

Foreword

Dear Faculty,

The School of Foreign Languages (SFL) Academic Writing Center (AWC) provides service to faculty and graduate students of the METU community. Our services mainly consist of 45-minute one-on-one tutorials for all kinds of academic writing in all disciplines. Writing is often a lonely task, making writers feel a lack of support, guidance and acknowledgement until the end. The tutorials at the AWC provide consultancy in various aspects of an academic paper. By doing this, we aim to help individuals improve their writing skills and become better writers, while at the same time, making the writing process less lonely, and, hopefully, more enjoyable and productive.

This booklet aims to acquaint tutees with the AWC and the basics of the services provided.

We look forward to meeting and working with you,

The AWC Coordinators

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What is the School of Foreign Languages - Academic Writing Center?

The METU Academic Writing Center (AWC) is a unit established by the School of Foreign Languages (SFL) to provide consulting service to the METU community, to guide writers throughout the process of writing academic papers, and to improve their writing skills by increasing awareness of their own writing process.

The Philosophy of Our Writing Center

Parallel to the writing center theory throughout the world, social construction is a major influence in our writing center theory. Besides, the philosophy of our writing center is to nurture both individuality and collaboration. Such an approach, which addresses higher-order issues first and lower-order issues next, is fundamental to encouraging good writing, good thinking, and autonomy.

Our writing center is a relaxed environment where language instructors have one-on-one discussions with

academic writers from all fields to improve their writing skills. The environment is unconstrained because there is no grading, no criticism, nor any pressure to complete a certain task. The essence of the writing center approach is assisting academic writers by helping them take ownership and develop a critical eye toward their own writing. Through discussion, the writer often improves on weak points and develops strategies to become a more competent writer. In this process, the tutor asks questions and offers suggestions; however, it is the writer who makes the decisions and the modifications. After all, the writer is the expert in the field and the writing is his/her creation.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to empower members of the METU academic community to become more effective and autonomous writers by providing guidance and assistance to reach their full potential in writing according to the conventions of academic discourse.

Vision Statement

The School of Foreign Languages Academic Writing Center aspires to actively contribute to METU's objective of being an internationally-renowned, research-oriented university and preserving its leadership role in social development by extending its services throughout the Middle East Technical University community. We aim to maintain our service quality through the use of both conventional and new methods in the ever-changing world of academic writing centers.

The History of the Academic Writing Center

Writing centers, or ‘writing labs’ as they were then called, were first seen in the USA in the 1930’s. In the 1970’s, their number increased greatly and they became much more widespread. Today, most high-ranking universities throughout the world include such centers within their community.

The idea of setting up a writing center at the Middle East Technical University was several years old before it was finally materialized. With the support of the President of the University, the decision was made and preparations were initiated. In the summer of 1999, the Chairperson of the Department of Modern Languages, who also became the first advisor to the center, went to the University of Delaware to do research and enhance her knowledge on writing centers. Upon her return, preliminary research continued. A survey was conducted for needs analysis, and seminars and workshops were held to train prospective tutors.

In December 2000, the Director of the School of Foreign Languages sent out an announcement to DML and DBE

explaining the purpose behind this endeavor. As explained in this announcement, METU, like other reputable universities around the world, needed a writing center to help faculty members and graduate students write academic papers and guide them throughout the process of research and in accordance with international standards.

Finally, after more than one and a half years of preparation, on March 19, 2001, the School of Foreign Languages Academic Writing Center opened its doors and started providing service to the academic writers of METU. Today, the AWC continues to provide tutoring service with two full-time coordinators and experienced instructors from the DBE and DML who work part-time.

<p><i>Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.</i></p> <p>Leonardo da Vinci</p>

Who We Are

The AWC functions under the supervision of the School of Foreign Languages. The administration consists of the advisor to the Center and two coordinators, one from the Department of Basic English and one from the Department of Modern Languages. The tutors are instructors from both departments. Also, a student assistant is the Computer Coordinator of the Center.

Whom We Serve

Our Center caters mainly to METU faculty and graduate students. It also gives support to undergraduate students who need help with professional writing.

Writing is a craft where noone ever becomes a master.

Ernest Hemingway

What Types of Writing We Deal With

We deal with the following academic writing types:

- Journal Articles
- Theses/Dissertations
- Research Papers
- Proposals
- Annotations
- Critical Reviews
- Conference/Seminar Papers
- Exam Writing (GRE, TOEFL etc.)

We also give help with various types of professional writing, mainly:

- Application Essays
- Cover Letters
- Résumés/Curriculum Vitae
- Business Letters
- Statements of Purpose

What Service We Provide

Tutorials

The AWC offers 45-minute one-on-one tutorials with instructors of English from the School of Foreign Languages. These tutorials are consultancy sessions which cater for the specific needs of academic writers. They provide assistance by

- deliberating with the writer on the content of the writing
- offering guidance with planning, revising and any other stage of the writing
- helping in matters as varied as organization, coherence, appropriateness and accuracy of language, word choice and borrowing ideas
- making suggestions for writers to develop lifelong editing and revision strategies

An important note: the AWC tutorials are not for translating, checking grammar, editing, or proofreading.

