COMMONLY USED REVISION TERMS

This handout will define common revision terms used in the writing process.

APA Formatting refers to the formatting guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association for scientific writing and advanced research.

⇒ If you ask for assistance in this area, a Writing Assistant will comment on ways to improve the formatting of your paper so it adheres to APA guidelines. This includes the title page, the headings for the remaining pages, section headings, in-text citations, and references.

Chicago Formatting refers to the humanities citation format that philosophy, history, and political science courses often use.

⇒ If you ask for assistance in this area, a Writing Assistant will comment on how to format your paper in Chicago style. This includes the title page, the headings for the remaining pages, section headings, footnotes, and bibliography.

Clarity refers to how clear and direct your writing is.

⇒ If you ask for assistance in this area, a Writing Assistant will comment with ways to improve clarity. For example, he/she may suggest moving from old to new information, using transitions, using active voice, using parallel structure, choosing action verbs, and avoiding unclear pronoun references.

Development refers to how you choose to provide supporting details for your main ideas.

⇒ If you ask for assistance in this area, a Writing Assistant will comment on areas that require more specific information or concrete examples to help sustain your argument.

Grammar refers to the system in any language with rules and mechanics that influence the writing of clauses, phrases, and words.

⇒ If you ask for assistance in this area, a Writing Assistant could comment on independent and dependent clauses, fragments, punctuation, subject/verb agreement, pronoun/antecedent agreement, and tense consistency, for example.

MLA Formatting refers to the Modern Language Association’s formatting style most often used for citing literary research.

⇒ If you ask for assistance in this area, a Writing Assistant will comment on ways to format your paper according to MLA. This includes the first page layout, headings for the remaining pages, section headings in-text citations, and works cited.
**Organization** refers to how your paper is structured and how it progresses.

⇒ If you ask for assistance in this area, a Writing Assistant might comment offer help in a few ways. For example, he/she may comment on a paragraph that may not have a clear connection to the next. Too, the Writing Assistant could comment on information that may not be relevant to your thesis. The Writing Assistant may also provide advice for showing your audience how your ideas build and ask you questions about the current placement of your paragraphs.

**Sentence Structure** refers to how you set up your sentences with regard to grammar and clarity.

⇒ If you ask for assistance in this area, a Writing Assistant will focus on fragments, misplaced modifiers, and choppy/awkward phrases. Too, the Writing Assistant will suggest ways to improve your sentences, such as the use of conjunctions.

**Thesis Statement** refers to the part of your introduction that clearly states your argument or research and indicates the direction of your paper.

⇒ If you ask for assistance in this area, a Writing Assistant will comment on whether or not you have a thesis statement in place for your paper. The Writing Assistant may ask questions to help guide you in considering what your argument is and identifying the trajectory of your paper.

**Word Choice** refers to the vocabulary you use for writing your paper. It is also called “diction.”

⇒ If you ask for assistance in this area, a Writing Assistant will comment on words that may be informal, vague, or inaccurate. For example, the Writing Assistant may provide suggestions to replace the word or ask questions about what you intend to communicate in that particular sentence.