

Group 1—Maria, Ian, and Natalie

Maria

Writing Center Code of Professionalism

In general:

- Be polite, respectful, and friendly.

Before tutoring:

- Arrive on time—or better, five minutes early.
- Silence your cell phone.
- Greet tutees with a smile and make an effort to pronounce their names correctly.
- Remember repeat tutees, or at least don't make it obvious if you don't remember.

While tutoring:

- Keep on task and budget your time realistically.
- Be interested in the tutee's project—this keeps the mood positive and also encourages tutees to take ownership of their projects.
- Be specific with your encouragement and with your constructive criticism.

Potential scenarios & suggestions:

- A tutee hits on you.
 - What you do depends on whether you're interested. If not, decline politely (“Oh, thanks, but I don't think it's a good idea to date people I meet through work”), and if so, accept, but keep the following scenario in mind.
- Someone you know wants you to tutor him/her.
 - It's up to you whether you want to tutor someone outside of the Writing Center, but in the Writing Center you need to keep your tutor hat on. You will need to treat your friend like any other tutee—no editing or other preferential treatment. If you think this will be difficult for you or your friend, you should recommend another tutor to him/her.
- A tutee says or writes something you really disagree with.
 - Ask questions to explore the topic, but don't try to force your point of view. Tutees have a right to their opinions, but it may be useful to their argument to explore another side.
- A tutee complains about a class.
 - Empathize, but don't allow the session to turn to professor-bashing. (“Oh, that sounds difficult. So how did you handle it?” or “Seems like you're not sure what the professor wants. Maybe you should email him/her today.”)
- A tutee asks you to ballpark the grade he/she might expect.
 - Canned answer: “You're asking me to do the one thing we're absolutely not supposed to do...” Most tutees will understand. If they press you, just explain that you're really not sure because you're just a student like them. They probably have a better idea of what their professor wants from being in class with them.

Ian

Code of Professionalism Ideas

- Employee Duties

- Welcome clients warmly and with a smile; coming to the writing center can be an overwhelming experience for the client and we want to make it as easy as possible
- Show up for shifts on time, prepared to work, especially during finals
- Do not hesitate to ask other tutors for help if needed
- Treat clients with respect both during and after tutoring sessions

- Coworkers and Administration

- Treat the tutoring position like any professional job and act accordingly
- If you receive email or tutor mailbox requests, respond in a timely manner
- Administrators and fellow tutors can serve as a sounding board and a valuable resource; don't hesitate to utilize them
- Complete tasks by stated deadlines
- Avoid gossip about a client or tutoring session, but do seek help with any issues

- Downtime

- Cubicles should be cleaned and left in good condition
- Non-tutoring conversation levels should be kept to a minimum
- No talking on cell phones
- Ensure that handouts and worksheets are fully stocked
- If a computer or facilities problem arises, alert administration

- Client Interactions

- Always welcome clients and ask them what they want to cover in the session
- Always ask for the assignment
- Introduce yourself/ask the client's name; put them at ease
- Set proper expectations as to what can be covered due to time constraints
- Patience and a relaxing manner are two keys for success
- Impatience and anger are to be avoided at all times
- Tutors are not proofreaders; focus on helping the student to learn
- Engage the client with questions throughout the session
- Try not to write on a client's paper
- Long periods of silence are generally not good
- Treat the client with kindness and respect
- Never put down a client's writing ability
 - Give praise as well as highlighting areas of trouble
- Avoid commenting on potential grades for papers and/or instructor quality
- Avoid negatively commenting on a prior tutor's work with a client
- Give the client your undivided attention: no texting or email during the session.
- If you aren't sure of the answer to something don't make it up!
 - Look up the correct response if possible or explain that you aren't sure

- Thank the client for coming at the conclusion of the session

Natalie

Responsibility:

•Should conflict occur between tutor and client, tutors take responsibility for their own behaviors and work toward resolution.

- Tutors take personal responsibility for the cleanliness of the stations they occupy.

