Frequently Asked Questions about Becoming a Graduate Writing Consultant

Who uses the Graduate Writing Center and why? Graduate students across the campus seek peer guidance for a variety of writing projects (seminar assignments, conference presentations, thesis proposals, and more) at any stage of the writing process (brainstorming and getting started, developing and revising, editing and polishing). While some students may be grappling with a particular challenge such as coming to terms with an unfamiliar genre or negotiating language differences, the Graduate Writing Center offers all graduate student writers the benefit of talking through ideas and strategies with a knowledgeable peer.

If you feel confident about (and find pleasure in) the process of writing and if you also enjoy talking with others about their writing, you could be a helpful, effective consultant for students who visit the Graduate Writing Center.

Will I meet with graduate students only in my academic discipline? How can consultants work effectively with writers working on unfamiliar topics? Although you may meet with students from your program, you are more likely to meet with students who are working in disciplines and academic writing styles that are new to you. You will also meet with both graduate student writers who are native English speakers and graduate student writers for whom English is a second (or third or fourth) language. Our pre-semester training and ongoing meetings will prepare you for working with advanced writers, including multilingual writers, across disciplines and also give you the chance to learn from other consultants about writing in their disciplines.

If you are interested in learning how scholars forge their voices and advance their research perspectives within diverse disciplinary genres, you likely have the rhetorical curiosity and flexibility a graduate writing consultant needs.

What is the overall time commitment and compensation? Is this a one- or multi-semester appointment? All new consultants must attend a pre-semester workshop—typically 1-5 pm over three days the week before the semester’s start. Except for breaks and holidays, the Graduate Writing Center is open from the first week of the semester through the last day of classes with each consultant scheduled for up to six one-hour appointments each week. You will also participate in biweekly staff development meetings. You will be paid $15 an hour for all training workshops, staff meetings, preparation for workshops and meetings, and consultation hours. Graduate writing consultants commit to one semester and are eligible for renewal if they are working satisfactorily within the Graduate Writing Center’s guidelines and are in good standing with their programs. Those graduate writing consultants who continue beyond two semesters, the pay increases to $18 an hour.

Through a combination of tutoring experience and ongoing training, UVM graduate writing consultants also qualify for the College Reading and Learning Association’s Level I, II, and Master tutor certification.

Can I serve as a graduate writing consultant if I already have an assistantship or fellowship? If your assistantship or fellowship does not preclude additional campus employment and if your other academic obligations leave you with some free time in your schedule, you can apply for a graduate writing consultant position. But because your advisor or program director will need to approve this
additional employment, please check before applying. An international student who has restrictions on additional employment during the regular semester but who would like the professional development experience of involvement with the Graduate Writing Center might be able to pursue College Reading and Learning Association certification and writing center experience through an independent study.

Although graduate writing consultants typically work 10 or fewer hours each week during the semester, give consideration to all of your—class, assistantship, thesis, family etc.—commitments before applying.

**How will my schedule be determined and where will consultations take place?** Before the first week of the semester you will decide, in collaboration with other consultants, what Monday through Friday days and times between 10 and 6 you would like to staff the Graduate Writing Center. The new Graduate Writing Center, with a suite of offices to accommodate small group, individual, and Skype consultations will open on the ground floor of Bailey Howe this January!

*In addition to scheduled hours, consultants also have the option of staffing Sunday afternoon Graduate Writing Retreats, meeting with graduate students seeking early evening (6-7 pm) appointments, or visiting seminars to lead workshops.*