

Best Practices for Required Visits

Required visits help students better recognize the importance that you place on writing; they also have the potential to improve the quality of the papers you receive. We often find students who might never have considered using the Writing Center discover the benefits of our services, prompting them to return even when they aren't required to do so.

Experience has shown that “required visits” can be a great deal more productive if instructors are willing to create certain expectations about the visit among their students. In particular, you can help us out in the following ways:

1. Please require your students to choose 2-3 *specific* issues they want to address when speaking to a tutor about their papers. When students arrive with no end goals (“She just told me it’s required,” they’ll say), they end up with unproductive sessions. Alternatively, the student will say “just check my grammar,” which usually means the student hasn’t given much thought to how he or she might improve the paper and/or isn’t prepared to do the deep work of revision. The Writing Center isn’t meant to be only a grammar-checking or editing service, so students who come expecting this approach may leave frustrated.
2. Please encourage (or require) your students to make an appointment, as opposed to just dropping in. Doing so helps spread out the workload a bit; it also makes the students more intentional about the whole process. They can make appointments using [the online appointment form](#).
3. Set a deadline for the visit well before the submission deadline for the paper to ensure students have time to make appointments and implement revisions. Also, if possible, create a system when scaffolding your assignment that staggers the deadlines. Past experience suggests that students will often put off these visits until the last minute, which may create too much demand for appointments on a particular date and thereby overwhelm the system. Moreover, students tend not to be very interested in the advice they receive in such compromised circumstances, because — as they have sometimes said — “I don’t have time to fix it.” If the paper is due on Thursday the 28th, choose a date earlier in the week (the 26th at the very latest) as the last day to make a required visit to the center. Even better, require a certain part of the alphabet to do it by the 24th,

another part by the 25th; you might consider awarding extra credit for people who make appointments early. Making appointments early is especially important if your class has more than 20 students. The more time you can give students to make appointments and then make revisions based on their sessions, the better the experience will be for all.

4. If possible, send us a copy of the assignment and any specific criteria or challenges ahead of time, noting due dates and dates by which a visit is required. With this information, the tutors can be better prepared for required visits. Our tutors always ask students to see the assignment anyway; many don't have it with them or can't find it. This problem obviously occurs in a variety of cases, not just when students are assigned to visit the Writing Center — but when visits are assigned, this at least gives us an opportunity to address the problem by providing the tutors with it ahead of time.

Scheduling Information Sessions, Workshops, or In-class Peer Review

The Writing Center will always be happy to accommodate any writing needs your course may have within your classroom! If you'd like a Writing Center ambassador to visit your class for an informational session, for help with workshopping, as an extra set of eyes on peer review days, or other writing-focused projects you are considering, please contact Janelle Pulczinski at pulczinskij@trine.edu to make arrangements.

Tutor Referrals

Are you teaching a writing-intensive course and have students who excel at writing and/or helping their classmates understand concepts of composition? I'm happy to take referrals for tutors, especially students in the STEM, Health Science, or Business fields (most of the tutors who work at the center come through Instructor Referrals). Send me an email or use the tutor referral form located on the Writing Center website.