



NOTE TAKER POLICY

Description:

Notetaking services and/or supports are an in-class accommodation used to support those who have documented disabilities impacting focus, processing speed, comprehension, hand writing/typing, concentration, hearing, vision, or attention. It is a tool used to allow students to focus on one activity at a time (e.g. devoting their full attention to the lecture, discussions, demonstrations, or other learning activities). Examples of disabilities that may affect these major life activities include (but are not limited to):

- Visual or hearing impairment
- Psychiatric Disability
- Specific Learning Disability
- ADD/ ADHD
- Other Medical Conditions and Medications

A note taker or notetaking support software allows students to access full educational material from classroom and online courses. This provides students with equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the course material.

Common ways to provide note taking accommodations include the following:

- Guided Notes
- Instructor Lecture Notes
- Copies of Notes by a Designated Note Taker
- Audio Recordings/ Supported Note Taking Software

Guided notes are outlines, provided by the instructor, with spaces or blanks that the student can fill in during the lecture. Copies of presentation overheads might also serve as guides for note taking. Guided notes encourage student participation during class and minimize the amount of writing required to keep up with the information being presented. Guided notes can be provided to a student as a hard copy or electronically.

An instructor can provide their *lecture notes* to a student prior to the lecture. This allows the student to concentrate on the information given and participate

in discussions. For some students it is helpful to refer to these notes during the lecture.

Audio recording, particularly with supported note taking software, is the most accurate and complete way to capture class information, except in situations where the lecture format is highly visual, as it might be in math or science classes (math problems on the board or demonstrations in science). Recordings without note taking software may be time-consuming to review. Additionally, this support is not useful for a person with a hearing impairment (although dictation software could be beneficial).

Copies of notes, from a designated note taker or volunteer from the class, can be written on NCR (no carbon required) paper, photocopied or shared electronically. While these methods are easy to use, there are several factors that may limit their usefulness:

- Legibility or clarity issues
- Notes rely on the writer's interpretation of the lecture, which may not match what the student needs to help remember key concepts
- Risk of peer note taker unable to make it to class due to extenuating circumstances, meaning the Accommodated student could lack support

Note Taking Support Software

Students who are interested in using Notetaking Support Software can contact the Director of Accessibility Services to review available options. Students can also work with Accessibility Services to learn to use software/ receive training.

Examples include:

- OneNote
- Evernote
- Notability
- Glean

As of Fall 2020, Accessibility Services will also be able to rent out (1) Livescribe Smart Pen each semester.

Overview of Roles and Responsibilities for Peer Notetaking Support

Faculty

Faculty members will be asked to assist in recruiting note takers for a particular class, or recommend students who might be effective note takers.

Faculty Responsibilities

1. Receive notification (via email) that notetaking is a reasonable accommodation for a student with a disability who is enrolled in a particular section of a class being taught this term.
2. Read the class announcement during two consecutive class periods to assist in recruiting a notetaker, or ask a specific student or teaching assistant to take notes for the student. Faculty may also email the entire class with the request for recruiting a note taker. The class announcement is as follows:

"Accessibility Services are looking for a peer note taker in this class willing to share a copy of class notes with another student. This is an excellent community service and an opportunity to help improve their own learning techniques. If they are interested or would like more information, please see me at the end of class today.

Peer tutors are provided with **[a certification from MMU indicating that they have completed 45 hours of volunteer work for each class that they work as a note taker, as well as a stipend of \$45 which may be used at the bookstore at the conclusion of classes for the semester.]"**

3. Notetaking is a confidential service. Do not disclose to anyone the names of students receiving any access services, or any information about them when recruiting a note taker.
4. When a student note taker has been identified, please provide their name to the Director of Accessibility Services, who will provide them with a training handbook.
5. Provide the name of the student note taker to the student requiring accommodations.
6. Immediately notify the Director of Accessibility Services of any difficulties in locating a note taker or with any other concerns regarding a note taker.

