**FAQ for Graduate Students Interested in Working at the Writing Center**

**Why should I apply?**

Becoming a Writing Center coach provides a wonderful opportunity to develop your teaching skills, learn more about yourself as a writer, and join a community of like-minded graduate students from across the university. Past coaches have found that their Writing Center training and experience are valued by employers and have described working at the Writing Center as one of their best graduate school experiences. Our coaches work with diverse student writers from across the disciplines, gain a new kind of teaching experience, develop their own writing skills, and receive a TA stipend without the take-home work of grading and class preparation.

**Could I be hired for this summer?**

No. For the summer, we hire only people who have already been through our training. If you are part of our staff during the fall and/or spring, you can apply to work in future summers.

**How much will I work?**

Graduate writing coaches work 15 hours per week. You’ll never do less than that—you’ll be busy with Writing Center activities during all of your scheduled hours. But you’ll never need to go over, either—except for a little preparatory reading over the summer and attendance at our fall training week (the week before classes begin), everything will happen within your regularly-scheduled hours. You’ll spend most of your time talking with students one-on-one in 45-minute appointments. You’ll also respond to student requests for online feedback, attend our weekly staff meeting, and participate in ongoing professional development activities. You may represent the Writing Center at campus events and work on other projects, like creating instructional materials, trying out education-related technology, and helping us develop new programs and services.

**How will the Writing Center determine my schedule?**

All staff members must be available from approximately 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day of our fall training week, which takes place the week before classes begin (this year, that will be August 15-19).

During the semester, the Writing Center is open Sunday from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM, Monday through Thursday from 9:00 to 8:00, and Friday from 9:00 to 4:00. Before each semester begins, each tutor submits a schedule request. Writing Center administrators then create a work schedule that meets everyone’s needs and provides coverage in the Center. Your hours must be distributed over at least four days a week. Also, you must be available to work at least one full evening (5 p.m. to 8 p.m.) per week. You may not be called upon to work in the evening every semester, but we need to be sure we can cover these hours. Once the schedule is set, it remains the same for the entire semester. You’ll swap shifts with other writing coaches when you need to attend conferences or interviews or fulfill personal commitments.

**I’m only available for one semester. Should I apply?**

In general, we prefer that people work for us during both the fall and the spring semesters. But funding sometimes shifts during the year, enabling us to hire additional staff members—so if you might be interested in working for a single semester, feel free to apply, or contact us for more information. While it is unlikely that you would be hired for spring semester only, we do frequently have fall-only positions.

**Academic coaching is just like teaching, right?**

Yes and no. Like classroom instructors, we want to help students become better writers. But our one-on-one writing instruction differs from classroom teaching in that we don’t write on students’ papers or assign grades. Coaches spend time listening, asking questions, and discussing choices as writers brainstorm, draft, and refine their papers. Working one-on-one allows us to tailor instruction to each student’s concerns.

**Do I have to be a full-time graduate student to apply?**

Yes. To work at the Writing Center, you must be a full-time, degree-seeking student in residence concurrently enrolled in a graduate program at UNC-Chapel Hill (being enrolled in dissertation credit only is o.k.—you do not have to be taking classes). If you do not meet these criteria but are interested in working as a private tutor or editor, you may wish to request a listing on our [“Help for Hire”](http://writingcenter.unc.edu/about/help-for-hire) page.

**Does the Writing Center provide assistance with tuition?**

The Writing Center does not have a funding line to cover tuition or reduce an out-of-state student’s tuition to in-state levels. Whether our TAs receive such assistance depends on the policies of their individual departments and of the Graduate School. We are happy to confirm that you are serving as a teaching assistant and explain how your work benefits the University.

**Who works in the Writing Center?**

The Writing Center staff includes six full-time professionals: Dr. Kimberly Abels, Writing Center Director; Dr. Vicki Behrens, Assistant Director; Dr. Gigi Taylor, ESL Specialist; Dr. Becky Butler, ESL Specialist; Christy Webb, Peer Tutor Coordinator; and Ms. Kim Allison, Administrative Manager. Each semester, 10-20 graduate student teaching assistants and 10-20 undergraduate peer writing coaches from across the curriculum work with us. Peer coaches must successfully complete English 402, a three-credit-hour class, before applying to teach in the Writing Center. Several undergraduate office assistants serve as receptionists. We value having a diverse staff, and we all work together to create an environment that is professional, collaborative, supportive, and fun.

**Where can I get more information?**

If you’d like to speak to one of our current TAs, we’ll be happy to connect you with someone. Please also feel free to contact the Assistant Director, Dr. Behrens, at [vicki@unc.edu](mailto:vicki@unc.edu) or 962-4799. We appreciate your interest in joining our staff and would be happy to answer any questions.