SCAA OWL
Procedures and Guidelines
Winter 2016

The SCAA Online Writing Lab (the OWL) is a platform that allows SCAA writing tutors to provide feedback to student papers submitted via email. The following set of *Procedures and Guidelines* have been created to help insure a consistency in the responses provided by the SCAA tutors. These policies are also intended to help tutors feel more comfortable in knowing that they are following the program criterion and that their work is guided by regular and purposefully designed principles.

SCAA OWL writing tutoring shares the same approach as in any one to one, in person writing session. Tutors are expected to focus on global, whole-text writing concerns (i.e. ideas, content, genre, thesis, development, clarity, etc.) and to insure that the student's writing is an appropriate response to the prompt or directions provided by the instructor. Local (or lower) order concerns at the paragraph, sentence or word level (i.e. grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, spelling, etc.) should be addressed within the context of the broader, higher order focus. SCAA tutors do not edit or proofread students' writing, and a paper submitted to the OWL should be returned to the student and be annotated with comments that will assist the student in the next stage of revision. The following describes some of the distinctions between Global and Local Writing Concerns.

Global Writing Concerns (higher order)
FIRST: In the assignment, in comments, in discussions with students, and in evaluation criteria, focus first on whole-text issues such as ideas or content, focus, genre, argument, thesis, development, organization, clarity of purpose, awareness of audience . . . . Asking questions like these can help us focus on this global/higher level—

!   Does the draft respond specifically and appropriately to the conceptual demands of the assignment?

!   Does the writer demonstrate a good understanding of the readings (data, field observations, lab experiment . . .) that s/he's writing about?

!   Does the writer have something worth saying? Does the draft make points appropriately sophisticated (original, interesting, provocative . . .) for the assignment, the level of the course, etc.?

!   Does the draft have clear main points?

!   Does the draft match or fulfill the writer's intentions? Does the draft do justice to the writer's ideas?

!   Is the draft effectively organized? Does it follow a logical sequence of points?

!   Are points adequately developed and explained?

!   Is there appropriate and sufficient evidence to support the main points?

! Does the introduction effectively signal the topic, scope, and organization of the paper?

! Are paragraphs unified and well-developed?

Local Writing Concerns (lower order)

After you've reviewed the paper from the GLOBAL perspective,
THEN focus on more local concerns at the paragraph, sentence and word levels . . .

! Are there effective transitions between sections?

! How can the style be improved?

! Where do sentence or word-choice problems interfere with the writer's communicating clearly with readers? Or where are there muddy or confusing sentences?

! Are there any grammatical errors?

! How can the word choice be improved?

! Are there punctuation errors?

! Are there proofreading mistakes?

From the WAC (*Writing Across the Curriculum)* program, University of Wisconsin

OWL Email Procedures

To provide the most effective OWL tutoring for our students, tutors need to become familiar with the SCAA website: http://library.csueastbay.edu/scaa/which contains much useful information regarding our services. For example, there are many handouts and videos that you can recommend to students to supplement your responses to their online submissions or to use as referrals for areas of concern that you've identified in your review of the students' work (see: http://library.csueastbay.edu/scaa/resources/for-students/) .

► WHEN YOU FIRST RECEIVE A STUDENT'S PAPER

Students' submissions appear in your email inbox with *FW: OWL Submission* in the subject area.

1. Review the submission form. What does the instructor's prompt ask for? What does the student want help with? Note that the paper may not exceed 6 double spaced pages and must be related to a student's current course work (the course name and number should appear on the form). Read and respond to each paper within 48 hours of the submission date on the form.

2. Save the document and edit the name of the document in case you need to retrieve it later (for example, John Franklin's document, Eng1001_2ndDraft, could be saved as: Eng1001_2ndDraft_JFranklin_OWL_10Jan2012). Review this saved version of the document: first, in a line or two, introduce yourself; then, insert comments by going to the Review tab, then selecting New Comment which will open a balloon in the right margin where you can ask questions, give advice, etc; conclude at the end of the paper with a brief overview of your comments and recommendations.

