Faculty Guide
To Writing Services Provided

Created to provide Faculty and Instructors at Bowling Green State University a detailed understanding of the kinds of services and support The Learning Commons Writing Staff can provide students and writers.

First Floor William T. Jerome Library

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The Learning Commons is a division of Enrollment Management.
The Bowling Green State University Learning Commons

Located on the 1st floor of William T. Jerome Library, The Commons is an academic support service offering a centralized location for tutoring in Math & Statistics, Study Skills, Writing, as well as a Tutorial Center for any subject area. All members of the BGSU community are welcome to use the free services offered.

Mission Statement of The Learning Commons
The Learning Commons provides students with academic resources that foster independent learning. The highly trained professional, graduate, and undergraduate staff utilizes technology and additional resources to offer individual and group tutoring and consultations tailored to meet the needs of any student in any course at any time in the learning process.

The Learning Commons is committed to these Core Values:

Collaboration, Respect, Empowerment, Accessibility, Teamwork, Excellence

The Learning Commons Administrative and Classified Staff

Mark D. Nelson, Director (419)372-6067
Sally Dreier, Study Skill Coordinator (419)372-2679
Donna Dick, Content Tutor Coordinator (419)372-8345
Jeremy Joseph, Math and Statistics Coordinator (419)372-9129
Jason Clevenger, Writing Coordinator (419)372-8319
Debbie Hine, Secretary (419)372-2221
Chris Hesterman, Secretary (419)372-9142

The Learning Commons Writing Staff
Undergraduate, Graduate, Faculty, Specialists, and Professional Writers

The staff varies from year to year as consultants graduate or move on to other pursuits. The core of the writing staff is made up of paid undergraduate students from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines who have excelled in their writing classes. Most apply to the Learning Commons based upon the recommendation of a writing instructor, and most who start working in the Learning Commons stay throughout the course of their time at BGSU. As a result, the staff possesses a significant level of expertise. The staff also includes paid graduate students from a variety of disciplines, English as a Second Language Specialists, and current and former instructors. All are exceptional writers, and all consultants receive extensive and on-going in-service instruction.

Current Hours of Operation
Fall 2012

Monday – Thursday 8am-10pm
Friday 8am-5pm
Sunday 6pm-10pm

Operating hours may vary, so please consult the Learning Commons web site www.bgsu.edu/learningcommons/ for current hours and contact information.
Philosophy of the Writing Staff

The Purpose of the Learning Commons Writing Staff  
*High-quality feedback on any writing task to any writer working in any subject*

The Learning Commons employs writing specialists who offer a free source of feedback, reader response, encouragement, and tutoring for all writers on campus. Students, faculty, and staff are invited to make an appointment or stop by the Commons to work on personal, course-related, and/or professional writing tasks.

We envision our service as one of writers helping writers. In providing a real audience for writers, we ask questions to encourage revision of drafts for increased clarity of ideas, logical organization, and overall effectiveness. We look at writing not only as a static text but also as a process of learning and problem solving that creates new meaning and greater understanding. Because we believe ideas have consequences, we work with writers to bring their ideas into focus. We encourage creativity, critical thinking, and communication. We strive to create a unique space, where writers feel comfortable to discuss and develop their ideas and where they can grow confident in their ability to communicate with diverse readers. To that end, we will not edit drafts; rather, we offer feedback to writers to help them identify and address areas of concern themselves.

Instructors are welcome to visit and observe the staff at work. Instructors are also encouraged to schedule a class trip to the Commons for a guided tour or a representative will be happy visit their classroom for 10-15 minutes to discuss the services. Brochures, syllabus information, and other distributable materials that detail the services are available.

If you have questions or concerns about a writing consultation in The Learning Commons, please do not hesitate to contact J. Clevenger, the Writing Coordinator, by phone at 372-8319 or via email at jcleven@bgsu.edu.

