University of Houston Clear Lake
WRITING CENTER

Troubleshooting Online Issues

Technical issues sometimes arise when attempting to use the Writing Center system and are understandably frustrating, particularly while attempting an online chat session with a tutor. If you find yourself experiencing technical difficulties, consulting this tip sheet for troubleshooting online issues should help resolve the issue.

General Considerations

There are a number of factors outside of the Writing Center's control that may affect your experience with our online chat system. Please consider all of the following prior to the start of your session.

- **Where are you working from?** Some locations from which you may try to access your session (hospitals, business offices, etc.) have measures in place to prevent the use of certain sites. Accessing your session from home or a UHCL campus works best.
- **Is your computer up-to-date?** Please ensure that your computer is as up-to-date as possible. Outdated hardware and software may result in issues with ease of access and use of the Writing Center system that we cannot troubleshoot.
- **What web browser are you using?** Not every web browser works equally well with the Writing Center system. In particular, Internet Explorer users tend to encounter more issues. If possible, use Mozilla Firefox (used by Writing Center staff) or Google Chrome to access the Writing Center system. Both are available for free download on the internet.
- **Have you cleared the cache of your web browser?** Issues with ease of access and use of the Writing Center system sometimes arise as a result of a bloated cache. Clearing your cache may help in some instances, particularly if you are having lag issues. To clear your cache:
  - **Internet Explorer**
    From the "Tools" dropdown on the browser toolbar, click on "Delete Browsing History" (or press ctrl+shift+del).
    In the screen that pops up, click delete.
  - **Firefox**
    From the "Tools" dropdown on the browser toolbar, click on options.
    In the screen that pops up, open the "Advanced" section, then "Network."
    Within "Network," find "Clear Now" to clear cached web content.
  - **Chrome**
    From the Chrome menu, find "Tools."
    In the Tools window, click "Clear browsing data."
    Select all of the types of data you want to clear (at least "delete cookies" and "empty the cache") and click to clear browsing data.
- **Have you been inactive?** After 10-20 minutes of inactivity, the Writing Center system will automatically log out an account. This change will not be immediately apparent and the system will simply appear to be unresponsive. You will need to log in again if this happens.

Don't know how to access your session?

Your session can be accessed through the Writing Center scheduler page. From the UHCL homepage, find the "Students" tab, then the "Writing Center" link under "Student Services," bringing you to the

Writing Center webpage.

From there, click on "Make an Appointment," where you can log in to our system. Your email address should be your UHCL email and your password "password" if you have not changed it.

Once logged in, your appointment slot will show as a light blue block at the scheduled time and day. Clicking on your appointment brings up a session window. From there, clicking on the red text "Start or Join Online Consultation" takes you to your online chat session.

Can't log in to the scheduler because your account is disabled?

The most common reason for a disabled account is more than three failed log in attempts, locking the account for fifteen minutes. This cannot be overridden, so please be careful when entering your log in information.

Disconnected from your session?

If you have been disconnected during a session, the most common cause of this issue is inactivity or a bloated cache.

More information on inactivity can be found above in *General Considerations*. If inactivity results in disconnection, please log in to the system again and remain active for the duration of your session.

More information on a bloated cache can be found above in *General Considerations*. If a bloated cache results in disconnection, please clear your cache before logging in to the system again.

Experiencing lag issues during your session?

If your session seems to suffer lag issues, such as the inability to see what your tutor is typing or scrolling problems in the chat box, a common cause is a bloated cache.

More information on a bloated cache can be found above in *General Considerations*. If a bloated cache results in lag issues, please clear your cache and log in to the system again.

Additionally, refreshing the page sometimes corrects these issues. To refresh the page, press the f5 key at the top of your keyboard.

Experiencing an issue not addressed here?

If you are experiencing an issue that is not addressed here, please call the Writing Center at 281-283-2910 to bring it to our attention.