Volunteer Note Taker Responsibilities/ Qualification Criteria

In order to provide notetaking services, note takers should have the following qualifications:

1. Willing to participate in note taker training
2. Good English skills
3. Good organizational skills

4. Legible handwriting
5. Good typing skills
6. Ability to listen and store information while writing or typing with speed and accuracy
7. Familiarity with course content, which may include majoring in this class subject
8. Demonstrate dependability
9. GPA of 2.5 or above

In addition, note takers must:

1. Adhere to the confidentiality guidelines.
2. Agree to abide by the conditions outlined in this policy guide.
3. Abide by state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.
4. Sign the *Volunteer Note Taker Services Agreement* and return to Accessibility Services.
5. Notify the Director of Accessibility Services if any problems arise during the semester. These might include difficulty understanding the instructor or other similar issues.
6. If the student for whom the note are being taken for does not show up to class, the note taker is not obligated to share notes.
7. If the note taker knows that they might be absent prior to the class session, they may seek out another classmate as a substitute and notify the instructor of this substitution.
8. Utilize their own supplies such as a personal laptop to compose their notes. The exception would be for classes that rely on graphs and formulas.
 - a. All notes are to be released to the accommodated student within 24 hours of class.
 - b. For handwritten notes, the note taker will need to ensure the legibility of the notes. Handwritten notes may be scanned and emailed to the accommodated student.

Accommodated Student Responsibilities

To help students benefit the most from their need for notetaking services, please review the following steps:

1. Discuss their need for sharing a copy of notes with their instructor who can help recruit a volunteer.
2. Meet with the identified classmate who is willing to help and arrange a mutually convenient way to make and receive copies and/or electronic notes.
3. Let their teacher and the Director of Accessibility Services know immediately if they are not satisfied with notes or if they are not able to connect with a consistent note taker.

4. Notify their note taker and professor if they decide to drop or withdrawal from the class.
5. Be advised that having a note taker accommodation *does not* allow students to miss classes. Note takers are not required to share notes from a missed class session. Students are advised that they may request a note taker provide them with a copy of the missed classes' notes should the missed class be related to their disability and/or chronic health condition.

The use of peer note takers who are capable and interested in sharing copies of class notes has been effective at Mount Mary University for many years. If this process does not work for their particular need, it is crucial that they explain the situation to the Director of Accessibility Services so that other arrangements can be provided. If they have any questions or problems regarding notetaking or other academic adjustments, please talk with the Director of Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

General Information

Qualities of a Good Note taker

- Is interested in class
- Ignores speakers' faults in delivery
- Listens for concepts
- Pays attention
- Discourages distractions
- Regards difficult material as a challenge
- Listens for clues as to importance

Note Requirements

- Record course name and date at top right corner of the first page
- Number each page
- Use correct spelling (for typed notes, spell check notes prior to sending to the accommodated student)
- Use plenty of space if handwriting
 - Write with a black or blue pen
 - Write legibly

Note taker/ Student Interaction

- Note takers should not have social conversations with the accommodated student during class time. Visitation should be done before and/or after the class.
- If another student from the class asks for information about what the note taker is doing, the note taker should let them know that they are

unable to discuss it during class but could answer before or after the class.

- When answering questions about note taking from faculty and/or other students, the note taker should keep in mind confidentiality and provide only general information.

Confidentiality

- Any information that is obtained through communication facilitation should never be disclosed.
- Anything that occurs while on the job should NEVER be disclosed to another student or professor, even if the students are friends or know each other.
- Note takers should bring problems or concerns to the Director of Accessibility Services and avoid discussing issues among themselves. Discussing these issues within the proper channels is not breaking confidentiality.

Inclement Weather

- If the weather appears to be hazardous, please refer to the inclement weather policy for Mount Mary University.

Complaint Procedure

- All complaints (from the note taker, accommodated student, or faculty) should be directed to the Director of Accessibility Services.
- Depending on the severity of the complaint and/or whether the same complaint has been previously made, a decision may be made to terminate the note taker's services.
- The Director of Accessibility services will work directly with the faculty member to identify additional note takers in the class.

Mount Mary University (MMU) is committed to providing equal opportunities in higher education to academically qualified students with disabilities. We work towards an appreciation of students' abilities through partnerships with students, faculty and staff to create a campus community that values the unique talents each person brings.

The University is committed to providing a supportive environment for students with disabilities as well as to complying with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended (ADAAA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Fair Housing Act (FHA).

Policy adapted from Emory University and Temple University.

