

USD Writing Center

Tutor Responsibilities and Code of Ethics

Based on 1) the philosophical foundations on which USD Writing Center tutor training is predicated, and 2) our commitment to respect students, faculty, ourselves, and the policies of the University of San Diego, we strive:

1. To engage in a collaborative effort with students to improve writing. We do not edit or proofread. Instead, we work to encourage deep thinking, to help analyze and teach tutees to correct errors, and to foster tutees' understanding of the conventions of writing for various purposes.
2. To encourage students to do most of the talking and writing. We provide scribe service, feedback, response, and advice, and we hope to encourage fresh ideas from students, and we resist inserting our own thoughts into students' writings.
3. To refrain from 1) discussing a grade a paper might receive, and 2) commiserating with students about grades or the specifics of classes. We strive to give positive feedback for specific aspects of writing. We understand that generalities such as "This is a great paper" may be misconstrued as a prediction of the grade a paper may receive, and we work to avoid such responses.
4. To be sensitive to the fact that students may come to the Center discouraged or insecure about their writing. We aim to be tactful but not false about the shortcomings of a piece of writing and to honestly cheer its strengths.
5. To communicate to students that each tutor hour is time-limited; it is unlikely that every aspect of a paper will be thoroughly addressed during one session.
6. To recognize that the relationships encountered in the Center are friendly but professional. We do not share or ask for personal or sensitive information. We recognize and respect the confidentiality of tutor-student sessions.
7. To honor and follow all USD policies. Tutors have the responsibility to alert tutees to writing that appears to be plagiarized. Discussion of appropriate citation methods, paraphrasing, and use of Internet sources may ensue. Tutors have the right to refuse to work with papers that appear to be purposefully plagiarized, in the rare case that this may occur.
8. To welcome and respect Writing Center visitors of all belief systems and backgrounds.
9. To recognize that tutoring in the Writing Center is voluntary. It entails focused attention to the work and wishes of others. As such, tutoring is demanding work. We understand that we have the right to politely decline service to disrespectful visitors.
10. To respect fellow tutors. We assist each other during difficult sessions; we are attentive to the needs of our peers; we value and solicit the knowledge of other tutors.
11. To recognize that tutoring is fulfilling and exciting work. We hope to make each tutoring session as interesting and individual as the many students who visit the Center.