Purpose: To articulate the administrative and programmatic mission of the Writing Studio in the context of ECSU’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

Prepared by:

Dr. Vandana S. Gavaskar

QEP Writing Studio Director
Table of Contents:

1. Institutional Mission
2. The Purpose of the QEP Writing Studio
3. Philosophical and Historical Contexts
4. QEP Writing Studio Staff: Roles and Responsibilities
5. Semester Timeline and Day to Day Operations
6. Students FAQ
7. Writing Studio Ethics

1. **Institutional Mission:**

   Through teaching, research, and community engagement, Elizabeth City State University provides a student-centered environment, delivered in a manner that enhances student learning, while preparing its graduates for leadership roles and lifelong learning. The university is also a leader in facilitating sustainable economic growth, while safeguarding the unique culture and natural resources of the region. (from ECSU’s Mission Statement 2009-2014 [http://www.ecsu.edu/about/index.cfm](http://www.ecsu.edu/about/index.cfm))

ECSU’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is developed in the context of the institute’s mission plan which values the specific needs and cultural contexts of the community served by ECSU, and emphasizes a student-centered environment.

Institutional research conducted in the form of surveys, focus groups and workshops in the ECSU community identified “academic writing” as a critical focus for the success of the institute’s mission. Appendix II of the QEP states: “The proposed plan will emphasize improving academic writing skills in redesigned *freshman year* courses taken during the first and second semesters. The specific courses considered for redesigning are GE 102 English Composition and Grammar and GE 103 English Composition and Vocabulary ([http://www.ecsu.edu/sacs/docs/qep.pdf](http://www.ecsu.edu/sacs/docs/qep.pdf)).
2. The Purpose of the QEP Writing Studio:

The QEP Writing Studio, a newly-renovated and state of the art center, is located on the first floor of Johnson Hall. It consists of a collaborative learning space for tutoring and workshop sessions and a computer-enhanced environment for digital and distance learning. For ECSU students, the QEP Writing Studio serves as a concrete embodiment of ECSU’s commitment to the academic and writing success of its students.

Its primary purpose is to enhance the institutional mission of student-centered learning and ECSU’s QEP focus of “academic writing” by:

1. Providing a welcoming space for scheduled and walk-in tutoring sessions with trained writing consultants for ECSU students engaged in any stage of academic writing assignments. The QEP Writing Studio also provides online tutoring services particularly geared toward distance learning. It is a planned requirement for students in GE 102/103.

2. Serving as a Learning Resource Center for the transition to college writing by providing onsite materials relevant to student learning and academic success and regular workshops. These include such topics as writing and revising processes, grammar in the context of writing and revising, research methods, incorporating and evaluating sources, plagiarism and intellectual property and other topics responsive to the needs of the students.

3. Assessing impact of the QEP Writing Studio on the academic writing success of ECSU students by studying the immediate and cumulative impact of tutoring and collaborative learning. The QEP Writing Studio will strive to learn about ECSU students as multi-dimensional learners who have specific strengths (and weaknesses) as academic writers and critical thinkers. Identifying and building on these strengths in a purposeful way, the QEP Writing Studio will document and research successful strategies for academic enhancement, developing and enhancing strategies.

4. Sponsoring university-wide workshops for ECSU faculty about academic writing in disciplinary contexts focused on such Writing Across the Curriculum and Writing in the Disciplines topics as: why include writing in my courses; how to avoid “lousy” writing; what is writing to learn; how to improve research proposals; how to develop effective peer response and collaborative writing and other topics that build on academic enrichment and professionalization through academic writing.

In sum, the QEP Writing Studio creates a dynamic presence for the pedagogy, practice and research on academic writing in the context of identifiable and demonstrable results. It will initiate and sustain academic writing practices as purposeful recursive processes based on writing, rewriting and editing in the context of specific academic genres and disciplines. It will use Socratic methods of
inquiry that privilege the self-development of students at the center of pedagogy, research, and of assessment.

3. Philosophical and Historical Contexts:

Writing Centers, Accessibility, Remediation and Accountability:

As more and more centers opened in 1970s and 1980s, the preferred term became center. Centers meant, according to Harris, people with people. As centers, these spaces, in North’s words, sought to become "the centers of consciousness about writing on campus, a kind of physical locus for the ideas and ideals of college or university …or writing." Harris noted that centers were often cast in "nurturing, nutritive analogies… [seen as] nurturing, helping spaces which provide assistance to other writing centers and sustenance to students to help them grow, mature, and become independent."

