

§ 1. Catherine Cassidy has every reason to be proud. This summer she graduated with a degree in Zoology from Queen's University, Belfast. She has ambitions to be a scientific journalist. She is also completely deaf. She can lipread. I interviewed Catherine via e-mail. She told me getting to university was an achievement in itself. She says: 'You have to work much harder than your peers (*сверстники*) and have to be prepared to commit yourself.'

§ 2. The Disability Discrimination Act insists that universities increase their intake of special needs students. But there are difficulties. First, there are no reliable figures on the numbers of disabled in the community, so universities are unsure of the percentages they should be aiming **to recruit**. Second, some students might require specially adapted computers, or online learning support. Of all the disabilities, deafness is probably the one that is hardest to cope with at university. Universities run on talk. Knowledge is communicated in lectures, seminars, talking to fellow students — reading is only secondary. For deaf students, casual spontaneous discussions **are out**.

§ 3. Fortunately for Catherine, Queen's University is a centre of excellence for the teaching of deaf students. The Joint Universities Deaf Education centre (JUDE) organised a special phonic earpiece (*слуховой аппарат*) that enabled Catherine to listen to lectures. JUDE has been extended to the other higher education institutions of Northern Ireland. JUDE is setting an example in what can be achieved. Sharon Easton, deaf student support officer, says: 'We visit schools to make deaf people aware that higher education is a possibility. Another part of our role is to talk with employers. We're offering them deaf awareness training — how to adapt to the needs of deaf employees, and where to apply for grants.'

§ 4. Catherine's skill in lip-reading made communicating with her seem so effortless that many people did not believe she had a problem. At times this experience has been painful. Catherine says: 'People have labelled me "not really deaf". It is like telling me I don't count. And this can be very disheartening, very demoralising.'

§ 5. Catherine believes that excellent and well-focused special needs support should be available to all disabled students at university whatever the cost. She says: 'You are accepted by a university on the basis of your ability to carry out mental tasks. You have a right to be there - people should not judge a person by any physical disability.'

Прочитайте текст. Ответьте на вопросы.

The main problem for deaf students at university is that

- 1) it is difficult to get phonic earpieces.
- 2) most learning takes place through the spoken word.
- 3) fellow students won't talk to them.