



## **Policy for Appropriate Use of Hand-held and Wireless Technology**

The College of Basic and Applied Sciences at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) is committed to educationally sound uses of technology in the classroom, to ensuring a secure learning environment, and to preventing disruption of students' and instructors' educational experiences. The College is also committed to balancing the need for concentration in the course environment with concerns about safety and with students' outside responsibilities (family responsibilities). We recognize that, when used properly, hand-held and wireless technologies can enhance the classroom environment and student learning; used improperly, these same technologies can significantly degrade the quality of learning in the course setting. Each student enrolled in courses in the College has a responsibility to other students and to the instructor to contribute to a courteous, respectful learning environment. This responsibility includes not disrupting instruction or distracting fellow students, maintaining an atmosphere that supports academic integrity, and being committed to learning.

For the purposes of this document, the term "electronic device" refers to any hand-held or wireless device that can be used to communicate, record, photograph, or access stored or networked data. Such devices include but are not limited to laptops, tablets, cell phones, electronic readers, PDAs, Apple watches and electronic dictionaries.

### **Policy**

Unless otherwise specified by the instructor on the syllabus, the following statements govern the appropriate use of hand-held and wireless technologies in courses in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences at MTSU.

1. Communication by electronic devices, including but not limited to instant messaging, text messaging, emailing, web surfing, and telephoning during class, is strictly prohibited unless expressly designated as part of the learning activities. Students may not use cell phones, pagers, PDAs, or similar communication devices during scheduled course meetings (including class time, laboratories, review sessions, individual instruction, or similar activities). Such devices must be silenced or turned off and should not be taken out during course meetings. Electronic audio or video recording of the classroom environment is prohibited unless permission is given by the instructor or the MTSU Disability Access Center prior to recording.
2. Laptops, tablets, wireless computers, or similar electronic devices may be used for note-taking or specified course activities (e.g., electronic surveys, electronic course evaluations, access electronic textbooks) with the instructor's permission. Students must avoid non-course-related activities such as checking email or social networking sites, web surfing, or playing games because these activities diminish the learning environment for all students in the classroom.

3. Unauthorized use of electronic communication or wireless devices during quizzes, examinations, or other graded activities may warrant disciplinary action under the terms of the Code of Student Conduct. In certain circumstances (exams, laboratories, presentations, etc.), students may be temporarily required to deposit cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices with the instructor or lab supervisor for the duration of the specific class or activity.
4. Students who require access to hand-held or wireless technology as assistive measures for documented disabilities may use them only as authorized by the Disability and Access Center or according to stipulations in the student's Professor Notification Form.
5. Where personal emergency, family care responsibilities or employment situations require access to electronic communication devices, arrangements must be made in advance with the instructor.
6. Because hand-held communication devices are an integral part of the University's emergency notification system, the instructor's or a designated student's hand-held device should be activated during scheduled course times to be able to inform the class of an emergency situation. In an emergency situation or if a security alert sounds or is sent by the Alert system, the instructor or his/her designee will consult their devices to determine if an emergency exists and may then give students permission to consult their own devices. Once the alert is over, students' devices should be immediately silenced and put away.
7. Other exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the instructor.

## **Sanctions**

Sanctions for violation of this policy will be determined by the instructor and may include dismissal from the class, attendance penalties or loss of class participation points, zero grades on quizzes or examinations, failure in the class, or other penalties that the instructor determines to be appropriate. These sanctions should be explicitly stated on the instructor's syllabus.

## **Providing Notice to Students**

Instructors should anticipate that issues with wireless communications and electronic devices may arise and publish any policies and restrictions in their course syllabi. Otherwise, a statement such as "The College of Basic and Applied Sciences Policy for the Appropriate Use of Hand-held and Wireless Technologies is in effect for this class" with a link to the text of the policy should appear on syllabi for all courses in the College. If the instructor plans to use sanctions for disruptions, s/he should publish details about the sanctions in the course syllabus.

### ***Example Syllabus Statement (please modify sanctions as appropriate for your course(s)):***

**Use of personal electronic devices in the classroom** - Cell phones, laptops, i-Pads, Kindles, and other electronic devices must be turned off and put away during class unless the Instructor determines and communicates that these devices are allowed to be used in the class. If so allowed, students may be directed to turn off any device if it is not being used for class purposes. Students are not permitted to take photos or record any part of a class/lab/other session unless explicitly granted permission by the instructor or the MTSU Disability Access Center. Sanctions for violation of this policy will be determined

by the instructor and may include dismissal from the class, attendance penalties or loss of class participation points, zero grades on quizzes or examinations, failure in the class, or other penalties that the instructor determines to be appropriate.

All course materials are protected by the law of copyright. Students are not authorized to use, reuse, reproduce, distribute, broadcast or publish the course materials, or any part of the course materials, in any medium, including on social media. This means that students are not allowed to photograph or reproduce course materials (for example, class PowerPoint slides), and that students are not allowed to record lectures, except as provided for by an approved ADA request. It also means that students are not allowed to distribute any course materials via any means, including via the internet and social media sites, including those such as GroupMe which primarily are accessed by cell phone.