What happens at the Graduate Writing Center?

The Graduate Writing Center offers free writing support to graduate students at the University of Vermont. Graduate writing consultants do not correct papers for students. Instead, they engage writers in conversation and strategies to help them move forward with writing projects and other forms of communication including poster and multimedia presentations.

Graduate students can learn how to make an appointment by visiting www.uvm.edu/writingcenter.

The Graduate Writing Center also sponsors writing retreats, workshops, and camps for dissertation and thesis writers.

Who are the Graduate Writing Consultants?

The Graduate Writing Center is typically staffed by 8 to 10 graduate writing consultants from a range of disciplines. Consultants take a pre-semester training workshop and participate in biweekly meetings to continue to develop their abilities as writing consultants and their understanding of graduate students’ advanced writing needs. Graduate writing consultants are certified by or in the process of accumulating the hours and training needed to be certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA).

Contact the Graduate Writing Center to:

- Invite a graduate writing consultant to introduce students in your class or program to the Graduate Writing Center
- Arrange for a special-topic workshop for your class or program
- Discuss ways the Graduate Writing Center can support your students in completing a writing project
- Learn about how graduate students who live and work away from the UVM campus can select the Skype option when they sign up for an appointment.
- Consult about individual students, an assignment, or writing supports for international graduate students

Contact or write Nancy Welch, Graduate Writing Center Coordinator gradwriting@uvm.edu

Include this paragraph on your syllabus, Blackboard, or program website:

UVM’s Graduate Writing Center offers free one-on-one and small-group consultations to graduate students working on a wide range of projects: seminar papers, reports, proposals, poster presentations, and more. Students can sit down with a graduate writing consultant at any stage of a project, from initial planning to final revisions and editing. Visit www.uvm.edu/writingcenter to meet the graduate writing consultants and learn how to make an appointment. Skype appointments are also available! Watch your email inbox too for announcements of Sunday Writing Retreats, workshops on such topics as Literature Reviews and Thesis and Dissertation Proposals, and camps for dissertation and thesis writers!
Frequently Asked Questions

My graduate student met with a graduate writing consultant. Why are there still so many errors in the paper?

A consultation in the Graduate Writing Center can help a writer improve a paper, but the final draft may still have problems for a variety of reasons.

• Our mission is to help graduate students become better writers, but progress is made over time.
• A graduate consultant and writer typically have one hour to work together. In that hour they identify one or two pressing issues to work on, setting aside others.
• Unless the paper is due soon or is for a high-stakes audience (e.g., a grant proposal), consultants generally consider global issues before sentence-level issues.
• When consultants and graduate writers work on editing, they work on identifying and correcting patterns of error in the writing. This editing skill is, however, learned over time. Consultants do not edit and correct papers for students.

Can a student see a graduate writing consultant with expertise in my discipline?

• The Graduate Writing Center hires consultants from a wide range of disciplines, and we are delighted to receive faculty recommendations of outstanding students so we can invite them to apply.
• Graduate writing consultants are also trained to help graduate writers find answers to their discipline- and genre-specific questions rather than to provide those answers.
• Graduate student writers report that meeting with a consultant who is knowledgeable about advanced academic and professional writing but is not an “expert” in their field helps them to clarify and more precisely articulate their ideas.

Can I require students to go to the Graduate Writing Center?

• You may want all students in a course to work with graduate writing consultants on a specific assignment, but please don’t make this a requirement without first contacting Nancy Welch (gradwriting@uvm.edu), so we can make sure we understand the assignment and can accommodate your students.

Can graduate writing consultations help with citation and formatting?

• Graduate writing consultants can introduce students to the basics of citation style for a specific discipline and can help students learn where to find answers to more complex questions.
• The Bailey Howe Library offers ongoing workshops on citation management systems such as Zotero, and the Graduate College website includes a guide to formatting requirements for theses and dissertations.

Does the Graduate Writing Center offer online appointments?

• Graduate writing consultants’ training includes working with writers via Skype and Google Docs.
• Graduate students who live and work away from the UVM campus can select the Skype option when they sign up for an appointment.

Can non-native speakers of English have their papers edited in the Graduate Writing Center?

• Graduate writing consultants work with non-native speakers on both editing and on global issues such as understanding a new genre or the conventions of sign-posting in U.S. academic writing.
• Graduate writing consultants help non-native speakers with editing by helping them to (1) rewrite passages where the meaning isn’t clear and (2) learn to identify common patterns of error and correct them. This is a slow but useful process; progress takes place over time.
• Graduate writing consultants cannot edit papers for students. It does not fit our mission, which is to help students develop their writing abilities. For graduate students who want to hire an editor, we can provide the contact information for professional editors.

Can I recommend a graduate student who already has an assistantship to be a graduate writing consultant?

• Yes! Graduate writing consultants typically work no more than 10 hours each week, so with advisor permission, most graduate students with other assistantship and fellowship awards are eligible to apply.