(Susan Waller. A Brief History of Writing Centers, 2002 http://www.newfoundations.com/History/WritingCtr.html#Intro)

Table 1: Historical Changes in Writing Centers based on Accessibility and Accountability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1960s-70s</th>
<th>1970s—1980s</th>
<th>1980s- Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labs/Clinics</td>
<td>Program specific Centers</td>
<td>University Centers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Writing Centers established in response to open admission policies in higher education | Writing Centers increase roles and presence as majors and disciplines make greater rhetorical demands on students | Although centered on student learning, Writing Centers create accountability based on student-centered research and institutional assessment. |

Historically, writing centers in higher education have responded to increased accessibility in higher education and to the resultant diversity of students. In the 1960s many universities instituted open admission policies that created a diversity of academic preparation among students who were veterans, and first generation students. Perceived needs for remediation from within and without (Silberman, C.E, Crisis in The Classroom, The Remaking of American Education. 1971) also resulted in the creation of labs or clinics where underprepared students sought to meet the standards of University writing.
While dealing with the diverse needs of students, writing centers have responded to the increased complexity of academic and professional rhetorical demands made on students in a complex technological and global world. The increasing variety of disciplines and specializations, and of academic/professional discourses coupled with the increasing diversity of students expand the role of writing centers far beyond the role of remediation based on “skills and drills.” A third factor increasingly in play is the public and political focus on student under preparedness which highlights poor student reading and writing skills and creates increased accountability for institutions of higher learning. The stakes are high and writing centers have expanded their functions to include all students (not just those labeled as remedial), and to provide many levels of service.

### Table 2: Expanding Role and Presence of Writing Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual and group tutorials on specific writing assignments with individual students.</th>
<th>Workshops on topics related to student centered writing pedagogy.</th>
<th>Writing Across the Curriculum and Faculty training workshops.</th>
<th>Community Outreach and Literacy</th>
<th>Research and Assessment of student learning environments.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Writing Centers as Contexts of Institutionalized Collaboration:**

Although the writing center can be one of the few places where a specific skill can be learned, it is increasingly contextualized by institutionalized collaboration between students (peer review), tutors (tutor training programs), and faculty (first year writing programs and writing across the disciplines). Thus writing centers function in the context of formalized and shared knowledge which has transformed the culture of informal collaboration between students and between faculty. The individualized approaches to instruction and anecdotal experience of students have been transformed by institutional research and collaborative pedagogy.
4. QEP Writing Studio Staff and Administrative Structure

The Chancellor
Elizabeth City State University

Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Assessment
Elizabeth City State University

QEP Writing Studio Director

QEP Writing Studio Writing Specialist

Dedicated QEP Faculty Learning and Resource Support

QEP Writing Studio Graduate Tutors

Technology Support

QEP Writing Studio Peer Tutors

Administrative Support

Administrative Support

Technology Support
QEP Writing Studio Director: Dr. Vandana S. Gavaskar

The QEP Writing Studio Director is the key administrator responsible for developing a comprehensive writing center pedagogy manifested in the day to day operations of the QEP Writing Studio including tutoring, workshops, university-wide efforts, and assessments. The mission of philosophy of the QEP Writing Studio is supported by the training, professionalization, and evaluation of tutors. This is accomplished by a course on Rhetoric and Composition related to writing and tutoring pedagogy taught by the Director and the observation and comprehensive evaluations of tutors. Programmatic collaboration with faculty about the redesigned GE 102 and 103 will guide the tutoring, workshops and other activities of the QEP Writing Studio.

The QEP Writing Studio Director is responsible for training, evaluating and hiring adequately prepared tutors who have studied writing center pedagogy in the context of writing process pedagogy; gained practical experience with tutoring and reflective practice of tutoring, and been professionalized by the academic and collaborative culture of the Writing Studio. The QEP Writing Studio Director is responsible for the orientation and continued professionalization of tutors based on weekly meetings, observations and evaluations, and on-going research about the tutoring techniques most effective for ECSU students.

The QEP Writing Studio Director serves as a liaison for faculty and students promoting a culture of academic writing, by expanding the role of the QEP Writing Studio as a Learning Resource Center for faculty and students alike.

The QEP Writing Studio Director supports the assessment of the QEP under the direction of the office of the Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Assessment.

Writing Specialist: Ms. Jenna Miller

The Writing Specialist is responsible for supporting the administration of the Writing Studio. The Assistant Director creates and maintains a schedule for tutors and for students enrolled in 102 and 103 who are required to utilize the tutoring and workshop services of the QEP Writing Studio.

