

## Notetaking

Pursuant to the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, The University of Akron does not discriminate against any student because of a disability and does not exclude any qualified student with a disability from participation in or from receiving the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University.

Notetakers are generally students who are enrolled in the same class as the student. Students requesting notetakers must select the course(s) in which they need a notetaker through STARS. Students are encouraged to request a notetaker as soon as they have made their final course selection. Once the student selects the course, the Instructor Guidelines for Securing Notetakers (the Notetaker Memo) will be emailed to the instructor. An accommodation letter will be emailed separately to the instructor.

The Notetaker Memo explains to the instructor the process of identifying eligible notetakers. It also includes an anonymous announcement for the instructor to read to the class in order to recruit a notetaker. Students should ask the instructor to read the memo explaining the notetaker position. A potential notetaker can either sign up through STARS or in person at the Office of Accessibility (OA). A notetaker from the class will be hired if all the employment criteria are met.

### **For questions or concerns regarding notetaking accommodations, please contact:**

#### **Notetaker Coordinator**

Leigh Sveda, [lab10@uakron.edu](mailto:lab10@uakron.edu)

Provided each student completes his/her responsibilities as noted below, the OA will assign a notetaker in a timely manner, within two (2) weeks from approval of notetaker services. Where notetaker services are approved prior to the beginning of a semester, OA will assign a notetaker within two (2) weeks from the first day of class.

### **Steps in Receiving Notetaking Services**

1. Students receive the notetaker accommodation approved by a Disability Specialist in the OA.
2. Students request accommodation letters each semester through STARS. Instructors will receive the Instructor Guidelines for Securing Notetakers. Notetakers are required to obtain a signed copy of the Instructor Verification form and attach one page worth of sample notes, which the instructor examines for quality. Notetakers must return the completed Instructor Verification form with a copy of their notes to the OA within two weeks of being hired.
3. The accommodation letters and memos are emailed to the instructors. Instructors will read the request aloud to the class. Interested students in the class will sign up through STARS or in the OA.
4. Notetaker's qualifications will be verified, and the notetaker will be hired contingent on successful completion of the online notetaker training and the submission of a signed copy of the Instructor Verification form and sample notes. The notetaker must complete the online training and submit the online form within two weeks of his/her hire date. If hired, the notetaker will be given the student's contact information in order to arrange the delivery of notes.

### **Notetaker No Shows**

1. If a notetaker does not report to class, the student will notify the instructor and the Disability Specialist.

2. In the absence of the notetaker, the student receiving notes should utilize his/her audio recorder accommodation. One of the purposes of the audio recorder accommodation is to be a backup if a notetaker is absent.
3. An audio recorder can be checked out from the OA at the beginning of the semester and kept for the whole semester. The audio recorder must be returned by the end of the final exam period each semester for maintenance purposes. There is an existing Equipment Loan policy that students follow when checking out equipment from the OA.
4. If the notetaker is absent two or more consecutive classes, the student must notify the instructor and notetaker coordinator to determine whether a replacement notetaker is needed.
5. In those situations where an approved notetaker is unable to continue, the following four options will be reviewed with the student and student's Disability Specialist in order to determine which is the appropriate fit for the student's accommodation needs:
  - The student will utilize his/her audio recorder for the remainder of the semester.
  - Instructors will be asked to provide a comprehensive copy of their notes.
  - A temporary notetaker will be assigned to the class, including instructor referrals.
  - A new notetaker will be assigned to the class and be required to complete the hiring process as outlined above.

The notetaking accommodation is individualized to the student's needs. In some cases, copies of professors' PowerPoint presentations and notes could be the most appropriate and effective option for the student. For example, an instructor could provide more comprehensive notes than those of a student notetaker. However, the notetaker service is generally the first and preferred option. Other services should only be utilized on a short-term basis or when a student specifically requests alternative services and such services are appropriate and available.

