**How to Identify Students Who Would Benefit From Additional Support**

Often, students who could benefit from additional writing support do not actively seek it. Reaching out to these students with an invitation to office hours, to chat with a TA, or to visit a writing centre or similar campus resource can be helpful, as long as you are careful not to imply a deficit when making your recommendation.

Remember, too, that most learning support services are intended to work with students at all stages, so the recommendation to visit a writing centre or learning commons can only benefit your students, even those who are already strong writers.

The following questions will help you determine if a student could use some additional support in understanding assignments or completing the writing process satisfactorily.

* **Does the student communicate their ideas clearly in writing? Does the student communicate ideas clearly when speaking?**
	+ If the student communicates their ideas clearly when speaking about them, but lacks clarity in writing, a couple of sessions with a writing centre tutor or coach will be helpful. A lack of clarity in both areas might indicate that the student would benefit from a meeting with an academic coach or other higher-level service.
* **Does the organization of the paper reflect the progression of the student’s ideas?**
	+ If there are serious issues with organization, the issue is likely with the student’s writing process. A referral to the writing centre/learning commons would be helpful.
* **Does the student make consistent patterns of error?**
	+ If a student’s work is full of the same type(s) of error – issues with verb conjugation, sentence fragments, etc. – that is an indication that the student would benefit from a review of the structures of written English. The writing centre/learning commons or English department will have resources that will benefit the student.
* **Does the student interact with source material appropriately and in a way that demonstrates understanding of the ideas of the material and the author’s intent?**
	+ If you notice any issues with how students interact with source material, it is a good idea to address them immediately, either through detailed comments and the provision of resources or via a referral to a support service. Even if the issue is a one-time occurrence, students are often unaware that they are misreading texts until it is too late. Pointing them towards resources that will help with reading comprehension, either generally or with texts in their field\*, is a good idea.
* Does the student have the same, recurring problems in all essay assignments?
	+ If a student’s work does not change or improve in response to your feedback, it is a good idea to let them know that you notice this. A referral to a learning support service will help, as will an invitation to office hours in case the issue lies in the student’s understanding of the feedback.
* Does the student respond to writing prompts and assignment sheets appropriately/as expected?
	+ An invitation to office hours may be the best course of action in this case; the student may be having issues understanding the expectations of the assignment and may need encouragement to ask questions. You may want to refer them to this page on ‘How to Approach Instructors’.
* Does the student cite outside sources as needed?
	+ If a student has any issues with citation, even if those issues are relatively minor, they should be addressed immediately to ensure that they don’t continue or escalate. Refer the student to the writing centre or point them toward the resources on ‘Integrating and Citing Sources’ and ‘Avoiding Plagiarism’.

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\* Often, the issue comes from a student’s lack of familiarity with the language used in a particular discipline or their lack of experience with reading in a certain genre. For example, scientific jargon can be especially confusing, whereas phrasing/wording can differ greatly within sub-disciplines (e.g. “proving” hypotheses/theories sometimes appears in physics literature but very rarely in biology sources).