

ENGLISH HELPSHEET

COMMUNICATING WITH FOREIGN STUDENTS OR RESEARCHERS

Sources:

www.wikihow.com

Seven Ways to Better Communicate in Today's Diverse Workplace, by Kim Ribbink, Harvard Business School

<http://sites-final.uclouvain.be/lexique/lexique.php>

→ Check official UCL translations in the UCL-KUL official dictionary under

<http://sites-final.uclouvain.be/lexique/lexique.php>

1) Expect differences

Different cultures will speak at different volumes, be more or less direct in showing emotion in their facial expressions, may or may not expect to engage in “small talk,” may communicate according to social hierarchies, etc. When communicating with people from other cultures, be prepared to encounter such differences, including ones that you were not aware of.

2) Be patient

Communicating with people from other cultures can be enlightening and rewarding, but also have its difficulties. Expect that not everything will come out quite right or be fully understood. Be patient with others, and ask them to be patient with you. Be patient when others are trying to use your language. We know that it doesn't mean that someone thinks slowly just because they talk slowly.

3) Be upfront about difficulties in communication

It is important to state with no ambiguity the rules adhered to in your country and organization so that foreign nationals know what your expectations are and that they be acculturated to the way that things are done in your institution, all the while staying flexible about differences.

If you cannot understand someone, or think that he or she does not understand you, say something about it. Avoid being rude or offensive, but patiently explain the problem. It's usually better to be upfront than to let a problem in communication go unaddressed, since there may otherwise be bigger problems later.

- If you do not understand:

→ Sorry?/ Excuse Me?/ Pardon?

→ Can you repeat that? / Can you speak slower / more slowly?

→ I'm not sure I understood you. Could we go over that again?

→ I'm sorry, I didn't quite understand the last part / the second bit / at the beginning.

→ Would you mind saying it again for me please?

→ Sorry, what does “word” mean?

- If you think that someone does not understand you:

→ Let's review things to make sure we're all on the same page.

→ Do you have any questions for me?

→ Is there anything that you would like me to explain more in detail?

→ Do you know what I mean?/ what I'm saying?

→ How do you say “word”?

- Help with spelling (e.g. of names):

NATO Phonetic Alphabet

Letter	phonetic letter
A	Alpha
B	Bravo
C	Charlie
D	Delta
E	Echo
F	Foxtrot
G	Golf
H	Hotel
I	India
J	Juliet
K	Kilo
L	Lima
M	Mike
N	November
O	Oscar
P	Papa
Q	Quebec
R	Romeo
S	Sierra
T	Tango
U	Uniform
V	Victor
W	Whiskey
X	X-ray
Y	Yankee
Z	Zulu

Western Union Phonetic Alphabet

Letter	phonetic letter
A	Adams
B	Boston
C	Chicago
D	Denver
E	Easy
F	Frank
G	George
H	Henry
I	Ida
J	John
K	King
L	Lincoln
M	Mary
N	New York
O	Ocean
P	Peter
Q	Queen
R	Roger
S	Sugar
T	Thomas
U	Union
V	Victor
W	William
X	X-ray
Y	Young
Z	Zero

4) Talking about practical questions

- Enrolment
Enrolment office / Central administration
Tuition fee
- Student accommodation / housing / dormitory / house / flat / room
Accommodation office / student housing office
- Campus
Pedestrian campus
Green areas
Library
- City council
Administrative procedure
Register with the municipality