### **Sources for replacement notetakers include:**

- Instructor recommendations of students in their classes
- Another notetaker who has signed up through STARS

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Request the course needing a notetaker through STARS; ideally prior to the start of classes.
- By the end of the first week of classes, students must determine for which classes a notetaker is still desired. While a student remains eligible for notetakers, many students find that there are some classes they either don't need or want a notetaker. Throughout the process, the OA will continue to reach out to students to determine a continuing need for notetakers. If no notetaker is in place by the end of the first week of the semester, the OA has reached out to the student at least twice, and the student has not contacted the office, the OA will assume that the student is no longer interested in this accommodation.
- If students no longer require a notetaker for their services, they must notify the OA by the second week of the semester. If no notetaker is required, students must update the accommodation request for each class in STARS.
- A student who wishes to obtain a notetaker beyond the sixth week of the semester is required to meet with his or her Disability Specialist to review and discuss this request.
- If notetakers upload the notes to STARS, students will need to download notes for use.
- Students must attend class to receive notes for that day, unless the student is prevented from attending due to an exacerbation of symptoms related to their disability.
- Students must communicate with their assigned notetaker to determine the delivery method that will be used to provide the notes throughout the semester. Course notes can be hand delivered, emailed directly to the student, or uploaded to STARS.
- Students receiving notes are responsible for notifying the OA if the notes they receive are inadequate or not supplied on a regular basis. You know your notes are adequate when:
  - ✓ They are legible.

- ✓ They include important information from lectures.
- ✓ They include information written on the board.
- ✓ They include information about homework assignments.

At the end of each semester, students will have the ability to evaluate their notetakers through STARS.

### **Additional Notetaker Coordinator and OA Responsibilities**

- Beginning in week 3, the Notetaker Coordinator will email all students who do not have notetakers secured by weeks 1 and 2 of the semester.
- The OA and the Notetaker Coordinator will ensure an adequate number of trained notetakers.
- Notetakers will all undergo mandatory training (see online training program).
- OA staff will begin identifying eligible notetakers much earlier in the process (i.e., several weeks before the semester begins) through earlier access to class rosters.
- OA will increase advertisement for eligible notetakers across campus.
- All notetakers must read and accept the STARS Notetaker Contract prior to becoming notetakers.

## **Notetaking Tips**

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Request the courses needing notetaking services through STARS **at least 3 weeks** before the beginning of the semester.
- **It is your responsibility to contact your notetaker.** This information can be found under the “Notetaking Services” tab on your STARS profile.
- Attend each class session in order to receive the notes for that day. If you do not attend class, the notetaker is not required to provide the notes to you for that missed day.
- Take your own notes. The purpose of your notetaker’s notes is to supplement the notes that you have taken.
- Notify the Notetaker Coordinator or your Disability Specialist if you have questions or concerns about your notetaking accommodation, as it pertains to non-lecture courses.

### **Tips for Success**

- Notetaking services may not be necessary for all classes, including labs and online courses. **Only choose the notetaking accommodation for the classes you truly would like a notetaker.**
- Work with your instructor to find a notetaker for the class. If you know a student who would like to be your notetaker, please have the student contact the Notetaker Coordinator to sign up. Otherwise, the Office of Accessibility will recruit students from your classes to be notetakers.
- Make sure to use your audio recorder as a back-up means of getting lecture information.
- We encourage you to keep regular communication with your notetakers to ensure that you receive quality notes on a regular basis!

\*Please note, students who receive notetaking accommodations will not be eligible to be a notetaker in other classes.

\*In cases where a student has requested a notetaker for a non-lecture course, they will be contacted by the Notetaker Coordinator, to determine whether a notetaking accommodation is appropriate or needed for the course. Please note, in cases of distance learning or online courses, the Office of Accessibility may be unable to fulfill an in-class notetaker recruitment due to the online nature of the course or the location of the class. Additionally, in cases of online courses, a peer notetaker cannot be guaranteed, and students are encouraged to utilize lecture recordings and copies of instructor provided notes, to supplement their own notes.