Shifting Note Taking and Transcription Preferences Among Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

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Introduction
From Fall 2020 to present, University of Manitoba students experienced two years of fully remote learning during the 2020-21 and 2021-22 academic years, followed by a challenging transition back to on-campus learning in the 2022-23 academic year. At the same time, the availability and reliability of assistive technology for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) students, including automated speech recognition and transcription, has vastly improved.

During this timeframe, Student Accessibility Services (SAS) identified a shift in the types of requests for note taking and transcription accommodations among D/HH students, as well as growth in the number of D/HH students requiring accommodations.

![TOTAL D/HH STUDENTS REGISTERED WITH SAS](chart)

Shifting Trends
D/HH students have traditionally used note taking and transcription supports provided by staff who attended lectures either remotely or in-person. This has shifted towards D/HH students primarily requesting app-based note taking and transcription services.

This has allowed students to access note taking and transcription supports more independently, while also resulting in lower accommodation costs and fewer challenges in the recruitment and training of qualified note taking and transcription staff.

Considerations for Accessibility Coordinators
Selecting the right note taking and/or transcription support for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students should not take a “one size fits all” approach. Keep the following considerations in mind:

- The type of course and lecture style – does it involve visuals and work on the board, or is it mainly auditory lecture?
- The degree of hearing loss – does the student need to review what is being said in real time throughout the entire lecture, or is this something to refer to later in case bits of information are missed?
- The student’s other accommodations and what combination of supports is the best fit – are watching ASL interpreters during the lecture and need access to notes after class?
- The student’s learning style and how they plan to use the notes/transcript/recording – is it helpful to replay portions of the lecture, do they plan to condense a longer transcript into their own notes, or compare their own notes to others to ensure understanding?
- The student’s access to technology and the reliability of Wi-Fi throughout your campus – will using an app-based option provide the student with a seamless and reliable service? Are they able to get a clear audio input to ensure that the transcript/notes will be accurate? Providing a clip-on Bluetooth microphone to the instructor can vastly improve accuracy.

“[This app] was a really great tool for me. I appreciated the independence it gave me...I found myself leaving class a little less exhausted than normal, because beforehand I was often very stressed and a lecture would constantly feel like a sprint to the end trying to keep up.”
- D/HH student, 2023