

Frequently Asked Questions – Online Writing Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020

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How to Access Online Tutoring

1. How can I book an online writing tutorial?

Online tutorials in writing can be booked the same way that onsite sessions and written feedback sessions were booked:

- **Visit** <https://my.metrostate.edu/my-apps/schedule-tutoring/>, log in or create an account, and then select any open block in the schedule (indicated by white boxes) to book a session. Enter the required information (Course Subject and Number, what you want to learn about), and upload the document you want to discuss and assignment instructions.
- **Call** our Front Desk staff during working hours at 651-793-1460. They can assist you in booking, modifying, or understanding more about your tutorials.
- **Email** our Front Desk staff during working hours at centerfolk@metrostate.edu. *Note: please allow about an hour for responses during working hours.*

2. I used CAE writing tutoring onsite. Can I call or email a tutor I've worked with before to get online help?

To preserve equity in our services, serve as many students as possible, and protect tutor's personal information, staff at the CAE **do not** use personal email or phone numbers for tutorials. All tutorials need to be booked through WOnline or by contacting our Front Desk staff (see answer to question 1).

Emails or phone calls directly to tutors will be redirected to Front Desk for follow-up. Please do not contact tutors to book tutorials or to seek help with writing outside of scheduled tutorials.

Types of Online Tutorials

3. What is the difference between written feedback (aka etutorial) and a Zoom (aka online) session?

We use "written feedback" to indicate an asynchronous (not live) writing tutorial and the term "Zoom session" to indicate a writing tutorial that takes place in real time (live) with a tutor, via the videoconferencing tool Zoom.

- Written feedback involves the student attaching a paper to their appointment. The tutor then reviews and adds marginal comments and a summary letter to this document. The student does not work in real-time

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with the tutor and interaction with the tutor is limited to the direction a student provides for what they would like to learn in the tutorial. Written feedback tutorials work best when the student has already drafted at least some material for the assignment.

- Zoom sessions involve the student meeting the tutor for a live 1-to-1 appointment in a Zoom meeting space. The student can share their paper with the tutor in this meeting space. The student can field questions about their assignment and discuss their work with a tutor in real-time, using audio or optionally video to communicate with a tutor. They closely emulate face-to-face sessions and are appropriate to use at any stage in the writing process.

4. Should I use written feedback or a Zoom session?

Both modes of tutoring are effective and provide quality feedback and learning. Our start-up guide provides guidance on when to use both kinds of sessions – see the “When to Use...” sections for both written feedback sessions (p.1) and online tutorials (p.3).

To summarize: written feedback tutorials are most effective when you already have text drafted, need feedback but can't be present in real-time, and/or respond best to written feedback.

Zoom sessions are effective at any point in the writing process and allow for discussion, require the student to be present to interact, and require audio (and optionally video) to conduct a session successfully.

5. How do I know if I've signed up for a written feedback session or Zoom session?

When logged into WCOonline and viewing the Writing Schedule (01), any of your tutorials will appear in yellow as part of the schedule grid. Click on the appointment you want to check to open the appointment dialog box.

The box underneath the tutor's profile will display the following: “MEET ON ZOOM OR RECEIVE WRITTEN FEEDBACK?”, in blue text. The red text that immediately follows this question indicates your type of tutorial, either “Written Feedback” or “Zoom Session.”

If the response reads “Zoom Session” in red, your tutorial is a Zoom session occurring in real-time. (See below example.)

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View Existing Appointment

Client Luke Morgan	
Appointment Date Monday, May 18, 2020 2:00pm to 3:00pm <small>[MARK MISSED]</small>	ZOOM SESSION <small>CREATED: May 18, 2020 12:19pm by Luke Morgan</small>
Staff or Resource Test Tutor 1	Post-Session Client Report Forms Add New or View Existing

MEET ON ZOOM OR RECEIVE WRITTEN FEEDBACK? ZOOM SESSION

Zoom sessions take place in real time and work much like onsite tutorials. They require audio and optionally, video. To enter your Zoom session, click the link above labeled "Join [tutor name] In Zoom". If prompted, accept any requests to open and run Zoom. The tutor will join you in the meeting space.

If the appointment says "Written Feedback" in purple, the appointment is a written feedback session (not in real-time), and you will need to attach a document to be tutored as well as the assignment instructions to complete the tutorial. (See below example).

