UWC

Consultant Handbook

2023-2024

THE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER
DEPARTMENT OF RHETORIC AND WRITING
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

The University Writing Center

Contact Information

Main Phone Number: (512) 471-6222

Chat Line Number: (512) 488-1457

Fax Number: (512) 232-2719

Campus Mail Code: G3000

Mailing Address:
The University Writing Center
The University of Texas at Austin
Learning Commons, PCL 2.330
101 E. 21st St., Stop G3000
Austin, TX 78713

Staff Listserv: uwcstaff@utlists.utexas.edu

Administrative Staff Contacts:

Jackie Rhodes	jacqueline.rhodes@austin.utexas.edu 512-232-4152	Director
Alice Batt	alicebatt@utexas.edu 512-232-4152	Assistant Director
Michele Solberg	micsol@austin.utexas.edu 512-232-2725	Operations Manager
Kristin Gilger	kgilger@austin.utexas.edu 512-232-4258	Graduate Writing Coordinator
Emma Beard	emma.beard@austin.utexas.edu 512-471-4031	Administrative Associate
Vanessa López	vnlopez@utexas.edu	Assistant Program Coordinator

Abigail Burns	anburns@utexas.edu	Assistant Program Coordinator
Torri Hart	torri.hart@austin.utexas.edu	Assistant Program Coordinator
Autumn Reyes	ahr766@utexas.edu	Presentations Coordinator
Trent Wintermeier	trentwintermeier@utexas.edu	Presentations Coordinator
Emma Conatser	emmaconatser@utexas.edu	*Praxis* Associate Editor / *Praxis* Assistant Editor
Iana Robitaille	iwrobitaille@utexas.edu	Graduate Services Assistant / Outreach Coordinator

Emergency phone numbers are posted at the front desk and in the break room.

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Chapter One: The UWC

History

The University Writing Center had its beginnings in the widely publicized events leading to the creation of the Division of Rhetoric and Writing at The University of Texas in 1993. Until that time, the University's required first-year composition course (E 306, now RHE 306) was offered and overseen by the Department of English. Debate about the 306 curriculum in 1989 and 1990 led to a study by the University Council (now Faculty Council) Committee on the Undergraduate Experience. On January 21, 1992, the Committee submitted a report recommending "that a Division of Rhetoric and Writing be established in the College of Liberal Arts that would be responsible for the administration, staffing, and teaching of first-year and advanced composition courses." Following President Cunningham's approval of the new division in August, the DRW began operating on June 1, 1993. Incoming faculty stipulated the creation of a writing center as a condition for their involvement in the DRW, and thus the Undergraduate Writing Center was born.

For the 1993-1994 school year, the UWC operated out of a room in Parlin Hall and served only students in English and DRW classes. Professor Sara Kimball, the Writing Center's founding director, along with Scarlett Bowen and Randi Voss, set up UWC policies and practices with significant help from the Temple University Writing Center. On January 28, 1994, the University Council Committee to Examine the University Writing Program submitted a proposal to "fully implement the Undergraduate Writing Center as soon as possible" as part of its efforts to support and improve the teaching of Substantial Writing Component classes. By that time, plans were already under way to move the Center from Parlin Hall to the Flawn Academic Center. On September 21, 1994, the UWC began operating in the Flawn Academic Center.

Further expansion of the UWC's mission and physical space began in the 2000-2001 school year. In summer 2001, the UWC formed a partnership with the Office of Graduate Studies' Intellectual Entrepreneurship Program to explore providing graduate writing services in select departments. In January 2001, the UWC received a $300,000 grant from the Houston Endowment to expand UWC outreach to instructors of Substantial Writing Component courses. This grant funded the creation of an SWC Resource Coordinator position to support SWC faculty directly. The FAC space doubled in size after an expansion project was completed in June 2001.

In 2015, the Undergraduate Writing Center became the University Writing Center, a name change reflecting the expansion of its services to include workshops for faculty and graduate students. The UWC also received funding from the College of Liberal Arts to hire graduate student consultants from departments across campus and to launch the Course Specialist Consultant program, in which specially trained undergraduates served as designated writing consultants for UT courses. In August 2015, the UWC relocated from FAC 211 to the new Learning Commons in Perry-Castañeda Library. The new space offers approximately four

times the square footage of FAC 211, windows, and proximity to multimedia learning labs and other library services.

Mission

> Maybe in a perfect world, all writers would have their own ready auditor—a teacher, a classmate, a roommate, an editor—who would not only listen but draw them out, ask them questions they would not think to ask themselves. A writing center is an institutional response to this need.
> —Stephen North, "The Idea of a Writing Center"

The University Writing Center, a unit of the Department of Rhetoric and Writing, is oriented toward helping UT students become more proficient, more versatile, and more confident in their writing abilities. We do so by providing one-on-one writing consultations to students, supporting the faculty teaching writing, giving presentations to classes, developing handouts, and employing undergraduate and graduate student consultants.

The help we provide is intended to foster independence. We do not, therefore, revise, edit, or proofread student papers. Instead, we teach students how to revise, edit, and proofread their own work more accurately and efficiently. The advice we give in consultations is professional but nondirective. The invention of ideas and supporting statements remains the writer's responsibility, and the consultation itself belongs to the student. Because student visits are confidential, students have access to our records of their work with us, and we notify instructors of their students' visits only if students ask us to.

We also view as central to our mission the support of faculty who teach undergraduate courses. Every semester we send Writing Flag and other faculty a letter informing them of our services, and throughout the semester we support them indirectly by working with their students. In addition, we give presentations and workshops for the classes of faculty members who request our services.

Policies

Populations Served

Any undergraduate or graduate student currently enrolled at UT Austin can schedule an appointment at the UWC. Students can use the UWC for one semester (including summer sessions) after graduation. Graduate students in Option 3 programs must have their program set up a payment agreement with us in order to use the UWC for consultations. We also provide workshops to faculty and graduate students enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts. In addition, we offer advice and materials, both in print and online, for faculty teaching undergraduate courses and for college-level writers.

Degree of Help

Since our goal is to help writers mature, we do not edit, proofread, or rewrite their papers. We do, however, discuss all aspects of the writing process from brainstorming through drafting, revising, and final editing. To discourage over-dependence, we recommend that students have no more than three sessions on each writing project that is 10 pages long or less. We impose appointment limits (by day, week, or month) when we are fully booked in order to ensure that we can provide access to all writers who want to use our service.

We work on any kind of writing undergraduate or graduate students bring us, including employment and graduate school applications and personal and public writing not assigned for class. We can work with writers on take-home exams if their instructors have not prohibited them from visiting the UWC, as long as we maintain our non-directive approach. We do not work with writers whose work is due fewer than two hours from the time the consultation begins.

The Writer's Ownership of the Text

Although the consultant acts as the expert in a writing consultation, the writer should always be the one in control. In order to successfully collaborate with a writer without colluding, we must work to preserve the writer's ownership of the text. Likewise, a writer who always stays in control of the work will have an easier time practicing independently the strategies learned during a consultation. Thus, only the writer should generate the prose and the arguments. While we can offer opinions and suggestions about what might work best, ultimately the writer must decide how to construct the paper. Refer to "The Chronology of a Consultation" starting on page 26 for some ways to help ensure the writer maintains ownership of the text.

Confidentiality

Consultation records are confidential; they will not be released without writers' permission. We do, however, encourage writers to let us communicate with their instructors through notes describing work conducted in sessions. Our notes are correspondence with the student, and we only copy the note to the instructor if the student requests that we do so. These notes should be our only communication with the instructors about our consultations. If you have concerns that you would like to communicate to the instructor (such as suspicions of plagiarism), please communicate these concerns to the writer instead. Lastly, UWC consultants and staff are mandatory reporters under Title IX. For more information about what type content from a consultation a consultant would need to report to UT's Title IX office, see Chapter Three, section "Engage with the Paper and Consult", subsection "Pointing Out Potentially Offensive Material."

Computer Policies

UWC's location in the Learning Commons makes it much more public. Fifty thousand students are able to log into our computers whenever PCL is open. All logins to floor

computers will be done with your EID. For this reason, it will be *very* important that consultants log out after each consultation. We cannot guarantee the security of computer activities that might be done while your EID remains logged in.

Job Descriptions

Director. Jackie Rhodes. The director is the chief administrator of the UWC, charged with ensuring the effective operation of the unit. The director is ultimately responsible for all policy, staffing, and budgetary matters involving the Center. The director also communicates with other administrators, faculty, and the larger public.

Assistant Director. Alice Batt The assistant director is responsible for the day-to-day running of the UWC. Along with the director, the assistant director initiates long-range planning for the Center and participates in the training of graduate and undergraduate consultants. Most of the assistant director's time is spent hiring, supervising, and ensuring evaluation of a staff of 80 or more, and teaching RHE368C: Writing Center Internship. The rest is spent reacting to the unpredictable and immediate demands of the UWC (putting out fires).

Operations Manager. Michele Solberg. The operations manager oversees the day-to-day details of the Writing Center and takes care of accounting issues, scheduling, appointments, supplies, the front desk, and other questions or problems that arise. She also oversees the technology in the UWC. She is a full-time employee and often works in a human resources capacity.

Graduate Writing Coordinator. Kristin Gilger. The Graduate Writing Coordinator meets one-on-one with graduate student writers, trains and evaluates peer graduate consultants, and organizes workshops, writing groups and retreats for graduate students. She delivers presentations on graduate writing topics across campus.

Administrative Associate. Emma Beard. The administrative associate serves as the front desk receptionist at the UWC and oversees UWC data. They answer phones, direct guests, and respond appropriately to questions from visitors. They also assist students with check-in, provide accurate, dependable answers to questions, assist the Director and Assistant Director with scheduling events and activities throughout the year, keep the space organized and open on time regularly and dependably, help with webpage maintenance by checking daily for accuracy and completeness, help with training and supervising students assisting the front desk, oversee the design and creation of consultant dashboards each semester, package Writing Center data for Department classes, assist the Director with any business/data reports she may need to present to faculty, campus administrators, non-profits, or to colleagues at conferences, and finally, create and modify any staff performance tools the Center might need.

Assistant Program Coordinators. Vanessa López and Abigail Burns. In addition to consultants, the UWC employs three graduate students as assistant program coordinators (APCs). They work on projects that improve the quality and breadth of the UWC's services to writers. For consultants, they offer additional guidance and support, answering any questions or concerns

they may have particularly regarding difficult consultations. APCs coordinate and act as liaisons for committees, such as *Praxis* and Presentations. Some of their tasks include publicizing the UWC, organizing orientation, training consultants, initiating and sustaining research and assessment projects, and attending other meetings. Each APC typically takes on a special project or group, including UWC social media, consultant certification, and the UWC research team.

Praxis Managing Editors. Emma Conatser. Praxis is run by two managing editors, both serving staggered two-year terms. Both associate and assistant *Praxis* managing editors serve as primary contacts with submitting authors, associate and copy-editors, blog authors, and members of the writing center community in general. Between them they coordinate the publication of three issues of *Praxis* per year, one blog post every two weeks, and the curation of the *Praxis* research exchange, PRX. *Praxis* managing editors solicit blog posts from UWC consultants, members of the wider UT community, and scholars from other colleges and universities, and managing editors are also responsible for soliciting data from researchers involved in quantitative writing center research. The associate *Praxis* editor also chairs the Editorial Committee and is closely involved in publication-related professionalization opportunities within the UWC, while the assistant *Praxis* editor coordinates with multiple committees whose purviews closely connect them to the *Praxis* mission. The *Praxis* team offers copyediting workshops each semester for UWC consultants who want to be involved in copyediting for *Praxis*.

Presentations Co-Coordinators. Autumn Reyes and Trent Wintermeier. Two graduate student employees chair and run the Presentations Committee. Their primary duties include creating and conducting presentations, training Presentation Committee members, fielding and scheduling presentation requests, and facilitating UWC outreach ventures. They also regularly review and revise the UWC collection of handouts.

Graduate Services Assistant. Iana Robitaille. The primary responsibility of the Graduate Services Assistant is to help plan, coordinate, and run the UWC's current graduate programs and events, including writing retreats, workshops, writing groups, and presentations. He may also assist in the training of new consultants, create new initiatives, and develop additional avenues for outreach and publicity.

Outreach Coordinator. The Outreach Coordinator will work to increase access to writing center support for groups across campus and the Austin community. They will work with groups with special interests who contact us and explore the kinds of collaborations we might build together. They will work with UWC administration to establish a vision, scope, and procedures for work we do with community schools, nonprofits, and other entities. The job may also require brainstorming funding streams and writing grant proposals. The coordinator will keep records of activities, collect relevant data, and produce an end-of-year summary for the UWC annual report.