The Writing Specialist will maintain and organize data on a daily and weekly basis including tutoring reports and client information utilizing Accutrak. She will generate reports as needed.

The Writing Specialist will create and maintain workshop schedules, weekly staff meetings, mentoring of tutors, and the QEP Writing Studio’s web presence.

The Writing Specialist will pursue professional goals related to the QEP Writing Studio including presentations at meetings and professional conferences, grant writing, and report writing.
Administrative Support: Ms. Keisha Hill

- Responsible for daily opening and closing of QEP Writing Studio and for the security of the premises using surveillance technology.
- Processing paperwork for the employment and monitoring timesheets of Writing Studio staff.
- Ordering supplies and materials as needed.

Technology Support: Mr. Michael Pugh

- Maintaining the web presence of the QEP Writing Studio.
- Serving as technology support for Blackboard platform, online tutoring, ACCUTRAK, Criterion, and SMARTTHINKING.
- Offering workshops to QEP faculty and students on a regular basis.

Dedicated QEP Faculty: Learning and Assessment Support:

As faculty with experience in the field of Rhetoric and Composition, they support the pedagogical and assessment goals of the QEP.

Dedicated QEP faculty will help support the Learning Resource goals of the QEP Writing Studio by helping generate handouts and other support materials which can be used by tutors, faculty and by students.

Dedicated QEP Faculty will help to maintain a professional and collaborative environment by engaging students, tutors and faculty in discussions about the successes and challenges of students.

Dedicated QEP Faculty will provide continuity for the First Year Writing Program (FYWP) creating and maintaining programmatic, evaluative, and illustrative documents that articulate the pedagogical and assessment goals of the FYWP. They will serve as resources for faculty who teach in the FYWP and who may not be as familiar with writing process pedagogy in general and with the field of Rhetoric and Composition in particular.

Each QEP faculty member will spend a minimum of 10 hours a week in the QEP Writing Studio to serve as a resource for faculty, for tutors and for ECSU students.

Graduate Tutors:
Successful ECSU graduates are in the unique position of identifying and responding to the challenges faced by current ECSU students. They will draw upon their successful experiences with writing in a variety of ECSU contexts to tutor students who are making the transition from high school to college.

Graduate tutors will tutor students on a regular basis and serve as mentors and role models. They will help in maintaining tutor reports and other relevant data. They will participate in ongoing projects and workshops including visiting 102/103 classes to talk about the role and services of the QEP Writing Studio. They will serve as online tutors and help students utilize online services and programs.

Graduate tutors will pursue professionalization by participating in staff meetings and in professional Writing Center conferences. They will maintain a blog and newsletter which reflects the pedagogy of tutoring, and write professionally reviewed scholarly articles in such journals as The Writing Center Journal, Praxis, Academic Exchange Quarterly, Writing Lab Newsletter among others.

**Peer Tutors:**

Successful ECSU students are encouraged to be peer undergraduate tutors in the QEP Writing Studio. Peer tutors will take a course in Rhetoric and Composition, observe and tutor in the Writing Studio, and create tutor portfolios consisting of reflective, observational and research projects about writing process pedagogy and peer tutoring in writing centers across the nation.

Peer tutors, a significant group of students pursuing undergraduate research across the nation will pursue professionalization by participating in staff meetings and in professional Writing Center conferences including the National Peer Writing Conference. They will maintain a blog and newsletter which reflects the pedagogy of tutoring, and write professionally reviewed scholarly articles in such journals as The Writing Center Journal, Praxis, Academic Exchange Quarterly, and Writing Lab Newsletter among others.

The QEP Writing Studio will seek to hire and maintain a stable and dedicated staff of students who will actively create continuity and serve as ambassadors for the QEP Writing Studio among the ECSU students. They will actively promote a culture of academic writing on our residential campus and generate enthusiasm for its work.

**5. Semester Timeline and Day to Day Operations**

The operating hours if the QEP Writing Studio are: 9-4 Monday through Friday.
There are 9 sessions daily of 45 minutes each and approximately 36-45 sessions a day with 3-4 tutors scheduled to work daily

9:00-9:45; 9:45-10:30; 10:30-11:15; 11:15-12:00; 12:00-12:45; 12:45-1:30; 1:30-2:15; 12:15-3:00; 3:00-3:45 (3:45-4:00 closing procedures and bookkeeping)

There are 45 sessions a week. 3-4 tutors work simultaneously will provide approximately 140-160 sessions weekly.

