Pioneer Writing Center Instructions

The Pioneer Writing Center is a fully-online, asynchronous resource dedicated to supporting scholars in the Pioneer Research Program on their college-level research papers. The Writing Center serves as an essential resource to help scholars in the following areas:

- Grammar and language usage
- Structure, logic, and clarity
- Basic style and presentation

Using the Writing Center

Every scholar in the Pioneer Research Program is entitled to 4 submissions to the Writing Center over the course of the program. Unless your professor requires it, it is not mandatory to use the Writing Center - but we strongly encourage you to, because it will raise the language quality of your final paper, and ensure that you and your professor can spend your time together on *content* and *the research process*, rather than language details.
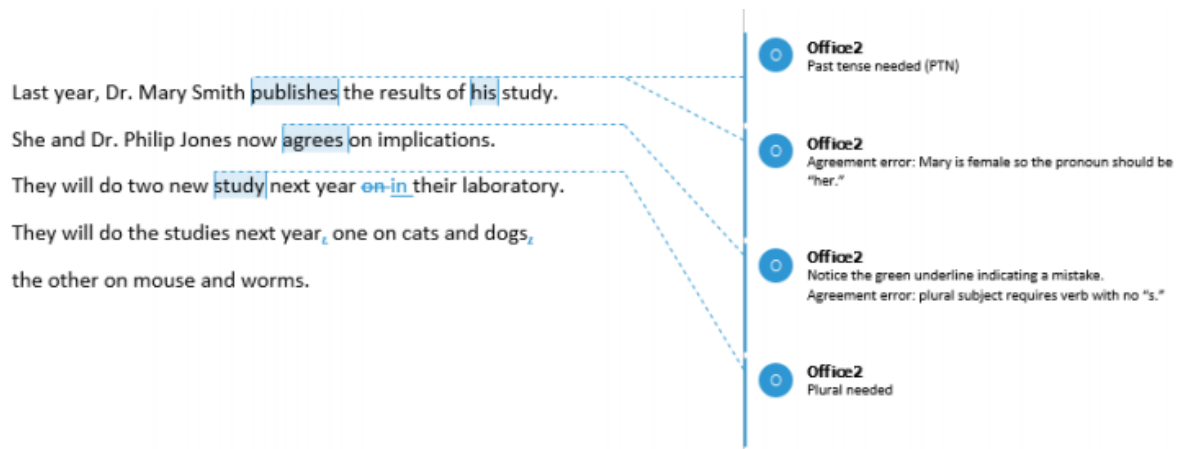
To use the Writing Center:

- Complete your Writing Center submission form (available in your Course Materials section on the LMS).
- Email your paper draft and completed submission form in **MS Word .docx format** to writingcenter@pioneeracademics.com
  - NOTE: if your professor requires you to use LATEX or another specific text processor, that does not save/convert to .docx, you may submit your work as a PDF.
- We will return your draft with feedback within 2 days of receiving it. Your feedback will be posted in your Professor-Scholar Group on the LMS.

The Writing Center operates on a first come, first served basis; we cannot prioritize scholars who submit last-minute requests to review their paper close to a deadline. We recommend that you **submit your paper 3-4 days in advance of your professor's deadline**, in order to receive our feedback (which takes up to 2 days) and then review your work and make edits based on the tutor's comments. (which should take you 1-2 days)

Additionally, the Writing Center will only look at subsequent drafts after 3 days of returning the previous submission. This is to make sure you've seen and incorporated previous feedback before requesting feedback again.

Feedback from the Writing Center

The Writing Center provides feedback and suggestions. It does not re-write or make substantive changes for you. Almost all feedback is put into your paper in the form of a comment in the margins of the paper. An example of what that looks like follows:

Last year, Dr. Mary Smith publishes the results of his study.

She and Dr. Philip Jones now agrees on implications.

They will do two new study next year on in their laboratory.

They will do the studies next year, one on cats and dogs,

the other on mouse and worms.

> **Office2**
> Past tense needed (PTN)

> **Office2**
> Agreement error: Mary is female so the pronoun should be "her."

> **Office2**
> Notice the green underline indicating a mistake.
> Agreement error: plural subject requires verb with no "s."