Engineering Training Coordinator. The Engineering Training Coordinator designs and conducts special training sessions to help consultants become more comfortable and confident

working with students who are writing engineering papers. The person in this position also plays a key role in advertising our services to engineering students.

Spanish Language Consultations Coordinator. The Spanish Language Consultations Coordinator provides support for consultants who conduct consultations in Spanish or help students with papers written in Spanish. Since this is a fairly new enterprise at the UWC, this person also participates in publicizing Spanish language consultations across campus.

Consultant. Consultants' primary task is to collaborate with UT undergraduate and graduate students in one-on-one consultations to help them improve as writers. They assist with day-to-day operations, like staffing the front desk. In addition, consultants conduct original writing center-related research and contribute to ongoing projects in the Center, such as project groups and public relations efforts.

Student Assistant. The UWC hires undergraduates to work as student assistants at the front desk. They check in students, help students book appointments, troubleshoot technical issues with online appointments, and answer questions for visitors. They also help to maintain the UWC physical space and the supplies that consultants use.

Dates and Hours of Operation

The UWC opens on the first-class day of each semester and remains open through the first week of finals. In the 2023-2024 school year, we will open for the fall on August 21 and close on December 11. In the spring semester, we will open on January 16 and close on May 6. We will not conduct consultations during fall or spring break.

The UWC, located in PCL 2.330, is open Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m, and Sunday from 1pm to 7pm. The UWC stops accepting writers for consultations one hour before closing time.

Chapter Two: Administrative Aspects of Being a Consultant

Consultant Responsibilities

Writing consultants work on an individual basis with writers who come to the UWC; they may also act as guides and a resource for writers working in groups on collaborative projects. Consulting includes maintaining accurate consultation records and providing a note to the writer's instructor when the writer requests that a note be sent. (See Chapter Four for more on keeping records and writing instructor notes.) Also, when the situation requires, writing consultants take turns doing other jobs, including promotional tabling. When not working with writers, consultants help out with administrative tasks such as folding brochures, designing and distributing flyers, and maintaining the cleanliness of the UWC.

Consultants may also serve on various project groups around the UWC. Groups include the *Praxis* copyeditors, Publicity and Social Media Team, Research Team, and Outreach and Access Team. Project groups provide voluntary opportunities to pursue writing-related interests backed by the support and resources of the UWC. They meet during UWC hours to discuss current projects and future initiatives.

Because we invite instructors to request UWC presentations and workshops, consultants should also be ready to respond to inquiries about them. Instructors should be directed to the Presentations page on the UWC website where they can submit an online request.

UWC Work Basics

Graduate consultants with 20-hour teaching appointments in the DRW or the English Department can apply to work for additional hours per week consulting in the UWC. Graduate students in these departments can also choose to work 20 hours per week in the UWC in lieu of teaching. Prospective undergraduate consultants must first take RHE 368C, the Writing Center Internship course, in Fall or Spring. The director and the coordinator will decide who from the class to hire as paid consultants. Undergraduate consultants usually work in the Writing Center for about ten hours per week but can work anywhere from two to fifteen hours per week.

Scheduling

The UWC's operations manager, Michele Solberg, is responsible for scheduling staff at the beginning of each semester. Prior to the start of each semester, Michele will send an email to all consultants with an online form to fill out that will allow consultants to block out times in which they are unable to work at the UWC and to indicate their work preferences. Take note of these guidelines when you complete your schedule: (1) graduate consultants with 4- or 8-hour/week appointments and undergraduate consultants will work no more than 3

consecutive hours per day without a half-hour break, (2) consulting shifts must be a minimum of two hours long, and (3) be aware that you will be required to conform your schedule to the scheduling needs of the UWC, including possibly taking on hours during the morning and early afternoon, when we are most busy. If you need to make permanent schedule changes during the course of the semester, fill out a schedule request change form.

Time Reports

All consultants who are paid on an hourly basis are required to complete time reports indicating how many hours they have worked during each two-week pay period. Employees should log hours on Workday (accessible through UTDirect and the utexas website), as covered during orientation. Please reach operations manager, Michele Solberg, with any questions about completing time reports.

Using Slack

Using Slack is especially important to maintain communication with the admin team and front desk staff. All consultants are required to log on and be available for messages in Slack during their shifts. Slack may also be used to facilitate discussions groups as a part of our ongoing training this year. Consultants are also encouraged to use Slack to socialize and maintain connections with other UWC employees.

Missing a Shift

Here at the University Writing Center, it is always our wish to support the physical and mental wellbeing of our employees. If you need to miss work for health reasons, we want you to feel comfortable making an absence request. We also understand that emergencies happen and that many of you will have interviews or conferences that may conflict with your regular work schedule.

That said, the University Writing Center is a professional work environment. If you are scheduled for a shift, it is important that you make your best effort to attend. If you cannot make your scheduled shift, it is also important that you complete the absence request form to notify UWC staff and that you give as much notice as possible so that we can organize coverage.

Generally, you are allowed up to 6 absences per semester. If possible, no more than 3 of these absences should be unanticipated absences (scheduled less than 3 business days in advance). All absences should be requested with as much notice as possible to ease the rescheduling burden placed on the front desk. If you believe you may need to exceed 6 absences in a semester, please discuss options with Alice.

Anticipated absences can be used for meeting professional or academic commitments (including conferences, scheduled exams, job interviews, etc.) or for vacation time (going to visit family, spending the day with friends who are in town, etc.). A wide variety of reasons

are acceptable as long as we receive the request at least 3 business days in advance. The more notice you can give us, the better.

If you need to request more than 3 anticipated absences, you may do so as long as your total number of absences (both anticipated and unanticipated) does not exceed 6 for the semester.

Unanticipated absences should be used for unexpected health issues (physical or mental) or personal/family emergencies. You are never required to disclose the reason for your unanticipated absence. Please do use these absences responsibly.

If you are making a same-day absence request, always call the front desk or contact the desk through the website chat (even if you already filled out the absence form) to make sure they are aware of your absence. If you are unable to fill out the absence form yourself, let the front desk know during that phone call or chat conversation so that they can fill it out for you.

Graduate consultants are required to make up their hours, but we will work with anyone who has difficulty scheduling their makeup hours to make the process as easy as possible. Exceptions may be granted for serious health issues, death in the family, or other extreme circumstances. Undergraduate consultants are not required to make up hours. However, they are welcome to make up the shifts they miss; otherwise, they will not be paid for the missed time.

If you find that you need to schedule an extended absence, if you need more than 6 absences, or if you need more than 3 unanticipated absences over the course of a semester, please reach out to Alice.

If you exceed the absence limit without prior approval, Alice will meet with you. Together, you will decide what needs to happen in order for you to meet your commitment to the UWC. In some cases, you may need to change your work hours; in others, it could mean scheduling you for fewer hours per week. These measures will also be applied if you are consistently late.

Our primary responsibility is to meet writers' needs. To ensure that we can, we ask that you: 1) honor your scheduled hours, 2) arrive promptly for scheduled shifts, 3) report anticipated and unanticipated absences, 4) if applicable, schedule makeup hours, and 5) honor your commitment to said makeup hours.

Remote Work Requests

We realize that some consultants who are typically scheduled to work in person may be unable to do so at certain times during the semester. We want to do our best to maintain everyone's health and safety, so we are allowing consultants who do not feel well enough to come to campus or are needing to quarantine to request remote consultations. If you need to request remote consultations for a shift, fill out an absence request form and indicate that

you will not be coming in, but are able to take online consultations. If it is a last-minute request, you should also call the front desk to let them know.

If you believe you will need to work remotely for an extended period of time, please contact Alice to discuss your options. We are committed to doing our best to accommodate consultant health and wellness needs during this time, so please feel empowered to reach out if concerns arise.

Absences Due to Illness and COVID-19 Exposure

If you are sick or have been in close contact with someone who is sick, you should request an absence or to work remotely (if you feel well enough).

In accordance with University guidelines, you should contact either Alice or the [Occupational Health Program](#) if you experience symptoms of Covid-19, believe you have been exposed to someone who has contracted Covid-19, or have tested positive yourself.

Reporting is crucial for maintaining the safety of consultants and visitors of the UWC and will allow for proper contact tracing efforts to take place. However, both the UWC and OHP understand the importance of keeping your health information private and will not disclose your identity to others.

Absence Form

All absences must be reported via the YouCanBook.Me form: https://uwcabsences.youcanbook.me/. This form is also accessible from the website. Please fill out the form as soon as you know when you are going to be absent. Make sure to note the number of shift hours (not including breaks) you will be missing in addition to real time hours missed. For example, if you work from 10-2:30 with a half-hour break from 12-12:30, you would request an absence from 10-2:30 and note that you would be missing 4 shift hours.

When you request an absence, you will receive an automated email confirming that your request was submitted. You will receive an additional email letting you know that your request has been approved (or in rare cases rejected) once we have had the chance to address your request.

If you have not received the automated confirmation email that your absence is approved by the day of the shift you will be missing, call or chat online with the front desk to make sure that they received your request and blocked you off.

Makeup Hours
Once you have filled out an absence form, you may need to schedule makeup hours. Graduate consultants are required to make up all hours, while undergrads are not required to make up hours but are welcome to do so if they would like to be paid for the missed time. When you have received confirmation that your absence is approved, go to

https://uwcmakeuphours.youcanbook.me/. Makeup hour shifts must be requested at least three days in advance. Select your preferred dates and times for your makeup shift. Once you've completed the form, you will receive an email confirming that your makeup hours have been scheduled. You are responsible for showing up to your makeup shift. If you do not show up for a confirmed makeup shift, it will be considered another absence.

The makeup hours form should also be used to request attendance for trainings and UWC events outside of your normally scheduled hours, including requesting to work at a graduate writing retreat.

If you have not received the automated confirmation email that your makeup request is approved by the day of the shift you requested, contact Emma Beard via email or on the website chat to make sure that she received your request and put you on the schedule.

Maintaining a Professional Ethos
The UWC is a professional workplace. Like any workplace, we expect our employees to work unless a serious circumstance prevents them from doing so.

If an employer outside the university would not accept your reason for being absent, we probably will not accept it either. Meeting a professor, studying for a test, and visiting financial aid are not acceptable reasons to miss shifts. Please arrange to deal with non-emergencies outside of your scheduled hours.

Grounds for Termination
Several circumstances are grounds for termination: 1) missing a shift without submitting an absence form in advance, 2) having more than six total absences without approval, 3) failing to make up absences (for graduate consultants), 4) consistently showing up late to shifts, and 5) not responding to UWC communications in a timely manner. In any of these instances, you may expect that Alice will schedule a conference with you to find out what's going on and find the best way to move forward.

Training

Incoming (New) Consultant Training

You will observe three consultations, ideally with different consultants each time. After each consultation, you will sit down with the consultant you observed to talk about the strategies they[1] employed and to go over the note that they will write for their consultee. The goals of observations are to demystify the consulting process (both logistically and interpersonally) and to allow new consultants to get a sense of different consulting styles. Emma Beard, the administrative associate, will track completion of your observations.

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[1] Throughout this handbook, we'll be employing the gender-neutral singular pronoun "they" where appropriate, in accordance to the 14th edition of the Chicago Manual of Style. Since "they" is already commonly used to solve the pronoun dilemma, it seems likely that "they" will transition to standard use.

Once you complete the three observations, you will do three collaborative consultations ideally with three different experienced consultants. After each co-consultation, you will receive feedback from your co-consultant and write the note to the consultee. You will also discuss how your initial training and consulting experiences are going as well as any concerns you may have. Once again, Emma B. will track your progress.

After you have completed three co-consultations and feel comfortable, you will begin consulting on your own. A member of the admin team will also observe you at some point in the semester after you've done solo consultations to give you feedback.

Note on Collaborative Consulting. Throughout the year, all consultants have the option of consulting in pairs when we are not busy. Simply ask another consultant on your shift if they would like to do a collaborative consultation, and then ask the desk person to pair you. For even the most experienced consultant, collaborative consulting can be a great way to learn new strategies. You can also request to observe another consultant or to be observed at any point by indicating your request for support on the note form. The front desk will follow up with you to schedule the co-consultation or observation that you requested.

Note on Undergraduate Interns. Undergraduate interns follow a similar procedure to the one described above during their internship. In Fall 2023, Spring 2023 interns will have the opportunity to do more co-consultations and solo consultations before their official observation by an admin team member.

