Supporting Students with Sensory Disabilities

Sensory disabilities include a range of conditions affecting vision, hearing, or other senses. Every student experiences their disability differently, and therefore support should be guided by individual needs, preferences, and the learning context. Inclusive teaching practices and appropriate adjustments can help ensure equitable access to learning.

The following strategies may support students who are **Blind or have Low Vision**, and students who are **Deaf or Hard of hearing**. Individual needs and preferences will vary, hence it is important to discuss appropriate supports with the student where possible.

Supporting Students who are Blind or have Low Vision

1 Address students by name



- Address students by name when speaking to them.
- This help students who are blind or have low vision know when you are directing a question or comment to them.

2 Introduce yourself

- When starting a conversation, identify yourself before speaking, especially if the student may not recognise your voice.

Instead of...	Try...
"Hi Jeff."	"Hi Jeff, this is Dr Koh from your Early Childhood Class."

3 Describe visual information aloud



- When writing on the board or referring to diagrams, slides or demonstrations, explain the key information verbally so everyone can access it.

4 Use clear, descriptive language

- Rather than saying "it's over there," describe where items are using specific locations or landmarks.

Instead of...	Try...
"The pencil is there."	"The pencil is under your table, next to your right foot."

5 Provide accessible learning materials



- Share digital course materials in accessible formats where possible so students can use assistive technologies such as screen readers or magnification software.

6 Discuss seating preferences

- Ask the student where they would prefer to sit, as seating needs vary depending on their vision, the classroom layout, and the learning activity.

Supporting Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing



1 Discuss seating preferences

- Ask the student where they would prefer to sit. Some may choose to sit closer to the lecturer to improve visibility or hearing, while others may have different preferences.

2 Use assistive technology



- Use assistive listening technology where available.
- Ensure microphones and assistive listening systems are used consistently during lessons.

3 Face students when speaking



- Communicate clearly and face the class when speaking.
- Avoid speaking while turned away from students or covering your mouth, as many students who are Deaf or hard of hearing rely on lip-reading, facial expressions, and visual cues.

4 Ensure good lighting

- Good lighting helps students who rely on lip-reading or visual cues to see the speaker clearly.

5 Speak directly to the student

- If a sign language interpreter is present, address the student – not the interpreter – and maintain eye contact with the student during conversation.

6 Provide information in accessible formats

- Share presentation slides, lecture notes, or key information before or after class where appropriate.
- This helps students review information they may have missed while watching an interpreter or lip-reading.



7 Use captions whenever possible

If captions are unavailable, provide an accessible alternative where appropriate.



8 Facilitate inclusive discussions

Facilitate accessible classroom discussions. Encourage one person to speak at a time, repeat or summarise questions from the class, and ensure speakers are visible whenever possible.



For more info on supporting students with accessibility needs, visit suss.edu.sg/sas or email Student Accessibility Support (SAS) at sas@suss.edu.sg