View Existing Appointment

Client Luke Morgan	
Appointment Date Monday, May 18, 2020 2:00pm to 3:00pm <small>[MARK MISSED]</small>	WRITTEN FEEDBACK <small>CREATED: May 18, 2020 12:19pm by Luke Morgan</small> <small>LAST EDITED: May, 18, 2020 12:22pm</small>
Staff or Resource Test Tutor 1	Post-Session Client Report Forms Add New or View Existing

MEET ON ZOOM OR RECEIVE WRITTEN FEEDBACK? WRITTEN FEEDBACK

Written feedback appointments do not require the student to be available in real-time. They do not include interactive feedback. If you choose an written feedback appointment, upload your paper after making this appointment. Please attach your instructor's assignment instructions as well. Then, watch your email for notification that your appointment has been modified or that someone has responded to your paper.

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6. I am not signed up for the kind of tutorial I want to have. How do I change the mode of my tutorial?

Log in to WOnline and navigate to Schedule 01- Writing. Locate the appointment whose tutoring mode you want to change (your tutorials will show up as yellow blocks in the schedule). Click on the tutorial you wish to modify.

In the tutorial dialog box, click the blue “Edit appointment” button.

Look for the “Meet on Zoom or receive written feedback?” box (see example below).

The screenshot shows a dialog box for editing an appointment. At the top, it displays the appointment date as 'Monday, May 18, 2020' with two time dropdown menus set to '2:00pm' and '3:00pm'. Below this, the staff/resource is listed as 'Test Tutor 1 (81 Testbed Schedule)'. A grey box contains the text: 'APPOINTMENT LIMITS: Appointments must be between 0 hours and 2 hours in length.' The main section, titled 'Meet on Zoom or receive written feedback?', contains two radio button options. The first option, 'Yes. Schedule Written Feedback appointment.', is selected. Its description states that written feedback appointments do not require real-time availability and do not include interactive feedback. The second option is 'Yes. Schedule Zoom Session appointment.', with a description stating that Zoom sessions are real-time and require audio and optionally video.

Select either “Yes. Schedule Written feedback appointment” or “Yes. Schedule Zoom Session” as desired.

Before exiting the dialog box, click “Save Changes”.

Note: If you have issues logging in to WCO and need to change the format of your tutorial, email centerfolk@metrostate.edu with your request at least 30 minutes ahead of your scheduled session.

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Using Written Feedback Session

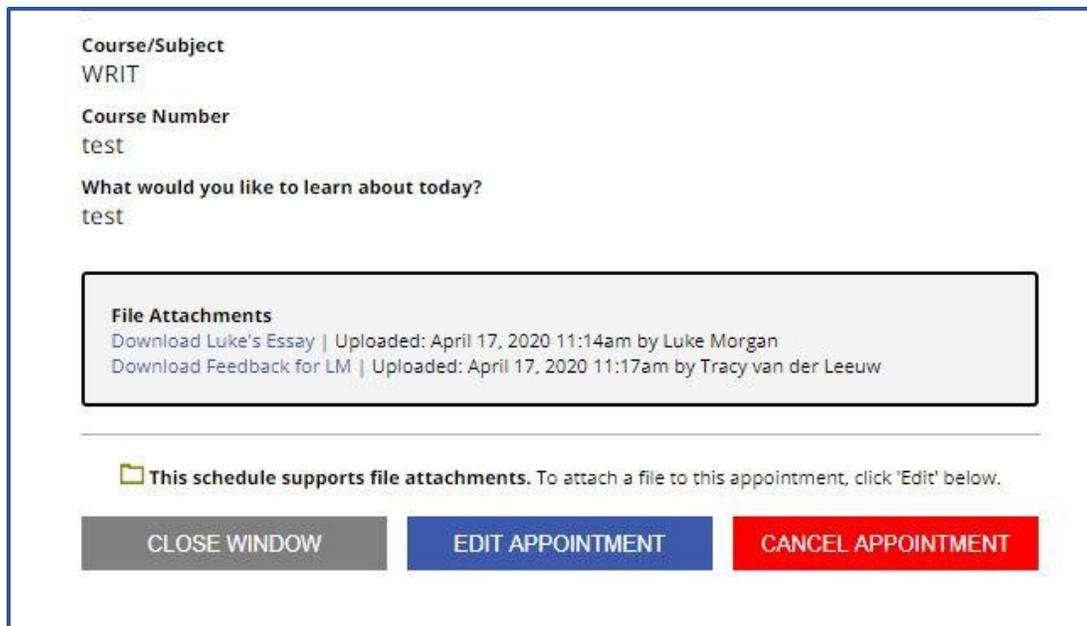
7. I had a written feedback session. Where can I find my feedback?