All Consultant Training

Orientation. Before the start of the fall semester, both new and returning consultants will be required to attend orientation. Please look out for emails about orientation during late July and August for more details.

Continuing Training. All consultants will participate in orientation before the fall semester. Additional required trainings, which would take place during your regularly scheduled shifts, may be announced throughout the academic year. All undergraduate consultants are encouraged to pursue further training by working towards UWC's certifications. On completion of two certifications, undergraduates will be considered for an hourly pay raise. Undergraduates interested in pursuing certifications should speak to the current certifications chair, Vanessa López. Graduate students interested in additional training opportunities should see Kristin Gilger.

Professionalization. There are many opportunities to develop professional skills at the UWC. Former consultants consistently report that the skills they developed while working here have helped them acquire employment and perform well in their workplaces. Most of these opportunities come from pursuing one of the many additional certifications that consultants can achieve through working with writers. Certifications consultants can pursue include: Business Writing, Data Visualization, Professional Writing and Applications, Scholarly Editing and Publishing, STEM Writing, Spanish Language Consulting, and Online

Consultations. Additional information about each of these certifications can be found on the UWC website on the consultants page.

Observations

New UWC consultants are observed by a member of the admin team.

These observations provide staff development opportunities for all those involved. Veteran consultant observers have a chance to connect with new consultants and to talk with them about their experiences working in the Writing Center. Also, observations provide helpful snapshots of your work as a consultant—important for consultants who plan to request letters of recommendation from the director or coordinator. These observations provide a chance to reflect on the work we do here and for graduate consultants to consider how that work has informed their views on teaching writing.

Observations of new UWC employees will be conducted throughout the semester they are hired. Once the observation is scheduled and the writer has checked in, the consultant being observed explains the observation arrangement to the writer and asks their permission to have a guest sit in on the consultation. Throughout the consultation, the observer takes notes and fills out the observation report form. At the end of the consultation, the observer and consultant discuss the session, and the observer finishes and submits the observation report. A subsequent observation may be carried out when appropriate—for example, if the observer finds significant problems or if the consultant feels the session did not realistically reflect their work.

In addition, veteran consultants may request to be observed if they would like feedback on a particular aspect of their performance or if they have asked Alice to write them a letter of recommendation.

You can view the observation form if you would like to know what your observer will record: https://form.jotform.com/230817074291051.

Opportunities

Join a Project Group

While the individual writing consultation is always at the center of our mission, many consultants have interests and energies that extend beyond the forty-five-minute consultation. Consultants can make the most of the UWC's resources—including other consultants—by joining project groups that satisfy those interests. Project groups infuse fresh energy and ideas into ongoing tasks in the UWC; participation can also be a change of pace from the rather intense job of consulting.

Project group leaders will recruit and contact members very early in the Fall semester. Committees meet regularly during the academic year, though the frequency of meetings will

vary depending on the committee chair's preferences. At peak consultation times during the semester, some committees may become less active, as consultations are our first priority. Groups include the *Praxis* copyeditors, Publicity and Social Media Team, Research Team, Spanish Consultation Team, and Outreach Team.

- The *Praxis* **Copyeditors**. The Editorial Committee is chaired by the senior *Praxis* managing editor and focuses on the mechanics of publication in scholarly journals from writing, through submitting and responding to editorial comments, to eventual publication; the Editorial Committee is also closely involved in readying consultants for their editorial certification applications. Members of the Editorial Committee will be expected to write at least three blog posts, attend all Editorial Committee meetings, work towards their editorial certification both through copy- and associate editing for *Praxis* and through submission of scholarly articles to appropriate journals and will be closely supervised by the senior *Praxis* managing editor, who will in turn serve as a resource for all publication-related questions from Editorial Committee members. Members of the Editorial Committee will receive preference in applying for *Praxis* managing editor positions and may be asked to write columns or book reviews for publication in *Praxis*. Contact Emma Conatser for more information.

- The **Publicity and Social Media Team** updates the UWC's multiple social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Social media team members (Creators) can help generate content for all of our social media platforms and design specific promotional campaigns. This committee can also works with the Managing Editors of *Praxis* to write blog posts and to promote the journal's endeavors. Creators also help promote the writing center around campus and help generate new ideas or areas of publicity that may currently be underrepresented or unutilized. Contact Abigail Burns for more information.

- **Conference and Publication Opportunities.** In the past, consultants have presented papers based on their work in the UWC at conferences such as the Conference on College Composition and Communication (4Cs), Computers and Writing, Rhetoric Society of America, the International Writing Centers Association, and the South Central Writing Centers Association. Publication opportunities range from articles in major journals to brief questions or comments in newsletters. Many conference presentations and journal articles can begin as *Praxis* blogs, which are published on the *Praxis* website and via social media. Presenting at professional conferences and writing articles for writing center journals allows consultants to combine UWC work with their academic pursuits.

- The **Spanish Consultation Team**: Consultants with diverse levels of Spanish language abilities join together to offer multilingual consulting as it relates to the Spanish language. Undergraduate and peer graduate consultees are now able to prioritize writing in the Spanish language as a session focus. Additionally,

students who speak Spanish fluently can discuss writings in the English language. Consultees can address writing topics ranging from thesis strengthening to paper structure. Each Spanish consultant decides their own level of linguistic comfort for consulting in Spanish. Contact the APCs for more information.

- The **Outreach Team** works to increase access to writing center support for groups across campus and the Austin community. They will work with groups with special interests who contact us and explore the kinds of collaborations we might build together. They work with UWC administration to establish a vision, scope, and procedures for work we do with community schools, nonprofits, and other entities. They may also contribute to brainstorming funding streams and writing grant proposals. Contact the APCs for more information.

- The **Presentations Team** manages all presentations and handouts the UWC offers, and we are constantly working to keep all of our resources up-to-date and inclusive. Please contact us at uwcpresentations@gmail.com with any suggestions or concerns about any of our posted materials and let us know if you want to contribute in the updating process.

- More project groups may be introduced during orientation.

Resources

The UWC is chock-full of resources designed to make you a successful consultant and collaborator in the UWC.

Resources for Professional Development

The Website. The UWC website contains many professional development resources and opportunities. *Praxis* features publications on many writing-center-related topics and also offers accessible opportunities for consultants to publish original scholarship. Under the "About" tab and under the submenu "For Consultants" you can find this handbook.

The Library. Whether you're looking to strengthen your consulting practice or publish an article, the UWC library is a good place to start. Explore the Writing Centers, Teachers/Tutors, and Journals sections of the library. The Journals section contains the major journals in the field. Other sections contain texts about rhetoric, composition studies, and teaching English as a second language.

The UWC Staff. Of course, the UWC staff is our best resource. We're here to help each other achieve our professional goals. Talk to your fellow consultants and the members of the administrative staff about how we can strengthen our training and consulting practices. Work with each other to conduct research or assemble a conference panel.

Praxis: A Writing Center Journal is an internationally read, peer-reviewed open access journal publishing articles on writing center research and practice. *Praxis* began in 2003 as a consultant-run journal and gradually attained a top position in the field, becoming peer-reviewed in 2011. Currently some of the top researchers in the field, many of whom are also writing center directors across the country, serve on the *Praxis* editorial review board. There is a blog associated with *Praxis*, AXIS, which publishes short-form (<1000 words) semiformal meditations on writing center research, practice, consultant experience, and writing center theory, and *Praxis* has also just launched a research exchange, PRX, whose purpose is to promote quantitative research in the field of writing center research through the dissemination of data used in assessment and research. *Praxis*' mission includes close attention to issues of social justice and an ongoing commitment to asking hard questions about the ethics of writing center practice, and the journal plays an important part in the UWC's outreach efforts both on- and off-campus through increasing the UWC's visibility online and at writing center conferences.

Handouts. The UWC has a series of handouts for consultants—housed online and in racks on either side of the bookshelf—and is developing additional handouts for professional development. These handouts are intended for use during consultations and to respond to consultants' common concerns. The Presentations team manages all presentations and handouts the UWC offers, and we are constantly working to keep all our resources up-to-date and inclusive. In the spring of 2020, we initiated a major revision project of our handouts in the interest of making them more inclusive. This work is ongoing, and we invite you to contact the presentation team with any suggestions or concerns about any of our posted materials.

Resources for Working with Writers

PCL Library. Our unique space in the Learning Commons puts us in close proximity with the PCL library staff and resources. Take advantage of this! You can use the library website to locate specific resources and library personnel during consultations and encourage students to follow up with library resources and personnel right after their consultations.

The Website. Get familiar with the UWC website. It contains features, such as the handouts, consultants can use during consultations and recommend writers visit in their own time. Going to the site with writers during a consultation is also a good way to model locating an important resource for undergraduate and graduate student writers.

The Computers. In addition to the UWC website, consultants and clients can use the UWC computers during consultations for help with research and brainstorming. You can show them how to use NoodleBib (http://www.lib.utexas.edu/noodlebib/index.html), an online resource that helps writers generate works cited pages for MLA or APA style documentation and the library websites.

The UWC Library. The UWC library has extensive resources that you can use during your consultations and that UT undergraduates and graduate students can come to the Center to use anytime. Most of the books that you will use during consultations are shelved to the left

of the front desk in the metal cabinets near the handouts. Feel free to photocopy a short section of a book that you think may help a writer. If the writer wants to study a book more extensively, invite them to do so inside the Center during UWC business hours at their leisure. (These resources are only available in our physical space.)

Handouts. We offer numerous handouts addressing a variety of writing issues such as grammar, style, format, documentation, and the writing process. Paper copies of the handouts can be found to the left of the front desk in labeled trays. Students are invited to take handouts for quick reference of material. They're available online and in trays by the front desk.

Space

All consultants who are working in person pick a table on the floor that will serve as their "station" for the entirety of their shift. We also recommend sitting across from consultees rather than right next to them during sessions to increase the space between you. During your shift, you are welcome to enter the breakroom to eat meals.

When the APCs are at the UWC, the office will be open to all consultants who need something or want to chat. You can find APC's office hours posted on their door! Feel free to stop by!

You may keep your belongings with you at your work station or store belongings you are not actively using in the consultant cubbies in the break room. Do not leave your belongings on the floor, strewn about the break room, or in the Tail while you are engaged in a consultation. Unattended belongings will be moved to the consultant cubbies in the break room.

You are welcome to store food in the refrigerator in the break room. To prevent spoilage, please do not leave food in the refrigerator for more than 48 hours. We will throw away any food left in the refrigerator when the UWC closes on Friday afternoons. Front desk staff and consultants should only eat meals in the break room. This helps us protect the considerable investment in our computers, and it also helps maintain a professional atmosphere in the spaces reserved for consultations. All drinks near computers should have lids. Please wash all non-disposable break room dishware and silverware immediately after use.

Chapter Three: The Consultation

The Three Principles of Consulting

All the recommendations that we make in this handbook attempt to help consultants implement three basic consultation goals:

1. Consultations are non-evaluative. Consultants function as outside diagnostic readers rather than authority figures.

2. Consultations are non-directive. Writers retain ownership of their texts and make all final decisions about revision.

3. Consultants are sensitive to writers' emotional investments in the writing process.

This chapter offers guidance based on collective experience. However, every consultation is unique. Consultants have to stay flexible and be creative. We hope that by keeping these basic goals in mind, you'll be able to adapt what we've offered to your own style and situation. Here's a little elaboration on the basics:

Why should consultations be non-evaluative? General evaluative language ("This paper/sentence/thesis is weak/good/terrible.") tips the balance of power away from the writer and toward the consultant. The writer often ceases to view the consultant as a collaborator and advisor and begins to view them as the final authority on "good writing." Since our goal is to help students make decisions for themselves, this is not desirable. A non-evaluative approach also prevents the consultant from inadvertently competing with the instructor for authority by implying that a paper deserves a certain response—grade, comments, or other. Obviously, you'll often have to tell students that they have misunderstood the audience or the assignment, but you'll want to do so with as much specificity and as little evaluation as possible. Your job as a consultant is not to tell a consultee whether or not their writing is 'good,' but to help them identify their writing goals and strategies they can use to meet them.

