Revision of Writing Programs Office Hours Policy

Approved by Writing Programs Committee 04/26/17

Rationale for Revisions

Writing Programs teachers have expressed a desire for greater clarity of requirements regarding location and spaces appropriate for conducting office hours. CLAS policy (which aligns with ASU university policy, known as the ACD) states:

> Every instructor who teaches courses is expected to be available to students outside of class on a reasonable and regular basis. The availability should be stated in the syllabus. On campus course instructors should also be available by appointment for students who cannot meet during posted office hours. On campus faculty with an office location other than where courses are taught should make arrangements to offer office hours or meet students on the campus where courses are taught. (Accessed here: [http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd305-05.html](http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd305-05.html))

English department policy (the DEN) dictates:

> At the beginning of each semester, faculty and TAs should schedule realistic office hours that students and colleagues can rely on. In general, faculty and TAs keep at least two office hours per course per week but should consider the particular needs of their courses and students in setting hours. Faculty and TAs should notify the main office of any changes in office hours. (Accessed here: [http://www.asu.edu/clas/asuenglish/facspace/deptmanual/den301.htm](http://www.asu.edu/clas/asuenglish/facspace/deptmanual/den301.htm))

In addition, empirical and anecdotal data suggests that the office hours policy could better meet the needs of Writing Programs teachers and students. Workspace Survey data collected in Fall 2016 indicates that many Writing Programs teachers conduct a portion of their office hours at a variety of on-campus spaces. However, there are no clearly stated policies in either the ACD or the DEN regarding this behavior. Further, the Workspace Survey data indicates Writing Programs teachers are on campus, and thus able to hold office hours, mostly around mid-day but students are often in class at this time and therefore unable to attend office hours scheduled during this period. The final rationale for revising the Office Hour Policy is because students increasingly perform their educational tasks online, including consulting their instructors.

The task force proposes the following clarification be made to the existing Writing Programs office hours policy. This revised policy aligns with University and Departmental standards, accounts for the changing spaces, actual and virtual, that Writing Programs teachers and students utilize, and is in accordance with teacher behavior as revealed by the Workspace Survey. Finally, it provides Writing Programs teachers more agency and flexibility to meet the needs of their students.
The following revisions are tentative. The task force will revisit the policy during the Spring 2017 semester and assess whether it serves Writing Programs pedagogical goals. If necessary, the policy will be further revised.

Writing Programs Office Hours Policy

At the beginning of each semester, Writing Programs teachers should schedule realistic office hours that students and colleagues can rely on. In general, teachers keep two scheduled office hours per section per week, but office hours do not need to exceed four hours per week. Teachers should consider the particular needs of their courses and students in setting hours.

When teaching face-to-face or hybrid courses, at least half of these office hours should be conducted in the teacher’s assigned departmental office space. Remaining office hours can be held in assigned office space, other on-campus locations, or through online platforms (i.e., email, discussion boards, Skype, Google Hangouts, etc.) at the teacher’s discretion. The location of office hours not conducted in assigned office spaces should be consistent and clearly stated in the syllabus. Instructions for students to access office hours should be provided in the syllabus. Other on-campus locations used should be as private and as accessible as assigned offices. Specific accessibility challenges can be addressed by the student(s) and teacher on a case-by-case basis.

Office hours, location, and access instructions (as described in the syllabus) should be reported to the Writing Programs and the English Department at the beginning of the semester. Writing Programs teachers should notify Writing Programs and the English Department of any changes in office hours.