

*This is an English transcript of the video 'Working with interpreters' (Julia Murphy)*

<https://vimeo.com/232794103>

*If you have any questions about student support, working with interpreters or student rights, please contact us here: [info@deafconnected.com.au](mailto:info@deafconnected.com.au)*

### **When I started university, did I know what my rights were?**

No, not really, but eventually I did. I was wondering what was going to happen when the DLO contacted me to ask me what I needed in terms of access. I was surprised at first, then I said I would need an Auslan interpreter. Then I informed them of my preferred interpreters, as well as the interpreters I didn't work with well. It is important that interpreters work with me well. So, that is how I learnt about my rights regarding interpreters.

### **How did I learn and understand the process at the university?**

Really, I learnt from the DLO who explained my rights, such as requesting a change of interpreters if I didn't feel I could work with an interpreter, or if they couldn't understand me well. Or if I felt that they were not being professional, I know I could inform the DLO and request a change of interpreters. I don't need to give them a reason, it is my right. But luckily, I have never been in this situation.

### **How to work with an interpreter effectively?**

Well, it is really important to establish a good relationship. I'll need to let them know what I want, for example: an interpreter may ask me if I want to see more fingerspelling or more lexical signing – this is something I would really appreciate because it is really every interpreter's job to work with me, not the other way around – I am the one who is deaf, and that is what interpreters are for. So, when an interpreter asks me, I would say I want to know what's happening in my surroundings, such as a door shutting, a phone ringing, or group discussion, because other students can hear. This way, I feel included, not isolated. That makes a good interpreter – like I said before, it is important to establish a good relationship.

### **What are interpreters' must-dos and must-don'ts?**

Interpreters must follow their ethics. For example: in a lecture, interpreter can't exaggerate information, nor can they exclude any information. They must always interpret and relay exactly what is said. Interpreters cannot exaggerate or exclude information because they don't like it. It goes both ways.

### **Did I ask interpreters if they understood me or did they ask me if I understood them?**

Yes, it is important to check if they understand you because if you don't do that, information can be interpreted differently. It is serious: the teacher may think I don't understand what they are saying or other students might think I don't understand the question. It is crucial that my interpreters can understand me – there is no harm if the interpreter is not interpreting at the teacher's pace or mine as long as information is interpreted and relayed correctly. It is important and it means we are on the same page. If it does not work out, I'll inform the DLO and request a change of interpreters. It can happen.

### **What advice can I give?**

When you arrive at university, make sure you know your rights. It is crucial because if you do not, your course will be a rollercoaster; if you do, it'll ensure a smoother pathway to what you want to achieve and what you want to get out of your university experience. This way you'll feel good and be successful. Also, it'll help with your relationship with interpreters, other students and lecturers. It makes the experience more worthwhile.