Documentation Guidelines for a Hard of Hearing or Deaf Situation

To know what accommodations a student needs for a hard of hearing or deaf circumstance, documentation should present enough information that a lay person can accurately understand the situation and know why specific kinds of accommodation are important for creating “equal access and opportunity” in a college setting.

Documentation of a deaf or hard of hearing circumstance should be written by a licensed audiologist or equivalent specialist. It should contain the following information:

a. An indication of the author’s credentials to verify a sufficient level of expertise on hearing topics.

b. A historical summary about the student’s hard of hearing or deaf circumstances.

c. A copy of an audiogram and the summary from a relevant audiological evaluation. For circumstances involving progressive loss of hearing the summary should be no more than 3 years old. For circumstances that involve complete deafness the summary should be from when or after the deafness was first discovered.

d. An explanation of the functional limitations the circumstances create, indicating whether the degree of severity is mild, moderate, or substantial. There should also be an explanation about how those things are expected to change over time.

e. There should be an identification of the aspects of college towards which the circumstances will create a negative impact. Examples could be the student’s ability to: live in a residential hall; participate in meetings with professors; hold a job on campus; perform common academic tasks (create lecture notes, take tests, participate in class discussions, deliver speeches, etc.).

f. Recommendations for the kinds of accommodation that should occur to create equal access and opportunity.

Concise statements regarding each of the above topics may be sufficient, if they adequately address the focus. Because it’s important to describe the aspects of college towards which the circumstances will create a negative impact, the best documentation may be both the summary of a relevant evaluation and a concise letter written specifically to explain the impact.