

What is the Writing Centre?

Hello, and welcome to this online introduction to the Writing Centre. My name is Jonathan Faerber, and I work with Theresa Bell to support students in their writing at RRU. In this video, I'll introduce the Writing Centre, and talk about the online help we offer especially during measure introduced to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

So let's start with a look at where you can find us online. The Writing Centre is part of the Library at RRU, and you can access [our website](#) and information about us through the [library's website](#). On our website itself, we have our contact information, links to [booking an appointment](#) and a link to a tool called [WriteAnswers](#), in addition to a lot of other information on different topics related to writing. If you're interested in learning about [how book an appointment](#), or [how to use WriteAnswers](#), please watch our videos on those two topics. We are available throughout the week on every day except Sunday unless otherwise noted on this page, and you can book appointments during the hours listed [here](#).

So, what's a Writing Centre anyway, and what will you learn from working with us? Well, the Writing Centre works with you individually help you grow as a writer and enable your confidence and mastery in written communication. As described on the website here [**under "What does the Writing Centre do?"**], our view is that writing is a lifelong learning skill, and that this skill is really important to scholarly and professional communication. We are currently providing online support for all types of academic writing, both within individual online appointments, and through a variety of online resources, and we will continue to respond to your needs and requests within this distributed learning environment. But this support does not include proofreading and it does not include editing—rather than reading through a specific writing assignment to identify concerns and make decisions about your writing, we want you to maintain sole authorship of your own text. That means at all times, we will look to you to ask us about aspects of your writing that are important to you, so that we can provide information that best helps you make your decisions about your writing, and more importantly, that allows you to practice and improve your skills as a writer.

So for example, instead of us reading through your reference list to make our own corrections, if you have questions about formatting your references, we'll make sure you have what you need to know to go through that reference list and ensure that a resource is formatted correctly. This helps you improve your mastery of a specific skill, and it also means that when you hand in that paper in your name on it, it's really true that you really did write the entire your paper yourself, rather than have someone else make decisions about what to write and how it should look.

So that's a really short introduction to the Writing Centre, and an explanation of where to find us online and how we can support you, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are interested in learning more about what we do, please click into this menu on Writing Centre services, and read through this page on our mandate. If you are looking for specific information

about how we work with you during individual appointments, please watch our short video on 30-minute appointments, as well as our video about our 60-minute appointments.

Thanks for watching this video about where to find us online and how we can help. We look forward to meeting with you.

Discussing Questions About an Individual Work in Progress (30-Minute Appointment)

So if you've just watched our video about what the Writing Centre is, where you can find us online, and how we support students at RRU, [this website](#) should look familiar to you. In this video, I'm going to show you some of the web pages on our website about how to meet with us online, and what you can expect from a conversation with either Theresa or me. My name is Jonathan Faerber, and I work with Theresa Bell to support students in their writing at RRU and I am narrating these videos to give you a brief web tour through the different ways the Writing Centre can help you online, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

So when you are on [our website](#), especially for the first time, I encourage you to explore this page on [Writing Centre services](#) for yourself. I do cover this information about [our mandate](#) in [another video](#), and if you haven't seen that, I encourage you to pause this video here [to read though this](#).

You can also watch [the video that covers that information](#), so from here I'm going to jump right into what you can expect in a 30-minute appointment at the Writing Centre.

[A 30-minute appointment](#) is a way of accessing support during your work on an assignment that you will submit for grading. In this appointment, we will establish some goals at the beginning of what we will accomplish by the end of a 25 minute conversation. We then will use up to 5 minutes at the end to follow up with resources that will complement the concrete strategies and information we discussed in the previous 25 minutes.

So the key thing I want you to remember from this video is that you don't need a completed paper in order to benefit from an appointment. There's no set criteria, in fact, as to who would most benefit from an appointment or when you are most ready to see us, it really depends on you. We can help at any stage of the writing process, even when you're still figuring out what your topic is, or what will your argument will be, or what you will be doing in the time that you have to complete the assignment. In fact, you may not know what would help you exactly, you might just want help, and that's okay. Even when you're at that point, that stress and anxiety about writing is normal, and we can work with that.

If you find yourself hesitating to ask us a question because you're not quite sure we're the right people to ask, the right thing to do is to ask us anyway. Chances are that if you think it's got something to do with writing it probably is something we can help with, and if that someone else might have a better answer to your question than we do, chances are that we will know exactly who you should talk to about that question.

See one of the benefits of an institution our size is that after a while everyone gets to know everyone else, so even when we aren't the best people to answer a question, we'll be able to point you in the right direction for that support. For example, since we aren't the experts on, say, job applications, we'd refer you [to someone who is](#) so you can receive expert support from them. So again we're staying away from career advice, we'd give terrible legal advice as well, but in the end, it's our job to know what we can help with, and what someone else can help with, so there's nothing to lose by asking us a question when you're in doubt.