What does it mean for a writer to retain ownership of the text? Ideally, it means that consultants will help writers to move away from a passive position where they wait for their paper to be "corrected." Writers will then take an active position where they can use the consultants' considerable expertise as a resource for making their own decisions about a piece of writing that is truly their own, rather than an exercise performed for others. Our aim is to help students become stronger writers rather than to improve any one piece of text. Asking students to generate strategies, choose among them, and implement them on their own helps ensure that the resulting texts are ones they feel they truly wrote themselves—and that they will be able to tackle the next assignment that comes their way. This does not mean that you cannot facilitate the brainstorming process as the consultee considers revisions, only that the consultee should always make the final decision about how and why to make changes to their work

What kind of "emotional investments in the writing process" can we expect, and what is entailed in being "sensitive"? Being non-evaluative and helping students maintain a sense of ownership go a long way toward mediating student responses, but navigating emotions in a one-on-one consultation can still be tricky. For students at UT, who spend the bulk of their time in large lecture courses, intensive one-on-one attention itself sometimes feels strange and intimidating. Often, the only kind of intensive attention they've received is negative. We've

made suggestions throughout the handbook about how to be sensitive to these reactions, but the best course is often simply to observe the writer's reaction and to check in directly with the student by asking them questions about how they are doing.

The Consultant-Writer Relationship

Consultants are not and should not be authority figures in ways that instructors are. Instead, we measure progress in terms of what the writer is learning about writing. Is the writer sensitive to the conventions and demands of writing in an academic setting? Have they envisioned an audience for their work and established a tone consistent with that audience? Will the structure of the paper enable them to make a convincing argument? In other words, we are more concerned with helping writers develop general writing strategies than we are with making any particular paper "correct."

Differences between Consultants and Instructors

Setting Goals: A consultant may make recommendations for what the goals of the session will be, but the writer makes the final decision. An instructor, by contrast, will usually specify areas the writer should work on.

Content: The instructor defines the parameters of assignments, while the consultant asks questions that prompt the writer to assess the demands of the topic and to determine appropriate modes of expression.

Diagnosis vs. Evaluation: Evaluation denotes a process of observing people or things and ranking them. Diagnosis involves observation, but it results in suggesting a course of action that leads to improvement rather than pronouncing a judgment that merely assigns status. Both consultants and instructors assess students' writing and make decisions about courses of action that will help students improve as writers. The instructor, who must eventually grade students, also evaluates their work; the consultant helps to diagnose writing habits that impede the consultee's ability to accomplish their writing goals.

Differences between Consultants and Peer Reviewers

The consultant's role is very different from that of one classmate helping another with a paper: the consultant is a professional writing expert, while the classmate is not. The consultant and the peer reviewer also have different goals. The peer reviewer is concerned with the product, helping the writer improve the paper. A consultant is concerned with the writer's process, helping the writer develop skills and critically engage with their own process. While the consultant is a writing specialist in comparison to the peer reviewer, this does not mean they must know all there is to know about grammar, formatting, citation styles, etc.; it just means they should be prepared to help students identify and answer questions about their writing.

Graduate Consultants and Their Students

Since the help that writing centers provide undergraduate students should be non-evaluative, and since instructors eventually have to grade their students' writing, graduate writing consultants may not provide consultations for students currently enrolled in their courses. If you notice that a student from a class that you teach or TA for has scheduled a UWC appointment with you to work on a paper from that class (or if this becomes apparent after the consultation has begun), contact the front desk to get the student moved to another consultant. The front desk will also contact the student to explain this policy. If the student wants to work with you on a paper from a different class, you may do so if you wish or as the front desk to move the student to another consultant if you feel uncomfortable. This policy does not preclude consultations with former students. Because graduate consultants are not acting as classroom instructors in the UWC, they may not hold office hours while they are on duty. Likewise, consultants should not have their students pick up or drop off work at the Writing Center.

Undergraduate Consultants and Their Classmates

In order to avoid blurring the lines between peer reviewer and consultant, undergraduate consultants may not work with students from classes in which they are currently enrolled. Having an open exchange about writing concerns or anxieties with a classmate can be uncomfortable. Undergraduate consultants may, of course, work with classmates from one class on papers for another class that they do not share. If you notice that a student from a class that you are also enrolled in has scheduled a UWC appointment with you to work on a paper from the class you are both enrolled in (or if this becomes apparent after the consultation begins), contact the front desk to get the student moved to another consultant. The front desk will also contact the student to explain this policy.

The Chronology of a Consultation

A UWC consultation is a teaching and learning event in which writers and consultants work collaboratively. Consultants aim to lead writers to greater awareness of their own writing processes and with every consultation gain a better understanding of how to share their knowledge for the writer's benefit. Writers benefit from our consultants' knowledge of and experience with the writing process, but they also teach us how to be more effective consultants and better writers. The writer maintains ownership of and responsibility for the text and holds authority for making final writing judgments and decisions. Every one of the following steps in the consultation process reflects this intention.

When the writer arrives at the UWC or checks in for their online appointment, they will fill out an intake form with information about themselves and their assignment. Once the student has filled out the form, the front desk will send you a text message and/or email notification that your consultee has checked in for their appointment. The message will contain the writer's EID and preferred first name, and will indicate if the writer wants a copy of the consultation record sent to their instructor (and provide that instructor's contact

information if applicable). It will also include a link to access the note for the appointment, so be sure to not delete the message. Take a moment to review the information in the message. Then, if you are consulting in person, greet the writer, and lead them to the consulting floor. In the event the writer has requested a Reduced Distraction Room for their consultation, the intake notification will reflect this information; in this situation, lead the writer to the Reduced Distraction Rooms and allow them to pick which room they prefer.

In the instance of an online consultation, much of the above process remains the same. The primary difference is that the consultant should open their personal meeting room with Zoom for the session. Consultants should double-check to make sure the consultee has received an invitation to the event and should check with the desk if the consultee is very late joining the meeting.

Consultant Procedures for 2023-24
To increase the distance between you and the writer during in-person consultations, you should sit across the table from them, rather than directly next to them. Additionally, if the writer doesn't have two printed copies of their writing, you should use the screen sharing function of Zoom to view their document. Doing this will allow the writer to maintain full control of their document on their device, while you can view it on your own laptop or a UWC computer. When screen sharing through Zoom during an in-person consultation, make sure both you and your consultee mute your audio.

Content Warning Procedures

Our intake form prompts writers to indicate whether they would like to provide a "content warning" for their work. This warning would flag any content that may be sensitive in nature, such as discussion of sexual or physical violence, racism, suicide or self-harm, eating disorders, and so on. If you receive a content warning for which you are uncomfortable consulting, whether on that particular day or in general, see the front desk to have the student reassigned to a member of the admin team. If you get a consultation where the student failed to provide a content warning and you are uncomfortable consulting, gently stop the conversation and bring the student to the front desk for reassignment. Please note that you will never be required to explain or justify your choice to not consult on this work.

Assess the Situation

Once you are either seated for the consultation or are signed into Zoom for the session, you will need to set expectations for the session. Start by asking if they are a first-time visitor to the UWC, and, if necessary, explaining our non-directive, non-evaluative consultation style and why we work that way (see below). You should also make time to determine what the writing assignment is and the writer's main concerns. Ask the student what type of writing they're working on, what class the assignment is for if they have brought in coursework, and what their concerns are with regard to the writing. During the consultation, you might use the writer's name to emphasize the collegial relationship.

Because your time with the student is limited, you'll want to make the most of the

consultation. You cannot deal with every concern in every paper. The key to a good consultation is realizing as early as possible just what can be accomplished realistically to best help the student become a better writer, which is not necessarily the same as helping them get a better grade on this particular paper. Let the student help you determine what areas these are. Consider asking the consultee whether there are particular parts of the writing process or the assignment expectations they are uncomfortable with, or if there is a section of the paper they'd like to focus on. Establish priorities, concentrating first on those aspects of the paper that make it most difficult for a reader to understand, and be open with your consultee about the limitations of the session. Abiding by the 45-minute time limit for each consultation requires planning and prioritizing. It is important to remember that if a student arrives late to the consultation, they will only have 45 minutes from the time their appointment was meant to start (for example, a 10:00 appointment will end at 10:45 even if the student arrived at 10:05).

Greet the Writer and Set the Tone

Your first task is to set the writer at ease. Always remember that showing your writing to a stranger can be daunting. Demonstrate from the start that the writers who come to us are in good hands by showing that we are kind, concerned people who are genuinely interested in them as writers. Make the student the sole focus of your attention. Begin establishing a rapport to set the respectful and supportive tone of the consultation.

When a student comes in with an electronic document, ask the student if they have enough battery power or if you need to work close to a power supply. If there are no outlets available and the computer cannot run on its battery for the next 45 minutes, have the student save the document to the cloud (such as on Google Docs, UTBox, or simply by emailing the document to themselves) and open the document on a UWC computer.

If you are consulting online, be sure to ask if the student has visited the UWC in person or online before early in the session to establish their familiarity with our process and using Zoom. Be sure to politely introduce the technology, explaining how the student can share their screen or use the chat function. (Note: You will need to give them access to share their screen from your end).

Explain our Process

Especially when working with first-time consultees, it is crucial to explain how and why we use the approach we do. While this information can be presented in many different ways, feel free to use the following examples as a guideline.

Example 1:
So, since it's your first time at the UWC, there's a little speech we like to give everyone, just to let them know what we do and how we can help. We're going to have 45 minutes together (or "we have until [end time of appointment]" such as "we have until 10:45"), during which time we can work on really whatever you want. As I'm helping you with your writing, you'll notice me taking a particular approach: I'm going to try to be non-directive and non-

evaluative. And that's really just a fancy way of saying two things. One, I won't talk in terms of "good" or "bad," or in terms of grades, because that's what TAs and instructors get to do. I'm not the ultimate audience of your work, so I can't anticipate how they'll evaluate it, so it won't be useful for me to try. Two, I won't proofread or edit your work for you. That is, I won't tell you what to write, what to fix, what to change, what to do, etc. Instead, I want to help YOU make those decisions. So, you'll notice me ask you a lot of questions; I'll try to have a lot of conversation with you; I'll probably offer you a bunch of options and models and strategies. My ultimate goal will be to help you address the specific concerns you have about the product at hand, but in a way that will make sure you retain ownership over what you're writing and that will help you cultivate your overall process as a writer. So, any questions about that approach before we start?

Example 2:
Since this is your first time here, let me tell you a bit about how we work. My goal today is to provide you with helpful feedback, not just with this one project, but also on your writing process as a whole. In order to do that effectively, I'm going to remain non-directive and non-evaluative. In other words, I want all the decisions about your writing to come from you; and I'll leave the evaluation up to your professor. We have 45 minutes (or "we have until [end time of appointment]" such as "we have until 10:45") for our consultation today, after which I'll ask you to take a quick exit survey at one of the computers up front. When we're done, I'll also write a brief note describing what we did here today, and you'll receive that note in your email. Do you have any questions before we get started?

Ask Questions

Asking a few questions about the writer's work before you begin reading it will help you put their writing in context. It will also help you determine where you should focus your energies and how much you can realistically accomplish during the consultation.

- *Have you been to the Writing Center before?* If so, the writer already knows about the time limit and has an idea of how we work. If not, this is your chance to explain the 45-minute limit/end time of the appointment right off the bat, before it is a problem or an embarrassment. It is also the time to explain or remind the student of our non-directive, non-evaluative philosophy and mention the brief end-of-consultation surveys.

- *What is the writing task as you understand it? Can I see your assignment prompt?* When beginning consultations, it is helpful to read the assignment prompt and get a feel for how the writer understands it. If the writer does not have a copy of the prompt, or the instructor did not provide one, ask the writer to describe the assignment. Listening should give you a sense of how comfortable, confused, or anxious the writer is about the assignment, which will help you tailor your approach and your feedback to the writer's practical and emotional needs. For instance, if the writer is confused or anxious about the assignment, you could start by putting them at ease and helping them interpret what they've been asked to do. Usually, the two of

you will be able to come to a clear understanding of the assignment. If the prompt is vague or confusing, the best plan of action may be to refer the writer to their instructor for clarification. Conversely, if the student is clear and confident about what they're being asked to do, you can move more quickly into setting up a plan for the consultation (more on this below). If the student has generated a thesis and/or content, you should ask the student how they see it addressing the prompt early in the session to make sure their work correlates with the assignment expectations.

