



## Project Case Study

---

### Bath Spa University, Bath

#### **| The Challenge...**

To meet legislative requirements and improve accessibility for hearing impaired students

#### **| The Solution...**

A range of induction loop and infrared systems from Gordon Morris Ltd

#### **| The Benefits...**

Improved accessibility for hearing impaired students

Educational premises such as universities and schools face unique pressure to improve access for disabled students. Not only are they expected to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 amendments, they are also subject to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). This act demands that educational institutions take reasonable measures to avoid disabled students being

substantially disadvantaged in relation to accessing student services. In addition to these legislative controls, improving disabled access can help an establishment be more effective and competitive.

## **Disability Support**

Bath Spa University is a medium-sized institution with a friendly atmosphere, set in beautiful grounds near the city of Bath. It offers a range of courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level, boasting a strong track record of teaching excellence. The Disability Support Office at the university offers a range of services to students and prospective students, to support those who have a disability to get the most from their studies. Serving nearly 400 disabled students including 13 who have hearing impairments, Disability Officer Hannah Bagnell is responsible for delivering services in a friendly and approachable manner. *"We offer drop in sessions, one-to-one meetings, we meet students and applicants on open days and we're available throughout the summer. We liaise with support services, registry, academics and so on. We also offer advice on Disabled Student Allowances (DSAs)."*

## **Winning the Contract**

In response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, Bath Spa University decided to install hearing loop systems in many of their lecture halls and seminar rooms. The tender process was overseen by external consultants on behalf of the university's Property Services team and Gordon Morris Ltd emerged as the successful contractor. As Hannah Bagnell explains, *"Property Services use a specialist consultant to oversee the tendering process. Our guys go to the consultant and say this is what we want and they come back with an appropriate contractor."* Gordon Morris Ltd provided advice and consultation in developing an appropriate solution for the university's needs. The result was

that in 2004 a number of induction loop and infrared systems were supplied and installed in most classrooms, to make learning more accessible for students who are deaf or have a hearing impairment.

Hannah describes the quality of service received from Gordon Morris Ltd as *“excellent”*. Other members of staff involved with the project have also had similar opinions. *“I know the company is really good at contacting us and being really helpful. Other staff who worked in the office here at the time the system was installed said really good things about it. Everything I hear has been really positive.”*

### **Improving Uptake**

Although uptake of the new facility by students has been quite slow, Gordon Morris Ltd. is continuing to work with the university to help them get the most from their investment. Developing a strategy for advertising the availability and benefits of the technology available at the university is important to ensure that it delivers value for money and optimum accessibility for hearing impaired students. Managing Director Gordon Morris has returned to the university since the installation was made to deliver presentations to key staff and students, in an effort to ensure that the systems are not being underutilised and contact between the two organisations is ongoing.

Hannah Bagnell is confident that the systems will become more popular in future as the facility is more widely advertised. *“We have it available for Open Days and we get students and their parents using the system. In the future, we expect to have more deaf students who will definitely use it. The fact that we have hearing systems in place means we’re making everything inclusive. At the moment we’re working on our Disability Equality Scheme and it’s important for us to tell local disabled people and their organisations that the facilities are here. This means they can access many more public events at Bath Spa than they might have believed possible.”*

Gordon Morris Ltd would like to thank Hannah Bagnell for her kind cooperation with this article and wishes the students and staff at Bath Spa University the very best for the future.

To find out more about what they can offer visit: <http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/>