

INTERPRETING SERVICES

Languages: American Sign Language  and English

ASL-English interpreting services at Saint Mary's University

The Interpreting Services manager is responsible for coordinating all interpreting service requests including arranging for team interpreters, requesting and distributing preparation materials, organizing logistics for the team and interpreted-mediated event participants, ensuring the quality standards are maintained, and being a resource to the SMU community.

All ASL-English interpreters who work with the Faculty of Science are members of the national association and a provincial affiliate chapter such as the Maritime Association of Professional Sign Language Interpreters (MAPSLI). Membership requires the interpreter to follow a Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct. Additionally, all interpreters working with Interpreting Services are asked to sign a confidentiality agreement specific to the work they do with SMU.

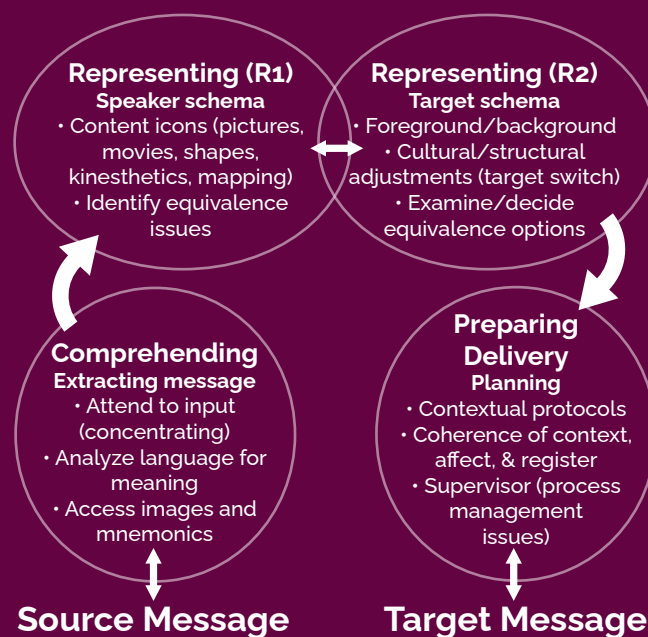
ASL-English interpreting services are provided for everyone involved in a situation where people do not share a common language. The Faculty of Science Interpreting Services working languages are English, American Sign Language, and some Maritime Sign Language.

Interpreters at Saint Mary's

- One full-time staff interpreter/manager
- One full-time staff interpreter dedicated to Science
- Freelance interpreters as needed
- The interpreters are NOT scientists and may or may not have knowledge of your research or discipline.
- There may be more than one interpreter working with you. Interpreting is both physically and mentally fatiguing; interpreters will work together to monitor each other to support the work.
- There may be observation & intern interpreters present who are learning from the team. Interpreting is a practice profession like medical or legal professionals; mentoring is fundamental.

What is ASL-English interpreting?

Interpreters take an utterance from one language and render its meaning into the grammatical structure and cultural framework of another language, and vice versa. This interpreting process is typically done simultaneously, with a few seconds of processing time. Here is one process theory:



Source: ©Betty M. Colonomos, Bilingual Mediation Center, Inc.

Who is ASL-English interpreting for in the Faculty of Science?

- SMU Interpreting Services provides interpreting services to faculty, students, and staff in the Faculty of Science for science-related events, meetings, and courses (*not including services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing SMU students. Contact the Fred Smithers Centre of Support for Students with Disabilities for assistance*).
- Campus-wide services are not yet available; however, advice can be provided to faculty and units looking to ensure their events are more accessible and inclusive.

How to work with interpreters

- Reach out to participants and interpreters in advance to discuss needs and expectations for both the event and interpreters.
- Interpreter "fit" is based on the situational needs of the assignment. Provide as much information as possible when requesting interpreting services to ensure a capable and qualified interpreter is booked.
- Collaborate with the interpreting team on pre-event preparation needs, on-site logistics, and post-event debrief to continuously improve service provision.
- Share materials that will be used during the event; such as agendas, PPT slides, supplemental documents. Interpreters need time to prepare for specific concepts and themes being discussed to mitigate information being "lost in translation."
- Turn on closed captions for all videos and audio clips or have a transcript available.
- Ensure adequate lighting for the venue, and appropriate placement of interpreter(s).
- Mic the interpreter and not Sign Language user; i.e., for a presentation given in ASL.
- It will take a few seconds for the interpreter to process the message being signed/spoken. You may hear a few gaps of silence at the beginning or between statements.
- Look to the signer when speaking, not the interpreter
- For visual languages, interpreters will position themselves closer to the speaking participants, and opposite from the signing participants.
- If the interpreter uses an incorrect pronunciation, please say the word aloud. This can be done subtly during the interpreting or afterwards. 99.9% of the time it is the interpreter who does not know specific terminology and jargon, not the Sign Language user. We appreciate all feedback to improve our services!
- Practice turn taking during discussions; ideally using a raised-hands system. No interpreter can simultaneously render accurate interpretations when multiple people are speaking.
- Don't worry: your hand movements or gestures while speaking are not distracting to signers.

Resources

The SMU Deaf Academics & Interpreters web page offers resources including best practices and tip sheets on working with interpreters.

smu.ca/faculty-of-science-interpreting

Translators

Translate written text


Interpreters

Interpret spoken or sign language

Helpful Terminology

- We are **interpreters** not translators.
- We are not here for the Deaf / Hard of Hearing person, and we are not 'their' interpreter. We are professionals working with everyone for inclusive communication.
- **ASL-English interpreters** can hear. They may have known ASL since birth or learned it later in life.
- **Deaf interpreter** is Deaf and knows English and ASL, along with the lived experiences to understand cultural & language mediations necessary for nuanced and complete comprehension.
- **Deaf** and **Hard of Hearing** are acceptable terms. Hearing impaired and mute are not acceptable.
- **Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)** is when interpreters join via online video-conferencing.

Did you know?

- This symbol  indicates that signed-spoken language interpreting services are provided.
- A Sign Language is not a visual version of a spoken language. It is a physio-spatial language using 3-D space to convey sophisticated concepts!
- There are ~200 Sign Languages worldwide
- Provincial agency for non-SMU related interpreting services requests. sdhns.org
- National professional association: Canadian Association of Sign Language Interpreters (casli.ca)
- Provincial professional association: Maritime Association of Professional Sign Language Interpreters (MAPSLI.ca).
- The Canadian Association of the Deaf is the national organization that promotes and advocates for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Canadians. cad.ca
- The Fred Smithers Centre of Support for Students with Disabilities provides interpreting services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. They do not provide interpreting services to faculty and staff on campus.
- International Week of the Deaf takes place at the end of September yearly.