

The Department of Access Services

Working with Interpreting, Captioning and Notetaking

The Department of Access Services (DAS) provides interpreting, captioning and notetaking services to support deaf and hard-of-hearing RIT students. Our role is to facilitate communication in your classroom and other settings at RIT. We are part of your team and want to work with you so please ask us questions, talk with us and share information that helps us do a stellar job. In turn, we will communicate with you and work with you to provide the best support possible for the students you teach and whom we support.

Services provided by DAS:

NTID cross-registered deaf and hard-of-hearing students can request **one live support service:**

- **Interpreting:** Provides signed language
OR
- **Captioning:** Provides English from speech-to-text on a viewer

Students can always request notetaking.

If a class is supported with captioning, the students approved for support will also receive the captioning transcripts. Transcripts are not provided for special requests.

The following checklists can assist you with best practices when working with interpreters, captionists and notetakers in your classes. These individuals strive to provide the best support possible to deaf and hard-of-hearing, as well as hearing students in your class.

Prior to the Start of the Semester and your Class:

- _____ Visit the Department of Access Services (DAS) website: MyAccess.rit.edu. Sign in using your RIT DCE username and password. You will find a list of the classes you are teaching, and the types of support assigned to your class, if any. Look for the letters **I**=Interpreting, **C**=Captioning, **N**=Notetaking to indicate which services are assigned to your class. You will see the email addresses for service provider assigned to your class. You may contact these individuals at any time. Department information and contacts are also on this website.
- _____ Prior to the start of the semester, DAS providers are automatically added to myCourses to the specific courses they support. Materials you post in myCourses are then accessible to DAS providers in your class. These materials, such as your syllabus, handouts, PowerPoint slides, assigned readings or videos, help us to be prepared for your class by allowing us to review terminology, complete readings, check your syllabus for assignments, and be aware of important information. In addition, we receive emails you send out via myCourses regarding changes to class, including materials/dates/times/cancelations. If a provider is assigned **after** the start of the semester, **please add them** to the access provider view in my Courses.
- _____ If you hand out any materials during your class, please make copies for both the interpreters and the captionists. This helps us to follow along with your lesson.
- _____ Be sure that any audio/visual materials you show are captioned. Contact *The Wallace Center* to have materials captioned (turn around time is not long) or click on this link for more information: <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/tls/course-design/teaching-elements/media-captioning>
- _____ If you assign online media outside of assigned class times, be sure that it is captioned.
- _____ When using reserve materials for class, please grant access for interpreters and captionists, so that they can be prepared too.
- _____ Talk with your providers and establish communication in your class. Work together to agree upon signs or signals they can use to if you are talking too fast or if you are going over the scheduled class time.

During Each Class:

- _____ Pause or take a slight break in speaking when you change topics or subjects.
- _____ When you post PowerPoint slides or any visual aids in class, give everyone a few seconds to read them prior to presenting. Keep these slides or aids posted until the interpreters and captionists have had time to interpret/caption them before you move on.
- _____ Slow down and give us time to process. There is a lot going on from when you start speaking to the time the student receives the information. *We hear you, we process what you say, we convert that into signs or text, the student receives that information, they need time to process too.* When you speak fast it's difficult to process at that rate. We know you understand the material you are teaching, but give us time to learn and understand it while you present it.
- _____ A student cannot watch the interpreter nor read the text, look up at the board, and attend to everything going on at the same time. Give them a few seconds to take in and process all of the visuals.
- _____ Spell long words, places, or names that are uncommon. It helps **all** of us.
- _____ Remind students who speak softly, or unclearly, to speak louder and to enunciate their words. You are teaching them good life skills.
- _____ During class discussions encourage and remind students not to talk over each other; instead, take turns by allowing only one speaker at a time. A good teaching strategy is to use a tennis ball and the only person who can speak is the person with the ball. When the ball gets tossed to the next speaker then it is their turn to talk. Another good life skill to teach.
- _____ Teach students how to present. They often read from the PowerPoint slides at a pace no one can follow, or they speak softly and no one can hear them. Ask them to either email copies or give paper copies of their presentation to the interpreters and captionists **in advance**. This helps us be prepared. Media used in student presentations should also be captioned. This is a free service of The Wallace Center. When presenting, remind students to slow down. These practices teach them good professional life skills.
- _____ When you write on the board refrain from saying things like "this one goes here, and that one goes there". Instead, label what you write and refer to them with labels, such as "column A is on the left and column B is on the right".
- _____ When addressing or talking with a deaf/hard of hearing student speak directly to the student and NOT to the interpreter or captionist. We are only there to facilitate communication. Talk to them!
- _____ When assigning students to work in groups, interpreters and captionists have to join those groups; talk with the service providers for strategies before assigning groups. There may not be enough providers in the room to support all of your students if they are in different groups.

After Class:

- _____ If you sense that the interpreter/captionist is struggling with classroom content address this with him/her after class, which will foster good communication with your provider.
- _____ Allow the interpreter/captionist freedom to ask questions or bring up concerns. Have open dialogue and clear communication. Be open to suggestions and working together.
- _____ We are a team! Remember, we are there for you and are part of your team! If we can work together, we can both be successful.
- _____ Look over the notes or transcripts via MyAccess.rit.edu if you have captioning or notetaking in your class. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask us.

Notetaking Checklist

The table below presents, in checklist form, a series of 'best practices' to allow the deaf and hard-of-hearing students in your classroom to obtain the maximum benefit from having a student notetaker in your classroom.

Working with notetaking in your class:

- _____ We try to assign students who are taking your class as notetakers. They have access to all of materials used in class and will attend your class each session. We provide all notetakers with a two-hour training.
- _____ We pay students for their notes and the hours they work taking them. We require that students turn their notes in right after class or shortly after. We keep and scan their notes into our online system. Students can upload their own notes to our online system too. Notes are only accessible to students who are approved for this accommodation; deaf, hard-of-hearing, or approved through the Disability Services office. You can access these notes via MyAccess.rit.edu.
- _____ Be sure that the notetaker has copies of any handouts you give out so that they can use them to take notes on. If these are not posted in my Courses they are responsible to include them with their notes.
- _____ Our Notetaker Coordinators try to assign a back-up notetaker to each class, in case the primary notetaker is absent; we will then have a backup set of notes.
- _____ Have open and direct communication with the notetaker. If you are speaking too fast, be open to them letting you know. If they need more information or assistance in spelling, allow them to ask questions so that their notes are clear for the student(s).
- _____ Notetakers will take notes on media you show, so captioning helps with spelling.
- _____ We ask you to review the notes for your class and if you have any concerns talk with the notetaker directly. If that is not successful please reach out to their Coordinator or Department Manager. Their contact information can be found on the DAS website at MyAccess.rit.edu or at the bottom of each set of notes.
- _____ Keep in mind that notetaking is not an easy task. Listening, processing, writing and trying to learn at the same time is not easy. Remember, notetakers are your students too.
- _____ If there are concerns we ask that you work with us to help the notetaker improve, but if it is imperative to replace a student notetaker we will do our best to support you. Please know that we must follow NYS DOL guidelines in hiring so finding a replacement takes time and is not always easy to accomplish after the start of the semester.
- _____ For some student notetakers this is their first job, and they are trying to do well. Be sure to give them your feedback. When they do a good job – tell them. You will make their day!