- *When is the paper due? What are your instructor's expectations and/or comments?* We've all had consultations in which we realize three-fourths of the way through that the paper we're working on is due much sooner than when we first assumed, or that we've focused on an aspect of the paper that the writer's instructor does not deem particularly important. Knowing the assignment due date and understanding the instructor's expectations and/or comments will help ensure that the writer gets to focus on those aspects of their paper that they can reasonably expect to revise before the due date and/or that their instructor deems important. For instance, if the paper is due in a little more than two hours or if the instructor is primarily concerned with grammar and sentence-level issues, it is likely that the writer will neither be able nor interested in making profound changes in argumentation or organization. In such an instance, you should scale your comments to the time available for revision and/or to the instructor's priorities. Also, knowing the answers to these questions will give you a sense of how to approach the consultation in an emotionally sensitive way. For instance, for writers who have plenty of time to revise and have supportive instructors, non-directive consultation strategies can be fun and engaging. Conversely, for students who are stressed out by a quickly-approaching due date or vague, unhelpful instructor comments, non-directive strategies can be highly frustrating, confusing, and even traumatic when they are not properly explained and framed.

  Note: We do not work with writers whose papers are due in fewer than two hours. A consultation scheduled to start exactly two hours before the time the paper is due is permissible (so a 10:00am appointment for a paper due at 12:00pm is ok, but a 10:30am appointment would not be). All students are asked on the intake form if their paper is due in less than two hours and, if so, are informed of our policy and turned away. However, students can of course lie about the paper due date to get into a last-minute appointment. If the student has gotten through this screening with a paper due in less than two hours, politely explain the UWC policy to the writer, tell them that you cannot work with them, and alert the front desk. If the paper is due in less than two hours, the writer will not have the time to revise it. Furthermore, consultations are intended to help writers improve their writing technique, not just the paper.

- *What have you done up to this point? How much work do you anticipate doing, or are you willing to do, before you submit the assignment? What do you hope to accomplish during our meeting today?* These questions will help you assess three important things: 1) how aware the writer

is of their own writing process, 2) where the writer thinks they are in their process, and 3) how the writer understands the consultation as a part of their process. Discussing this information will help you and the writer set priorities and goals for the consultation, and will give you a common ground from which to adjust those priorities and goals if you need to later in the consultation. A writer who has clear and straightforward answers to the first two questions will probably have a relatively sophisticated answer to the third. A writer who does not may need more help setting priorities and goals, both for the consultation and for the rest of time they have before their due date. For instance, writers often say they are at the stage of final revision, when, in fact, their work may have invention or organization problems requiring more than simple proofreading. And sometimes writers have no idea at all about what they need to work on and will ask simply that you "go over" the paper. These writers help recognizing and articulating their writing goals, and it might help to brainstorm potential issues with them or to point out patterns as you work together, Finally, establishing where writers are in their writing process also helps them mature as writers. By asking them questions about their writing process, you can help reinforce the idea that learning to write well is a long-term process that involves many complex judgments and many different stages.

- *Do you want me to give feedback on other issues if I notice them, especially if they affect things such as meaning, thesis, organization, or argument?* After you have decided on a set of issues to focus on during the consultation, you could consider asking the student if they mind hearing feedback on other issues you notice while reading the paper. Asking this question leaves control in the writer's hands and allows them to set the terms of the consultation according to their own priorities and their own process. For instance, on one hand, if a writer knows their instructor has a specific set of concerns, they might ask you not to share unsolicited feedback that will distract the consultation from those concerns. On the other hand, if a student knows they have a significant amount of time to spend revising a paper, they might welcome unsolicited feedback that will help them notice issues they did not anticipate.

Set Priorities

After asking the initial questions outlined above, you and the writer should have a sense of the issues you want to focus on during the consultation. Chances are you won't have time to talk about all of these issues, so you'll need to set priorities. Your initial discussion will help you begin the process of setting priorities, but a second, more explicit step may be necessary as well. More specifically, given the information you glean in response to your initial questions, you may need to discuss the global-to-local spectrum of writing concerns (pictured below) and to provide scaffolding the writer can use to choose which concerns are most important to them.

GLOBAL
Thesis
Audience, Tone, Clarity, Supporting Evidence
Organization, Transitions

Introduction, Conclusion
Grammar, Punctuation
Spelling
LOCAL

Global and local writing issues exist on a continuum. At the most global end of the continuum are issues such as thesis statements, audience, and organization. Global issues affect the overall coherence or clarity of a paper. At the most local end of the continuum are issues such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation. In the UWC, we think of local writing issues as isolated errors or mistakes at the sentence-level. Such issues cease to be local and become global when they appear throughout a paper and/or when they impede the reader's basic comprehension of the argument.

Ultimately, the student gets to decide what priorities to set for the session. We understand that working on global concerns will be the best way to improve their process and their products. Often, though, writers and/or their instructors have very specific concerns that do not necessarily jive with our global-before-local approach. Explaining this spectrum of writing concerns (though you do not need to use the terms "global" and local"), can help consultants show the advantages of focusing on global issues over local issues. However, the writer should always decide what is important to them given their time constraints and their instructor's expectations.

No matter what concerns you focus on, work to prioritize the writer's process. Put another way, even if the writer wants to focus on local issues, you should avoid slipping into "editing" mode. Focus on the paper as a whole by pointing out patterns as you work. You can also center process by discussing revisions in detail. Work with the student to identify the underlying causes for unclear sentences or confusing paragraphs. Even a conversation about sentence structure can center process as long as you take your discussion back to the writer's goals.

Reading and thinking about the paper as a whole has several advantages. First, it sends the writer good signals about how to set priorities in revising: it shows them that they should focus on global issues and pervasive local issues before focusing on sentence-by-sentence editing. Second, it enables you to track global and local patterns in the paper, rather than isolated mistakes. Third, it helps you recalibrate your original priorities, if necessary. For instance, you and the writer might originally decide to focus on sentence-level style but the paper may actually have a generally incoherent structure. If you work through the paper sentence by sentence, you may not notice the paper's structural problem until the end of the session. If you read the paper as a whole and save your comments until the end, you will notice the structural problem and be able to bring it to the writer's attention.

Focusing on the paper as a whole can be especially challenging when the consultee is interested in sentence-level issues. If a writer wants to focus on sentence-level issues, the following strategies will help you do so while still prioritizing the writers' process.

- *Isolated Mistakes.* If the paper is generally understandable and readable, but contains isolated mistakes, explain the mistakes and model how to correct them. You might create an example sentence to correct, or model how to correct the actual mistake in the writer's paper. If you choose the second option, be careful that you don't continue editing the writer's paper. After modeling the first correction, ask the student to find and correct similar mistakes in the rest of the paper.

- *Pervasive Mistakes.* If the paper's sentence-level mistakes are so pervasive that they seem to be more of a global issue, try using the same process outlined above while focusing only on the salient mistakes.

- *Minimal Marking.* If the paper contains so many mistakes that you can't identify which are the most salient, try minimal marking. First, choose a representative paragraph from the paper. Next, find, explain, and correct as many mistakes in that paragraph as you can. This step in the process should model for the writer how to identify, understand, and correct their own mistakes. Finally, ask the writer to do the same with the next paragraph in the paper, using the paragraph you heavily edited as an example. With either strategy, you can spend much of the session helping the writer find and correct their pervasive mistakes, modeling the process for them as you go rather than editing the paper for them.

In summary, when setting and recalibrating priorities, emphasize "global first, local last," but ultimately respect the writer's wishes, and remember that focusing on the paper as a whole means that you might find errors in a draft that you won't mention to the writer. Part of being a consultant is having the discipline to avoid editing.

Choose a Reading Strategy

With the writer, choose a strategy for reading the paper. First, assess how long the paper is. It takes an extra step to plan how to get through longer papers (more on this below).

If the paper is five pages or less, or if the writer wants to cover five pages or less of a longer paper, consider offering the writer the three reading strategies listed below. You'll want to explain the advantages and disadvantages of each reading strategy to the writer, explain your preference, and then let the writer decide which strategy they like best. We all have preferences for how we like to read writers' work, but the final decision should ultimately be up to the writer.

1. The consultant reads and marks the paper or inserts comments on the laptop/computer silently.
2. The consultant reads the paper out loud, while the writer follows along.
3. The writer reads the paper out loud, while the consultant follows along.

Each strategy has pros and cons.

1. **Consultant Reads Out Loud**

Pros: A writer gains from hearing the consultant read the paper out loud. The reader will hesitate while reading a sentence that is confusing, for example, indicating where the writer did not clearly convey a point. If consultants read the paper out loud they maintain control of the pace of the consultation and can stop if they need to concentrate silently, write a note, or give the writer time to write a note or make a correction. Also, reading out loud is an effective way to get a general sense of the paper as a whole. When you minimize your opportunities for frequent note-taking or silent reflection, you may find yourself concluding the paper with a sense only of its most pervasive or salient issues.

Cons: The consultant may not feel comfortable reading the paper out loud. Some consultants find it too difficult to read aloud while trying to consider and prioritize all the aspects of a paper. If you are such a consultant and the writer prefers this reading strategy, help yourself out by pausing when you need to reread part of the paper or to take notes. Also, let yourself off the hook: it is not your job to notice and record absolutely everything about a paper. Focusing on the student's process, rather than their product, frees you up to read for the paper's most pervasive or salient issues. If you choose this strategy, you will want to make sure the writer is listening carefully and doing a lot of the proofreading and prioritizing.

2. Writer Reads Out Loud

Pros: If writers read the paper out loud, they actively control the pace of the consultation, take full charge of the paper, and can make corrections as they go. Writers pick up more of their own sentence-level problems when they read their prose aloud, and they get to practice a skill they will use to revise their own writing in the future.

Cons: Some writers may not feel comfortable reading their papers out loud or may not recognize sentence-level problems as they read. Also, since having the writer read out loud puts the writer in charge of setting the pace of the consultation and deciding what to discuss, it is easier to get sidetracked and to go over 45 minutes/the end time of the appointment. You may need to acknowledge the writer's concerns as they arise while also encouraging them to finish the entire paper before you discuss their concerns. To do this, you might encourage them to jot down their concerns as they arise and save them for the post-reading discussion.

3. Consultant Reads Silently

Pros: Some consultants prefer this strategy because they find it difficult to think about the paper while reading it out loud or listening to the student read it. Silent engagement with the paper allows these consultants to concentrate on the paper and to read it as the primary audience–the grader–will read it. Some writers also prefer this strategy for the same reason. Other writers might prefer this strategy because they are uncomfortable having their work read aloud.

Cons: Reading and marking the paper silently can create a long, awkward silence at the beginning of a consultation when the writer is the most nervous and can put the writer in a passive, powerless position. The writer loses control of the text and has time to fear being judged or zone out. If you prefer this strategy, you should explain your preference and ask the writer's permission. Also, with this strategy, you may have to work harder to get the student engaged in conversation after the paper has been read. Ask the student to read along with you, to think about the concerns you prioritized, and to take notes on issues that come up for them as they read. You may recommend that they do a reverse outline as you both read. Let them know that you expect them to bring up concerns or observations after you've finished reading.

If the paper is longer than five pages and the student wants to cover the entire paper, you may still need to decide on one of the reading strategies outlined above, but will also need to choose a strategy for getting through the paper:

1. You can heavily skim the entire paper, focusing on the introduction, topic sentences, and the conclusion. With this strategy, you will get a feel for the argument and structure of the paper in its entirety, but will not get to focus closely on the writer's prose. Accordingly, this strategy will help you offer feedback and scaffolding on global writing issues, such as thesis, structure, and organization. It will not enable you offer much help in the way of local issues, such sentence-level style, transitions, grammar, editing, etc.

2. You can set a time limit, read as much of the paper as possible within that limit, and then stop to discuss what you've read. You can also suggest that the student return for a follow up consultation in which they finish the paper with you or another consultant. With this strategy, you can focus closely on the global and local issues in the part of the paper you read, but not in the rest of the paper. This strategy may only appeal to the writer if they have time to return for a second consultation.

3. You can do a "reverse outline." Reverse outlining is a process in which the writer explains their thesis statement and then tells you, in one sentence apiece, the main point, claim, or sub-argument of each paragraph. Encourage the writer to use only one sentence per paragraph and take notes as the writer talks. At the end of this process, you will have a more or less rough outline of the writer's paper. With this strategy, you can see the basic argument and structure of the writer's paper and offer feedback and scaffolding on those issues. Writers often find it challenging to succinctly summarize their thesis and their supporting paragraphs in one sentence apiece. Such writers are probably unclear about what their thesis is or should be, and about how they should support that thesis in their body paragraphs. Accordingly, the reverse outline will help the writer identify sources of incoherence in their thinking and in their paper without actually having to read the whole thing.