3. Be sure to SAVE frequently.

4. Go to your email inbox and bring up the student's initial email OWL submission; once the email opens, select ***Forward;*** copy/paste student's email address into the "To" field; always ***CC*** to: onlinescaa@csueastbay.edu; clear out the currently attached file (original) by clicking on the 'x' next to the file name; **attach** the reviewed document and any handouts you recommend; type a brief comment in the body of the email that also includes the handouts recommended at the SCAA website; and/or, for example, you could recommend the Purdue OWL url: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/ if the student should get additional help with MLA or APA citation. At the very least, your brief message within the return email should say something like, *Hi Jo, Attached is your paper with my comments and suggestions. Thank you for visiting the OWL. Please fill out our Student Satisfaction OWL survey to give us feedback on our services @ http://goo.gl/forms/jMu6NyiO3q.*   Also, you may wish to recommend face-to-face tutoring at the SCAA if needed; be sure to state that the SCAA's location is on the 2nd floor of the CSUEB library.

5. *Send* email

6. Record the time spent reviewing the paper at MYCSUEB right away; **note in the comments section** (click on the cloud) the following: **student's name, date reviewed, # of pages, time (ex: 9:30 – 10AM).** Note: OWL submissions are treated much like in person drop in sessions at the SCAA except that instead of half an hour, *OWL tutors have 45 minutes to review a paper.* Therefore, when recording your time on your timesheet, the Office Manager or Online Coordinator will verify and approve up to 45 minutes per paper.

OWL Guidelines for Paper Review

The following guidelines, meant for standard argumentative papers, should be followed in your responses. For other types of papers, (which should be noted within the submission form in the instructor's prompt or by the student), use your best judgment or contact the SCAA Coordinator of Online Services for advice.

► **PAPER REVIEW**

1. Introduce yourself at the top of the first page. (For example: *Hi, I'm Jo, your OWL tutor this evening. Please be sure that you are in print preview mode so that you can see all of my comments which will appear in-text as well as in the right hand margin of your paper.)* If you have already worked with the student, you can be less formal.

2. Skim through the entire paper quickly. You might keep in mind the following: Is there a hook (if needed), a thesis, good supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion? What kind of help is the student asking for? Is the professor's prompt followed sufficiently? Is the paper properly formatted? (ex: MLA or APA formats)

3. Review the introduction—does the writer engage the reader with a hook (if required). Look for adequate background information introducing the topic. Is there too much detail that should be included later or left out? Make sure the thesis is logical (an enthymeme or logical syllogism). Does the prompt specify what type of thesis? Some professors prefer an 'umbrella' or overall claim, whereas, some instructor's might ask for a more specific form.

4. Do the topic sentences of each paragraph, (each one a sort of 'mini thesis'), directly support the main thesis (claim)?

5. Do the examples, citations, and paraphrases actually support the topic sentence in each paragraph?

6. Are citations stated within quotation marks and cited? Does the tone of the paper change? If you think the student may be in danger of committing plagiarism, politely say that s/he must be aware of the rules and point the student to good resources.

7. Is there adequate analysis? Too much analysis?

8. Is a counter argument and rebuttal required? A paragraph or two usually appear just before the conclusion, although a counter argument can, generally, be inserted anywhere in the essay. Often, this strategy assures a reader that the writer is credible.

9. Is the conclusion adequate? Does the writer bring up a new topic that does not belong in the conclusion? Does the instructor want the writer to end the paper by linking the thesis to a larger view of society or the world?

10. End with general comments, identifying the trends you have noted throughout the paper. Offer any additional advice and/or resources that would be helpful. Try to mention the strong, as well as the weak areas in the essay. If the student asked only for help with grammar, please stress that the OWL is not an editing service and point out the overall grammar issues that need to be resolved (subject-verb agreement or possessive issues, for example) and provide the link to the SCAA handouts or other useful websites. If the student did not supply enough information in the submission form, you may say so and ask that future submissions include the professor's prompt, etc. If online tutoring cannot adequately meet a student's needs, recommend face-to-face tutoring. In general though, you may end at the bottom of the document with the following example: *So, those are my suggestions for your next draft. If you need further assistance, feel free to resubmit your revised draft to the OWL, come see us in person at the SCAA, or see your professor during office hours. Thank you for visiting the OWL.*

11. Email the submission back to the student (**see OWL Email Procedures above)**.

Note:

Call or email June Barber, SCAA Online Services Coordinator with any questions, suggestions, or concerns:
TELEPHONE: 510/885-4511
EMAIL: june.barber@csueastbay.edu

Saved as:

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