

# CORNELL Writing Centers

## EDITING POLICY

Editing is a crucial part of the writing process. In order to produce precise and polished prose, writers must direct attention to the sentence level. **And, as is the case when developing proficiency in any feature of college writing, learning how to edit requires time, practice, and patience.**

Tutors at the Cornell Writing Centers are available to provide certain kinds of sentence-level support. Tutors will clarify rules, explain conventions, provide examples, and guide writers as they revise their own sentences. Tutors will discuss style, language, and rhetorical choices. But tutors are not editors – they cannot correct grammar, syntax, punctuation, or typographical errors.

**M-Th, 3:30-5:30pm**

Mann Library  
178 Rockefeller Hall

**Sun-Th, 7:00-10:00pm**

108 Uris Library  
403 Olin Library  
3343 Tatkon Center

## Writing Tutors Do Not Edit Papers.

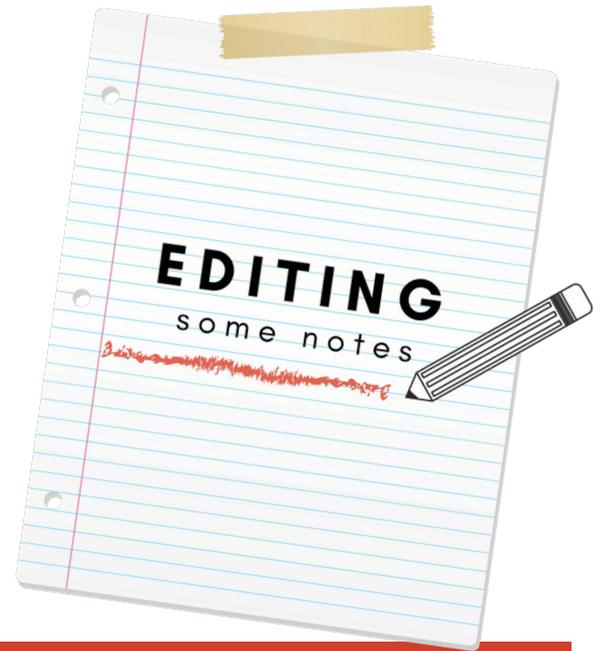
Here are several reasons for this policy:

- » First, **there is no pedagogical value in having a tutor edit a student's paper.** Writers do not learn when other people correct errors for them. The Writing Center's primary goal is to ensure that students have access to learning opportunities, so during tutoring sessions, tutors use specific pieces of writing to engage broader discussions about academic writing and to encourage robust interventions into student writing processes.
- » Second, **copyediting someone else's writing requires a highly specialized skill set.** Writing tutors are not professional editors; they simply do not have the training, experience, or desire to perform such technical work.
- » Third, tutors are Cornell University students themselves. They cannot complete assignments for other students. As such, deep collaboration of this kind, **line-by-line editing, could violate Cornell University's Code of Academic Integrity and thus put students and tutors at risk.**

If you want someone to proofread or copyedit for you, you can hire a professional service. (Search online for a local or internet-based company.) Be certain, though, to consult your instructor as such collaboration may be a violation of Cornell University's Code of Academic Integrity.

**Editing is hard work.** Even writers who take the process very seriously can come up against severe obstacles as they home in on the word, paragraph, or page: Writers may be fatigued or stressed, or inexperienced. They might speak and write other languages, or they might be managing learning differences or disabilities. They might have knowledge gaps or unevenly developed skills. They might be reaching to learn.

**As readers, especially of student writing, we can learn to be patient with sentence-level writing errors and to focus, instead, on how students are developing their ideas, using evidence, organizing their essays, and making their arguments.**



**For More Info About the Writing Centers:  
<http://knight.as.cornell.edu/wc>**

Tutors at the Cornell Writing Centers are eager to help writers become more confident, efficient, and effective readers and editors of their own writing. Here are several typical strategies for working together:

**LOCATE PATTERNS OF ERROR.** Writing tutors read through significant portions of a writing project (no more than 5 pages) and identify **ONLY** one or two patterns of error (run-on sentences or subject-verb agreement, for instance). Writing tutors circle recurring errors or put checkmarks in the margins to indicate problems with recurring errors in the marked lines. Writing tutors then explain the errors and work with writers to correct them.

**SELECT A PASSAGE OF TEXT.** Writing tutors read through a short section of a writing project (one paragraph, perhaps, but no more than one page) and identify a range of errors. Writing tutors circle errors throughout the short section or put checkmarks in the margins to indicate problems in the marked lines.

**READ OUT LOUD.** Writing tutors listen as writers read aloud portions of their writing (no more than 3-5 pages) and mark any places where writers say something different than what is on the page. Alternatively, writing tutors read papers out loud while writers mark any places that do not sound as intended.

The Cornell Writing Centers are committed to the teaching & learning of writing. Tutors are eager to work with writers who are interested in:

- » understanding the fundamental features of academic writing;
- » using writing to clarify, complicate, and refine ideas;
- » exploring more flexible writing strategies.