Feedback from written feedback sessions is created when the tutor adds marginal comments and a short summary letter to your existing document. Your feedback is attached to the appointment session in WOnline *and* emailed to you directly from WOnline as an attachment.

To access your feedback through email, watch for a new message arriving from WOnline with the subject "New File Available: Metropolitan State University Center for Academic Excellence". Note that Outlook sometimes sorts these messages automatically into your Other or even Junk folders, so be sure to check these folders when looking for feedback emails. Select the email and download the attachment to access your feedback from the tutor.

You can also always retrieve your feedback from your tutorial on WOnline. To do so, navigate to <https://my.metrostate.edu/my-apps/schedule-tutoring>, log in, and find the tutorial you want to access. Your tutorials always appear as yellow blocks in the schedule, but you may have to use the "Previous Week" button at the top of the schedule to find the correct day.

Click on your tutorial to open the session dialog box. Then, scroll to the bottom of the dialog box to display attached files (see example below). Click on the correct attachment link (in blue), usually labeled something like "Feedback for [Student Name]" to access your feedback.



The screenshot shows a dialog box with the following content:

- Course/Subject**: WRIT
- Course Number**: test
- What would you like to learn about today?**: test
- File Attachments**:
 - [Download Luke's Essay](#) | Uploaded: April 17, 2020 11:14am by Luke Morgan
 - [Download Feedback for LM](#) | Uploaded: April 17, 2020 11:17am by Tracy van der Leeuw

Below the attachments, there is a message:  This schedule supports file attachments. To attach a file to this appointment, click 'Edit' below.

At the bottom, there are three buttons: **CLOSE WINDOW** (grey), **EDIT APPOINTMENT** (blue), and **CANCEL APPOINTMENT** (red).

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8. I booked a written feedback session but never received any feedback from my tutor. What happened?

There are three possible reasons that you might not receive feedback immediately from a tutor if you booked for written feedback:

- **No document was attached** – if you booked a written feedback session but did not attach a Word document for the tutor to review and instructions for the assignment, the tutor was not able to complete the tutorial. You may have also received emails from Centerfolk with requests to attach, or may see an attached document in your tutorial from the tutor explaining that the document was missing. You may reschedule a session with the same or a different tutor to have your document reviewed. Be sure to attach both the document for review and instructions for the assignment to your new session.
- **The tutor is still working on your feedback** –All tutors strive to complete their sessions on time, but may occasionally be running a little behind schedule. If you check for your feedback a few minutes after the scheduled end of the session and don't find it, wait 10-15 minutes at check again. If necessary, repeat the process one more time. If after about 30 minutes you still don't see feedback attached or receive a completion email with the attached file, email centerfolk@metrostate.edu to check the status of your session.
- **The feedback was attached, but you were not notified** – Tutors will almost always have you notified by email when your tutorial is completed. However, due to user or system errors, on occasion this may not occur. If you don't receive an email with your document with feedback, check your appointment on WOnline to check if the document is attached there. If so, you can retrieve your feedback by clicking the appropriate link in the "Attached Documents" section of your tutorial (see answer to question 5 for more). If feedback is still not attached and you have waited the recommended half hour, email centerfolk@metrostate.edu.

9. I received my feedback, but I am confused about how to use it to revise my paper. What can I do?

Time is limited in written feedback sessions, and typing comments takes longer than explaining ideas out loud. Additionally, some issues in writing are harder for tutors to discuss and provide advice for, and sometimes the feedback addressing such issues can be longer or harder to understand. This is one limit of the

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written feedback session's one-way (asynchronous) feedback – there is no place during the session to ask questions or gain clarity.

If you have a hard time understanding a tutor's feedback, it may be worth scheduling a session that meets in real time via Zoom to talk through the feedback with the same tutor and ask follow-up questions. You can schedule an online session with the same tutor on your own via WOnline, or call or email Front Desk to set up a follow-up tutorial ([see answer 1](#)).

When you book the session, be sure to mention specifically that you need help understanding feedback from a previous session, so the tutor can review this session before or during your follow-up meeting.

10. I submitted a long essay but only received feedback for a small portion of my assignment. How can I get feedback for the rest of the draft?