Three graduate tutors and 7 peer tutors are hired to work 10 hours a week.

160 45 minute sessions of tutoring a week for 14 weeks will lead to approximately 2240 45 minute sessions of tutoring a semester.

There are approximately 13-16 sections of GE 102 and GE 103 that have a maximum enrollment of 20/25 students. 325-375 students enrolled in 102/103 are require to have at least 2 sessions each a semester (650-750)

Online tutoring hours: 5:00-8:00 Monday-Friday.

Live synchronous sessions will be conducted online by 3 tutors each evening.

5:00-5:45; 5:45-6:30; 6:30-7:15; 7:15-8:00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline for QEP Writing Studio</th>
<th>Faculty Resources and Services housed in the QEP Writing Studio</th>
<th>ECSU Student Resources and Tutoring Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Semester and Faculty Institute</td>
<td>QEP Faculty Workshops</td>
<td>Writing Studio Staff Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tutor Schedules for semester and Accuttrak Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 and 2</td>
<td>Grammar Pre-Tests and Criterion Essays</td>
<td>Regularly Scheduled Face to Face and Online Tutoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>102/103 Class Visits to Studio</td>
<td>Staff meeting and Writing Studio Projects Assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 3-6</td>
<td>Blackboard and Technology Workshops</td>
<td>Regularly Scheduled Face to Face and Online Tutoring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Student FAQ

What is the QEP Writing Studio and how is it related to my GE 102 and GE 103 course?

As students in GE 102/103, your academic writing success is central to the university’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The writing that you produce in 102 and 103 will be assessed and analyzed so that the university can concretely demonstrate success in student writing as a group, over semesters and over years. Your grammar and essay writing skills will also be tested as your progress from the beginning to the middle and end of the semester. To support this growth and development, the GE 102/103 instructors have designed common course philosophies and approaches to teaching writing, reading, and grammar. The QEP Writing Studio will support these efforts through the semester and beyond.

The QEP Writing Studio is a Learning Resource Center that offers tutoring sessions (both face to face and online) that are required of all students and workshops to help you break down complex reading and writing assignments requiring specific academic writing conventions: tone, point of view, genre, and audience. The administrators and staff of the QEP Writing Studio will work closely with your instructors and with the requirements of your assignments which are based on
a common approach and philosophy developed by QEP faculty and administrators. Because the QEP Writing Studio will work with all students in 102 and 103, and have planned the assignments and expectations of your assignments, all students will benefit from both instruction and tutoring.

To be successful in GE 102 and GE 103, you will need to work on your reading, writing and research skills regularly, meeting deadlines for drafts and revisions and working with your instructors and tutors, and with the rubrics designed to evaluate each assignment. The QEP Writing Studio will offer workshops that deal with topics that will help you to meet all the demands that we will make of you as student writers including developing a thesis; supporting your writing with arguments and analysis and with research; revising a draft based on comments and rubrics; researching and incorporating research, and recognizing intentional and unintentional plagiarism.

Writing in 102/103 will be submitted on Blackboard, on Safe Assign (a plagiarism detection tool) and in an electronic portfolio. You will also be using an online writing assessment program Criterion, taking grammar tests on Blackboard and using online tools for online tutoring. The QEP Writing Studio will offer workshops on these requirements as well as serve as a resource center.

How do I make an appointment?

All students enrolled in GE 102 and 103 are part of our database in the QEP Writing Studio. In collaboration with your instructor, we will set up required tutoring appointments for you, and invite you to make additional appointments. We will track your progress on our software, and send tutoring reports to your instructor. We will also log your attendance at workshops, the resources that you use, and any computer instruction that we provide you.

What can I expect at my appointment? What should I bring with me?

When you come for your appointment, you will be greeted by QEP Writing Studio staff and by your tutor. You will sign up at the reception area and fill out a form about your goals for the session. Students should bring a draft, the assignment, and the rubric by which they will be graded. If your rough draft has comments, you should bring that with you so that we can help you identify areas for improvement.

The tutor will focus on your experience and process with working on your assignment and offer some strategies by which you can improve and develop your paper. He or she will work with you, offer you resources housed in the center, and answer any questions or concerns that you have. They may ask you questions about your essay so that you are able to identify what you
will need to work with. Tutoring can help writers at any stage of the writing process, but it is advisable to work with a tutor well before an essay is graded.