Professionalism:

•Tutors maintain a high level of integrity in the work environment as they maintain confidentially. Keep private any personal information concerning clients.

•Tutors refrain from expressing personal opinions about sensitive topics (race, sexual orientation, religion, disabilities, language) or concerning specific professors.

•Tutors are responsible for the professional appearance of the Center even during downtimes. Tutors should avoid sleeping at their stations during Center service hours.

Interactions with fellow Tutors:

- €• Tutors use discretion when correcting other tutors. Avoid displaying disagreements or undermining each other in the presence of clients.

Group 2—Ashley, Cloe, and Zak

Ashley

Winter Term Project

Code of Professionalism: Some Etiquette Tips

Duties as an Employee:

- Always be on time and present for work but call the front desk if I might be late or have to miss a shift. Try to see if I can find another tutor to cover for me and let administrators know well in advance if I foresee missing a shift.
- Make sure work station is clean and neat and turn off computer at closing time.
- Use print station only if I or a student needs to print something.
- Turn off cell phone before shift.

Downtime:

- Notify front desk assistants if I need to leave my work station for a few minutes. I should not be away from my work station for more than five or ten minutes if I need to stretch or use the restroom.
- If I need to talk on my cell phone I should leave the room.
- I should make sure the sound on the computer at my work station is on mute. Do not visit inappropriate websites during downtime and maintain professionalism at all times even when not with a client.
- I should be quiet and considerate of other tutors who might be in the middle of tutoring sessions.

Interactions with Clients:

- Always be on time for our session.
- Be patient with clients and always give them the courtesy of the full time of the tutoring session unless he or she arrives late and there is another client waiting.
- Leave a little extra time at the end of the session to write down what we worked on in the tutoring session report form and try to read it out to the client. Always ask the client's permission whether they want it emailed to their instructor.
- Give the client a grammar worksheet if he or she has a question about a specific grammar point or construction or needs more help with resumes, cover letters, or personal statements.
- Always remember to consult the guidebooks on the bookshelves in the back of the room and useful online writing assistants if the client has a question about citation format. Also, I should bring handouts on writing resumes and cover letters and on English 101 paper assignments with me during my shift.
- I can help my client with finding sources for research papers using the University System of Maryland Libraries website but tell the client that they should consult with their librarian and remind the client that the session should be more focused toward their paper or brainstorming ideas for their paper.
- Do not mention grades or criticize an instructor or an instructor's assignment even if the assignment might be vague or poorly worded. Instead, suggest that the

client talk to their instructor for clarification and try to help them figure out the assignment.

Interactions with Coworkers:

- Verify names of clients and length of appointments with the front desk assistants.
- Fill out and turn in tutoring session report forms to the front desk assistants in a timely fashion. Make sure report forms are complete, accurate, and legible.
- I can ask a coworker for help if a client asks me a question that I don't know the answer to.
- Be available to other coworkers if they have a question for me about a tutoring session or a client's work.
- I can talk to coworkers during downtime but I should keep talking to a minimum out of consideration of other tutors and clients.

Interactions with Administrators:

- Talk to an administrator if I encounter a difficult client during a tutoring session.
- Ask an administrator if I have a question about a tutoring session that neither I or a coworker would know.
- Fill out my timesheet by noon every other Friday and only record the hours I actually worked.
- Keep abreast of emails and notifications.
- Always ask the administrators if there might be anything extra I might do to help out, i.e. helping out with a workshop or an online chat.

Chloe

Writing Center Code of Professionalism

Before shift:

Be on time – at least 5 minutes early so that you can find a station and be ready to start your first appointment when your shift begins

When working at McKeldin, be sure to arrive at least 10 minutes early to get keys, set up signs, and ensure that supplies are stocked (all forms, pens, ect)

Dress professionally

During appointment:

Be sure to ask what assignment is and look it over beforehand, even if student has to pull it up on blackboard

Ask student if they prefer to read paper out loud – it's easier to talk about the paper if you or the student read through it together

