

Teacher of the Deaf interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Teacher of the Deaf roles usually combine a panel conversation with scenario-based tasks and a chance to discuss your philosophy of communication. The panel will want to see how you assess needs, plan programs, and work with families and allied health professionals.

- **Process and planning:** Questions about how you assess students, design individual learning plans and monitor progress.
- **Behavioural and collaboration:** Questions asking for examples of working with teachers, audiologists or speech pathologists.
- **Scenario and judgement:** Hypothetical classroom situations where you have to think on your feet and apply your knowledge of hearing technology and adjustments.
- **Technical and communication:** Questions about Auslan, spoken language, audiological equipment and your approach to language development.
- **Family and client-facing:** Questions about building trust with parents and carers, and handling disagreement or sensitive conversations.

The interview may start with a panel of two or three people, often including a school leader, a specialist teacher and sometimes an allied health professional. You might be asked to respond to a written scenario or case study, and there may be a follow-up meeting with the family or a tour of the setting. Some services include a practical task such as planning a lesson or reviewing a student's individual learning plan. You will usually have a chance to ask questions at the end.

1. Walk us through how you assess a new student's hearing, language and communication needs.

Why they ask

This question tests your clinical and educational assessment skills, and whether you can combine audiological data with classroom observation.

How to structure your answer

Use a chronological walk-through: before the student arrives, during the first sessions, and how you translate findings into an individual learning plan. Mention the tools and people you involve.

Example answer

"When a new student is referred, I start by reviewing any audiological reports, hearing aid or cochlear implant settings, and any early intervention records. I then meet the family to understand the child's communication history at home and their preferred mode, whether that is spoken language, Auslan or a mix. In the first few sessions, I use play-based and formal assessments to check receptive and expressive language, speech sounds, and social communication. I also observe the student in the classroom, looking at how they access instructions, group work and incidental conversation. I might use Boardmaker to create visual supports during these observations. Once I have a clear picture, I write up an individual learning plan with goals, adjustments and strategies, and I share it with the family, the class teacher and any allied health professionals. We review it each term and adjust as the student grows."

2. Tell me about a time you adapted a lesson or classroom environment for a student with hearing loss.

Why they ask

They want evidence of practical differentiation and your ability to work with classroom teachers.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Keep the result specific but without inflated numbers.

Example answer

"In my last school, I supported a Year 5 student with bilateral hearing aids who was placed in a large, echo-prone classroom. The task was to help him access a science unit on states of matter, which involved a lot of teacher talk and group discussion. I worked with the class teacher to reposition his desk away from the air conditioner and to use a sound-field FM system so her voice came directly to his receivers. I also pre-taught key vocabulary using Boardmaker symbols and a short video before each lesson. During group work, I encouraged the teacher to use a 'talk ticket' system so only one person spoke at a time. By the end of the unit, the student was answering questions in class without prompting and his test results showed he had understood the core concepts. The teacher kept the FM system and talk tickets for the rest of the year."

3. A student with a cochlear implant is struggling to follow group discussions. What would you do?

Why they ask

This is a scenario question to see how you think on your feet and apply your knowledge of listening technology and classroom strategies.

How to structure your answer

Show your judgement under pressure: first, clarify the problem; second, assess quickly; third, implement immediate adjustments; fourth, review and involve others.

Example answer

"I would start by observing the student during a typical group discussion to pin down where the breakdown happens. Is it background noise, the speed of turn-taking, or the student missing the start of a sentence? I would check the cochlear implant processor and any FM system to make sure they are working and set correctly. Then I would introduce immediate adjustments: maybe a portable FM system passed around the group, or a visual cue like a small ball to signal whose turn it is to speak. I would also remind the group to face the student and speak one at a time. After a week, I would check in with the student and the teacher to see if things have improved. If not, I would contact the audiologist to review the implant settings and maybe arrange a listening check. Throughout, I would keep the family informed and document what we tried."

4. How do you collaborate with audiologists, speech pathologists and families to support a student's progress?

Why they ask

This role is highly collaborative, so they want to know you can work in a team and communicate clearly.

How to structure your answer

Describe your general approach, then give a concrete example of a collaboration that worked well. Highlight how you share information and respect different expertise.

Example answer

"I see collaboration as a continuous loop. I make sure I have consent to share information, then I set up regular communication with the audiologist and speech pathologist, usually through a shared online document or Microsoft Teams. I attend appointments when I can, or I send through my observations from the classroom. For example, a student I worked with was getting new hearing aids, and the audiologist wanted to know how she was responding in noisy environments like the school hall. I collected data over two weeks, noting when she missed instructions and how she reacted. The audiologist used that to fine-tune the settings, and the speech pathologist adjusted her therapy goals to focus on listening in noise. I also met with the family every fortnight to share progress and make sure the strategies at school matched what they were doing at home. The student's confidence in group settings grew noticeably."

5. What is your experience teaching Auslan, spoken language or both, and how do you decide which approach to use?

Why they ask

They want to know your philosophy and flexibility. Some services are bilingual-bicultural, others focus on spoken language.

How to structure your answer

Explain your experience honestly, then describe how you make decisions with the family and the student. Emphasise that the choice is individual and can change over time.

Example answer

"I have taught both spoken language and Auslan, and I have worked in settings where a bilingual approach was used. I start by asking the family about their goals and what communication looks like at home. If the family uses Auslan, I will prioritise that and build literacy through Auslan. If they want spoken language, I focus on listening and spoken language strategies, often with hearing technology. I also watch the student: some children thrive with a spoken language approach, while others need visual language to access the curriculum fully. For example, I worked with a preschooler who had limited spoken language after receiving cochlear implants. We introduced key word sign and Auslan alongside spoken English, and within a few months he was using signs to request and comment, which reduced his frustration. Over time, his spoken vocabulary grew, and we gradually increased the spoken component. The decision is never fixed; it is reviewed regularly with the family and the student."

6. How do you handle a situation where a parent disagrees with your recommended approach for their child?

Why they ask

Family-centred practice is central, so they want to see you can navigate conflict respectfully.

How to structure your answer

Show empathy first, then problem-solving, then collaboration. Avoid being defensive. Mention documentation and follow-up.

Example answer

"I would start by listening properly to the parent's concerns and acknowledging that they know their child best. I would ask questions to understand what specifically worries them about my recommendation. Maybe they have had a previous experience that didn't work, or they have heard something different from another professional. I would share the evidence behind my suggestion in plain language, and I would be open to trying a different approach if it is safe and reasonable. For instance, a parent once felt that her son should not use a sound-field FM system because she worried it would make him stand out. I explained how the system could be discreet, and we agreed to trial it for two weeks with a clear review date. I also invited her to observe a lesson so she could see the difference. After the trial, she was comfortable continuing. I documented the conversation and the agreed plan, and we kept talking regularly. The key is to keep the relationship respectful and focused on the child."