Center the Student

Regardless of the format in which you engage with a paper, you must make sure that the writer retains ownership and control over the writing. Make sure the writer has a writing pad and a pencil. Writers who are new to the Writing Center may be shy about taking notes or making revisions on the fly during a consultation. If a writer suggests a productive revision, say, "That might work well. Why don't you write it down?" Try to use body and space language to reinforce a relationship of equality and collaboration.

Ask a writer, "Do you mind if I write on my copy of your draft?" before you set pencil to paper. Writers practically never mind, but that's not the point. By asking, we keep the text in the writer's control. Also, be careful not to mark up the text as you would if you were grading a student's paper. Make just enough marks to remind yourself of passages you might want to return to later in the session. Remember, you're an expert reader giving your response, not an instructor giving your judgment. Written comments tend to carry a kind of authority that makes the writer see them as admonishments or commands rather than suggestions. Your behavior will encourage the writer to be fully engaged in the writing process. At the end of the consultation, ask if the student wants the marked copy of their draft back.

With a laptop or UWC computer consultation, it is important that any revisions be done by the student. For this reason, we ask that the student share their screen with you through Zoom instead of sharing the document with you electronically so that only the student can make changes to the paper. If you want to insert comments electronically to help guide your conversation, first ask the student if they are comfortable sharing their document with you electronically and allowing you to make comments. If there are points for discussion as you read, you can either use the highlighter, comments, or track changes features available on most word processors to note those sections. At all times, make sure that you are only inserting comments and not changing or correcting the text as you type.

No matter how many times you've read essays about the same topics, remember that each writer who brings an essay to the Center has an investment in their argument. Perhaps they only want a good grade in the course, but grades are serious and legitimate concerns for writers. As a writing consultant, you must negotiate a balance between being critical and being supportive. In addition, while you want the student to have faith in your expertise as a writer and your ability to help, you shouldn't be afraid to admit that there are things you don't know. If, for example, the student has an obscure question about documentation, consult a handbook together. By doing so, you are not only making sure that the advice you provide is accurate, but also setting a good example. Encourage the student to take an active role in the consultation. Use the time to track down facts, ideas, and solutions together.

One way to establish a good working environment is to ask questions and let the writer do as much of the talking as possible. They will not only become more independent in this kind of exchange, but also give you, the consultant, the information you need to assist in the project at hand. Many undergraduates (like their professors) are unaccustomed to this collaborative approach and may need extra time and prompting to respond, but by framing questions and exercising patience, you help clients articulate their expectations for the consultation, the paper, and their growth as writers.

Possible Strategies for Three Common Consultation Scenarios

The following are some common situations our consultants face on a daily basis and some suggested ways to address them:

1. *The Grammar Check:* If the writer is satisfied that they have dealt appropriately with global issues and only needs to work on grammar, they can select a few paragraphs or a section to work on during the consultation.

2. *Big Changes at the Last Minute:* If the writer needs to work on global issues and the paper is due in three hours, you will need to work with the writer to discover how the consultation can be of most benefit. For example, no matter how disorganized the paper, the writer may only have time to revise for one or two global grammar issues. In this case, you may decide to help the writer learn to identify and revise these sentence level problems, and suggest that the writer come in more than once for the next paper, earlier in the writing process and well in advance of the due date to brainstorm a topic and then to work on higher-order global issues in a rough draft.

3. *Global Concerns that Require More than One Consultation:* If the writer wants or needs to work on thesis, clarity, evidence, organization, or other global concerns, and has several days to revise, the writer might choose to make an appointment to return to the UWC for further consultation on the same paper.

Engage with the Paper and Consult

Asking Questions. In productive consultations, the consultant's main role is that of a questioner. Good questions lead writers in the right direction while letting them come to their own discoveries about writing well. Often the writer's perception of what they are communicating in a text is different from what the text actually communicates. Many writers have an easier time verbalizing their ideas than writing them down. Thus, questions that ask the writer to summarize their arguments or explain their choices can be productive. You might ask the following: "How would you sum up your thesis?" "What does this paragraph argue?" "How does this passage contribute to your argument?" "How do you back up this idea?" "What do you want the reader to take away from your introduction?" "Describe the tone you chose to use. Do you think it will appeal to your audience?"

Working on the Writer's Process. Some of the most productive questions you can ask a writer sometimes seem to have the least to do with the paper itself. "How did you go about writing this draft?" "What thinking did you do about the topic before you started writing the rough draft?" "How do you usually approach the conclusion?" "Do you procrastinate?" "Do you talk to friends or to your professor?" "How much time does it take you to write a draft?" "Do you do any prewriting?" "Do you do research before or after you come up with a thesis?" By learning about the writer's process and asking the writer to examine that process, you can make suggestions that get at the heart of their writing concerns.

Taking Notes. When a writer is formulating a paper's argument, you can ask the writer to talk out their ideas while you take notes. You might say, "Tell me what your argument is, and I'll take some notes on what you say." Writers are usually grateful to have the notes to take home and refer to as they revise. To avoid collusion, be sure that your notes record only the writer's words and ideas.

Meta-Consulting. A writer will better understand the process of writing if you carry on a meta-consultation, explaining why you are doing what you are doing. For instance, if you explain why constructing an outline of a draft might help a writer strengthen an already-written paper's organization instead of just launching into an outline without comment, the writer will be more likely to apply that technique on their own next time they write a paper. Meta-consulting helps us achieve our goal of making writers self-sufficient.

Encouraging without Evaluating. Assessing without Critiquing. Even though we don't evaluate writers' works as instructors do, we naturally try to be encouraging. In particular, offering a positive comment when you finish reading the writer's draft can lessen their anxiety considerably. However, we avoid evaluating the writer's work. Evaluating ("Your conclusion doesn't work very well" or "This is a good draft") undermines your own role as collaborator, putting you in the position of authority over the work and the writer. Ultimately, that takes away writers' agency to assess and make decisions about their own work. Instead, try the following:

- Respond as an experienced reader ("I lose track of the argument in this paragraph. What did you want to say?") instead of as an instructor ("Work on this paragraph; it lacks focus.") The experienced reader gives a first-person response rather than an absolute judgment. By doing so, you avoid laying blame on the writer or the text.

- Compliment the writer's process instead of the text. "It's great that you're taking your revisions so seriously. It shows commitment to your writing process."

- Put the focus on audience. "This seems interesting to me, but of course, I'm not your audience. Will your professor think it addresses the prompt effectively?"

- Ask questions that put the authority to make judgments in the writer's hands. "What are you doing in the intro to entice the reader? How does that paragraph sound to you?"

- Put assessments in context. "The organization seems a bit confusing to me, but of course, that's to be expected at this stage in the writing process."

Avoiding Those Kinds of Authority You Don't Want to Assume. Consultants don't have to know everything, especially when it comes to the content or subject matter of a writer's work. If you are working with a writer who seems too dependent on your feedback, refusing to admit or to bring up your own knowledge of a paper's subject matter often forces the writer to

generate their own ideas. For instance, an overly dependent writer might say, "My paper's about 'Benito Cereno.' Have you read it? Is this analysis correct?" If you haven't read "Benito Cereno," say so and ask the writer to tell you about it. If you have read it, you can simply say, "Why don't you tell me about it?" If a student recognizes your evasion and pushes you further, you might respond by providing perspective on your role as a consultant. For instance, you might say, "I'm here to help you generate your own ideas and to write them in a way that will be effective, not for me, but for your audience. In order to do this, I need to remain totally objective about your ideas and your content—that is, so I can help *you* decide whether or not your audience will find them acceptable and cogent. For me to stay objective let's both just assume and act as though I haven't read that book. I want you to tell me about it."

Using UWC Resources. You can use the books in the UWC library and UWC handouts to address common student concerns about style, grammar, documentation, format, the writing process, or a specific subject area such as RHE 306. Showing the writer how to look up the answer to a question is more instructive than simply giving the correct answer. When you bring two copies of the reference book to the table and have the writer also look up the answer, you demonstrate and have the writer practice a technique that will help the writer develop writing skills. Handouts allow consultants to convey information about technical issues and jargon in a non-directive manner. For example, if you need to explain passive voice during a consultation, it takes less than a minute to grab the "Passive Voice" handout and review it with a student. Plus, the student can take the handout with them for later reference.

Dialectal Language Uses: Writers who use slang, colloquialisms, or dialect-specific grammar for academic writing are not incorrect. When you notice varied language choices in writing, ask your consultee who their audience is. In some circumstances, instructors and other readers may have institutional expectations of students' academic writing. Although we should ultimately strive to influence these prejudiced standards in academia, we want to arm our consultees with the tools needed to succeed under some courses' rigid requirements. Discussions resulting from varied language uses can be learning moments for consultant and consultee alike. You can reflect not only on the role of audience expectations in writing, but also on how generic expectations inform how we use language. We should present dialects as rhetorical choices of students who write, and not as "correct" or "incorrect."

Pointing Out Potentially Offensive Material: Occasionally students bring papers to us that might be deemed sensitive because of the language or topic. For our purposes, offensive material is writing that affects you personally, may affect or distract others nearby who can hear it being read, or causes you to be concerned about the writer's well-being or safety.

If you are presented with sensitive material, please keep in mind the following:

1. No consultant is required to consult on a paper that contains material they find personally offensive. If you find you cannot work on a paper for this reason, simply say politely, "I am not the best person to consult on this paper. I will check with the front desk to see if we can find someone better suited." Then explain the situation to

the person at the front desk, who will try to find a consultant who can work with the student. Note that you may choose this alternative at any point in a consultation.

2. Be sensitive to what you are reading and how it might be experienced by others. If you choose to continue working with a student whose paper might be considered offensive or distracting, please do not read it aloud. Even if you and the writer are not offended, someone working nearby might be. If you are reading aloud and the material becomes graphic, please stop and tell the writer, "This paper contains sensitive material. It may distract people around us, so it's better to read it silently." You can also suggest that the two of you move into a reduced distraction room if one is available in order to keep reading aloud.

3. Consider that the student who brings in a paper that contains racist, sexist, or graphic material may not realize its potential effects on an audience. It can be helpful to begin by asking what they intended to communicate with their writing to confirm the writer's intentions. You can turn the situation into a teachable moment by helping the student examine purpose and audience. Help them see why audience members may be offended.

4. On rare occasions, you may come across a piece of writing that really troubles you and makes you concerned for the students' safety or the safety of others. Texas State Law requires all employees (including student employees) at a public or private post-secondary institution to promptly report any knowledge of any incidents of sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking "committed by or against a person who was a student enrolled at or an employee of the institution at the time of the incident." UWC consultants are mandatory reporters, meaning that if a writer discloses such an incident during a consultation, either orally or in written text, consultants are legally required to report it. If this happens, you will need to make a report to Title IX. You can ask Alice, Michele, or Emma Beard for help to review the situation with you and make the necessary reports. You can also make the report directly to Title IX yourself, but please let us know. For a comprehensive explanation of UT's Title IX protocols, consult the Handbook of Operating Procedures 3-3031.

End the Consultation

When you write the note after the consultation, you will want to indicate what kind of paper it was and a few of the most important things you discussed in the session. Summarize what you've accomplished in the consultation, and mention any areas for future work.

If you worked on a laptop/computer, allow yourself enough time to end the consultation 45 minutes after the scheduled appointment start time. Feel free to end the consultation a few minutes early to make sure the student saves the updated version to their laptop, flash drive, or email.

If the writer has specified on their intake form that they would like a copy of the post-consultation note sent to their instructor, confirm with the writer that you will do so. If the writer has not supplied or does not know the instructor's email address, you may look up that information in the UT directory (http://www.utexas.edu/directory) after the consultation.

If this is an in-person consultation, ask the writer if they have time to complete the Student Satisfaction Survey. If they do, walk them to the survey computer. If they do not, encourage them to check their email for a link to the same survey which they may complete whenever they are able. When you say goodbye to the writer, please thank them for visiting us and wish them a good day or evening.

Tips for Ending a Consultation at 45 Minutes

Many consultations naturally run from thirty to forty minutes. Beyond about forty-five minutes, clients and consultants may find their attention starting to lag and their minds starting to wander. It's possible to accomplish a lot in forty minutes, and the suggestions you make will leave the writer with quite a bit to do, even if the project is not yet finished. Once you've been working with a student for thirty-five to forty minutes, it's a good idea to wrap things up. Often writers will signal that they know what they want to do next and that the consultation should end. Sometimes, however, you will need to take some active steps to conclude the consultation.

