Notetaking Procedure (New) at The University of Akron

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, program, or activities of the University.

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

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

For questions or concerns regarding note taking accommodations, please contact:

Current Note taker Coordinator:
Julie Sandish, Graduate Assistant
Simmons Hall 105
(330) 972-7928
ooaga1@uakron.edu

Jessica DeFago, Associate Director
Simmons Hall 105
(330) 972-7928
jld4@uakron.edu

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

Steps:

1. Students receive the note taker accommodation approved by a disability
specialist in the Office of Accessibility.

2. Students request accommodation letters each semester through STARS. Instructors will receive the Instructor Guidelines for Securing Note takers. Note takers are required to obtain a signed copy of the Instructor Verification form and attach copies of their notes which the instructor examines for quality. Note takers must return the completed Instructor Verification form with a copy of their notes to the Office of Accessibility within one week of being hired.

3. The accommodation letters and memos are emailed to instructors. Instructors will read the request aloud to the class. Interested students in the class will sign up through STARS or in the Office of Accessibility. Additionally, as soon as requests for accommodations come into the Office, Office of Accessibility staff will work to recruit eligible note takers in classes prior to the semester start date by contacting and communicating with students registered for those classes.

4. Note taker's qualifications will be verified and the note taker will be hired contingent on successful completion of the online note taker training and the submission of a signed copy of the Instructor Verification form and sample notes. The note taker must complete the online training and submit the form within two weeks of their hire date. If hired, the note taker will be given the student's contact information in order to arrange the delivery of notes. If the student has indicated that they don't want the note takers to have their contact information, notes may be uploaded into the STARS system or picked up in the Office of Accessibility.

**Note taker No Shows:**

1. If a note taker does not report to class, the student will notify the instructor and the disability specialist.

2. In the absence of the note taker the student receiving notes should utilize their tape recorder accommodation. One of the purposes of the tape recorder accommodation is to be utilized as a backup if a note taker is absent.

3. A tape recorder can be checked out from the Office of Accessibility at the beginning of the semester and kept for the whole semester. The tape recorder must be returned by the end of the final exam period for each semester for maintenance purposes. There is an existing Equipment Loan policy that student follow when checking out equipment from the Office of Accessibility.

4. If the note taker is absent for two or more consecutive classes the student must notify the instructor and the disability specialist. The note taker will be contacted by the disability specialist or note taker coordinator to determine whether a replacement note taker is needed.

5. In those situations where an approved note taker is unable to continue, the following four options will be reviewed with the student and the student's disability specialist in order to determine which is the appropriate fit for the student's accommodation needs:
The student will utilize their tape recorder for the remainder of the semester.
Instructors will be asked to provide a comprehensive copy of their notes.
A temporary note taker will be assigned to the class including instructor referrals.
A new note taker will be assigned to the class and be required to complete the hiring process as outlined above.

The note taking accommodation is individualized to the students' needs. In some cases, copies of professor power points and notes could be the most appropriate and effective option for the student. As an example; an instructor could provide more comprehensive notes than those of a student note taker. However, the note taker service is generally the first and preferred option and others 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 note takers include:
- Instructor recommendations of students in their class
- Pool of student assistants from the Career Center
- Another note taker who has signed up through STARS

Student Responsibility

- Request the course needing a note taker 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 note taker is still desired. While a student remains eligible for note takers, many students find that there are some classes they either don't need or want a note taker. Throughout the process, the Office of Accessibility will continue to reach out to students to determine continuing need for note takers. If no note taker is in place by the end of the first week of the semester, and the Office of Accessibility has reached out to the student at least twice, and the student has not contacted the Office, the Office of Accessibility will assume that the student is no longer interested in this accommodation.
- If students no longer require a note taker for their services, they must notify the Office of Accessibility by the second week of the semester. If no note taker is required students must update the accommodation request for each class in STARS.
- A student who wishes to obtain a note taker beyond the sixth week of the semester is required to meet with his or her disability specialist to review and discuss this request.
- If note takers 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 genuine personal or health reasons.
• 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:
  o They are legible
  o They include important information from lectures
  o They include information that was written on the board
  o They include information on homework assignments

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

**Additional Note taker Coordinator and OA Responsibilities:**

• The GA coordinator will email all students who do not have note takers secured in weeks 1 and 2 of the semester.
• The OA and the GA coordinator will ensure an adequate number of trained note takers
• Note takers will all undergo mandatory training (see online training program).
• The OA has established a pool of trained note takers through the student employment office which will be utilized in the event that a note taker or replacement note taker has not been identified.
• OA staff will begin identifying eligible note takers 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 note takers across campus.

• All students must read and accept the STARS Note taker Contract prior to becoming a note taker.