Now, before I move on, I do want to note one or two "housekeeping" items: the first is that although there is no limit to how often you can see us about your writing during your program, we are trying to keep the time you spend doing this within any given week within reason. What that means is that you can book one appointment per day, and two appointments in total per week. So although you can see either Theresa or me once per day, or twice per week, that means that you are seeing either one of us that day, rather than booking an appointment *with each* of us per day, or two appointments *with each* of us per week.

The other thing I'll also explain in another video as well is what to do in situations where it no longer becomes possible to meet with us for that scheduled appointment. So of course, we understand that life happens, and we only ask that when something comes up you let us know by cancelling appointments that you can't attend. If you can only attend some of the scheduled appointment, and you let us know, we will still hold the remaining time of that 30-minute appointment to meet with you. On the other hand, if we don't hear from you within the first ten minutes of the appointment, that usually means that for whatever reason you're no longer able to join us for that appointment, and we will let you know that we are cancelling the appointment on your behalf.

If you want to learn more about our longer 60-minute meetings to discuss a graded assignment, please check out [our video](#) about how an appointment about a completed assignment can help you improve as a writer overall. And if you aren't sure how to set up and cancel appointments, as well as how to send us your document in advance of the appointment, please watch our very short [two minute video](#) about setting up an appointment.

Thanks for watching this video about our 30-minute appointments. We look forward to meeting with you.

Discussing Feedback on a Graded, Individual Essay (60-Minute Appointment)

This video the second of two videos about the two kinds of Writing Centre appointments at RRU. My name is Jonathan Faerber, and I work with Theresa Bell at the RRU Writing Centre, so you'd be meeting with either one of us if you schedule the kinds of appointments described in either one of these videos.

[In the earlier of these two videos](#), I discussed how the Writing Centre can meet with you while you are writing an assignment to provide help. But our intention is to help you become a better and more confident writer overall, and another way we can do that is by meeting with you in a [60-minute appointment](#) to discuss an individual, graded assignment. In the process, we will also provide written feedback on your assignment to complement that verbal conversation as well. So again, while we do not read your completed graded assignment or provide written feedback in advance of a 30-minute appointments, an actual graded document that will not be re-submitted for further grading is required for this appointment so we can do just that.

Just as with a 30-minute appointment, you can schedule one of these appointments on our booking website, but unlike the 30-minute conversation, we ask that you schedule that conversation at least three business days ahead of the day on which you actually booked the appointment through our website.

We also ask that you send us a graded document at least three business days before your scheduled appointment, so that we have time to review your writing, and you have time to review our feedback before the appointment. Now when we return our essay review to you with all of our feedback in writing, you'll see that we have a lot to say, and I really want to emphasize that the amount of feedback we are providing is no reflection on how that assignment measures up to the grading criteria from your instructor.

So, for example, we'll never make corrections and comment on your document in red, because our intention is to engage you as much as possible in understanding what our experience was reading that document, rather than to evaluate the content or frame our feedback as criticism. In fact, when we do have something to say, you'll even see that we've used, say, teal or turquoise to visually highlight these questions and suggestions in those non-alarming colours to focus on positive feedback and again, to indicate that those comments are intended to help you.

So once you've had the time to read through our comments and suggestions a day before the appointment, that then allows us to complement that written feedback with a verbal conversation that gets into some of the ideas that you're hoping to learn about. Conversation really is our way of getting to know a little bit more about how you write and how you think so that we can then talk about those patterns in your writing and we can tailor our conversation to the specific skills and tools and resources that you can then use to build on your strengths as a writer as well as to address some of the things about your writing that you're still working on and are looking to do differently. Just as with the 30-minute appointment, our goal is to then leave you with at least one or two concrete suggestions or strategies that you'll find helpful in your writing, and we will leave up to 10-minutes at the end to send out a follow-up message with some resources that can support that learning.

So those are the steps for completing an appointment about graded work, and just as with the 30-minute appointment, you can book more than one of these, but you are limited to booking up to one of these per day. So that means that while you can meet with either Theresa or I that

day, you will not be meeting us both for a total of two appointments on any day, or a total of four appointments per week. With the 60-minute appointments especially, there probably won't be a need to meet more than once per day or twice per week anyway because the process is comprehensive and does cover more than enough material for you to work with on the day or week of your appointment. But once you've had that time to apply what you have learned from a 60-minute appointment, there's no overall restriction to how often you can meet us.

And you can also cancel an appointment like this at any time before the appointment and if you are running late for an appointment and let us know within the first ten minutes, we will hold the remaining 40 minutes. Finally, if we don't hear from you once your appointment starts, we will cancel the appointment after the first ten minutes.

If you want to learn more about our shorter 30-minute meetings to discuss an assignment you are working on, please check out our video about how we can help with those assignments. And if you aren't sure how to set up or cancel appointments, as well as how to send us your document in advance of the appointment, please watch our very short two minute video about setting up those appointments.

Thanks for watching this video about our 60-minute appointments. We look forward to meeting with you.