The amount of content a tutor covers in a written feedback session will vary depending on the complexity of the content, the nature of the issues you want the tutor to assist you with, and the approach a tutor uses in these sessions. Usually, tutors can cover no more than about 6 pages of content in a single written feedback session; it may be less or slightly more depending on these factors.

If you have a long paper (more than 6-8 pages) or a comprehensive document like a capstone paper, project, thesis, or dissertation, you should plan to have the document tutored in smaller increments to allow the tutor to provide feedback effectively. You can submit the same file in each session, but add specific instructions in the "What would you like to learn about today?" section that indicate what parts of the document the tutor should focus on in that session.

If you are able to use Zoom sessions, you may find it easier to work through more content in this format. This is because having the ability to communicate in real-time usually allows discussion of a paper to move along more quickly than can occur when feedback is all typed out. Live communication also allows you to indicate priorities more specifically to a tutor, and adjust priorities when needed. Even so, it is normal to only cover between 5-10 pages of content in a single 50-minute session, depending on what kind of issues are being discussed and the complexity of the document.

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Using Zoom Sessions (formerly online tutorials)

11. What should I expect to occur in a Zoom session?

Tutorials in Zoom most closely resemble face-to-face sessions. They follow the same basic pattern and offer the same ability to discuss ideas with a tutor, clarify difficult points, or explain your thinking out loud.

The tutor will always first introduce themselves to you and ask about what you need to work on in the session.

Then, the tutor may take a few minutes to make sure you are comfortable with the tools they will use in Zoom – especially if this is the first time you are using this kind of tutoring. They will direct you to tools like chat, screen-sharing, and audio/video controls that you may need to use in the session.

The tutor usually next sets an agenda for the session by explain how they'd like to proceed to address the goals you've identified. This may involve reading the paper out loud, focusing on certain sections, or other strategies you or the tutor find helpful.

The tutor will conduct the session much as they would in a face-to-face session, helping you read, reflect on, and revise your work. This part of the session will be unique to your goals and the kind of writing you are working on.

Towards the end of the session, the tutor will let you know when about 5 minutes remain and prompt you to begin wrapping up the session, saving your work, and retrieving anything from the Zoom space (such as notes, drawings, or resources) that you may want to continue your work.

12. Do I need to install or update anything to use Zoom for tutoring?

Since Zoom is link-based and the program prompts you to download all necessary add-ons, all you need to attend a tutorial through Zoom is the link for your individual meeting, included in the tutor bio page on your appointment.

However, it is a good idea to take a few steps to make your use of Zoom for tutoring easier and more intuitive for you and the tutor.

First, download and install the [Zoom Web Client](#), or optionally, [the Zoom desktop client](#). Either will work for accessing Zoom meetings for tutoring. Having one of these clients downloaded is required to use Zoom meetings through any browser. Installing them ahead of the meeting saves time when you try to enter a tutorial.

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Log in to either client using your Metro State Star ID (Zoom calls this SSO, or single-sign-on). See more here about logging in to the web client or desktop application using SSO [here](#).

Now that you are signed in, clicking a meeting link will automatically redirect you to the version of Zoom you are using (web or desktop) to open the meeting. It will also ensure that your proper information (such as name) and settings are reflected in your meetings.

If you use the Zoom desktop client, you may be prompted to install updates occasionally. It is a good idea to keep up with these updates, as they include important security fixes and may allow access to new features.

13. How do I access Zoom to use for tutoring?

Zoom meetings are link-based, meaning if you have the link you can usually access the meeting. The easiest way to access your meeting link is to look for the **link labeled "Join [Tutor Name] on Zoom"** that appears in your confirmation email.

You can also access your tutorial on WOnline by:

- Logging in to WOnline and locating your scheduled tutorial.
- Clicking the tutorial box to open the tutorial information dialog box.
- At the time your tutorial begins, clicking **the blue link labeled "Join [tutor name] in Zoom"**, located in the tutor bio section of the appointment (see example below).

APPOINTMENT LIMITS: Appointments must be between 1 hour and 2 hours in length.

Join Peter on Zoom: <https://minnstate.zoom.us/j/97256138023?pwd=dkpRZGlyNEUwRjdXamNOaDIlQjdBdz09>

Peter (he/him) is a professional writing tutor.

He has worked at Metro for 11 years and has a degree in Environmental Studies. Peter often uses whiteboards for organization and helping to understand the writing process. He always tries to encourage writers to think for themselves and gain skills that will help them be independent writers and stronger critical thinkers. In his spare time, he enjoys bicycling, trivia, Star Trek, and video games.