One way to do this is to change your posture and tone of voice, explain to the student that you think they have accomplished a lot, and explain that it's now time for them to work alone. Summarize the work you've done in the session, and review the actions you and the writer have decided they should take next. Jot down a list of the steps you've both decided they should take. If you feel the paper will still need work after the writer has taken these steps, encourage the writer to make an appointment to come back. If you and the student agree that they should work with you again, consult with the front desk to see whether your schedules coincide. If you won't be working in the Writing Center before the paper is due, or you feel one of the other consultants has expertise that would be useful in the next stage of the project, consult with the desk person to determine when and with whom the student should consult.

Have the Student Check Out

Consultants should request that writers complete an exit survey once their consultation is over. The electronic form collects feedback from students about their consultation, which is then used by the administrative staff to assess the quality of our performance. The survey is anonymous and confidential and takes about a minute to complete. All writers will receive a link to the survey in their email when they check in for either an online or in person appointment; it is helpful for you to remind them about it at the end of each session. If your consultation is in person, walk your consultee to the one of the two exit poll computers to complete the survey on their way out.

Complete the Consultation Record (the Note)

You can use any computer, including your own, to write the post-consultation note (see Chapter Four, "Completing the Consultation Record" for how to write a note). Each consultation has a specific note link. The link can be found in the intake notification email that you received when your student arrived.

Fill out the note form according to its instructions. You will be asked to provide a brief description of the work you completed and the aspects of writing you addressed. If the student has requested that a copy of the note be sent to their professor, you will also be asked to provide that professor's name and email address. After you click "Submit," the note will be emailed to the student.

Consulting with Multilingual Students

Different writing standards exist across cultures, and at the UWC, we aim to validate all students' cultural and dialectal heritages. We avoid approaching varied writing standards from a "correct/incorrect" perspective. That said, it is our job to arm our consultees with the tools they need to succeed in the US academic environment. It can be tempting to be directive in multilingual consulting, but consultants should maintain a non-evaluative, non-directive approach except where more directive approaches are necessary for modelling grammatical structures, the specific meanings of certain words, etc.

Cultural standards may influence writing styles, and often dictate norms of educational interaction. Consultees should listen carefully for signs of discomfort about the consultation dynamics and strive to be adaptable, changing techniques if need be.

Begin by being encouraging and understanding. Multilingual learners have earned proficiency in more than one language, which is a remarkable achievement. It is important to frame consultees' knowledge of multiple languages as an asset to their writing, not an obstacle, and to draw on consultees' experiences with other languages wherever possible during the consultation. In addition, many international learners are far from their home countries and cultures. This is deserving of our respect.

As in any consultation, prioritize global over local concerns. Multilingual students may wish to prioritize grammar and usage concerns over higher-order issues such as argument and organization. Resist turning the consultation into a "grammar check"—remember, we are not a proofreading service. Remind students that higher-order issues often influence a reader's comprehension more than sentence-level elements do. You can also work to turn a "grammar check" into a higher-order discussion by identifying patterns in your consultees writing and discussing the principles underlying suggested revisions or sentence clarity issues. Focusing on the positive can make students more confident, resulting in the ability to work

together beyond sentence-level clarity. If sentence-level mechanics affect your understanding, work with students to address one or two consistent problem areas (e.g., preposition use, verb tense, pronoun agreement). Explain clearly that you will not have time to address everything in the paper, and remind your student of consultation goals to develop lasting writing tools. You may want to provide a diagnostic list of grammar/punctuation patterns that you suggest the student work on over time and then ask them to pick a few to focus on in the consultation. That way, the student has a sense of other things that might be helpful to work on while continuing to improve their writing.

Ask plenty of questions. In this way, students participate more actively, which in turn helps you avoid being overly directive. Let students explain their goals for the paper. Ask about their concerns regarding this paper, if they struggle consistently with particular areas of grammar or usage, and (if they have visited the Writing Center before) what consulting approaches work best for them (e.g., student reading aloud, consultant reading aloud, taking lots of notes, using handouts, etc.).

Your goal remains to help students improve their writing for the long term; sometimes it is not yet realistic for a student to produce a grammatically flawless paper. Resist the urge to copy-edit or direct students to fix specific aspects of their papers. The path to writing in a learned language is a long, ongoing process. Remind yourself, as well as the student, that this consultation is one important step toward that goal.

Working with Students with Disabilities

Qualified students with disabilities may request appropriate accommodations. We make every effort to support these students' success with writing projects and their development as writers. Accommodations may include using a Reduced Distraction room to minimize noise and distraction; students do not need a letter from SSD to request this accommodation. **All students are welcome to book more than one consultation per day if needed if the schedule allows. They do not need to upload an accommodation letter to do this. Appropriate accommodations do not include actually doing any work on student products such as researching or typing for students. If you have questions about accommodations we offer, check http://uwc.utexas.edu/accessibility/, or consult with Alice or an APC.**

Online Consultations

As of spring 2020, the UWC offers online consultations for all students. Online consultations are conducted through Zoom. Additional instructions can be found on the UWC website at http://uwc.utexas.edu/consultants/online-consultation-instructions and http://uwc.utexas.edu/consultants/front-desk/.

If you have difficulty with any of the steps, please call the front desk at 512-471-6222 or use the online chat for assistance.

Final Note on Consulting Strategies

Remember that these strategies have been developed through years of collective experience at the UWC but that they are ultimately just guidelines. Since every writer and every writing situation is unique, no set formula will be effective in every consultation.

Your job as a consultant is to help the writer apply their personal writing process to the demands of the given situation. That may require a change in their writing process, or it may just require reframing the situation for the writer in order to highlight points of connection they may have missed.   Some writers crave structure and may struggle with an assignment that calls for them to create their own topic and approach to that topic; these writers will benefit from being shown how they can break the creative process down into manageable chunks based on what instructions have been provided. Other writers bristle at assignments that seem to them overly directive and will benefit from being shown ways they can express themselves creatively within the guidelines of the assignment.

As long as you remember our three core principles of being non-evaluative, maintaining the writer's ownership of the text, and being sensitive to the writer's emotional investment in the writing process, you have leeway to adapt your approach to the needs of each individual writer and situation.

Chapter Four: Completing the Consultation Record

Steps to Complete the Consultation Record

Once you have finished a consultation, go to the intake notification email you received when the student arrived and click on the "edit submission" link to access the note. Fill out this form **the same day as the appointment**.

Indicating Mode of Consultation

In this section, answer yes or no to the question, "Was this an online consultation through Zoom?"

Noting any Problems with Technology

In this section, briefly describe any technical problems you may have had in an online consultation.

Indicating Type of Paper

In this section, you may select the type of paper you worked on with your consultee.

Indicating Certification Topic

In this section, select which certification topic (if any) your consultation counts towards and briefly describe why.

Indicating Kinds of Work Done

In this section, you should click on the boxes of the terms provided to indicate which topics you worked on during the consultation. Try to be as accurate and as thorough as possible. Use the glossary definitions found in Appendix 3 (Glossary of UWC Terms) to guide your selection of topics.

Glossary of UWC Terms

We've developed a list of terms and accompanying definitions in order to create a common

UWC vocabulary for discussing consultations and to standardize our internal record keeping. This glossary, which is included as Appendix 3 in this handbook, will facilitate our new more, robust assessment. These terms are for internal record keeping purposes; you are not required to include them in your consultation note. In the note feel free to mirror the writer's language (e.g. if they are concerned about "flow" and "clarity" you can use those terms to describe the consultation).

Comments to the Admin Team

If something came up in your consultation that you would like to share with the admin team, positive or negative, you may do so in this section. Your note will then go to both Alice and the APCs. This section is also for reporting if you felt consultees were required to come to the UWC by their instructor and for requesting additional support.

Completing the Brief Description of Work Done (the "Note")

Describing the consultation thoroughly and accurately is especially important not only to ensure the usefulness of our records but also to provide students with a useful reminder of the work they did during a consultation (and, if the student requests it, to inform instructors about their students' efforts to develop their writing). Give a useful description, not an evaluation, of what happened in the session, one that incorporates the student's perceptions as well as your own and that makes clear to the instructor what work was conducted during the consultation. It is helpful to mention the paper topic or the name of the assignment involved. Hereafter the Description of Work Done will be called a "note," regardless of whether it will be sent to an instructor.

Why Write Notes?

Notes have three primary purposes:

1. *Record Keeping for the UWC and for Yourself.* We analyze our services to improve them and to argue for their continued necessity. If a student or instructor has questions later about a consultation it is often useful for you to be able to return to your own record.

2. *Reminders for Students.* During consultations, students often make important decisions regarding their writing process and their papers. Notes provide students with basic reminders of the decisions they made during their consultations. Ideally, these reminders help students take the work they did during a consultation and continue it on their own.

3. *Outreach to Instructors.* Students have the opportunity to request that their instructors receive copies of notes. Notes make the Writing Center's process transparent to instructors and help them to understand our services better. They also help the consulting process remain a three-way collaboration

between the student, the consultant, and the instructor. Notes also let instructors know where a student's sometimes dramatic "new direction" came from. Finally, they indicate students have voluntarily sought help outside of class.

The Ideal Note

The ideal note is a concise (in most cases no longer than a paragraph), specific, non-evaluative description of the session you just had with the student that illustrates the collaborative, student-led nature of the consultation. This is sometimes difficult to accomplish. We'll address some specific challenges below ("Common Note Writing Challenges"), but in general, it is helpful to remember two things. First, the use of "we" helps convey collaboration, as does stating what the student did and what you did. Second, a specific description of what happened ("You decided that you would do additional research before writing your paper.") is much more helpful for both record keeping and instructor outreach than evaluative statements ("You were really engaged and committed to making your paper better.").

Keep in mind that instructors may receive copies of these notes. As instructors and consultants, we would be remiss if we were not enthusiastic about students. But if you tell a student that they are a great writer and well-prepared and the instructor disagrees, the student (and sometimes the UWC) has to take the brunt of the instructor's displeasure. We can never be sure we are getting the whole picture when we meet with students, and we have to be careful to respect the instructor's decisions.

A Suggested Note Template

As in the consultation itself, begin by reporting on global issues or higher-order concerns such as understanding the assignment, content, revision, and re-structuring, and then work your way down to local issues and lower-order concerns such as grammar, punctuation, and style. Most consultants develop their own personal templates after a while, but it is usually some version of the ones below.

All you need to write is the body of the e-mail to the student summarizing what occurred during the consultation. This text is put into a template email that includes a salutation and a sign off with your name pre-populated, so it is not necessary for you to include a salutation or sign off in the note you write.

The Student's Agenda. You said you wanted to work on "flow" in your essay on the effects of alcoholism in the 18th Century British navy. (If you don't remember the exact assignment/author name, it's OK to be general.)

The Global Tasks Actually Performed. We read through your paper together and decided that the most important things to tackle were clarifying your thesis and improving your paragraph structure. We did some brainstorming together while I took notes, and then we worked together on re-structuring your first few paragraphs.

Any Local Tasks Performed. Along the way we discussed the use of passive voice and worked on reducing redundancy.

Any Tasks You Felt Were Important but Did Not Have Time to Address or That the Writer Was Not Ready to Address. Although we recognized that your draft had numerous grammatical errors, we decided to tackle your major re-writing first and leave sentence-level work for a future consultation.

The Next Steps, If Any, the Writer Will Perform and Any Final Recommendations You May Have Made. You left saying you were confident you could restructure the rest of your paragraphs on your own and then polish your thesis to match the resulting structure. I suggested that you e-mail your new thesis to your instructor to make sure they felt it satisfied your assignment.

And That Is It. There is no need for any ending flourishes (no "I really enjoyed working with you …"). Proofread your note and click "Submit."

Common Note-Writing Challenges

We did so much. How do I write about all of it?
You do not have to. Try prioritizing according to the suggestions above and using qualifiers like "primarily" or "mainly" to let the reader know other things took place. You might also think about which parts of the consultation are most likely to change the student's paper in a way that will catch the attention of the instructor—again, global issues are likely to take precedence over local issues.

The student was working so hard. How can I let the instructor know without evaluating?
Try reporting on the specific things the student was doing to give you a positive impression rather than praising the student. For example, "You brought in your third version of your rough draft and showed me half a dozen articles you had found to supplement your research," rather than "You were obviously working really hard."

The paper was really good. How can I let the instructor know?
You can't. It's not your job to evaluate; it's the instructor's. Simply report what you have done, and leave it at that.

The student was very passive/resistant during the consultation.
Take a deep breath, and then report on what you *recommended,* rather than what you actually accomplished. The phrases "I suggested" and "I recommended" will be very useful to you.

