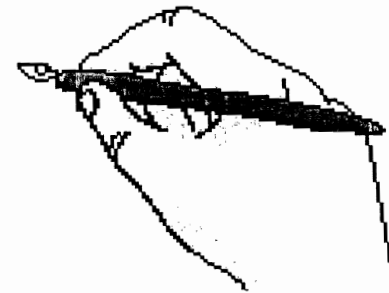


**University of Delaware**

**Writing Center**



**Consultants' Handbook**

**2008-2009**

## Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Mission Statement	4
Description of Services	5
Writer Policies	5
Personnel Policies	7
Alternate Responsibilities	11
Important Numbers	14

## Introduction

Welcome to the writing center!

This handbook is intended to help writing consultants become acquainted with the policies of the UD Writing Center. While we want the writing center to be an enjoyable place to work, we also need to maintain a professional atmosphere so that everyone who comes here knows how hard we work. We also want to equitably share the resources and responsibilities that fall to us. Hopefully, these guidelines will help us do that.

If you have any questions on any of these policies or any suggestions for improvements, please talk to the Assistant Director, Barbara Lutz, or the Director of Writing, Dr. Melissa Ianetta.

## Writing Center Mission Statement

Since 1967, the UD writing center has fostered excellence in writing at the University of Delaware. To fulfill this mission, the center

- Provides all university members the opportunity to develop their writing skills through one-to-one and small-group writing tutorials
- Advocates for writing as an essential part of learning through faculty workshops and individual consultations
- Improves local and national understanding of the writing process by leading writing-related research
- Contributes to the local community through writing-related community service.

Ultimately, the writing center is a place where all UD community members can come to write and to talk, think and learn about writing.

**Upon notification, all policies in this handbook are subject to change.**

## Description of Services

The writing center is primarily a place for writers who want to work one-to-one with our writing consultants. However, we also offer a variety of other services to assist instructors, students, and staff. These services include in-class and in-center workshops and online writing resources at [www.english.udel.edu/wc](http://www.english.udel.edu/wc). In order to support writing-based research, we also have a variety of reference books and online resources.

## Writer Policies

**Scheduling Appointments:** Writers can schedule an appointment at our website or on the login computer at the front desk of the writing center. If they call to schedule an appointment, encourage them to do so online, but do it for them if they seem reluctant to do so.

**Faculty Notification:** Unless a writer indicates an instructor should be notified of the visit (by checking the appropriate box on the session information form), the visit will remain confidential. If a student requests that a conference summary form be sent to the teacher, do so immediately after the tutorial. If the student does not know the professor's name or department, remember that you can look it up in the UD or English department directories.

**Cancellations:** If a writer is fifteen minutes late (without notice), another writer may take his or her place. If there is less than thirty minutes left in the tutoring hour, honoring the scheduled tutorial is up to the tutor's discretion. Any student who misses an appointment without calling in advance is considered a no-show. Please check "no show" in the appointment box.

**Proofreading:** Although we do work on grammar, if writers have come to the writing center only for editing and proofreading, the consultant should clearly explain the writing center's policy. Be clear on what the writing center can and cannot do for them. Because definitions of "proofreading" and "editing" differ greatly, the consultant should emphasize the sentence-level assistance we can offer. If this proofreading policy creates a problem with the client, refer him or her to the director or assistant director.

## **Personnel Policies**

**Scheduling:** Once a consultant's scheduled hours are set for the semester, they should not be altered unless it is an emergency. If a scheduled event is coming up during the semester (conference, research trip, interview, etc.), that event should be factored into the tutoring schedule at the beginning of the semester. In case of an emergency absence, they should be rescheduled as soon as possible afterward. Alternatively, with the consent of the Director, missed hours may be made up on a writing center project.

**Absence/Lateness:** Consultants should not be late or miss consultations or meetings. If you must be late or absent, it is important to call the writing center as soon as possible so that the desk assistant can inform the students and reschedule any appointments. If you are late and a writer is scheduled with you, the appointment will be transferred (with the writer's consent) to an available consultant, and your hour will be rescheduled.

Repeated unplanned absence/lateness is unfair to your colleagues as well as those students whom we are paid to assist. In the case of an absence/lateness, the assistant director will be notified. In the case of a second instance, you will receive an informal warning from the Director of Writing. After a third instance, you will receive a letter documenting your attendance/lateness from the Director. A copy of this letter will be kept in your file.

If you have a tutorial scheduled, be in the writing center to greet the writer. If not, be in the center or the consultants' office (room 019 Memorial).

**Ethics:** As with any professional service, consultants have an obligation to protect the privacy and best interests of their clients and community. Thus, writers and/or sessions are never to be discussed in the writing center in a negative or critical manner.

**Do not comment on instructors, assignments, potential grades, or teaching methods. Ever.**

**Leaving the center:** Consultants are expected to be in the center during their scheduled consultation hours. **As with faculty office hours, you are expected to be there whether you are with a student or not.** If you go to get a soda or the rest room, alert the person at the front desk.

**Communication:** You are responsible for having a working email address and checking it regularly. Barring circumstances beyond our control, we will give notice when something (policy, meeting cancellation) is going to change. You are then responsible for that change. However, as a member of the department, it is in your best interest to check your email daily.