The Relationship between the Classroom Instructor and the Writing Consultant  
* A common goal

Both the instructor and the writing consultant are united by a common goal: to help the student become a more confident and effective writer. The Learning Commons believes in open communication and trusts that instructors and writing consultants are free to contact one another whenever necessary. To this end, The Learning Commons has an Instructor Referral Form available online which Instructors can use to make suggestions for upcoming tutoring sessions. At the conclusion of each session, writing consultants—in conjunction with the writer—write brief summaries of all tutoring activity and, if the writers allow it, forward those summaries to the instructor. Instructors are also encouraged to send copies of assignment sheets to the Learning Commons.

We also ask that Faculty and Instructors contact the Learning Commons if they have any questions or concerns regarding a writing consultation session. It is our goal to enhance the work being done in the classroom, and every bit of feedback we get from the Faculty and Instructors is of great value to us.
Assistance Offered by The Learning Commons Writing Staff

Learning Commons Services for Students
One-to-one sessions, online feedback, technological assistance, and workshops

One-on-one Sessions.
The primary service writing consultants offer is the one-on-one tutoring session. These 50-minute sessions are writer-driven and can cover any phase of the writing process, from prewriting to final revision. Since the writing consultants ask questions and offer suggestions which focus on helping writers fully develop the ideas and clearly express the purpose of the draft, we rely on the writers to understand the complexities of the subject matter. As a result, we are capable of working with writers from all disciplines, at all levels, and at any time in the writing process.

Online Writing Services.
The Learning Commons also offers an online writing service, which students may access through the Learning Commons web site: http://www.bgsu.edu/LearningCommons. We strive, as much as is possible, to adhere to the same philosophy and approach used in in-person session—despite the limitations of email. To this end we require writers to submit a draft via an online submission form that asks for details regarding the assignment and the rhetoric context. Feedback takes the form of comments, questions, and links to supplemental materials inserted into the writer’s document using MS Word’s comment function. Turnaround time is usually within 48 hours. Over weekends, the turnaround time may increase to 72 hours.

Collaborative Projects
Groups are welcome in the Learning Commons. If students are working on a group or collaborative project, all members are present at the session. Students may schedule appointments for work on their own writing (not the writing of peers), but if the work of the group is to be discussed, all members of the group must be present.

Walk-in Services
Writers are free to drop by the Learning Commons at any time. However, other than times designated as walk-in (at which times students will be served on a first-come-first-served basis), walk-ins can only be give a session if a consultant is available. Further, if the writer arrives at twenty minutes after the top of the hour, a determination will need to be made regarding the level of services required. The consent of the consultant is a critical factor in this determination.

Weekly Workshop Series
A weekly workshop series is available for writers seeking further assistance. The topics covered in the series vary from semester to semester. Past topics have included: academic honesty, revision strategies, MLA and APA, and using sources effectively. If you have an idea for a workshop or would like to lead a workshop, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Software Tutorials
The Commons provides software tutorials that help students utilize Microsoft Office products in the production of texts. Other technology tutorials may be available depending on the knowledge of the staff.
Learning Commons Services for Faculty
*Facilitation, In-class workshops, Online resources, Writing help.*

We can facilitate peer review sessions
The Learning Commons staff has experience facilitating in-class discussions of writing. We can come to your classroom and provide an overview of effective peer review. We can also work with small groups of writers. If you are interested in having consultants visit your classroom, please contact us to make the arrangements.

We have space available in the Learning Commons.
Faculty and Instructors are welcome to reserve the presentation space, which contains a SmartBoard, as well as the group study rooms and open tables. The space can be used for nearly any instructional function—to hold office hours, to meet with individual students or small groups, to hold peer review sessions. If you would like to reserve space in the Learning Commons, please contact us to make the arrangements.

We can visit your class.
We can discuss our services with your students. We can also offer classroom-based workshops on topics ranging from using citation methods (MLA, APA, CMS, &etc.) to crafting effective paragraphs. Just ask us; we may have already developed a workshop that will fit with your goals.

We provide online resources.
The OWL contains a variety of handouts for use as teaching tools or as additional resources for your students, and we are willing to provide access to or help develop additional resources that you feel are beneficial to your student writers.

We can work with you on your writing projects.
The Learning Commons staff is made up of undergraduate, graduate, and faculty writers. We are sympathetic readers, and many of us have experience developing course assignments, grant proposals, and material for publication. We can offer you a reader’s perspective, asking questions and offering suggestions that can help you achieve your objective.

