**Guidelines for Irish Sign Language Interpretation in Examinations**

To effectively integrate Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpretation into examinations for students whose first language is ISL, universities should establish comprehensive guidelines that ensure the process is fair, equitable, and maintains the integrity of the examination. Here's a detailed set of guidelines that universities can adopt to facilitate this accommodation:

**1. Pre-Examination Arrangements**

* **1.1 Interpreter Booking**: Ensure that a qualified ISL interpreter is booked well in advance of the examination. The interpreter should be experienced in educational settings and familiar with academic vocabulary.
* **1.2 Pre-Examination Meeting**: Arrange a meeting between the student, interpreter, and invigilator prior to the examination date to discuss the format of the exam, any specific needs, and to establish communication preferences and styles.

**2. Interpreter Responsibilities**

* **2.1 Arrival and Preparation**: The interpreter should arrive at the examination venue ahead of time to make necessary seating arrangements and to interpret any preliminary interactions between the invigilators and the student.
* **2.2 Fidelity to Content**: During the examination, the interpreter must translate the content accurately without adding, omitting, or altering the information. This includes translating examination questions, instructions, and any clarifications as needed.
* **2.3 Interaction Translation**: The interpreter is responsible for translating all communications between the examiner and the student. This includes questions, answers, and any requests for clarification.

**3. During the Examination**

* **3.1 Continuous Availability**: The interpreter should be available throughout the examination to translate all announcements and instructions given by the invigilator.
* **3.2 Clarity in Communication**: If clarification of a question is needed after the initial translation, the interpreter may rephrase their interpretation but must not introduce new information. Any unresolved issues should be referred directly to the examiner.
* **3.3 No Additional Assistance**: The interpreter must not provide examples, contextual information, or guidance that could aid the student in answering the examination questions.

**4. Special Provisions**

* **4.1 Translation of Responses**: If the student opts to answer in ISL and requires transcription, the interpreter may assist by translating the student’s responses into written English. Care must be taken to ensure that this translation does not disrupt the student’s flow or introduce inaccuracies.
* **4.2 Handling Disruptions**: If frequent clarifications are needed, impacting the student’s performance, this issue should be reported immediately to the Disability/Access Officer to consider finding a more suitable interpreter for future examinations.

**5. Post-Examination Procedures**

* **5.1 Feedback Collection**: Collect feedback from both the student and the interpreter after the examination to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication and interpretation provided. Use this feedback to improve processes and training.
* **5.2 Review and Adjustment**: Regularly review the guidelines and practices associated with the use of ISL interpreters to ensure they are up-to-date and meet the students' needs effectively.

**Conclusion**

By implementing these guidelines, universities can provide a supportive and equitable examination environment for students who communicate through Irish Sign Language. This not only enhances their ability to perform to their potential but also ensures that the examinations are conducted fairly and respectfully, maintaining academic integrity.

**Guidelines for Students Using Irish Sign Language to Answer Examination Questions**

For students who choose to use Irish Sign Language (ISL) to answer questions in examinations, universities should have specific procedures to accommodate this preference efficiently and fairly. This includes the use of video recording to capture the ISL responses, ensuring that these are accurately transcribed and assessed. Here’s how universities can structure these guidelines:

**1. Student Preparation and Notification**

* **1.1 Advance Notification**: Students who intend to use ISL for their exam responses must notify the university’s disability services office well in advance of the examination date. This allows adequate time to arrange for the necessary resources and support.
* **1.2 Consent for Recording**: Obtain written consent from the student for video recording their examination responses. Clearly explain the purpose, use, and confidentiality measures concerning the video recordings.

**2. Setup and Equipment**

* **2.1 Video Recording Setup**: Arrange for a quiet, private examination room equipped with high-quality video recording equipment. The setup should include a camera with clear visual and audio capture capabilities to accurately record ISL responses.
* **2.2 Technical Check**: Perform a technical rehearsal before the exam to ensure all equipment functions correctly and that the recording angle and lighting conditions optimize the visibility of ISL signs.

**3. Examination Conduct**

* **3.1 Presence of Interpreter**: An ISL interpreter should be present not only to facilitate the translation of the examination paper and questions into ISL but also to assist in recording the student’s responses if necessary.
* **3.2 Clear Instructions**: Provide the student and the interpreter with clear instructions on how the responses should be signed to ensure clarity and ease of transcription later. Instructions should emphasize the need to maintain a consistent signing space and visibility to the camera.

**4. Recording Guidelines**

* **4.1 Continuous Recording**: The video recording should start before the examination begins and continue until completion to capture all interactions and responses without interruption.
* **4.2 Backup Measures**: Implement backup recording measures, such as a secondary camera or recording device, to prevent data loss due to technical failures.

**5. Post-Examination Processing**

* **5.1 Secure Storage**: Store the video recordings securely, with access restricted to authorized personnel only, to maintain confidentiality and integrity of the examination responses.
* **5.2 Transcription Process**: Arrange for the recorded ISL responses to be transcribed accurately into English by a qualified individual who is fluent in ISL and familiar with academic content. This transcription should be verified for accuracy by another independent ISL expert.

**6. Assessment and Feedback**

* **6.1 Fair Assessment**: Ensure that the transcriptions of ISL responses are assessed with the same criteria and rigor as written responses to uphold fairness in grading.
* **6.2 Feedback and Review**: After the examination, provide the student with an opportunity to review the transcribed responses and the video recording to confirm that their responses were accurately captured and transcribed. Address any discrepancies or concerns raised by the student promptly.

**Conclusion**

These guidelines aim to support students using Irish Sign Language in examinations by providing a clear, fair, and standardized process for recording and assessing their responses. By carefully planning and executing these steps, universities can ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities in a format that best suits their communication preferences. This approach not only enhances inclusivity but also respects the linguistic and cultural identity of ISL users.