

British Sign Language

**Catherine Mills and Alison Blunt; School of Geography
Westfield Fund**

During 2017/18, the School of Geography ran two-weekly one-hour British Sign Language (BSL) classes for students and staff, delivered by Sister Marika Rebicsek (a fully qualified BSL teacher). This was prompted by **wanting to enhance communication with a profoundly deaf UG student starting his studies in the School.**

Aim

To enhance communication, inclusivity and access in the School of Geography through teaching students and staff BSL; to increase deaf awareness.

Exam success

The classes have been attended by 11 students and one member of staff during the academic year 2018/19. All students who took Unit 101: Introduction: passed, with three students completing an additional Unit 103: BSL at School, College or Work and two students obtaining their full Level 1 certificate.

Sister Marika states:

'It has been an enriching experience not only for the students but myself and my Hearing Dog as we try to bring a little bit of deaf awareness to the campus. Two students passed the full BSL Level 1 qualification in just 40 hours of teaching time (exam board recommends 66 hours!) and it has unearthed some talent too!'

Student comments:

'It has been really enjoyable to learn such a worthwhile skill and have my progress recognised through the completion of exams.'
(Charlotte Watson, BA Geography 2019)

'Marika has thoroughly taught us the foundation knowledge for communicating in sign, not only words but etiquette and when to use certain phrases... I feel this course has given me an opportunity to pursue a full qualification in BSL and help the deaf community.'
(Laura Deacon, BSc Geography 2019)



School of Geography students and staff
with Sister Marika and Hearing Dog