Hello and welcome to the online NMU Writing Center orientation. Thank you for your interest in the WC! This document gives a comprehensive review of the functions of the WC for instructors and students.

**Role of the Writing Center**

The WC provides free writing tutoring for NMU staff and students on a walk-in basis. Visitors generally bring a single piece of writing to work on with one of our peer tutors and the tutors will give an individualized tutorial based on the student and their writing. Tutorials are visitor led, so be prepared to be vocal and involved with the tutor during your visit to the WC. Visitors are welcome to work with a tutor on any part of the writing process, from brainstorming to outlining, to rough drafting, to the works cited pages. Writing brought to the WC can be for a class, a resumé, or even a personal writing project.

**Location and Hours:** The WC is located in the LRC, next to Starbucks and All Campus tutoring and is open Mondays through Thursdays from 10am to 4pm and 6pm to 9pm. On Sundays the WC is open from 1pm to 6 pm.

**Peer Tutors**

Tutors are students from NMU who are selected for their passion for writing and take a course to train them in the established best practices of tutoring academic writing. The tutors are happy to help visitors with their concerns but it is important to remember that they are *writing* tutors and during tutorials visitors will be the resident experts on the content of their papers. In addition, our tutors work to encourage visitors to develop writing skills and habits that will stick with visitors for long after their visit to the WC ends. An important part of this process stems from tutors demonstrating for visitors how to find answers on their own instead of simply giving answers and moving on.

**Tutorial Run Through**

**Signing In:** When entering the WC, a student will be greeted by a staff member. The student will be asked to sign in on the WC’s laptop, providing their name, course the writing is for, and most significantly their instructor’s name.

**Waiting:** If a tutor is available, the student will be told so and can begin tutoring immediately. Although infrequent, a student may be asked to wait for a tutor in the WC waiting area if all tutors are busy. Waits are rarely longer than 10 minutes.

**Tutorial:** Once a visitor is with a tutor, they will work together to fill out a brief questionnaire called a “T-Record.” This is an email that includes: details about the assignment, the student’s questions and concerns, and what was worked on during the session. Upon conclusion of the tutoring session, the student will receive a copy of this record via e-mail.
What should I bring to a tutorial? The more information the tutor has regarding a piece of writing, the better. The assignment handout is the best way to convey to a tutor the requirements of the writing, the tone of the assignment, and the expectations of a professor. If a paper has been workshopped or has previous drafts, then those may also be helpful. Laptops are necessary to email the tutor the piece of writing (unless the student already has a printed out draft).

How to best prepare for a tutorial: Before visiting the WC, you should have an idea of what exactly you’d like to work on with the tutor: are you having trouble beginning an assignment? Struggling to develop your ideas? Organize them? Do you have difficulty with research citations? Sentence fragments? Has you instructor referred you to us? Why, specifically? Provide tutors with as much information as you can so the tutorial will address your writing needs most effectively. If you do not provide a focus for the tutorial, the tutor will have more difficulty helping you. He or she will prioritize concerns after reading through your work, if this is the case, and help you with whatever he or she deems most necessary and feasible to accomplish in the next 30 minutes.

Benefits of Tutoring:

Final pair of eyes: Above all other tools, having a fresh pairs of eyes, whether they belong to a parent, friend, or writing tutor, is one of the surest ways to improve one’s writing. We are happy to provide that service to visitors and by reading through a paper, both tutor and student will catch minor mistakes that inevitably appear in all of our writing.

Develop comprehension of writing: The motto we work by at the WC is “if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a life time.” Our goal at the WC is to share techniques that will inform a visitor’s writing and the visitor will continue to build on those techniques after they leave the center. Writing is not something that anyone masters. It’s a practice that is always growing and reshaping.

Demonstrate diligence to instructors: After a visit to the WC, instructors are informed of a student’s visit. Visiting the WC reflects positively on a student and instructors often take a student’s visit into account when they are grading their writing.

Other services

Online tutoring: If you are a commuter and would like to get feedback from a writing tutor, or if you are unavailable during WC operating hours, you are welcome to use the WC’s online tutoring system. Our website explains how to email a writing piece to the WC and what information to include to get the most useful feedback from a tutor.

Handouts and Resources: The WC has a plethora of handouts available that explain and explore commonly misunderstood parts of writing processes. We encourage visitors to come in and peruse the handouts, as well as our shelf full of reference books even if they are not interested in a tutorial at that time. We’re also happy to consult briefly with you on any questions you may have in lieu of a full length tutorial.
Do NOT expect:

**Editing:** The WC is not a drop off editing service. We stress that we are focused on *tutoring* students to develop an understanding of their writing. Tutors do not fix mistakes for students, they demonstrate for students *how* to spot and fix mistakes.

**Grades:** Visits to the WC do not ensure any grade. Continuing the work on and improve the piece of writing after visiting the WC is the responsibility of the student.

Important Notes:

**Planning Ahead:** A trip to the WC usually means a visitor will leave desiring to spend quite a bit of additional time working on their paper. DO NOT bring a piece of writing to the WC at 10:30am when the assignment is due at 11:00am that day. This will add undue pressure to both the visitor and the tutor and it is not the goal of the WC to make a piece of writing ‘turn-in’ ready.

**Final’s Week:** The WC is closed the final week of the semester. The week before, the final week of classes, the WC is open for ‘Appointment Only Tutoring.’ This is the only week that the WC works on an appointment basis. A sign up sheet will be taped to the door of the WC and a student may reserve a 30 minute time slot. For this week a student may reserve no more than 3 time slots.

If anyone has additional questions please contact either the WC director or graduate assistant:

Heidi Stevenson, NMU Writing Center Director
hstevens@nmu.edu

Mike Jacoby, NMU Writing Center Graduate Assistant
ajacoby@nmu.edu

NMU Writing Center Website
http://www.nmu.edu/writingcenter/