Start the session by asking what the student wants to focus on

Don't speak negatively about an assignment or a professor

Always have a positive attitude

Remember that we are here as tutors to help students develop their writing, not evaluate their work like teachers
Try to engage the student by asking questions, don't dominate the conversation or let the session become just a lecture about grammar
Always find something positive to say about the paper or the student's writing
Don't let appointments run over time, especially when the Writing Center is busy
During busier times, keep walk-in appointments to a half an hour max
Don't eat during appointments
Be sure to check that the student has filled out the top section of the form clearly
Go over with the student what you are including on the form, especially if the student has requested it be sent to the professor

Between appointments:

Keep volume down on headphones if listening to music – you should be the only one who can hear it
Don't rest feet on desk or other chair
No cell phone conversations
Turn off ringer on cell phone
Try to stay at your station so that the receptionist can easily find you
Keep conversation volume low
Keep your station area neat – no food wrappers or piles of paper

Zak

What etiquette or set of behaviors do you find most important in maintaining the outstanding level of professionalism that is expected from all tutors at the Writing Center?

- **Punctuality:** Showing up for tutoring on time demonstrates respect for coworkers and the administration as well as responsibility. However, beginning individual tutoring sessions on time also shows dedication and respect for the needs of the tutees.
- **Be Involved and Aware:** Be aware of events the Writing Center is offering and the various papers and books that are available and can be used to reinforce your own knowledge or help a client. A tutor can never have all the answers and being involved and aware of what the Writing Center has to offer can boost your individual knowledge while also allowing you to better assist clients improve their writing skills.
- **Listen:** In the work place it is important for tutors to listen to directions to ensure that the tasks such as scheduling, paperwork, etc. can be completed. Listening is also crucial to any tutoring session. The essay or assignment is not yours, it is the client's; therefore it is important to understand the guidelines of the client's assignment and what topics the client is concerned about or struggling with.

- **Prioritization:** With often only half an hour to complete a session, it is crucial that tutors be able to speak with a client and decide what topics get first priority. If a student comes in with concerns about their conclusion, it is important that you ensure the conclusion is reviewed and discussed before focusing on menial topics such as grammar.
- **Determination and Patience:** Tutoring clients in writing can be a frustrating task when students walk in feeling defeated and confused. In this way a tutor must be able to encourage the student and be determined to make them feel more confident about their writing abilities by being patient and continually offering various explanations with different examples. This requires creatively recognizing a client's strengths and connecting it to the writing process to boost a client's self esteem. For example, science students tend to struggle with writing; by connecting the format of a typical persuasive essay (introduction, thesis, body paragraphs, conclusion) to a lab report (hypothesis, evidence, conclusion) a tutor can help a science-focused client better understand the purpose of their paper.
- **Organization:** Tutors must present concerns in an organized fashion to ensure the student does not leave the writing center overwhelmed. For example, tackling weaknesses in the thesis before discussing grammatical errors or reviewing the concerns within a paragraph from top to bottom, ensuring the client understands each concern before moving on.
- **Perspective:** It is important to remember that as a tutor we are not trying to make one paper fantastic, we are trying to improve the client's overall writing abilities through the paper they have brought for review. This involves a delicate balance of reviewing and improving an individual paper while making overall lessons clear to the client so they can be used on future assignments.
- **Respect:** Respecting the expectations and needs of coworkers, the administration, and the client's is obviously very important. This involves issues such as maintaining appropriate noise levels during and in between tutoring sessions to turning phones off. However it also includes discussing tutoring sessions while at the writing center and having personal conversations that can be distracting or make others uncomfortable. Therefore, maintaining appropriate conversations during your time at the writing center is another important quality of a tutor.
- **Communication:** While it is important to listen, it is also important to be able to clearly communicate issues or concerns with clients, coworkers, and the administration. With so many people working in one area and on various schedules, communicating needs or any confusion can be the difference between calm and organized versus stressful and haphazard.
- **Welcoming:** It can be uncomfortable for a client to bring their personal writing in for review and, therefore being kind and understanding can greatly impact the success of a tutoring session.