Services Not Offered
Writing consultants do not assign grades, comment on the grade a paper might merit, ghostwrite, proofread, or edit a writer’s paper. Consultants are trained to follow academic honesty policies to the letter.
Using the Learning Commons

Guidelines for visiting The Learning Commons

The majority of the writers coming to the Commons come on their own initiative. Others come because their instructors or counselors have strongly encouraged them to take advantage of the service.

Instructors must be aware that a visit to the Commons should not be used for remediation or disciplinary purposes. That is, students must not be sent to the Commons to make up for missed class time, late submission essays, etc.

As well, we ask that instructors seek approval before requiring an entire class to schedule an appointment with the Learning Commons.

The Learning Commons will work with students on any writing project—this includes take-home exams. Because of the large number of writing assignments given to students in any given semester, we must rely on Faculty and Instructors to establish policies regarding seeking writing assistance on take-home exams. If you do not wish your students to receive feedback from the Learning Commons writing staff, we ask that you please make that explicit when you distribute the exam.

Some ways you can assist us and your student writers:

Include information about The Learning Commons on your syllabus.

Schedule a Learning Commons visit to your class.

Encourage writers to visit The Learning Commons at any stage of the writing process.

Utilize the referral form and session report forms to foster communication throughout the writing process.

Send a copy of your writing assignment(s) to the Learning Commons.

Setting Up an Appointment with a Writing Consultant

To receive the full benefit of a writing consultation, writers should schedule an appointment days in advance of the due date. Currently, The Learning Commons utilizes Accudemia to schedule and track appointments. Students can access Accudemia and schedule an appointment via the Learning Commons tab found in their MyBGSU accounts online. Writers may also call or stop by to make an appointment.

While appointments are not necessary, they are strongly advised. Time with writing specialists is in high demand, thus available appointment times tend to become scarce as the semester progresses. In short, The Learning Commons cannot guarantee that students who walk in will be able to secure an immediate appointment.
A Writing Session

What happens in a typical one-to-one session with a Learning Commons Writing Consultant

Anatomy of a typical session

The typical writing session is 50 minutes long. The writer typically brings the work in process, which may be as little as an idea for a paper, or a partial or full rough draft, or as much as a completely revised paper. We also ask that writers bring any and all available materials connected to the assignment – assignment sheets, previous drafts, instructor comments, &etc. Writers should also bring questions and be prepared to voice their concerns.

Our process is driven by the idea of meeting the writer at the point of need. To determine that point, we talk with writers about their projects – focusing on their questions, goals, ideas, and revision strategies. Consultants also devote time to determining what stage the writer is at in the writing process, when the assignment is due, the type and length of the assignment, and what the writer wants to work on. This discussion allows the consultant to establish a list of priorities for the session. (To facilitate this conversation, please feel free to complete a writing session referral form.) The consultant and writer will then begin reading through the draft.

As they read, the consultant will ask questions to help the writer develop ideas and enhance connections; the consultant will point out reoccurring concerns (sentence-level and/or global) and present the writer with information, strategies, and resources designed to address those concerns. The feedback that the consultants provide is presented as one reader’s judgment, and as such, the writer is always encouraged to disagree – thus maintaining the responsibility for the draft throughout.

At the end of every session, the consultant and writer fill out a session report form that—pending the approval of the writer—can be sent to you. The reporting form contains a brief summary of all tutoring activity that took place during the session, and by completing the form with the writer, it serves as a mechanism for establishing the priorities for the next revision of the draft.
Synopsis of Important Policies

Confidentiality

- The Learning Commons respects the confidentiality of every student. Session reports will only be shared if the student has given permission for us to share it. All students are asked to make a determination regarding sharing the reports during every session.

Academic Honesty

- The Learning Commons writing staff strictly adheres to the BGSU Academic Honesty policy.
- Plagiarism Policy - The LC staff assumes that the writing brought to them is the tutee's own.

