

FAQ: The Writing Center

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What is the Writing Center (WC)?

It is primarily a place where students, faculty, and staff come to solicit free, one-to-one help from writing consultants. Consultants generally talk with students about “global,” rhetorical elements of their writing such as development, organization, and purpose before advising on “local” concerns such as helping you revise sentence fragments and circling spelling errors. The overarching goal of each session is to make you a better writer – not produce a perfect paper.

Who staffs the WC?

The Writing Center’s staff is comprised of instructors within the Writing Department as well as graduate students from the English Department as well as the Composition and Cultural Rhetoric program.

Who visits the WC?

All successful academic writing undergoes a rigorous process of revision. And for many thriving scholars at SU – undergrads, grads, native or multilingual writers, etc – the WC plays an instrumental role in this process.

How do students make appointments?

Face-to-face and online appointments are available throughout the week; the Writing Center is open Mondays- Thursdays 9 AM to 9 PM and Fridays 9 AM to 5 PM.

All appointments are made via WOnline, our online scheduling program. Face-to-face appointments and synchronous online appointments can be made up to the time an appointment is scheduled to begin.

You must register an account in the Center’s system before booking an appointment. You can register your account with your SU email address and ID number; once registration is complete, you can then log in to make appointments.

You can access the Center’s schedule here:

<https://syr.mywconline.com> You can create an account here: <https://syr.mywconline.com/register.php>

When booking an appointment in the Center, you will be prompted to upload a text for your consultant to review. You are strongly encouraged to upload your text (and, optionally, the corresponding assignment sheet and rubric) when booking that appointment; you can also include a link to a google doc. Please only upload Microsoft Word documents when creating an appointment. If you would prefer to work via google drive, make sure to link to your text when booking your appointment and make sure that your document is publicly available.

What happens during an appointment?

Although we see all kinds of writers whose purposes, audiences, and genres vary, a session usually starts with essential questions. We typically ask if you’ve been here before, what the assignment

requires (ideally, they've brought it to the appointment), when it's due, and what you hope to get out of the session. From there consultants might prompt you to brainstorm ideas, read a draft aloud or silently, or help them read a source more critically. Although consultants certainly listen to and respect students' needs, they order concerns from global to local. That is, they look to help you with more complex and ambiguous principles of writing such as development, organization, and purpose before they underline sentence fragments and circle spelling errors. The overarching goal of each session is to make the you a better writer – not just produce a perfect paper.

When should students use the WC?

You should make appointments as soon as they receive their assignments. You do not need a draft to talk with us; in fact, in many cases it's better that they only bring the assignment sheet and a pencil to their first appointment. This helps with procrastination and ensures you will see a consultant long before the paper is due.

We often work with "first-timers" who have written several pages in response to an assignment, but quickly realize during a session that they didn't understand the instructor's prompt and have to rethink their whole draft.

Unfortunately, this situation happens repeatedly during midterm and finals weeks, when the WC gets slammed.

What are some of the WC's basic appointment policies?

- You can meet with a consultant up to two hours per week, for either 25 minutes or 55 minutes per session.
- Please arrive at your scheduled time (or even a couple of minutes beforehand).
- If you need to cancel your appointment, make sure you do so at least four hours in advance, using the online system.
- Writing consultants can teach you to copyedit and proofread their work, but they will not copyedit or proofread for you.
- Writing consultants will not dispute or question grades.

What are some of the ways students most commonly use the Center?

- Interpreting and analyzing assignments
- Brainstorming and talking through ideas
- Outlining and organizing ideas
- Developing a thesis and paragraph organization
- Summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, and citing information
- Revising holistically throughout a rough draft
- Editing and polishing a final draft
- Revising citation and stylistic concerns

What is the GEC?

Graduate students may also make use of the Graduate Editing Center (GEC), which provides free editing and proofreading services. Our editors work with a range of texts, from dissertations and master's theses to articles, conference presentations, and grant proposals. The GEC is staffed by writing instructors and advanced students in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric, the Writing Program's doctoral program. GEC procedures and policies can be found here:

<https://artsandsciences.syracuse.edu/writing-center/graduate-editing-center/>.