**Lunch/Dinner:** Because most consultants only work a few hours at a time, you will not get a lunch or

dinner break while you are on duty. Please eat lunch before or after your scheduled hours and not in the writing center.

**Use of space outside the tutoring room:** Room 019 is office space for writing center consultants who are currently tutoring in the center. You may use this space as a lounge or a lunchroom. **However, if the space is not kept clean, the space may be withdrawn.**

**Trash:** Blue waste baskets are for recycling only. Other waste baskets are for non-recycling refuse.

**Kitchen area:** Clean up the kitchen area immediately after use. It is NOT the custodians' or office supervisor's job to clean this area. Wipe out the microwave after each use. Keep track of your food in the refrigerator. If you notice paper and plastic supplies getting low, leave a note with the office supervisor or assistant director so replacements can be ordered.

**This area is not a right, it is a privilege. If the consultants and staff's use of this area creates work for the administrative staff, this privilege will be revoked.**

**Free time:** Even if you do not have a client, you are still working as a consultant. Please use time between consultations to work on writing center projects. If you're not sure what needs to be done, just ask!

**Security:** If the front desk is not covered by personnel, make sure that one instructor is positioned so that s/he can see the door. Instructors who do not have students should take turns sitting at the front desk. For safety's sake, please exercise caution when leaving at night. If possible, it is advisable to leave as a group when closing the center. **Never leave a tutor alone in the center with a client.**

You will have a key to the writing center. **Be sure all the doors are locked when you leave and never lend your key to anyone.**

**Paperwork:** Detailed records are crucial in order to evidence the good work we do. Thus, consultants will ask the writer to fill out an evaluation form at the end of each session. Likewise, at the end of each session, the consultant **must** fill out the session's information form online, including if and when a letter was sent to the instructor. Be as detailed as possible in recording the particulars of the session.

**Phones:** When working, please help the administrative staff by answering the phone when they are busy. Answer the phone in a professional manner. ("Writing Center. This is Melissa speaking. How may I help you?")

The phone in Room 019 is only an intercom. For personal long distance calls, use your personal cell phone.

**Photocopy machine:** The photocopy machine is for writing center-related business only. All other copies

are to be made on the English department copier and in accordance with their policies. If you need to make copies for the writing center, please ask the office supervisor to input the code.

**Printer:** The front desk printer is for front desk work only. Toner and paper costs limit printer use to specific writing center administrative needs. If you need to print personal documents, please use the computer site in Memorial Hall or your own printer at home.

**Computers:** Three computers along the left side of the center are for consultants' use. Please do not use the scheduling computer at the front desk nor the two data entry computers by the assistant director's office for personal work. These computers are not hooked up to a network printer.

**Smoking:** Smoking is not permitted in Memorial Hall or its doorways. Outdoors, there is a designated smoking space west of Memorial Hall.

### **Alternate Responsibilities**

Graduate students appointed to the writing center may fulfill a portion of their hours by working on Director-approved activities. Graduate students and peer tutors may lead in-class seminars or work as an administrative assistant at the front desk.

**In-Class and In-Center Presentations:** At the beginning of the semester, consultants will provide student presentations on the writing center. Consultants will be assigned classes to visit during

their scheduled hours at the writing center. Because the presentations are often a student's first glimpse of the writing center, consultants need to be prepared, enthusiastic, and professional.

**Lateness for a presentation will not be tolerated!**

**Seminars:** Throughout the course of the year, consultants may be asked to participate in various large and small group writing seminars, both in the writing center and in classrooms. The topics for these seminars will be determined throughout the year.

**Front Desk Administrative Assistant Duties:**

Anytime the writing center is open and a student worker is not scheduled to be at the front desk, a consultant will be designated as the front desk administrative assistant (AA). The AA will not tutor but will be at the front desk at all times. If you are on AA duty, do not wander around the writing center. Be at the desk, ready to greet students and to answer the phone. Other consultants should avoid socializing with you in the front desk area. The AA is responsible for the following duties:

***Greeting:*** Because the AA is the point of contact for people coming into the writing center, it is important that you welcome them in a friendly manner. Don't let them mill around when they walk through the door – make eye contact and ask them what you can do for them.

*If they are here for a tutorial:*

1. Ask if they have an appointment (if not, assign a consultant).
2. Ask them to fill out the session form and show them how to make future appointments online. Help them complete the online registration information if necessary.
3. Complete all data entry procedures so that clients are properly registered in the online databases.

***Phone Calls:*** Oftentimes, a phone call represents an individual's first contact with the writing center. Thus, when you pick up the phone, sound friendly and professional ("University writing center; this is Susie Smith speaking.").

***Messages:*** Make sure you write down the phone number of the caller, the date and time of call, and any messages on the telephone pad provided. Put the telephone message slip in the recipient's mailbox.

**Save for dire emergencies, do not interrupt a consultation in progress.**

## Contact Information

Writing center 302-831-1168  
[wcdesk@english.udel.edu](mailto:wcdesk@english.udel.edu)

English office 302-831-2361

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