If a consultant suspects that a paper is not the work of the writer, the consultant has the responsibility of pointing out the areas of the draft that are under suspicion, remind the student of BGSU’s academic honesty policy, and offer appropriate assistance to the writer (help with learning to paraphrase or in the use of proper citation methods).

Because we hold the sessions in the strictest of confidence, the consultants will only discuss the activities of a session—including conversations regarding possible plagiarism—with anyone outside of the Learning Commons if the writer has given the Learning Commons permission to do so and that permission is recorded on the session report form.

Faculty and Staff

- Faculty notification policy – Upon the completion of every session, the student determines whether the Learning Commons notifies the instructor of all tutoring activity via the Session Report Form. If the student consents to notification, a copy of the form will be emailed to the faculty member. If the student does not consent to notification, no information about the session will be shared (see confidentiality policy).
- Required tutorials policy – Before requiring a class to visit the Learning Commons writing staff or offering extra credit for visiting the Learning Commons, we ask that faculty member get prior approval from the LC.
  - Appointments are scheduled on a first come first serve basis; No session times can be reserved for those required to come to the Learning Commons. The Learning Commons staff will attempt to accommodate all those who are required to visit the Learning Commons, but because of the large number of students served, it is almost impossible to guarantee that students will get an appointment.
- Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) required tutorials policy – Appointments are scheduled on a first come first serve basis; No sessions are reserved for those required to come to the Learning Commons with a SAP referral. While every effort is made to accommodate SAP referrals, students must be aware that we serve a large number of students. As a result, students should schedule appointments as far in advance as possible.
Appointments

- Learning Commons writing staff will help any member of the BGSU community on any writing project for which the Faculty, Instructor, or Coordinator have not placed a limitation upon using the service.
  - Priority is given to student writers.
  - In all instances, the tutee is responsible for determining whether or not tutoring is permitted.
    - Students are responsible for determining if the Learning Commons is permitted to help with take-home essay exams.
    - Students are responsible for determining if the Learning Commons is permitted to help with writing personal statements for fellowships, jobs, or graduate school
  - Tutors are not permitted to help with writing that has legal or financial implications or is related to an appeal of a university decision.
  - The Learning Commons is not liable if the tutee violates this policy.
- **Frequency policy** - Students may book up to TWO appointments per week. (This includes online submission sessions using the OWL.)
  - Students may not book back-to-back sessions without prior approval of the LC staff
  - Sessions are 50 minutes and start on the hour.
- **Proofreading policy** – Consultants will not proofread drafts. Instead, they will offer writers proofreading strategies (including helping writers with reoccurring structure or grammatical concerns) that will aid the writer in proofreading his/her own drafts.
- **Cancellation policy** – Sessions may be canceled up to two (2) hours prior to the scheduled start time of a session. Students who do not cancel in time and fail to appear for a session will be counted as a no-show (see No Show policy).
- **Rescheduling policy** – Sessions may be rescheduled up to two (2) hours prior to the start time of the appointment. Students who do not reschedule in time and fail to appear for a session will be counted as a no-show (see No Show policy).
- **Late Arrival policy** - If a student is more than ten minutes late for an appointment, he/she loses the exclusive right to that appointment and the session may be given to someone else.
- **No show policy** - After TWO (2) MISSED appointments (or what we call "no-shows"), students are prohibited from booking further appointments for the current term.
- **Group policy** – Groups are welcome in the Learning Commons. If students are working on a group project, all members are present at the session. Students may schedule appointments for work on their own writing (not the writing of peers), but if the work of the group is to be discussed, all members of the group must be present.
- **Walk-in policy** – other than times designated as walk-in (at which times students will be served on a first-come-first-served basis), walk-ins will only be given a session if a consultant is available and if not arriving at the top of the hour, only with the consent of the consultant.
- **Abuse policy** - If a student abuses the scheduling system and/or Learning Commons’ policies, The Learning Commons staff reserves the right to limit or deny services.
  - Consultants are permitted to end a session at any time if they feel the session has become disruptive or combative.
Works Referenced

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/faculty_resources/index1.html

George Mason University
http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/sessions-and-policies.php

The University of Notre Dame
http://writingcenter.nd.edu/faq/faculty-faq/

Concordia University