Purpose and Goal

The Writing Tutor Office assists Divinity students in improving as writers and researchers. Graduate level writing requires a great deal of time and effort as students learn to master academic tone and develop strong research skills. Students will have many opportunities to refine and hone their writing skills throughout their coursework. Each of the disciplines represented in the Divinity School offers students an opportunity to learn and experiment with different assignments, research methods, and styles. The Writing Tutor Office assists in this process by offering critical feedback, suggesting research strategies, and by providing responses that help the writer advance his/her paper. Students should utilize this free and confidential service as they strive to become more effective writers, researchers, and communicators.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the Writing Tutor do?

Although my official title is Writing Tutor, I prefer to think of myself as a consultant who assists writers at various stages in the writing process. I usually meet with students to discuss particular papers for classes; however, I am happy to discuss more general issues regarding writing or research matters. Bringing a relevant writing sample will make these consultations more helpful.

When are you available to meet?

I am available Monday through Wednesday, 9am-3pm by appointment. All appointments are 60 minutes long and should be scheduled a minimum of 24-hours in advance.

Tuesdays from 10am-1pm I will try to keep open office hours. During those hours, if I’m not already meeting with another student I’m happy to receive walk-ins. This is also a great time to stop in and get acquainted. (Note: During busy times of the semester these time slots are likely to fill up with appointments, so never count on this option)

How do I get an appointment?

The fastest way to schedule an appointment is to do so online at http://doodle.com/divinitywritingtutor -- select one or more available 60 minute time slot to propose a meeting and I will confirm your request via e-mail.
If you prefer, you may also e-mail me directly and I will reply back with the appointments that I have available. When using this option, it will help to speed the process along if you indicate a preferred day and time frame in your initial e-mail.

_Do you offer e-mail, phone, or Skype consultations?_

Your first consultation must be in person. This allows us to get to know one another and to interact more directly around your needs. After this, follow up consultations may occur in person and/or online depending upon the particular needs and desires of the student. While e-mail or Skype consultations may be effective to address brief follow up questions or in circumstances of difficult commutes, face-to-face consultations are generally most effective, so the writing tutor reserves the right to decline alternative methods if she believes that further face-to-face meetings will be more conducive to a student’s progress.

In all cases, the same 24-hour advance policy applies and students must abide by the one consultation per day policy; however, there may be some more flexibility about date and time of consultations.

_Do an e-mail consultation mean I can just email you my paper to edit and return to me?_

The Writing Tutor Office is not a copyediting, proofreading, or spellchecking service. We may address grammatical issues in your appointment and some follow up consultations may occur through e-mail; however, my goal is to help you determine issues of structure, clarity, organization, grammar, and mechanics and to help you work through them.

_How much does a consultation cost?_

Absolutely nothing! The Writing Tutor is a free and confidential service for all students of Vanderbilt Divinity School.

_How do I prepare for my appointment? Do you need my paper in advance?_

- I will expect you to bring at least one copy of your paper to the consultation session. To expedite the process, you may choose to bring two copies. In all cases, you should email the paper to me at least 30 minutes before our scheduled meeting.

- Please provide the course name and a description of the assignment with your paper. Include an electronic version of the syllabus or cut and paste the assignment guidelines in your email. Also, please inform me of any special instructions for the assignment.

- Papers should be doubled-spaced, proofread, and include all relevant citations.

- When you email the paper, please alert me to particular concerns you have about it, the assignment, or writing in general.
What should I expect during my appointment?

You should expect to be an active participant in the meeting as we discuss your paper. The session will focus on your thesis, argument, and the tone of your paper. If you have particular technical or grammatical concerns or such errors occur frequently within your paper, we might also discuss strategies to watch for and correct this items too. Don’t be surprised if I suggest exercises or activities to improve your writing or better revise your paper. Hopefully, you will leave your session with a better idea of how to improve your current paper as well as future projects.

How many appointments can I have?

You can only have one appointment per day. During busy times (around midterms and finals), please be respectful of others who would like to use the service and limit your appointments to one per week.

What if I need to cancel?

Please be respectful of others by canceling an appointment as soon as possible. Note your cancelation on Doodle if applicable, and e-mail the tutor with your cancellation.

After three missed appointments during a semester, a student will lose the privilege to sign up for appointments. However, the student will still be able to walk-in if the tutor is available.

What if I’m late?

If you are more than ten minutes late for an appointment, your session may become available to a walk-in. If you know that you will be late, please e-mail so that I can prepare accordingly.

Help! You’re Completely Booked! What do I do now?

Should someone cancel or show up more than ten minutes late, you may be able to have their appointment by walking in. Also, be aware that the Vanderbilt Writing Studio is available to you as another resource. Check out: www.vanderbilt.edu/writing (Phone: 343-2225).

I don’t have a paper, but I have a great idea. Can I still have an appointment?

I am happy to discuss tips for brainstorming and turn your great idea into a more focused project.

As a graduate student, I hate to admit that citations are confusing. Can you help me with that?

I am happy to provide guidance on appropriate citation and documentation systems for your paper. If citations are an area of concern, please let me know the style you will be using.

What if I have unintentionally plagiarized? Does the Writing Tutor report to Honor Council?
No. One of my goals is to help students properly cite material in order to avoid plagiarism. The Writing Tutor is a confidential service. I will not share information about consultations with other students, administrators, or faculty without your consent.

*How much higher can I expect my grade to be after visiting the Writing Tutor?*

Although your paper should improve after our meeting, a consultation with the Writing Tutor *is not* a guarantee of a good grade. I will not grade or speculate on the possible grade for a paper. Also, remember that the responsibility for your papers remains *yours*. I will not write, complete, or revise your paper, or any portion thereof, for you.

**Resources**

*Vanderbilt Jean and Alexander Heard Library:*

Library Reference Tools: [http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/ref/](http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/ref/)

Getting Help With Your Research: [http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/heard/researchhelp.shtml](http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/heard/researchhelp.shtml)

Divinity Library Databases: [http://divinity.library.vanderbilt.edu/databases.html](http://divinity.library.vanderbilt.edu/databases.html)

*Vanderbilt Resources*

Vanderbilt Writing Studio: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/)

Writing Studio Resources: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/resources/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/resources/)

*Style Manuals*

*The Chicago Manual of Style* (online access through Heard Library)
[http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/home.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/home.html)

Turabian Quick Guide: [http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html)


Central: LB2369 .T8 2007 REFERENCE ARMSTD-4FL (nocirc)


Central Library: LB2369 .G53 2009 REFERENCE ARMSTD-4FL (nocirc)
Other University Writing Centers
(see also http://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/resources/other%20writing%20centers.php)

Duke Divinity School: http://divinity.duke.edu/academics/center-theology-writing-media/writing-resources

Purdue: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/


Ashland Theological Seminary: http://seminary.ashland.edu/academics/academics-writing.html
(includes a very helpful writing Handbook)