

Our philosophy

Student Writing Support (SWS) offers collaborative one-to-one writing consultations to help student writers develop confidence and effective writing strategies. Our writing consultants will listen to your goals and concerns, read and respond to your written work, pose questions that help you clarify and articulate your ideas, and affirm the experiences and abilities you bring to your writing. We value your life experiences and languages, and we seek to provide a supportive space for you to share and develop your voice.

"FANTASTIC! She gave me excellent, pointed feedback that I can easily incorporate into my next paper. Her suggestions were very straightforward, and she was respectful of my own individual writing style and how to make changes the instructor is looking for, but still keep my 'own voice.'"

"She gave me wonderful comments not only about English expressions but also my cover letter. It is so helpful for me to make my cover letter more organized and effective. THANKS."

"One of the best aspects of the center is the ability to use it any day and time, especially with the online resource. Thank you for all of the wonderful years and I look forward to a few more as a graduate student."

What a writing consultation is

A writing consultation is a 40-minute conversation between a writer and a consultant. Together, they set the agenda for the session based on the writer's goals and concerns, read and discuss the work in progress, and collaborate to reach the writer's goals. Consultants work with writers at any stage of the writer's process, such as brainstorming and organizing ideas, developing a thesis statement or line of argument, creating cohesive paragraphs, revising sentences, and documenting sources. A consultation is often focused on a specific assignment or writing task, with the goal of supporting writers as they develop more effective and productive writing strategies to apply to future writing projects.

"This was a GREAT session! I was so burnt out and I just wanted to talk through ideas. She was a great listener and did a great job of reflecting back to me what I seemed to think was most important. Really helped me focus and get excited again about my writing."

"The writing consultant addresses my questions in an appropriate manner. His questions further prompt my critical thinking skills and establishment of strong arguments in my paper(s). I am thankful for this resource."

"[My consultant] did a fantastic job of addressing my concerns on a mathematics lab report! He understood the very technical language in the report and provided well thought out feedback on improvement."

Who the writing consultants are

SWS writing consultants are students and professionals with experience doing their own academic writing as well as reading and responding to the work of other writers. All of our consultants participate in ongoing professional development. Visit writing.umn.edu/sws/consultants.html to learn about the consultants' majors and interests, as well as which consultants specialize in working with international and multilingual writers (look for "Multilingual Learner Specialist" in their biographies).

Our writing consultants can

- Help you get started on an assignment: *"I have to do a literature review, but I don't know where to start."*
- Discuss organization: *"I have ideas for my dissertation chapter, but I'm not sure if they work together."*
- Address questions about clarity in writing: *"I am not sure if this paragraph makes sense. Is it clear to you?"*
- Model revision and editing strategies: *"How can I make my sentences clearer and more direct?"*
- Teach you how to proofread: *"My instructor said I have a lot of comma splices. How can I fix them?"*
- Direct you to writing resources: *"Is there a website that can teach me how to cite sources?"*

Face-to-face consulting sessions

At **15 Nicholson Hall**, writers can make an appointment for a 40-minute face-to-face writing consultation by accessing writing.umn.edu/mySWS, calling 612.625.1893, or visiting in person. Walk-in appointments often become available, so we encourage writers to stop by even if they don't have an appointment.

At **9 Appleby Hall**, consultants hold up to 40-minute face-to-face consultations on a walk-in basis only. To meet with a consultant, writers need to log in to the "Appleby sign-in" computer using their U of MN internet ID.

Online consulting sessions (SWS.online)

For SWS.online consultations, the writer schedules an appointment for a 40-minute online chat, then submits their writing and questions for the consultant to respond to prior to the chat.

Student profile

On the "Edit My Profile" page at writing.umn.edu/mySWS, writers can indicate a preferred name, how to pronounce their name, their gender pronouns of reference, the languages they speak and write, any accommodations they might need when using Google Docs, and/or "any additional information I would like SWS consultants to know about me as a writer/learner."

Late, no-show, and cancellation policies at Nicholson Hall

If you are more than 5 minutes late for a consultation in Nicholson Hall, you risk losing your appointment to another student. If you cannot attend your appointment, please log in to writing.umn.edu/mySWS or call 612.625.1893 to cancel. If you do not cancel, the appointment will be labeled a "no-show." Multiple no-shows will affect your access to SWS.

Sign-in list for walk-in appointments at Appleby and Nicholson Halls

The sign-in list gives priority to writers who have not had a consultation that day, and/or have not already had two consultations that week.

SWS communication with instructors

SWS staff will not verify or discuss your session with your instructors, nor will consultants provide signatures to verify a visit. If you would like to share information about your consultations with your instructor, please ask for our Student Reflection Form after your consultation. If your instructors require verification, please direct them to writing.umn.edu/sws/instructors.html.

Misrepresentation of identity

Due to limited resources, Student Writing Support can only work with writers who are currently enrolled as students at the University of Minnesota. Consultants cannot work with a writer who accesses our services using another student's U of MN internet ID, and students who attempt to do so may lose access to SWS services. Using another student's identity, even with their permission, is a violation of the Student Conduct Code. For more details, please see z.umn.edu/SWSpolicies.

UMN mandated reporting policies

Student Writing Support is not a confidential resource. Like other UMN employees, SWS consultants are mandated reporters with respect to the UMN policy on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking, and Relationship Violence (collectively called sexual misconduct). If employees learn about sexual misconduct in the course of an interaction with a writer, they are required to report it to the Title IX Office. For more details, visit diversity.umn.edu/eoaa/reporting.