

Use the Writing Center to Support Student Learning in Your Course

The Writing Center offers free one-on-one writing consultations to Mason students across the disciplines. Student writers can meet with a peer writing consultant at any phase of the writing project to get thoughtful, inclusive feedback and learn strategies for writing. We serve undergraduate and graduate writers from all language backgrounds.

When students talk about their writing with others, they engage in deep learning activities that support integrative and higher-order learning (Anderson et al., 2015). In a Writing Center session, peer consultants ask questions that get writers talking about their ideas and arguments: how they've developed them, structured them, provided evidence for them, and shaped them for specific audiences and purposes. When writers elaborate on these ideas, disciplinary learning can be reinforced and enhanced.

Integrate the Writing Center into Your Course

- **In your assignment schedule, build the Writing Center visit in to your process deadlines.**

Be sure to create time between the writing center session and due date for the next draft, so students have ample time to revise.

- **Let us support peer review in your course.**

Invite us in to deliver a workshop on doing peer review. We can work with you on a real-time workshop that offers instruction on doing peer review, then allows your students to provide feedback on a sample draft of the assignment they are working toward.

If you don't have class time to devote to a full workshop, or if you are teaching asynchronously, assign our video on doing peer review, which directs reviewers to the most important elements of a draft, provides commenting strategies, and helps reviewers build rapport with writers. Find this resource on our Class Workshops page, under Peer Review Workshop:

<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/workshops/virtual-class-workshops>

- **Ask students to compose a brief reflection after they revise.**

You can ask students could discuss three revisions they made, and why; or to discuss the feedback they acted on and decided against acting on, and why. This kind of reflection builds metacognitive awareness of revision and shows you value this part of the writing process.

- **Connect your students to our writing guides**

On the writing center website you will find a collection of 80+ quick-guides on a wide range of writing topics. You can draw on these for your course, and know that we welcome your feedback on any of these guides.

- **Include a Writing Center invitation on your syllabus**

Even if you don't build the writing center more formally in to your writing assignment, you can include a blurb in your syllabus. We have one you can copy and paste or tailor on our website.

If you're teaching online, you can link to our video roadshow, which tells students about our services. If you are teaching in person, you can invite a peer consultant to visit your class to do the same. <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/for-faculty/promote-us-to-your-students>

Help Students Get the Most from their Writing Center Sessions

- **Recommend the center to *all* your students at the beginning of the term** or when you introduce your first writing assignment.

Everyone needs feedback on their high-stakes assignments. If you identify a student whom you would like to encourage, just give that student a reminder.

- **Recommend rather than require visits**

By the middle of the term, we may be booked a week or more in advance. Trying to book a required visit can be stressful for a student having difficulty finding an appointment.

- **Prompt students to bring specific goals to their session**

When you do this, you position the student as the agent of their own writing and learning.

Talk about the role of feedback and revision in your own writing

Remind students that you receive formal and informal feedback from your peers on your high-stakes writing. Learning to ask for, receive, and work with feedback are valuable professional skills that can be developed in writing consultations.

Additional Writing Center Services

- "Opt-In" program for multilingual writers provides weekly sessions with the same consultant for continuity and cumulative learning
- Thesis and dissertation consulting
- Weekly write-ins for graduate students
- Writing groups for multilingual graduate students

Hours and locations

Johnson Center 227E

In The Lab for Writing and Communication

Monday-Thursday, 10:30 am – 6:30 pm

Friday, 10:30 am – 3:30 pm

Evening and weekend hours online only; check the schedule online for specific days and times.

Appointments available in person or on Zoom; students may also submit a draft for asynchronous written feedback.