

## GETTING FEEDBACK ON YOUR WRITING

### Possible Sources:

- Your professor (an expert reader)
- A Graduate Assistant (a semi-expert reader)
- A classmate (a familiar and knowledgeable reader)
- Your roommate/friend/family member (an interested but not familiar reader)
- A tutor at the Student Success Center

### Questions to Consider:

- **The beginning/idea stage:** Do I understand the assignment? Are my strategies for approaching this assignment effective? How can I discover the best way to develop my ideas into a draft? How long should it be? What kinds of sources should I use? Do I have to answer all of the questions on the assignment sheet or are they just prompts to get me thinking? Are some parts of the assignment more important than other parts?
- **Outline/thesis:** I have an idea about what I want to argue, but I'm not sure if it is an appropriate or complete response to this assignment. Is the way I'm planning to organize my ideas working? Does it look like I'm covering all the bases? Do I have a clear main point? Do I know what I want to say to the reader?
- **Rough draft:** Have I proven my thesis statement? Is the evidence convincing? Is it explained clearly? Have I given the reader enough information? Does the information seem to be in the right order? What kinds of contextual information are appropriate for the introduction and conclusion?
- **Early polished draft:** Are the transitions between my ideas smooth and effective? Do my sentences make sense individually? Is my understanding of the course material accurate? Where else could I look for more information? Do I have a point? Does my argument make sense? Is it logical and consistent? Is it supported by sufficient evidence?
- **Late or final polished draft:** Are my ideas organized logically or could they be rearranged? Does the reader need to know anything else up front? Does the introduction prepare the reader for what comes later? Do my topic sentences accurately reflect the content of my paragraphs? Do I have effective transitions? Does my conclusion tie my argument together well? Is my writing style appealing? Are there any noticeable spelling or grammar errors? Is my formatting the correct style? Do I use the passive voice too often? Am I using commas correctly? Do I have problems with subject-verb agreement? Is there anything I should change at the last minute?
- **After the fact:** How should I interpret the comments on my paper? What else might I have done to strengthen this paper? What can I learn as a writer about this writing experience? What should I do the next time I have to write a paper?

## **Using Your Feedback:**

- Don't be intimidated if your professor or GA has written a lot on your paper. Some people will simply provide more feedback than others.
- If you receive feedback before the paper is due, think about what you can and can't do before the deadline. If you have time to make major changes, then go for it. But if you have two other papers to write and all three are due tomorrow, you'll have to prioritize your revisions.
- Read ALL of the feedback that you get, even if you received a satisfactory grade. Doing so may help you see patterns of error in your writing that you need to address and help improve your writing.
- If you don't understand the feedback you receive, ask the person who offered it. Feedback that you don't understand is feedback that you cannot benefit from, so ask for clarification when you need it.
- Ultimately, the paper you turn in will be your own. You have the final responsibility for its form and content. Take the responsibility for being the final judge of what should and should not be done with your essay.

## **For additional information, check out these books located in Salmon Library:**

- *Academic Writing for Graduate Students, 3rd Edition: Essential Tasks and Skills*
  - John M. Swales & Christine B. Feak
- *Grammar Choices for Graduate and Professional Writers*
  - Nigel Caplan
- *Navigating Academia: Writing Supporting Genres*
  - John M. Swales & Christine B. Feak
- *Learning the Literacy Practices of Graduate School: Insiders' Reflections on Academic Enculturation* Christine Pearson Casanave and Xiaoming Li
- *Academic Writing in a Global Context: The Politics and Practices of Publishing in English*
  - Theresa Lillis and Mary Jane Curry
- *Academic Writing in a Second or Foreign Language: Issues and Challenges Facing ESL/EFL Academic Writers in Higher Education Contexts*
  - Ramona Tang

For more help, visit a [writing tutor](#). All appointments are available in-person at the Student Success Center, located in the Library, or online.