The instructor's comments/assignment sheets were confusing/incomplete.
Take another deep breath, and then try one or all of the following: you might report (if true) that you suggested the student go back to the professor to clarify the assignment or comments. You may politely admit your own confusion ("Although I was unsure I

understood the nature of the comment …") and report that you gave it your best guess. You may also, in some cases, simply omit any comments at all on the offending material.

Appendix 1: Getting Your Questions Answered

If you have a question about . . .   **talk to . . .**

- Your appointment or schedule . . .   Michele or Alice

- UWC policy . . .   a member of the admin staff or the
                                                handbook

- Our computers . . .   Michele

- The copier or printer . . .   Michele or the APCs

- Time sheets . . .   Michele

- Consultation Practice . . .   APCs or fellow consultants

If you want to . . .   **you should . . .**

- Take a brief break between consultations . . .   ask Emma Beard or the front desk
                                                person

- Call in sick . . .   submit an absence form online (and
                                                call/chat the front desk if you're
                                                requesting an absence for the same day)

- Debrief after a consultation . . .   talk to an APC or Alice--or Kristin if you
                                                consult with graduate students

- Do a collaborative consultation . . .   talk to Emma Beard

- Start a discussion about consulting . . .   ask your colleagues

- Propose an idea or project . . .   talk to an APC

Appendix 2: Selected Readings on Writing Center Theory and Practice

The following resources are located in the professional development section of the UWC library. We especially recommend the introduction to Covino and Jolliffe's *Rhetoric Concepts, Definitions, and Boundaries* entitled "What is Rhetoric?"

Barnett, Robert W. and Jacob S. Blumner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001.

Belcher, Diane and George Braine, eds. *Academic Writing in a Second Language: Essays on Research & Pedagogy*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1995.

Boquet, Elizabeth H. *Noise from the Writing Center*. Logan, Utah: Utah State UP, 2002.

Brown, Stuart C, and Theresa Enos, eds. *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2002.

Campbell, Cherry. *Teaching Second-Language Writing: Interacting with Text*. New York: Heinle & Heinle, 1998.

Carino, Peter. "Theorizing the Writing Center: An Uneasy Task." *Dialogue: A Journal for Writing Specialists* 2.1 (1995): 23–27. Rpt. in *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice*. 124–138.

Covino, William and David A. Jolliffe. *Rhetoric: Concepts, Definitions, and Boundaries*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995.

Ede, Lisa, ed. *On Writing Research: The Braddock Essays 1975-1998*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999.

Gillespie, Paula and Neal Lerner. "Working with ESL Writers." *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000. 119–28.

Gillespie, Paula, et al., eds. *Writing Center Research, Extending the Conversation*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2002.

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

Harris, Muriel. *Teaching One-to-One: The Writing Conference*. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers, 1986.

Hobson, Eric H. "Writing Center Practice Often Counters Its Theory. So What?" *Intersections: Theory and Practice in the Writing Center*. Joan Mullin and Ray Wallace, eds. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1994. 1–12.

Leki, Ilona. *Understanding ESL Writers: A Guide for Teachers*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinlemann, 1992.

Lerner, Janet. *Learning Disabilities: Theories, Diagnosis, and Teaching Strategies*. 8th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000.

McCall, William. "Writing Centers and the Idea of Consultancy." *The Writing Center Journal*. 14.2 (1994): 162-171.

Meyer, Emily, and Louise Z. Smith. *The Practical Tutor*. New York: Oxford UP, 1987.

Myers-Breslin, Linda, ed. *Administrative Problem-Solving for Writing Programs and Writing Centers*. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1999.

Neff, Julie. "Learning Disabilities and the Writing Center." *Intersections: Theory and Practice in the Writing Center*. 81–95.

North, Stephen. "Revisiting 'The Idea of a Writing Center.'" *The Writing Center Journal* 15.1 (1994): 7–19. Rpt. in *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice*. Robert W. Barnett and Jacob S. Blumner, eds. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001. 79–91.

North, Stephen. "The Idea of a Writing Center." *College English* 46 (1984): 433–46.

Ryan, Leigh. *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

Writing Center Journal. International Writing Centers Association. Ed. Joan Mullin and Albert C. DeCiccio.

Appendix 3: Glossary of UWC Terms

We've developed this list of terms and accompanying definitions in order to create a common UWC vocabulary for discussing consultations and to standardize our internal record keeping. This glossary will facilitate our new and more robust assessment.

These terms are for internal record keeping purposes; you do not need to include them in your consultation note. In the note feel free to mirror the writer's language (e.g., if they are concerned about "flow" and "clarity" you can use those terms to describe the consultation).

You can think of the glossary terms as falling under one of three overarching areas—Prewriting, Drafting, Revising—of the writing process depending on where a student is in that process. Some consultations (and potentially many of them) could entail work that could fall under more than one of these overarching categories. Prewriting, Drafting, and Revising shouldn't be thought of as rigid categories but as umbrella terms to encompass aspects of the writing process that often overlap.

Responding to Assignment
A consultation that deals with any aspect of an essay written in response to an assigned prompt would fall under this glossary category. This encompasses consultations where a writer might be misunderstanding, misreading, or having difficulty interpreting the assignment (and some assignments are hard to understand). It also covers situations where a writer might have responded to a portion of an assignment but not all of it. If an assignment requires a writer to compare and contrast but only contrasts, for example, or if an essay is shorter or longer than the guidelines given in the assignment, you would check this category. Finally, "Responding to Assignment" might also involve consultations where a student

revises an essay based upon feedback from their instructor or, alternatively, your discussion involves helping a student understand instructor feedback.

Brainstorming
Brainstorming denotes a consultation—or a portion of a consultation—devoted to discussing a writing project in its nascent stages. A writer might have begun to free-write and might bring what they have drafted to a brainstorming consultation, but they may not yet have begun to compose. This might entail going over an essay prompt with a writer and then developing an outline for an essay-to-be-drafted. A consultation might alternatively involve creating a thought-map of possible claims and talking through how such arguments might be made. As an overarching category, brainstorming can also include creating a working schedule for a longer writing project like an honors thesis among whatever other kinds of work completed during the consultation.

Thesis/Statement of Intent
A thesis is the main claim of your paper, the point that the paper argues or proves. It is different from the topic sentence of the paper, which is essentially the author's statement of intent. Professors may say "thesis" but mean different things. Students need to figure out exactly what their professor means, and you can help them do this by reading the prompt together and asking questions.

Unity
This is a useful term for thinking about a project's coherence in the largest sense. Does the paper stay on topic? That is, does the paper have a consistent argument, point, theme, or aim, and does the paper consistently concern itself with that theme? If you are going over a paper that seems to have too many points, gets sidetracked by tangents or digresses inappropriately, or that starts with one topic and ends with another, these would all be situations where you worked on "Unity."

Structure
Though potentially related to "Unity," this term deals with the organization and arrangement of an essay's parts, especially the order of an essay's main body paragraphs. You might have a paper, for example, that has an overall good argument where most points relate to each other, but the topics are presented in a scrambled order. The paper might circle back on itself, jump around, have every point in every paragraph, or order its ideas in a way that works against the argument, all of which would be structural issues. "Structure" also involves the proportion and development of an essay's ideas. If you have a paper with ideas and topics arranged in a reasonable order but some of them are discussed briefly while others are at length, this is also a structural issue (and, potentially, one of "Unity" as well).

Introduction
Discussions devoted to introductions tend to involve either an introduction's rhetorical fit or its "contract." Rhetorical fit deals with the rhetorical situation of an essay. An academic paper with a hokey beginning, a "since the beginning of time" opening sentence, an unnecessarily broad funneling method, or otherwise poor framing would raise issues of rhetorical fitness for that essay. Similarly, a paper that introduces topics that weren't really

discussed in the paper—likely because it was written before the rest of the essay—or that violates guidelines given by an assignment (no thesis statement yet the essay contains one, or a lack of a thesis when one is needed), requires talking about rhetorical fit. "Contract" is a catch-all term that, depending upon the discipline, might also be called a thesis question, thesis statement, partition, or topic statement—but there will almost certainly be *something* which, since it creates a connection between reader and writer, can be called a "contract." This contract establishes expectations with the reader and distills the "aim" of the peace.

Conclusion
Discussions devoted to conclusions, like those about introductions, revolve around questions of rhetorical fit. Is the conclusion rhetorically appropriate for the kind of paper this is? A two-paragraph conclusion might be appropriate for a long paper, for example, but would be an odd fit for a five-paragraph paper. What a conclusion requires depends upon the academic discipline in question. A lab report will not have an exhortation (call to action) or a call for further research, but a research article in sociology might have a call for further research. Some disciplines similarly require that a conclusion admit the contingencies of the overall argument or experiment, and some disciplines prohibit this. Also, for many kinds of writing, a conclusion should contain a clear summary of the claim(s) made throughout although this summary will take different forms—a summary in a lab report will differ from that of a research paper on a literary work.

Format
Although everything related to organization constitutes "format," this term should be used for consultations when you discuss format as genre conventions specific to an academic discipline—the format of a literary analysis versus a lab report, for example. Format additionally includes assessing whether a student's paper includes parts specified by the instructor (a "discussion" section, say) or observes college-writing conventions (double-spacing). Finally, format likewise includes the various style and citation guidelines employed by different disciplines (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc) for in-text references or in a Works Cited/Bibliography. You would select Format if a portion of the consultation dealt with how a parenthetical citation should be placed at the end of a sentence in MLA style or, alternatively, with how formatting a Works Cited correctly.

Incorporating Research and Sources
This term names consultations in which the consultant helps the writer decide what to do with current or ongoing research and source material, e.g. how to use it and where in the assignment. This is also a category for discussing distinctions between primary and secondary sources as well as how an essay balances them, which could potentially make this term connected to "Unity" and "Structure."

Using Appropriate Sources
Use this for consultations concerning audience expectations regarding research, including what kind of sources are expected for this particular assignment. For instance, for a Rhetoric 306 paper, popular sources might be very appropriate, but they would not necessarily be appropriate for a Government paper requiring peer-reviewed sources published in an academic journal.

Internal Paragraph Organization
This is the term for consultations that deal with the structure of a particular paragraph as opposed to Structure, which concerns itself with the structure of the entire essay. Internal paragraph organization, therefore, deals with the arrangement of sentences within a paragraph—is there a topic sentence, for example, what order should sentences have.

Transitions
This term includes consultations that discuss transitions between paragraphs, how the essay pivots from idea to idea, and/or how sentences within a paragraph transition from one to another.

Adequacy/Evidence
A paragraph (or several paragraphs, or an entire essay) might present some evidence, or contain some analysis, in relation to a claim—but might not offer enough evidence. Or, alternatively, the analysis might not quite fit with the evidence and/or the evidence might not support the claim being made. You would also check this glossary term if the development of ideas does not proceed logically in relation to the evidence presented and the conclusions drawn from it. This is different from whether the evidence is rhetorically appropriate for the task (e.g., the student used something from the *The Blaze* instead of the scholarly sources required by the prompt, which would instead be an example of "Using Appropriate Sources.")

Sentence level correctness
Sentence-level correctness encompasses issues of grammar and usage—reference errors, spelling errors, comma splices or sentence fragments, subject-verb agreement problems, etc. This glossary category might also include sentence-level violations of discipline-specific or college-level writing norms, such as using "I" in a science paper or an inappropriately informal level of diction for an assignment requiring formal writing. In such instances, correctness isn't a matter of grammar but adherence to genre expectations and rhetorical fitness.

Style
This glossary category includes issues like perspicuity, clarity, economy of language, effective use of agency, sentence length, and sentence variety. Also, excessive (or ineffective) use of passive voice would generally fit under the category of style.

Next Steps
You would select this if you spend a portion of the consultation establishing the next steps the student will take, which might involve discussing how the essay outline made during a consultation will be fleshed out into a full draft. It might also involve strategizing how to revise an essay based upon the minimal marking methods discussed during the consultation. Or, if a student is working on a lengthy and long-term project like an honors thesis, for example, helping them plan what portions of their project they work on when. You would also want to check "Next Steps" if you referred the student to other services on campus like Career Services or the Library Reference staff. Discussing "Next Steps" might overlap with

"Writing Process," particularly if you work on breaking a large project up into smaller, manageable tasks.

Writing Process
"Writing Process" could potentially include a variety of things, including: explicit instruction in the writing process (i.e., demonstrating how to change a passive construction into an active one); troubleshooting various issues a student might struggle with like procrastination and time management; creating a schedule for long-term projects like an honors thesis; and breaking a long writing assignment up into manageable pieces.