



## Required and Incentivized Visits to the OU Writing Center: Guidance for Faculty and Instructors

The OU Writing Center is a pedagogical service providing broad writing support for OU graduate and undergraduate students. The Center offers both in-person and remote sessions and can help students with a variety of writing projects, including course assignments, theses and dissertations, articles for publication, graduate school applications, and non-school related projects. The Writing Center can also support faculty through in-class, [informational visits and writing-based workshops](#). Another way the Writing Center supports faculty is by accommodating required or incentivized visits to the Writing Center.

For faculty and instructors who would like to require or incentivize their students to make appointments, the Writing Center offers some guidance to make those sessions as effective and productive as possible.

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### Recommendations for promoting useful required/incentivized visits

1. **Give us a heads up.** If you would like to require or incentivize your students to come to the Writing Center, please notify the Center ahead of time and, if possible, send us the assignment sheet. You can provide advanced notice by emailing [writingcenter@ou.edu](mailto:writingcenter@ou.edu). Writing Center Leadership will share the assignment guidelines with consultants so that they are better prepared to meet your students' needs. We also encourage writers to bring the assignment guidelines with them, either printed out or available electronically.
2. **Inform students of the purpose of the OU Writing Center.** This means letting students know that the Writing Center is a pedagogical service that strives to help students become stronger and more confident writers. Consultants cannot write or revise students' work for them.
3. **Encourage writers to come with specific questions or goals for their sessions.** We recommend that instructors spend time reviewing the assignment sheet with students ahead of their required visits and provide some guidance on useful questions or concerns to bring to the session. This helps writers be more prepared for their session rather than showing up without a clear idea of what they hope to accomplish in the session. Some ideas that might work across a variety of assignment types are:
  - a. Integration of sources
  - b. Developing/addressing a research question
  - c. Paragraph structure
  - d. Citations
  - e. Thesis statements

**NOTE:** The Writing Center always welcomes writers who do not have specific questions but are seeking support on their writing. However, we have found that when writers are required to visit, they may have less of an idea of how the Writing Center can be helpful to them with that specific project. Therefore, the instructor reviewing the goals of the project and providing writers of specific aspects of the assignment to discuss with the Writing Center can help required sessions be more productive.

4. **Please be mindful when sending students to the Center with potentially triggering content.** The Writing Center is staffed primarily by student employees who might be caught off guard by frequent sessions related to death, suicide, sexual assault, or other sensitive topics. Please make Writing Center leadership aware if your assignment invites students to engage with these topics so that we might prepare and support our staff appropriately.
5. **Remind students of their responsibility and accountability in these sessions.** It is important that students who are required or incentivized to visit the Writing Center actually show up for their sessions. Missed appointments take time and resources away from other students who would like to visit the Writing Center.

Students are encouraged to cancel their appointment as soon as they know they are unable to make it or if they decide that they are no longer interested in having a session at the Writing Center. Students who show up late to their appointment may be marked as a no show.

6. **Encourage students to make their appointments early.** Students may make their appointment up to two weeks in advance. Please note that our schedule does fill up very quickly at certain points in the semester, such as around midterms and finals week. Students will need to plan ahead to ensure that they can get an appointment.
7. **Clarify for students if asynchronous written appointments are permitted.** The Writing Center offers [in-person sessions, remote video sessions, and asynchronous written sessions](#). If it is important to you as the instructor that writers have real-time conversation with a consultant about their work, please specify that in the assignment guidelines. This ensures that students make the right type of appointment and do not make multiple appointments to meet the requirement if they do not feel they need additional support. [This video provides information](#) to help writers and instructors decide which type of appointment might be most appropriate.
8. **Encourage students to review the Writing Center's [Frequently Asked Questions](#), or review them with your students.** Reviewing the FAQ's ahead of time will give students a better idea of what to expect from their session.
9. **Explain to students how to provide proof of their sessions.** Students will receive a Session Note following their appointment, which contains a summary of what happened during the session. Students can forward this e-mail to their instructor to provide proof that they attended a Writing Center session. Please note that an appointment confirmation e-mail does not indicate a student actually attended their session, only that they made an

appointment. Requesting the confirmation e-mail as proof of appointment may contribute to higher rates of no shows.

10. Make students aware of [additional Writing Center resources](#), like handouts and videos on our website and other [events and workshops](#) offered throughout the academic year.
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### **Actions to avoid when promoting useful required/incentivized visits**

1. Please do not make Writing Center appointments a substantial portion of the student's grade unless attending the Writing Center is specifically related to the assignment's learning outcomes. Disproportionate weight on the Writing Center visit can create additional anxiety for students during their visit and impede the learning process. Additionally, because the Writing Center schedule can fill up quickly at certain times of the year, students may not be able to secure an appointment and fulfill that portion of the assignment.
  2. Please do not single out students for required visits to the Writing Center. We recommend that required or incentivized visits, along with the consequences or rewards involved, be offered to all students in a course. Requiring individual students to attend positions the Writing Center as a punitive or remedial service and is in contradiction to the Center's mission and goals.
  3. Please do not require students to come to the Writing Center with assignments that ask them to divulge extremely personal details. We believe it is better for students to choose with whom and how they share those stories as much as possible. Additionally, all Writing Center employees are mandatory reporters. Thus, required visits for personal writing could put both writers and consultants in difficult or unintended place regarding disclosure and reporting.
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The Writing Center appreciates faculty and instructor support. We view required or incentivized visits as an indication that instructors recognize the value the Writing Center offers to student writers, and our team works hard to provide continued evidence of this value. If you have questions, concerns, or feedback for the Writing Center, please reach out at [writingcenter@ou.edu](mailto:writingcenter@ou.edu) or (405) 325-2936.



This document was created by Dr. Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison, Director, with input from Wren Worley, consultant, at the University of Oklahoma's Writing Center. Created 2023 under Creative Commons license BY NC SA.

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