

Our Tutoring Service

The tutoring services at The Learning Commons and LAC Writing Center is provided entirely by current USM students, not professional tutors. The benefit to students is that our tutors have truly “been there”, taking many of the same courses, having experience with many of the same professors, and having balanced academic demands with other roles while attending USM.

Our Expectations

We want every tutoring experience to be positive and helpful. To achieve this, we have expectations of any student coming for the service, as well as expectations for every one of our tutors. Below is a summary of these expectations.

Expectations of students coming for tutoring

- Arriving to appointments on time
- Being prepared to actively engage in the learning process
- Bringing any relevant course materials (textbook, notes, syllabus, etc.) to appointments
- Treating The Learning Commons tutors, staff, and space with respect
- Using the tutoring time for feedback, practice, and building understanding
- Although we are happy to help students understand a homework assignment and run through a final draft of their paper, we do not provide direct editing or simply help students complete their homework
- Canceling appointments ahead of time if not able to attend ([HOW TO CANCEL](#))

Expectations of tutors providing the service

- Arriving to appointments on time
- Being prepared to work with the student on stated goals for the tutoring session
- Treating the student as an independent learner, with respect for student input, opinions, and different levels of topic understanding
- Asking questions to check for understanding, and providing the student with opportunities to explain or teach concepts to the tutor
- Using the tutoring time to provide feedback, practice, and opportunities to build understanding
- Although we are happy to help students understand a homework assignment and run through a final draft of their paper, we do not provide direct editing or simply help students complete their homework

Late Appointments and Cancellations

Students are expected to arrive on time for tutoring appointments. We understand that on occasion a student may be delayed, so there is a 15-minute grace period. Even if starting late, all appointments will end at 10 minutes of the hour (ex: 10:50AM) to provide the tutor with time to prepare for the next appointment. If a student is running late for an appointment, the student should contact The Learning Commons at 207.780.4228 (or, if the appointment is at LAC, the Writing Center at 207-753-6513). After 15 minutes, it will be considered as a MISSED APPOINTMENT, also called a “NO SHOW”.

If it is necessary to CANCEL an appointment, we ask that students do so as soon as possible in order to free up the time for other students to use that session. Waiting until just before the appointment to cancel typically will not result in another student being able to plan ahead and use that time. **NOTE: repeated last-minute cancellations may result in temporary suspension of scheduling privileges.**

No Shows

We have a limited number of tutoring appointments available, and often have students in need of tutoring who are unable to find an available appointment. This is why it is VERY important to either attend a scheduled tutoring session, or cancel that session to open up the time. If a student misses four (4) tutoring appointments without giving appropriate notice, the student's appointment-making privileges will be temporarily suspended until the student meets with the Coordinator of Tutoring Services or Coordinator of the LAC Writing Center to clarify the policy and discuss strategies for following through with any scheduled appointments. In some cases, any remaining tutoring appointments for that student may be cancelled until the conversation occurs.

Repeated missed (late cancellations or No Shows) appointments may result in the student losing tutoring privileges for the remainder of the semester.

Other Considerations

Students are allowed two appointments per week, per subject area. This is so we can provide ongoing support and ensure that as many students as possible can use the service. While we recognize some students believe they need more, our tutors can provide guidance on how to use time effectively outside of the tutoring appointments to keep the process going. Students who schedule more than this amount may have their account disabled until they speak to the Coordinator of Tutoring Services for review the policy. This is so we can provide ongoing support and ensure that as many students as possible can use the service.

We recognize every student works hard, and may experience some stress or frustration associated with assignments or the learning process itself. It is important for students to remember that tutors are peers, doing the best they can to be helpful. We expect both the student and the tutor to recognize, appreciate, and respect these issues.

Sometimes, stress or frustration can emerge during a tutoring appointment, which is understandable. However, it is not acceptable for a student to do any of the following:

- Yell at the tutor or other Learning Commons/Writing Center staff
- Insist that the tutor provide answers to homework assignments
- Pressure a tutor to edit written work, which includes writing on the page, providing specific revisions, or answering assignment prompts

Any such behavior may result in the student losing tutoring privileges.

If a student does not have a positive experience, we encouraged the student to come speak with the Coordinator of Tutoring Services or the Coordinator of the LAC Writing Center. We want all students coming in for the service to have a positive experience and welcome student feedback at any time.