



How to Work Effectively with a Writing Fellow

- ***Make an appointment and be punctual:*** While it is possible to just drop by the Writing Center for help with your writing assignment, tutors are not always available, so making an appointment in advance is best. If you are more than ten minutes late for a half-hour appointment, you will have to reschedule. If you are more than twenty minutes late for an hour appointment, you will have to reschedule.
- ***Bring something to work on:*** If you do show up empty handed, all is not lost. Writing Fellows can help you brainstorm for ideas and topics; however, you may have expected to accomplish more in the session. If you bring an outline or a first draft, typed or legibly written, the Writing Fellow will be able to offer more specific and focused assistance. It's always easier and more productive to discuss and revise "something" in writing than it is to start from "nothing."
- ***Plan, plan, plan:*** Do not wait until the last minute to make an appointment. If a Writing Fellow helps you review your paper thirty minutes before you hand it in, it may be a waste of time for both you and the Writing Fellow, since you do not have time to apply any of the Writing Fellow's suggestions for improving your paper. We suggest that you meet with a Writing Fellow several days before the paper is due. If you plan accordingly, you will be more likely to secure an appointment time that is convenient and productive for you.
- ***Take responsibility for your professor's requirements:*** Appointment times are limited. During peak hours each semester, appointments can be difficult to get if you have not planned far enough in advance. If your instructor **REQUIRES** you to meet with a Writing Fellow, it is your responsibility to schedule an appointment. This may require completing a draft of a paper two or more weeks in advance of the final due date. If all of the Writing Fellows are booked, you may have the option of contacting one of our online E-tutors, but only with instructor permission. If this option does not work, it is your responsibility to work it out with your instructor. Writing Fellows will do their best to meet with you, but they cannot rearrange their own schedules to accommodate individual scheduling problems, and they **Will Not** negotiate with your professor on your behalf.
- ***Do not expect a Writing Fellow to proofread your paper:*** Writing Fellows have been instructed by the Writing Center Director to refuse to proofread papers. If a Writing Fellow were to proofread your paper and change (or even identify) every grammar, punctuation, and spelling error, it would be **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**. If you do have these types of errors, Writing Fellows will do limited "**Instructional Editing**," meaning they will identify one or two examples of errors and show you strategies for finding and correcting more of them in your writing.



- ***Come in person, alone, at your scheduled appointment time:*** Writing Fellows will not look at a paper brought in by or dropped off by a “messenger.” You must accompany your own work to receive assistance. The MCCC Writing Center is also not a “drop-off” service for papers to be picked up later. In addition, do not bring a friend to an appointment to wait for you—our space is limited. Writing Fellows can only work with one student at a time, so there are no appointments for pairs or groups of students unless your instructor requires it and the Writing Center Director has been notified in advance.
- ***Come to your appointment with a positive attitude:*** Even the best writers value outside critiques of their work. This is your opportunity to receive constructive feedback about your paper and improve your writing. The more engaged you are with the Writing Fellow (positive attitude and inquisitive responses), the greater the benefits from the session. Prepare some specific questions about your writing or paper in advance. Ask the Writing Fellow to focus on a particular problem in the paper you have identified or struggled with, and be ready to seriously think about the suggestions the Writing Fellow offers you. Any kind of negative attitude or hostility will, more than likely, render your time ineffective.
- ***Expect to talk during the session:*** Think of your time with the Writing Fellow as engaging in a “dialogue” about your writing. You will most likely be asked to read all or parts of your paper (depending on the length). In addition, expect the Writing Fellow to ask you questions before making suggestions for improvement. You will need to thoughtfully consider these questions and do your best to respond. Also expect the Writing Fellow, in the last few minutes of the session, to ask you to verbally review the main points of the tutoring session. All of these techniques, while perhaps new to you, are employed to help you gain a deeper understanding of your writing process and improve your writing. After all, that’s why you came to the Writing Center.