



What Should Doctoral Students Expect When They Make an Appointment with the Writing Center?

This handout is an introduction to the kinds of support doctoral students can expect from the University Writing Center. Understanding these expectations up front will make your experience with us more effective, whether in person or over Zoom.

You are welcome to log in to [Trac Cloud](#) to make your own appointment. You can even include a note requesting a professional consultant who has experience working with graduate students. However, if you would like to ensure that you work with a professional consultant at a time most convenient for you, call the Writing Center at 828-262-3144 and speak with the desk assistant.

- **Consultants' Understanding of What Stage You Are In**

All of our professional consultants have advanced degrees and/or experience working in the publishing field. That said, it's always helpful for you to be explicit about the requirements of whatever you are writing, as well as what particular issues you are having. Taking the time to go over these details is also a good exercise for you!

- **Scope of Work**

Although we can help steer you through APA documentation and proofreading for grammar and punctuation, that's not all we do! Our view is that higher order issues come first. This means logical sequencing, thoroughness of evidence, clarity of expression—in other words, figuring out what you think and conveying this accurately to a reader. This most likely cannot be accomplished in a single session. After an initial session to go over what you want to work on, a mutual decision to schedule a "Review Appointment" before the next scheduled consultation can give your consultant a chance to read through your chapter or document. To ask for a Review Appointment in conjunction with a consultation, talk to your consultant about it; then, it's best to schedule your appointment with a desk assistant at 828-262-3144. Once it's scheduled, you can email your draft to writingctr@appstate.edu. **Without making this arrangement ahead, please do not email your document to us.**

If you are having difficulty understanding an assignment you have not started writing, we can help. All you need to have with you is a copy of the requirements and any other relevant materials, such as a syllabus or any sources you have already found or that your professor has pointed out. Consider scheduling a session for help with talking through this part of the writing process. No completed writing is necessary.

Even if you know what you are supposed to do, composing the first few lines of a writing assignment can be daunting, so consider scheduling an invention session with us. Together, you and your consultant can work on various invention techniques, such as focused free writing or talking it out while your consultant takes notes. This can alleviate those awkward first lines of composing and save you from writer's block. Again, no completed writing is necessary.

We are also happy to work with you on assignments for classes that do not have to do with your QE, proposal/prospectus, or dissertation. Bring the assignment, feedback notes, and any other material you have available.

- **Editing and Proofreading**

In proofreading and editing sessions, you will read through your writing out loud together, collaborating to catch sentence-level errors and address any clarity issues, formatting issues, or other editing concerns that might come up.

- **Documenting Sources**

Our writing consultants are always prepared to help you navigate documentation issues. Bring your sources and your assignment to your session, and we can concentrate on addressing all your documentation questions and concerns.

- **It's a Conversation**

We are not necessarily experts in your subject matter. We *are* experienced writers and attentive readers who are eager to work with you in collaboration. We hope you are looking forward to some good back-and-forth and effective support.

When you need assistance at any stage of completing a paper or project, schedule an appointment via our online appointment portal, [Trac Cloud](#), or give us a call at 828-262-3144. When it's time for your appointment, have available any and all materials relevant to the assignment, including

- assignment-specific handouts
- the course syllabus, which often includes information about documentation and formatting
- course texts
- other assignments you have completed, with feedback/responses from your instructor

If you don't have these documents available, no worries; show up as you are.