

Quality Assurance for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Accommodations

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NOTE: This document conveys in text format the same survey results that will be delivered in graphical format during our PowerPoint presentation at the 2016 AHEAD Conference/pepnet2 Training Institute.

Background:

In March-April 2016, an electronic survey was distributed nationally to individuals who coordinate or oversee transcribing and interpreting services at educational institutions. The survey was titled, "Quality Assurance for Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Accommodations."

There were 109 survey respondents. 92% of respondents were interpreting and/or transcription supervisors from post-secondary educational institutions, while the rest were worked in government or K-12 settings, agencies, etc.

Definitions:

For the purposes of this survey, we provided the following definitions.

Quality Assurance: The oversight and maintenance of a level of quality and professionalism required for a particular consumer or set of consumers, by observing, comparing to a standard, and giving feedback.

Communication Access: Interpreting, oral transliteration, real-time transcribing, captioning, etc. but NOT "notetaking."

Survey respondents were asked to focus on the actual transcript or interpreted message, produced in real time.

Survey results:

Following are the survey questions and responses, including some examples of freeform comments that were typed by individual respondents. In the PowerPoint slides, these statistics are presented as pie charts and bar graphs.

How would you rate the importance of Quality Assurance?

- Extremely important, 78%
- Important, 21%
- Somewhat important, 1%

Which categories of service providers do you employ?

In order from greatest to fewest responses:

- Independent Contractors
- Agency/Vendor
- Part-Time Staff
- Full-Time Staff
- Student Worker

Which QA procedures are in place?

In order from greatest to fewest responses:

- Student/Consumer Feedback
- Supervisor reviews work after class
- Unannounced observations
- Schedule observations
- Observations outside of class
- No QA procedures in place
- Other
- I don't know.

Sample of freeform comments about Quality Assurance procedures

- "Supervisor team interprets class, provides mentoring and feedback; regularly has group meetings with interpreters to debrief and/or discuss issues that could affect quality."
- "Applicants are pre-screened."

How often do you measure the quality of your STAFF providers' services?

In order from greatest to fewest responses:

- Only when issues arise
- Once per term
- Once a year
- Ongoing
- Once a month

How often do you measure the quality of your FREELANCE providers' services?

In order from greatest to fewest responses:

- Only when issues arise
- Once per term
- Once a year
- Once a month
- Ongoing

How often do you measure the quality of your AGENCY providers' services?

In order from greatest to fewest responses:

- Only when issues arise
- Once per term
- Never – QA is the agency's responsibility
- Once a month
- Once a year

Sample of freeform comments about the frequency of QA measurement:

- "Throughout the semester, then have a formal performance evaluation once a year."
- "Student feedback is ongoing allowing us to intervene when needed."
- "More often, if issues arise."
- "More frequently if skills don't meet expectations."

How important is consumer feedback to the QA process?

- Extremely important, 71%
- Important, 26%
- Somewhat important, 3%

How do you obtain student/consumer feedback?

In order from greatest to fewest responses:

- Face to face
- As needed
- Surveys
- By request

Sample of freeform comments about the student/consumer feedback:

- “We always encourage students to be self-advocates and reach out when situations are not working.”
- “As is often the case with surveys (like instructor evaluations), getting students to provide feedback can be challenging.”

Are pay increases/decreases tied to the outcome of the QA results?

- No/Never, 84%
- Sometimes, 9%
- Yes, 5%
- Depends, 2%

Sample of freeform comments about whether pay increases and decreases are tied to QA:

- “Staff must perform well on their performance evaluations to have pay increases.”
- “Staff are eligible for merit increases after a certain amount of time of service, at my discretion. It's at this point that I consider the feedback I've received...”

Sample of freeform comments about whether continued employment is tied to QA:

- “Continued employment with us is tied to the results of QA.”
- “If it is a contractor, I will decrease or stop using them if their quality of work is not up to par for the needs of the students/consumers.”

Sample of freeform comments about whether hiring is tied to QA:

- “Before being hired, their skills are evaluated quite critically. If they are not near perfect, the writer is not hired.”
- “I only hire specific service providers whose work I know and am familiar with.”