



## **Notetaker Guidelines**

**The Office of Disability Support Services**

Adelphi University



Garden City, NY

**It has been shown that notetakers take better notes for themselves while they are providing a valuable service to a fellow student. Your willingness to accept the responsibilities of a notetaker is greatly appreciated. Your services contribute in a very real way to the success students with disabilities achieve in college. Thank you for your help!**

### **Preface**

As a notetaker, you are a vital link in the support services our University is able to provide for students with disabilities. Thanks to you, classroom information is accurately recorded in a form that allows a student with disabilities to have equal access to classroom information. The students requesting notetaking services have documented disabilities that impede their ability to take notes in their classes.

This booklet outlines procedures and suggestions for notetakers serving students that are registered with The Office of Disability Support Services (DSS).

### **Accepting the Challenge**

Thank you for accepting the challenges and responsibilities that comes with working as a notetaker. You have indeed made a commitment which those students you serve and we in the DSS office greatly appreciate. Students who use notetakers have made a request through our office. We then carefully review class rosters, often consulting with the instructor, to find the right notetaker, such as you, to perform the service.

### **Attendance**

It is important that you realize the commitment required and the challenges you will face. Because your fellow student is depending on your notes, it is critical that you attend class regularly as you are providing a record of the information presented in each class. If

you are absent, the student is left without a record of information for that class period. It is your responsibility to provide the notes for each class and we suggest that you make arrangements with a fellow student in your class to take notes should you miss class.

### **Mechanics**

All notes must be provided to the DSS office **within 24 hours or** immediately following class when using carbonless notebooks. Copy machines are available at different locations for your convenience and the DSS office has a list of those locations. You can also fax (516) 877-3139 or e-mail notes [DSS@adelphi.edu](mailto:DSS@adelphi.edu).

Special carbonless notebooks are available at the DSS office for the student requesting copies of notes immediately after class. The student must self-identify to you. The carbonless notebook paper makes a second copy automatically as you write, thus eliminating the need for copy machines. Simply tear off the white copy and keep the yellow for yourself. A ball point pen or a pen that allows pressure is best. Generally, the finer the point, the clearer the copy.

Write on only one side of the page. Doing so will prevent text on the back of the page from coming through on the copies. Write legibly. It may seem an obvious suggestion, but unfamiliar words or special terminology require a clearly written style. Also, what may be readable to you in your own handwriting may not be to a student using your notes. Be aware of legibility.

Do not try to cram information. Use paper freely rather than writing very small down the side of a page or writing two or three lines where space for one line is intended. Leave generous margins on your notes so that the student can add his or her own notes when reviewing later. Use complete sentences when time allows.

### **Spelling**

Although all of us have some trouble with spelling, it is crucial that a notetaker pay particular attention this area. If you are unsure of a spelling, an “sp?” above the word signals the student of his or her need to check the spelling later. If a term is recurrent throughout the course or lecture, it is wise to consult the textbook for correct spelling. The instructor will probably not mind a brief question as to the spelling of a new or unfamiliar term. If you don’t know the spelling, chances are many others in the class don’t know either. Your question will be helpful to many.

## Format

It is extremely important that you list course name, number and date at the top of each page of the notes for each class session. The student using a notetaker probably has several other notetakers in other classes. It can be a problem organizing notes from several classes without course name, number and date. If your notes require more than one page, it is also important to number each page.

Inclusion of chapter number or pages being discussed is also extremely beneficial. An outline format lends itself best to notetaking. In some courses, this does not provide the best record, however, and you will need to use your judgment.

The important thing to remember is to use a consistent format. Underline all new terms, start important points and include notes from the instructor such as “must know this for the test”. Meticulously record all assignments, test dates, due dates, references and other such special information.

## Content

One of the greatest errors a notetaker makes is deletion of information. Often a notetaker will not record a point the instructor is making because the notetaker him/herself does not see it as new information. It is most important that you do not assume your fellow student has the same information you do. If the instructor discusses it, write it down even though it may seem an obvious or redundant point to you. If the instructor makes a point and then uses several examples, be sure to record the examples. These will help the student clarify the point and remember the lecture.

If taking notes in math, it is necessary to copy problems and the exact steps to use in completing the problem. Showing all computation work and every step in the sequence ensures your fellow student of the ability to practice similar problems at another time. Be sure to copy at least one example of each type of problem the instructor demonstrates and show all work.

**Abbreviations** are a wise time saver. If you use abbreviations, it is necessary to include a key to an abbreviation, especially if it is a new word or an unusual abbreviation.

Include questions from class members, student comments or discussion during the class. Include instructor response such as “instructor agrees” or “this is student’s opinion,” etc. Keep your personal biases out of the notes. A comment such as “boring lecture today” is unnecessary information.

### **Feedback**

As a notetaker, you must evaluate your own notes constantly. Based on information received, DSS will provide feedback on the notes and their usefulness, readability, abbreviation use, etc. It is also wise to share notes with the instructor and seek feedback from him or her as well. If there is an interpreter in the class, he or she may be able to provide feedback or input on the note taking process also.

The Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) is a vital campus resource and provides cost-free assistance to students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access to all aspects of University life through assistance, advocacy and reasonable accommodations. Those of us in the DSS office will be glad to assist with any questions or concerns you may have. For further information, please contact DSS at:

516-877-3145 (Voice)

516-877-3138 (TTY)

516-877-3139 (FAX)

[DSS@adelphi.edu](mailto:DSS@adelphi.edu)