> **Office2**
> Plural needed

Writing tutors will do their best to provide explanation so you understand the reasoning behind recommended changes. Under some circumstances though, writing tutors will change a paper directly. They will only do so if the edit is minor and does not change your intended meaning or if they can't communicate it in a margin comment. These include issues with incorrect article usage, incorrect punctuation, and the like. All direct edits made to the paper will be shown using the "track changes" function of Microsoft Word. You must accept or reject each individual change in order for the document to be finalized. Keep in mind you can only view this using a laptop or desktop computer. Smart devices most often cannot display comments or changes made in the "track changes" mode. If a pattern of mistake appears throughout the paper, the tutor will probably indicate the necessary change a few times and then call your attention to the fact that you need to read through the paper carefully to find and correct other instances of that same error.

Citations and references

The Writing Center is not responsible for correcting your citations or references. You have the Research Seminar materials to guide you in this. Every professor (and field) will have different citation style requirements, so it is important to communicate with your professor and review your syllabus.

See the links below for additional, good guides to citing sources in your paper:

- Purdue OWL citation chart
- Purdue style guides: MLA, APA, Chicago

Feedback from Pioneer scholars who used the Writing Center

Below are examples of emails we received in the past from scholars who used the Writing Center extensively. Take their word for it - submit your drafts to us early and often!

Dear Pioneer teacher,

Thanks a lot for your advice for all my three drafts. The suggestions really helped me to improve my paper to make it flow better. I am now ready to send my final paper to the professor. The experience in the Pioneer Research Program is really memorable because it is my first time to create my original findings and write them down in a formal paper. It was a great pleasure for me to communicate with you during the program!

Best wishes,

Max

Hi Pioneer Writing Center,

I'd like to give my earnest appreciation to the two awesome reviewers of my paper. There's no doubt that I improved a lot when I looked through their detailed comments and crafted my research paper. When I finally submitted my paper to my professor, I really thought that my Pioneer experience was enriching.

Many thanks,

Mary

Hi,

This is Oscar. I'm sending this email to thank you for your advice on my essay. I couldn't have gone so far without your help. Also, I found your advice really inspiring. Anyway, thank you for working so hard (especially when you sent the revised essay back in only one day)!

Sincerely,

Oscar

Dear all,

I hope this email finds you well. I would like to express appreciation for all feedback that I received from the Writing Center. It was very specific and it helped me to consistently express my ideas in the way I intended them to mean. Indeed, I learned much about good sentence structure from your comments.

Thank you very much.

Best,

Antoine

Key for Corrections

Due to constraints on our writing tutors' time, they will often explain the changes they make through keywords – see below.

- "Verb tense" - this is used to tell you that your verb tense is incorrect and needs to be changed. Often this will specifically say something like "past tense needed", or more simply "past tense," meaning it should be written in past tense.
- "Singular/Plural" - this comment indicates you should change the number of the noun or pronoun. Nouns and pronouns are either singular or plural. The comment may read in this way: "plural needed" or "plural," or "singular needed" or "singular." This may refer to a noun or pronoun (change "his" to "their.")
- "Gender" - many nouns and pronouns are either masculine or feminine. This indicates that gender usage is incorrect. Ex: "Dr. Mary Jones gave his opinion." Agreement error: Change to "her."
- "Agreement – SVA (Subject-Verb Agreement)" - in English, the subject and verb must agree. If the subject is third person singular (Harry, the boy, he, the book, it), and the verb is in present tense, the verb adds an s. With any other subject, the verb does not take an s at the end.
- "Preposition" - this indicates that the preposition is used incorrectly or that a more suitable preposition should be chosen. Usually the tutor will suggest or directly change to a better choice.
- "Articles" - this refers to when an article—a, an, or the—should be added, deleted or changed. Usually the tutor will suggest what change should be made.
- "Comma" - this refers to when a comma should be added or deleted. Usually the tutor will indicate the specific change.
- "Spelling (sp)" - this indicates that a word is spelled incorrectly.
- Red/green underlining in the word processing program - this indicates possible spelling or grammar errors, so check yourself – don't wait for a tutor.