Disability Services Center:

Note-Taking Accommodations, Policies, & Procedures

Note-taking assistance may include 1) Receiving copies of course notes (upon instructor’s approval); 2) Using a laptop in class; 3) Audio recording lectures and/or 4) Using a peer note-taker. The information and guidelines below will help students and instructors understand the procedures for identifying a peer note-taker and implementing note-taking accommodations.

The Coordinator of Disability Services and instructors will assist in the coordinating of note-takers for students with injuries, learning or physical disabilities, or hearing, motor, or visual limitations. The note-taking service provides students with supplemental support. Even if students have note-takers, they are expected to attend class and take notes to the best of their ability and are ultimately responsible for the material covered in their courses. Students might also record lectures to supplement the notes provided by note-takers and also, on an as-needed basis, meet with professors to ask questions about lectures and class discussions.

Note-takers will not provide copies of course notes to students when they are absent from class, unless the students receive approval from the Coordinator of Disability Services for medical or health reasons or other extenuating circumstances. Students and note-takers should not share notes with other class members.

What Options Do Students Have for Identifying Peer Note-Takers?

Note-taking support is typically provided by volunteers enrolled in the same course. Students have two primary options for identifying peer note-takers:

Option one: Students can recruit their own volunteer note-takers. This option gives students more control over the process; they will be responsible for self-disclosing to the note-takers, making arrangements for exchanging notes, and scheduling an appointment with the instructor and the note-takers to discuss note-taking procedures and policies. This option works best if students know of reliable note-takers who type course notes and can send them as an email attachment after each class meeting.

Option two: Students request the assistance of their instructors to recruit volunteer note-takers. In most instances, students should choose option two because instructors are in the position to identify the most qualified note-takers. The steps below will help students, instructors, and note-takers understand the note-taking service and their respective responsibilities (if students choose option two):

1. Students requesting note-taking support for the first time must provide the Coordinator of Disability Services with appropriate documentation to be eligible for note-taking assistance.
Students and the CDS choose the desired recruiting option (mentioned above). Thereafter, students must request note-taking support each semester if they want to continue this service.

2. Students arrange a time to meet with their instructors to discuss note-taking procedures, concerns, and expectations:

- The process for selecting note-takers, noted above.
- The possibility of a second note-taker (i.e., students would receive two sets of notes to ensure most all the main lecture points are captured).
- The process of copying and picking up class notes.
- The students’ responsibilities: attending class, taking notes, and not sharing notes with other classmates.
- An alternative plan if the designated note-taker is absent (e.g., meet with instructors to review lecture notes).
- Confidentiality: Instructors will make every effort to maintain student confidentiality (i.e., not revealing the names of these students to the class or to note-takers), but they cannot guarantee anonymity for students using note-taking services.

3. Instructors identify note-takers in one the following ways: a) talk to individual prospective note-takers after class or contact them through email or b) ask the class for volunteer note-takers and then briefly identify note-taking responsibilities (noted below). During this process, instructors should not reveal the identity of students requesting note-taking assistance unless given permission by the students who have requested the accommodation.

**Note:** Students should contact the Coordinator of Disability Services for assistance if a volunteer note-taker cannot be identified. Under certain circumstances, a paid note-taker may be used, and OWU will pay for this service.

4. Instructors meet with prospective student note-taker(s) to discuss the benefits of being a note-taker and note-taking responsibilities.

**Benefits:**

- Class attendance and quality of course notes improve for note-takers.
- Note-takers have a greater understanding of course material, resulting in better grades.
- Volunteer experience for resumes.

**Responsibilities:**

- Attend every class.
- Take careful and legible notes.
- Copy and provide notes for each class meeting, if possible, but at least once a week.
- Inform instructors about anticipated absences.
• Protect the identities of students for whom they are taking notes (if the students’ identifies have been disclosed to them).
• Inform the instructor immediately if they cannot continue as note-takers.
• Agree not to share notes with other members of the class.

5. Instructors select a primary note-taker and a secondary note-taker, who will provide notes if the primary note-taker is absent or can no longer continue his or her responsibilities. As part of this process, instructors should review examples of notes (of prospective note-takers) to determine if they will meet students’ needs. Students may also request to see copies of sample notes to determine which note-taking format is best for them.

6. Instructors meet with the voluntary note-takers to review note-taking responsibilities, including how and when notes will be copied. In most instances, the instructor makes arrangements with the department’s Administrative Assistant to have notes copied. At this meeting note-takers should inform instructors about anticipated absences.

7. Instructors introduce note-taker(s) to the department’s Administrative Assistant.

8. Instructors provide the names of the student note-taker(s) and phone number(s) to the Coordinator of Disability Services.

9. Note-taker gives notes to the instructor or to the departmental Administrative Assistant to be copied. Ideally, this should be done after each class and not less than once a week. Copies of notes can also be made in the Disability Services Center, Corns 316.

10. Students pick up copies of course notes at an agreed upon time and place.

11. Students are responsible for informing their instructors if notes are of poor quality and not provided in a timely way. Students are also responsible for informing instructors if note-taking assistance is no longer needed (e.g., if students withdraw from the class).

Students and faculty should contact Bridget Goggin (bcgoggin@owu.edu), the Coordinator of Disability Services, if they have questions about note-taking accommodations or procedures.