A writing administrator, Ben Rafoth describes what happens in a tutoring session in his chapter “Why Visit Your University Writing Center?” He writes:

Tutors try to focus on things that are important to the writer: the challenge of the assignment, the ideas there seem to be no words for, the little editing stuff that attracts red ink. Tutors encourage writers to take notes and start writing when the ideas begin to flow. Tutors are usually paid by the hour, so they’ll wait while you write. The important thing is to build enough momentum so that when you go home to finish the paper, you’ll already be on a roll. (*Writing Spaces*, 148)

*Will the tutor help me “fix” my paper?*

A widely practiced philosophy of Writing Centers is the goal to make “better writers not better writing.” This means that we will help you to develop strengths in academic writing by focusing on larger concerns of focus, organization, and development, rather than specific exercises that may or may not lead to improvement in writing. We will, of course, help you to work on editing concerns such as grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation and offer a Grammar Hotline online where you can ask us to provide you with specific questions, but our larger task is to provide you with adequate contexts for academic writing which focus on genre and discipline, and on the writing and revising process.

*How will my session be reported to my instructor?*

We will email a report to your instructor after each visit which will briefly describe what we worked on and what we will work on during your next session.

*How many sessions should I sign up for?*

You are required to schedule at least 2 sessions during the semester. You may sign up for more sessions, but no more than one session a week. You are, of course, welcome to “walk-in” and to work with any tutor that happens to be free.

*What happens if I cannot make a session?*

Please let us know well in advance. Because resources are limited and there are many students that need our services, we will penalize “no-shows” by informing instructors and not allowing students to schedule appointments.

*What if I do not get an A after I visit the center?*

Although students will become stronger writers as a result of tutoring, they are responsible for revising and developing their papers in a timely manner. Tutoring does not and cannot take the
place of individual students acting on the advice of instructors and tutors to revise papers in response to assignment demands and academic conventions.

Can I drop-off my paper to be “fixed”?  

No. That would be considered a form of academic dishonesty. We are here to help you learn about developing, editing, and revising processes. Collaboration and conversation is integral to the learning process and documents that you did all the work required for your paper.

Why should “good students” go to the Writing Studio?  

Writing Studios have historically expanded their role of teaching specific skills to working as a resource center for academic writing which has grown more complex with new majors and disciplines. Good students can benefit equally from the resources offered by Writing Centers and benefit from collaborative learning emphasized in academic and professional life.

What are the computers in the QEP Writing Studio for?  

The computer in the QEP Writing Studio will be used for the primary purpose of workshops; QEP testing, and one-on-one consultations. They will be reserved for specific classes and groups of students and are not available for individual work. These workshops will be simultaneous with the tutoring that will be held from 9:00-5:00 M-F. They will have a sign-up schedule maintained by the QEP Writing Studio Administrators. Your instructor will provide you with information about these workshops.

7. QEP Writing Studio Ethics  

a) Focus on Student: The QEP Writing Studio staff will focus on the student as a writer and the writing they are working on, rather than the grade, the instructor, or the assignment.

b) Professional Courtesy: They will treat each ECSU student with professional courtesy and empathy and create a collaborative conversation rather than instructing students on what to do, or what they would do if it was their paper. To then end, they will not significantly edit the student’s writing. They may help the student to identify “trademark errors” and teach them how to edit, using an example or two.

c) Not Doing Students’ Work for Them: They will not in any way, shape, or form, do the students’ work for them, or write any part of the paper. In fact, they will encourage students to take ownership of their writing and academic writing goals and to develop writing processes that are successful for them. Tutors and staff will strive to know the students as writers and to make suggestions for them.
d) *Maintaining Professional Relationships with Students:* All interactions between students and tutors will occur in the context of Writing Studio sessions be they online or face to face. Tutors should not work with students on their own time, or encourage students to send them papers via email. They will maintain professional interactions with students and refrain from “dating” students who are their clients.

e) *Netiquette and Timely Communication:* Writing Studio will communicate with instructors about sessions or assignments in a professional and timely manner. They will follow the netiquette of subject line, proper address and appropriate identification. All reports should be written in complete and grammatically-correct fashion. Requests for information may be made through the Director or Assistant Director.

f) *Full and Honest Disclosure about Tutoring Sessions:* Tutors will maintain detailed and up-to-date account of all sessions, being honest about successes and challenges.

g) *Use of Student Writing:* The QEP Writing Studio will not use student writing for any purposes without their express and informed consent. This relates to student examples of assignments, as well as essays used for research and professional presentation purposes.

8. **Tutor Session Log (see attached document)**