How a Tutorial Progresses

Each tutorial is 45 minutes. It begins with a warm-up when the tutor and tutee introduce themselves and talk about what the writer is working on. Then, to set the agenda, the tutor probes further by asking questions about the writing and together they decide on the section of the writing and issues that need to be focused on. Instruction time begins with the tutee reading the writing aloud. Consultancy takes place with discussions, questions and suggestions with regard to any aspect of the writing, including fluency, organization, language, consistency and word choice. The tutorial comes to a close after a wrap-up of the progress made and a brief discussion of what needs to be done to further improve the paper. Afterwards, an evaluation sheet is filled out by the tutee to rate the overall effectiveness of the session. The tutee can schedule another appointment if he/she feels that there are other priorities to be addressed, other issues that remain to be covered, or wishes to continue to benefit from this consultancy service.

It is expected that any writer who receives consultancy from the AWC will put into practice what has been

learned during the tutorial by improving and revising the remaining part of the writing himself or herself. Tutees can maximize the benefits they gain from AWC consultancy by coming to follow-up tutorials after having done necessary revisions upon tutors' suggestions.

How We Make Appointments

Academic writers who want to schedule an appointment can either drop in at the Center or call one of the two coordinators at

(210) 3921 or (210) 3946.

Appointments should be made well in advance (at least one week) to ensure slots of time most suitable for the tutee. Appointments cannot be scheduled via e-mail.

Writing is rewriting.

What Other Services We Provide

Faculty Writing Retreats

A Faculty Writing Retreat is a period of time when a group of faculty withdraw from all other responsibilities to the Academic Writing Center. These are typically three consecutive days scheduled once or twice each semester for groups of 12 to 15 faculty members to provide an opportunity for uninterrupted writing. As part of a group, yet working individually, these writers focus on their writings to achieve as much progress as they can. Writing Center tutors facilitate this goal by being available to provide assistance whenever the participants request it.

The aim is to contribute to academic research at METU by providing participating faculty a supportive environment to focus on and advance in their writing. In brief, the Retreat does not aim to provide direct instruction, but rather to provide an environment for individualised study.

The retreats are announced to faculty through server lists, AWC and METU Main Pages several weeks in advance so that those who wish to participate can register.

Registration is limited to a certain number of people, and full attendance throughout the Retreat Days is required. We also make available laptops for those who do not have their own to bring and resource material such as dictionaries, thesauruses and handouts.

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Handouts

Handouts on a variety of writing-related topics are available at the AWC. These handouts can also be obtained from the AWC web site under the 'Self Study' and 'Handouts' links. Handouts are summary notes on topics such as

- * Writing a Thesis
- * Review of Literature
- * Writing an Abstract
- * Self-editing Techniques
- * Writing Research Proposals
- * Documentation Styles
- * Writing a Critical Review
- * Statements of Purpose
- * Writing CVs/Cover Letters
- * Writing an Annotation
- * Sentence Connectors
- * Plagiarism
- * Verbs to Introduce Borrowed Ideas

Quiet Study Area

The AWC offers a quiet place for self-study. We have handouts, reference books, writing material, and PCs for you to make use of. You can drop in any time during working hours to write or study in this environment.

Language exercises for extra practice are on the website under the 'Self Study' and 'Test' links.

Online Chat Sessions

The AWC holds chat sessions on academic writing from time to time. These are multiple-user platforms which everyone can join to consult on-line tutors.

Outreach Projects

Upon request, the AWC assists communities outside of METU. We organize short and long-term courses and seminars to companies with various writing needs. We also conduct free-of-charge seminars and consultancy services to educational institutions as part of community service.

Where We Are

The Academic Writing Center is located on the 3rd floor of the MM Building, no: 318.

Our web address:

<http://www.awc.metu.edu.tr>

When We Operate

We operate from 9:30 to 16:30 on weekdays. Each tutorial is 45 minutes. The tutorial hours are

In the morning

9:45-10:30

10:45-11:30

11:45-12:30

In the afternoon

13:45-14:30

14:45-15:30

15:45-16:30

Simple writing is not the product of simple minds. By not calling attention to itself, it allows the reader to focus on the message.

Richard Lederer and Richards Dowis

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **How often can I get an appointment?**

We can schedule up to three appointments a week on condition that we have free tutorial hours.

- **Can I work with the same tutor?**

No. Though, from time to time, it is possible to come upon the same tutor(s), the AWC policy is that the same tutor is not assigned to the same tutee on consecutive appointments. As writer autonomy is of utmost importance, dependence on any specific tutor is not encouraged. Also, it is best for the tutee to benefit from the perspectives of different tutors.

- **Do the tutorials cost money?**

No. The tutorials are free of charge. It is a service offered to the METU community through the courtesy of the School of Foreign Languages.

- **Can I borrow any reference books from the AWC?**

No. However, you are welcome to use the books while you are doing self-study at the AWC at any time during work hours.

- **How much material can we cover during one tutorial?**

We aim for quality rather than quantity. That is, our primary objective is not extensive coverage of any material. A tutor may deal with a single paragraph, yet cover such serious issues as organization and referencing. In brief, the degree of awareness a tutee has gained, not the number of pages covered, determines how worthwhile a tutorial has been.

The most dreaded remarks at AWC

“I’d like to have it corrected for grammar mistakes.”

“I completed writing my thesis. I am having it published on Wednesday. Can you edit it?”

“My paper is only 17 pages. It won’t take too much of your time.”

“I have a scheduled appointment in five minutes. Sorry, I won’t be able to make it.”

“This instructor knows my study well. I would like to study with her throughout the term.”

“But I need an appointment today. I have to send this tomorrow.”

“We haven’t finished my paper. I still have three pages left. Can I make another appointment?”

“I’d like to send my paper to you by e-mail. Can you check it and send it back to me?”

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