[Book an Appointment](#)

The last two videos discussed the differences between what to expect in a [30-minute](#) or [60-minute appointment](#). Here, I want to tell you about where to go to set up an appointment. My name is Jonathan Faerber, and I work with Theresa Bell to support students in their writing at RRU and I am narrating these videos to give you a brief web tour through the different ways the Writing Centre can help you online, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

So there's a few different paths to [booking an appointment](#), but I am going to navigate to our [booking page](#) from our home page.

Once you are on the [booking website](#), you'll have to select "Writing Centre" from the list of services, and once you are in "Writing Centre", you also have the option of selecting whom you would like to meet for your appointment, as well as what type of appointment you would like to set up. There's a lot of flexibility around when you can meet, and in theory you can schedule an appointment anytime in the future, starting from the next 24 hours to as far as three months in the future. Notice that at this stage, what you're viewing in this calendar is based on the person you are meeting and the duration of the appointment. That should tell you two things: first, if you cannot find the time you are looking for with me, clicking into Theresa's calendar will show you some other options since we work at different times of the day and sometimes different days of the week. Second, if you are selecting the "30-minute appointment" option, you'll see more times available, since the calendar is displaying appointments with shorter time

increments. This is the default setting here, so before booking the appointment, make sure you've clicked into the drop-down menu to confirm the appointment type.

To complete the appointment booking, you'll now be asked for identifying information such as your name and the email we will use to send a confirmation email with the reminders about the appointment. You'll also be able to select at least one thing that you're interested in learning about from this list, although you're certainly welcome to talk about things that aren't on this list or to bring up something different from what you first planned to do. At the moment, we are meeting all of our students using a platform called BlueJeans, and you'll get an email shortly after confirming the appointment with instructions about how to access your appointment, and that email will also include information about how to cancel your booking. Before confirming your appointment, you may also upload your graded assignment directly onto this website in the event that you are meeting with us for 60-minutes.

So that's all it takes to set up a meeting with someone from the Writing Centre, and that really concludes the overview of the different ways you can meet with us for a conversation about your writing, and I encourage you to watch our videos on each of the [30-minute](#) and [60-minute appointments](#) themselves, if you haven't already. [The next video](#) in this series is focused instead on how you can access some of the resources we created to address your questions even outside of appointments, as well as how you can contact us for a response to a specific question related to your writing.

Thanks for watching this video about booking appointments at the Writing Centre. We look forward to meeting with you.

[Ask Us a Question Through WriteAnswers](#)

In the previous four videos, [we toured our website](#) while discussing the different ways you can meet with the Writing Centre for a conversation in real time to [address questions](#) and [improve as a writer](#). But of course, we understand that you are busy and may not always be able to make the time for one of these meetings, and it really is helpful as well to access information without having to talk to someone directly each time you have a question. That's why we've integrated the information into our website and tried to make it really easy for anyone to ask us a question about any of the things we could talk about if we were having a conversation about your questions.

My name is Jonathan Faerber, and Theresa Bell and I support students in their writing at RRU and we are the people who are helping with these questions and providing other online services I cover in other videos.

So every time you see this "Ask us" button on every web page, that's a short-cut to a tool called [WriteAnswers](#). WriteAnswers is really a searchable database of short, accessible answers about topics including APA Style, grammar, formatting, sentence and paragraph structure, and other aspects of academic writing. So the most common way of using this tool is to find information

on our website that is related to a specific topic. So one of the topics we mentioned in a previous video as an example is formatting a reference list in APA Style. Now, if I look up “format references”, those key words will match me with this list of questions such as “[How should I format my references in APA Style?](#)” and “[Does the Writing Centre have resources that will help me check the APA Style formatting in my work?](#)”, and if you’ll click into the first of these questions, you’ll see that there’s a few different things that can help you with formatting your document to APA Style rules: the [APA Style formatting checklist](#), for instance, is a list of ten things to look for when you are formatting your document to APA Style rules; likewise, the [citations](#) and [references checklist](#) each are a list of things based on some common errors and difficulties with those aspects of APA Style, and by the way, each of the item in these lists are presented in the order that they usually appear in within your document, beginning, for example, with the formatting of the title to the order of information within references.

WriteAnswers will also allow you to view our catalogue of resources based on [frequent topics and keywords](#), and to use these categories to filter for specific information in an advanced search. Of course, you won’t always find what you are looking for, so you can also send us a private message with your question by filling out [this form](#). When you submit the form, it sends Theresa and me a message that no one else can see, and we will answer that question privately and quite quickly, typically within one business day. Finally, you’re also welcome to use this form to upload your document: for example, you can use this as a way to send us a graded assignment once they have scheduled a 60-minute online appointment. If you haven’t watched our videos on what to expect from [those appointments](#) and [how to book one](#), please make sure you check those out, and if you have any other questions or need to contact us, you now know where to go!

Thanks for watching this video about asking questions using the Writing Centre’s WriteAnswers tool, and of course, we hope to hear from you.