

Frequently Asked Questions: Consultation Services

Academic Writing

Q: How can I schedule a consultation?

A: Please visit the Research Center website at <https://www.shsu.edu/academics/colleges/education/centers/center-for-research-excellence-and-innovation> and “click” on the booking link under the researcher of your choice. Dr. Hodges provides general academic writing support.

Click [here](#) to schedule with Dr. Hodges. If no availability is shown, you may email her at traceyhodges@shsu.edu to inquire about additional openings or cancelations.

Q: Who can request consultations?

A: Faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate researchers within COE and COHS-affiliated projects. Inter-disciplinary team members working with COE and COHS-affiliated projects may participate in collaborator-level consultations.

Q: In addition to individual consultations, what other formats are offered?

A: The Research Center will provide in-person or virtual consultations in classes, as well as meet with entire research teams. In some situations, these group consultations will be more minutes in length to meet the various needs. If instructors want several of their students to receive consultation during a semester, we encourage them to schedule a group consultation during their class time. Please feel free to email the director of the research center should you want to incorporate this option into your course planning.

Q: When should I schedule a consultation?

A: The earlier in your research or writing process, the better. However, consultations are available at any project stage. Availability is first-come, first-serve.

Q: How long are consultations?

A: Consultations are 30 minutes in length. During the initial meeting, we will work to learn about you and your goals and needs, followed by providing concrete support. Follow-up meetings may be scheduled for additional support.

Q: How often may I seek consultation support?

A: To allow the Research Center to support as many individuals as possible, everyone is allowed four (4) consultations in total each semester. This number represents consultations across all our staff, not four per staff member.

Q: What types of consultations does the Research Center provide?

A: Currently, the research center can assist with:

- Writing support for academic and research contexts (e.g., IRB protocols, dissertations/theses/manuscripts, literature reviews, grant proposals, conference proposals, clarity and organization)
- Logical framing and alignment across research questions, methodology, and analysis
- Idea and conceptual development

- IRB preparation and data collection planning
- Writing for publication and presentation
- Preparing presentations
- Creating visuals and tables to disseminate findings
- Preparing conference proposals

Q: What should I bring to a consultation?

A: To make the most of your session, please bring:

- A brief overview of your project or research question
- Any drafts or working documents (e.g., proposal, IRB, survey items)
- Deadlines or timelines
- Specific questions or areas where guidance is needed

If you are unsure where to begin, we can clarify your goals together during the initial consultation.

Q: What is the nature of the consultation?

A: Consultations are developmental and instructional rather than done-for-you services. You will receive support, feedback, and next steps while maintaining responsibility for conducting your research and writing.

For all consultations, students are asked to share their Zoom screen or bring hard copies of documents for which they want support. All notes, edits, revisions, analysis, or documentation are conducted by the student with the Research Center staff providing support, questions, and suggestions. When sharing documents related to data, please ensure that all information is de-identified.

For academic writing consultations, the Research Center staff member may read sections of your writing aloud, stopping to provide ideas for support and areas of clarification.

Q: What can I expect when I attend a consultation?

A: Consultations are formal in content and informal in tone. That means, the content and relationship with you is the focus, and the setting is collaborative and conversational. We honor your work and all stages of work. The most initial draft to the most polished piece is appropriate for a consultation. We welcome all questions related to research and writing.

We will begin with introductions, if we have not already met. Next, you will be asked to briefly share your project of interest and indicate your goals for the session. From there, the Research Center staff will provide support. You are the focus and are welcome to shift the conversation to meet your needs.

We are here to supplement the mentorship and support you receive from others. If you are a student and seeking consultation related to assignments or dissertation, we always defer back to your instructor and/or dissertation chair. In some situations, we might ask

you to invite your dissertation chair to ensure holistic support for your project and common goals and action items.

Q: Can I bring a partially completed draft, or does my writing need to be polished first?

A: Any stage of writing is welcome. Research Center staff can provide support as a thinking partner as you brainstorm ideas, or we can provide support specific to the later stages of your writing. Early drafts often allow for more impactful feedback, as we can help you conceptualize your audience, organization, or details to consider. However, polished drafts are appropriate as well. In short, we will meet you wherever you are in the writing process.

Q: What services are not provided through research consultations?

A: To maintain academic integrity, consultations do not:

- Write manuscripts or proposal sections for you
- Conduct literature searches independently
- Serve as ghost authors
- Provide line by line editing
- Provide asynchronous support

However, guidance, strategy, feedback, and skill-building are consistently provided.

Q: I see that available times for consults are full. Can I just email my work to the Research Center staff for review?

A: No. Our consultations are designed to provide mentorship and build capacity for research and writing through mentorship. To that effect, we do not review documents by email. After a consultation, Research Center staff may email additional resources or may follow up with individuals on a case-by-case basis.

Q: How is the Research Center different from the Writing Center?

A: The Research Center provides Academic Writing consultations that are specific to scholarly writing appropriate for advanced coursework, master's thesis, doctoral dissertations, and publication. The primary focus of our work is on advanced citations and style guides, voice, organization, and research-specific writing. Typically, Writing Centers focus more on general audiences for these services. We recommend using both the Research Center and Writing Center to aid in your writing journey. Specifically, the Research Center can provide services tailored through the lens of high-level scholarship.

Q: Can the Research Center help me interpret reviewer feedback or revise a manuscript after peer review?

A: Yes. We can help you organize, review feedback, and determine a clear action plan for completing revisions by a specific deadline. Oftentimes, reviewer feedback can feel overwhelming, and the Research Center staff can help you develop a way to address the feedback, respond to feedback that does not align with your philosophical stance, and create a complete revision letter.

Q: Does the Research Center help with citation management systems such as Zotero, Mendeley, EndNote, or others?

A: Not specifically. Our research librarians, such as Erin Owens, are a better fit for this type of assistance, and the library has many resources to help with this. However, the Research Center staff can help you use the management systems to write your literature review. Additionally, we can provide alternative strategies for managing and organizing your resources.

Q: Can the Research Center help me format my document to a specific publication or dissertation style guide?

A: Generally, yes; specifically, no. The Research Center staff can provide management strategies and suggestions for how to align your document to a specific style guide. We do not provide line by line editing or tailored guidance to ensure style guide formatting. The library has resources to help with this, and The Graduate and Professional School can assist with specifics.

Q: Can I come to a consultation without having written anything yet?

A: Absolutely! Consultations can focus on brainstorming, organizing ideas, clarifying your research question(s), or developing a writing plan. Many individuals schedule a first consultation before they have written much – with just an outline or basic idea. Getting help early can set you up for success later in the process.

Q: Does the Research Center help with personal statements, teaching statements, or job-related materials?

A: Yes, under the context of research or academic contexts. From a general writing standpoint and from participating in the academic hiring process, we can provide support. These sessions may focus on clarity, organization, scholarly voice, and alignment with academic job description. However, we may not have specific experience in your field of expertise.