

# University of Houston Clear Lake **WRITING CENTER**

## Writing Center Employee Standards

To ensure that the Writing Center offers an inviting and professional atmosphere, all staff members are expected to adhere to the following policies:

### Shifts

Shifts are scheduled to begin on the hour, and tutors are expected to be available to begin a schedule shift on time. Because tutors must “clock in” via TRAM, we recommend that tutors arrange to arrive at least five minutes before their scheduled shift to ensure that they can clock in on time. If a tutor is running late and will not be in the Writing Center by the start of his/her shift, the tutor should call reception to let us know that he/she is running late, allowing either us to inform the student or another tutor to take the appointment if needed. These expectations should be considered when submitting a schedule request form.

### Computer Use

Writing Center computers are to be used for educational purposes only. All materials, web sites, chat participation, etc. should be directly related to tutoring and must be appropriate for any audience.

The computers on the reception desk, COLT workstation, and Director’s desk are to be used **only** for those functions. No one is allowed to download materials or programs to any of these computers. Disks must not be inserted into the reception desk computer.

The Writing Center email account is for COLT use only. Please do not use this account for any other purpose.

### Resources

Resources including printer paper, the copy machine, and office supplies should be used for Writing Center purposes only. Since our budget is limited, we cannot afford to provide these resources for personal use.

### Telephone

The telephone will be used for Writing Center business only. Very brief personal calls are allowed, but tutors should not give out the Writing Center phone number to outside business contacts or use the phone for extended “friendly” or business conversations. The phone on the Director’s desk is for administrative purposes only.

## Shift Changes

Except for illnesses or emergencies, staff members are expected to take responsibility for their shifts. If a staff member wishes to switch shifts, he/she must fill out the shift change form and these arrangements must be made at least one week in advance. Employees who are ill must notify the Director or Program Coordinators directly by phone and/or email, whenever possible. Please do not leave messages regarding illness on the reception desk phone.

## Unrelated Business

The Writing Center is an instructional facility open to the public. Conducting business unrelated to the function of the Center is not allowed. Prolonged “visits” from friends are likewise not allowed as they distract employees from work-related activities.

## Down Time

When tutors have unassigned shifts, they are responsible for using that time to sharpen their tutoring skills by reading the staff development materials provided, participating in WCenter listserv discussions, or other, tutoring-related activities. Occasional center-related projects might be assigned to tutors for them to work on when they are not scheduled for an appointment. If no center-related work needs to be completed or has been assigned, tutors may work on personal items, such as reading or school work. No work may be completed during scheduled tutoring hours that poses a conflict of interest with a tutor’s position in the Writing Center, such as contract editing.

It is important that receptionists stay at the front desk for the entire shift. If it is necessary to take a short break, they must inform someone that they are leaving so that someone can cover the desk. Relief coverage for reception should follow in the order of an unscheduled tutor, Office Assistant, Program Coordinator, and then Director.

## Conversations

Any conversations tutors participate in which concern or involve faculty, students, or fellow WC staff will be professional in topic and confidential. In general, staff will treat all members of the university community with respect and consideration. Any conversations held in Writing Center can be overheard by colleagues and/or students; therefore, all topics of conversation should be appropriate for the environment. Private conversations should likely be kept for outside the Writing Center or held in the Break Room, but caution should be exercised at all times. Foul or inappropriate language will not be tolerated.

## Dress and Appearance

Staff is expected to present a neat, clean, and professional appearance at all times. While casual clothing is acceptable, dress should be appropriate to the educational environment in which we function.

## Personal Responsibility

All staff members must remember to keep the Center clean. The microwave, refrigerator, and coffeepot are provided for the staff's convenience. These appliances must be kept clean and staff must take responsibility for cleaning up after food and drink items and garbage. A cleaning schedule is available in the Break Room. All assigned staff should take part in cleaning the kitchen at their appointed time. Failure to do so will result in rescheduling so that all staff take part in keeping the center clean.

## Professional Responsibility

All staff are expected to exercise professional responsibility within their positions. This includes reporting any gross misconduct by other tutors or students to the Director or acting-director. Examples of gross misconduct include sexual harassment, inappropriate behavior or disrespect toward a student or staff member, excessive misuse of university property, excessive late arrivals or absenteeism, and knowingly completing a student's assignment for him/her (with or without pay). All staff are held accountable for their own actions, which should include upholding the ethical standards set forth by the Writing Center's professional Employee Standards and the university's Code of Conduct. Any action by a tutor that violates the center's Employee Standards and/or university's Code of Conduct will be reviewed by administration, discussed with the employee, and addressed in a manner deemed appropriate.

## Tutoring Outside the Writing Center

Tutors are not allowed to conduct Center-related tutoring sessions outside of the Writing center, nor are they allowed to take papers to read in advance of a tutoring session outside of a scheduled read-ahead appointment. If tutors wish to provide tutoring services outside of the Center for pay, these arrangements must be made outside of the Center and must be conducted outside of the Center. If you believe that your activities might create a conflict of interest or ethical issue, please speak with a Program Coordinator or the Director to clarify your rights and responsibilities.

## Noise Levels

Tutors are asked to be considerate of students who are working in the Center by keeping conversations and other noise at a low tone. Loud laughing and music are very disruptive to on-going conferences.

## Tutors as Students

Peer tutors are encouraged to use the Writing Center for their own writing projects. When a tutor is engaging in a conference with a fellow tutor, other tutors present should treat that conference with the same consideration as they would any other conference by refraining from interrupting or listening in unless invited.

# Disciplinary Measures

In the event that a staff member knowingly violates the Writing Center's Employee Standards and/or university's Code of Conduct, the following measures will be enacted. Not all violations must be of the same type. Situational aspects will be taken into consideration when reviewing an employee's actions.

## First Violation

A verbal warning will be given to the employee following a discussion of the employee's violation along with steps that he/she can take to improve as a staff member. A written account of the conversation will be put in the employee's file, noting that a verbal warning was issued.

## Second Violation

A written warning will be given to the employee stating the nature of the violation and offering recommendations on how the employee can correct his/her actions and improve as a staff member. A copy will be placed in the employee's file.

## Third Violation

A second written warning will be given to the employee stating the nature of the violation and offering recommendations on how the employee can correct his/her actions and improve as a staff member. The warning will also outline the Writing Center's rights to terminate the employee if another violation occurs. A copy will be placed in the employee's file.

## Fourth Violation

The employee will be terminated and provided with a document stating the nature of the fourth violation and the terms of his/her termination of employment with the Writing Center. All relevant documents will be given to HR if required.

Printed Name:

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Signature:

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Date:

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