must interpret the question and let the invigilator explain, signing their response. This protects the interpreter from accusations of misinterpretation or rule breaking.
- 6.14. It is not the responsibility of the interpreter to return either the equipment or the exam paper.
- 6.15. Ensure all paperwork has been signed appropriately.

## 7. Trips

- 7.1. Trips and residential visits are often integral parts of the student's learning. There are logistical and financial considerations to be taken into account prior to committing to these arrangements and these details vary depending on whether the interpreter is freelance or in-house. FE and HE are funded differently and therefore these are separated for clarity.
- 7.2. Prior to the trip, interpreters should review the trip itinerary and any preparatory materials available to assess the interpreting demands of planned activities. They should feedback any potential accessibility issues to organisers.
- 7.3. Discuss travel arrangements well in advance of the trip. Interpreters should be aware of meeting times and places and have staff contact details should any issues arise.
- 7.4. It is not the role of the interpreter to take responsibility for a group of young people.
- 7.5. Interpreters should be aware of any risk assessment and feedback any adjustments where needed.
- 7.6. Interpreters should have contact details for the trip organisers and, if appropriate, the student for use throughout the trip. Interpreters should also provide emergency contact details to trip organisers.
- 7.7. Where interpreters are required to stay overnight, they must be treated as staff and not housed with students. Interpreters should be clear on the sleeping arrangements and be involved in accommodation planning.
- 7.8. If working in-house, interpreters should have regular access to their manager who continues to have a duty of care to their employees.

**Funding for FE Trips (FE)** - these are predominantly local visits and usually organised by the college.

- 7.9. Where the college is funding support for a trip, interpreters should discuss:
- the length of the day and the corresponding fee
  - travel costs, any entrance fees and subsistence. Establish whether these will be reimbursed via an all-inclusive fee or via separate payment
  - the content of the visit. Evaluate if a second interpreter will be needed. Establish contact with a co-worker if booked
  - taking regular breaks and a lunch break for their own well-being. These breaks should, where possible, include time away from students to allow the interpreter both physical and mental space.

**Funding for HE trips** - these could be local, national or international.

- 7.10. Before committing to a trip and setting a fee, interpreters should consider the number of hours required per day - the usual for a residential trip is 10 hours a day with potential evening activities.
- 7.11. Interpreters must be clear about their fee; what expenses are included and who is paying. Funding for trips can come from a variety of sources depending on the nature of the trip.
- Support for trips integral to the course is likely to be funded by the students DSA. Non-essential trips may be paid for by the university directly.
  - Expenses including travel, accommodation and entry fees are not routinely covered by SFE and so may have to be negotiated. Ensure any agreements to cover expenses are recorded in writing with details of who is to pay for specific expenses. Remember to include travel to and from airports, public transport costs and food.
  - Keep all receipts as separate invoices may need to be generated.
  - Ensure all the relevant paperwork has been signed by the student.

**Case Study** - This case study is provided to give context to the guidance above. It is a personal report from an RSLI on their experience interpreting for a trip abroad.

I was the sole interpreter accompanying a student studying Film Production on a 4-day trip to a European film festival. I was employed in-house by the provider stated on a student's DSA. Logistics of funding and expenses were organised between the provider and the university. The provider was dependent on the University organising a realistic overall itinerary having received information on how to work with an interpreter, but the student led which activities/films they wished to attend. I worked regularly with the student, I knew them well and was familiar with the course. This was my first interpreting trip abroad with a student. This case study aims to bring to light some of the challenges, uniqueness, highs, and lows of working in such a unique way.

From the moment I arrived at the airport, everything I knew about my position, and 'role' as an interpreter working in education changed. Upon arrival at the airport, I found the students and staff, including the deaf student and their parents. This was the first time that the student with whom I was travelling had travelled abroad independently of family and my 'role' at this moment was a very human one, to provide reassuring words to the deaf student and their parents! Seats were rearranged on the flight so that the student and I were seated together; this meant that I could interpret any safety instructions.

Over the next four days, I interpreted between 2 and 4 films each day and 9 different screenings in total. The films varied in length, from single short films, a series of short films, to full-length feature films. The films were in several different languages. Any films that were not in English were subtitled in English. This was beneficial to the deaf student who was happy to access the film this way when subtitles were available. Active interpreting was required for any film content in English which would not be subtitled.

The student wanted discreet support throughout the trip. Therefore, all my interpreting had to be done seated in the cinema seat next to the student. This meant that the only light available for me to be seen by the student was that which was omitted by the film. When the scene was dark it meant struggling to be seen at all! It also posed difficulties from a health and safety perspective for me as I worked perched on the edge of a seat, with my body twisted to be seen by the student while still trying to maintain sight of the screen when visual cues were necessary.

The students' activity was completely self-led; they could choose which screenings they wanted to go to. I would not know which film I was going to until I received a text from the student, informing me of the start-time and the name of the cinema. This happened often without much warning at all, leaving me rushing across the city to get to a cinema a 30-minute walk away for a film that began in 20!

Each film was being watched by the student not only for enjoyment but also educationally, with a film-maker's eye. This meant that I needed to make the student aware of all sounds from a sound-artist perspective, describing any background noises, percussion sounds, mechanical sounds and any poignant silences. This was particularly true of 'audio-visual studies' which would be visual and sounds, but no words.

The only context or preparation I had for any of the films was a brief summary written in the festival programme. One of the films was followed by a live Q&A session with a director of a film, this is just one example of things I was required to manage without any preparation material or background information about the film or the people involved.

One of the challenges of this trip interpreting was looking after my wellbeing. I worked most days with film screenings finishing at 11:00 pm and arriving back at my hotel at 11:45 pm and then checked in with my manager in England. Physically, I was working with poor posture, without proper support and in poor lighting. I was fitting in lunches and dinners in extremely short gaps in between films. Managing time for myself and self-care was challenging. Some of the films were very harrowing or challenging in other ways and once on the trip there was no choice about whether to 'accept' a booking in the way that one might assess their capability on a 'job by job' basis.

Overall, the trip was an exciting, interesting, exhausting success but highlights the perils of the educators being totally unfamiliar with the demands of interpreting. The student had a wonderful time and accessed as much as possible. It was unlike any interpreting booking I have ever undertaken and with that came new experiences and learning.

## 8. References and Resources

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#### Relevant links

BATOD British Association of Teachers of the Deaf [www.batod.org.uk](http://www.batod.org.uk)

JCQ (exam regulations) [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)

Disabled Students Allowance: DSA [www.practitioners.slc.co.uk](http://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk)

Disclosures and Barring Service: DBS [www.gov.uk/disbarring](http://www.gov.uk/disbarring)