



SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Program Director, Writing Support
Academic Resource Center

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Dear Parents and Families,

The semester is just getting started here at Tufts, but students are already busy writing papers for their classes and personal statements for applications. As the Program Director for [Writing Support](#) in the Academic Resource Center, I hear a lot of students — from first-year undergraduates to doctoral candidates — express insecurity about their writing. I also hear a lot of misconceptions about writing: that getting help with it is a sign of weakness or lack of preparation, that it's something you need to do alone, that it isn't an important skill for STEM students, that everything you need to know you should have already learned in high school. It is my passion and privilege to spend my days debunking these myths and helping students to develop not only stronger writing skills, but a more robust process for writing. I'm writing today to provide you with an overview of some of the supports and resources available to your student writer.

In the ARC writing programs, we believe that academic and professional writing are inherently collaborative, because they always involve a writer and a reader. It's my job to provide access for every Tufts student to skilled, experienced readers who can work with student writers to develop, strengthen, and organize their ideas into complex papers. We ask questions instead of dictating changes, because we believe that talking through your ideas is especially clarifying, and because we believe students have the right to make choices about their writing. We encourage students to cultivate a writing process that involves exportation and deep revision in addition to the kind of surface-level editing they may be more accustomed to. And we help students understand what it means to write for different situations and disciplines, because writing is not the same in every subject area — and yes, even chemists, engineers, and doctors benefit from good written communication skills.

Tufts students might encounter ARC writing support through the [Writing Fellows Program](#). Students enrolled in these specially-designated classes are required to meet with Writing Fellows — or undergraduate peer writing tutors — to discuss their papers for those courses, no matter what the student's experience or background may be. Requiring these meetings

sends a clear message that individual feedback is a crucial part of improving your writing, no matter your level of expertise. Indeed, every professor has a trusted editor or reader they turn to when trying to publish their research! The Writing Fellows Program normalizes the practice of collaborating with a peer, and builds in extra time outside of class for focused review and revision.

We're proud to be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Writing Fellows Program this year! We are also currently recruiting new writing fellows for the fall semester. If your child is a first-year, sophomore, or junior and enjoys writing and revision, you might encourage them to [apply to be a Writing Fellow](#). Applications are due February 10.

Of course, the Writing Fellows Program cannot reach every Tufts student, due to the fact that it is tied to specific courses. Students who want to engage with their writing in other classes can meet with a [Graduate Writing Consultant](#). Many students initially encounter writing consultants while enrolled in their first-year writing requirement, and indeed, writing consultants are skilled at supporting students in the transition from high-school to college-level writing. Yet we support students throughout their college career, as every new writing situation offers new opportunities and challenges, and we work with students no matter where they are in their process. In addition to assisting students with their writing for any course they may be enrolled in — from anthropology to WGS and everything in between — we can also work with them on personal statements for fellowships, scholarships, professional or graduate school, and other applications. We also offer group sessions and workshops, as well as special programming for [senior honors thesis writers](#), including Saturday Write-In events.

Writing is one of the most intellectually challenging assignments students are asked to complete, and every writer can improve with feedback and guidance along the way. We hope you will encourage your child to explore the writing support offered through the ARC. We are excited to work with them!

Kristina Aikens
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