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14. How can I share my paper with a tutor in Zoom?

You can use the “Share Screen” option in Zoom meetings to allow a tutor to follow along as you work on your paper. While tutors cannot interact with your screen directly, they will be able to see anything you can see on your screen.

It is usually easiest to select the “Desktop” or “Screen” option to share your entire computer screen with the tutor. Please note that doing this does make anything on your screen visible to the tutor, so feel free to take time to minimize any personal documents or programs before sharing.

See the Start Up Guide directions for using screen sharing in tutorials – p. 10.

You may also choose to use [Annotation tools](#) to mark on top of the paper, or the [whiteboard screen](#) to draw or sketch (for example, to draw a chart or diagram).

15. How should I navigate the document so that my tutor can follow along to help me with my work?

After sharing your screen with the tutor, verify they can see your document. You will then want to think about how best to navigate and communicate about how you are moving through the document. (It can be hard to follow movement through documents when you are viewing a shared screen.)

Generally, try to communicate with your tutor **where** you are in the document and **what** you want them to focus on in the screen. A few good ways to do this are:

- Use pages, paragraphing and sentence order to indicate where you are in a document. For example, you might say to a tutor: “I am on page 3, in the second paragraph, and I want to look at the third sentence.” You can also read samples of the sentence or paragraph you want the tutor to read with you, such as “I am in the sentence that begins with ‘In this essay I will...’”.
- If needed, you can use annotation tools to temporarily mark on the page you are viewing (this will not alter the actual document you are working with). You can learn more about [annotation tools on Zoom here](#). To use annotation tools while screen-sharing, select “view options” in the screen sharing toolbar, then select “Annotate” at the top. Using annotation tools, you can, for example, highlight or underline a sentence, or draw lines between related ideas in two different paragraphs. All markings will be visible to the tutor as well, so they can follow along.

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16. My audio and video are not working correctly. How can I communicate with my tutor?

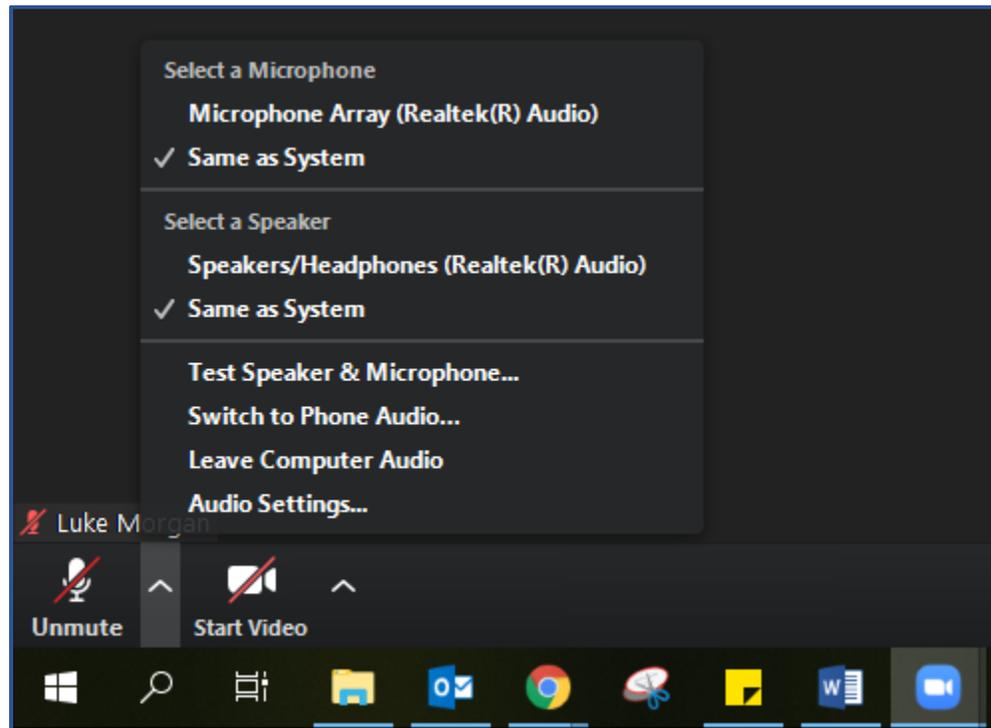
First, try to resolve the issue by ending the meeting and reentering through the same link you accessed the first time. This sometimes resolves audio and/or video issues.

If the issues persist, inform your tutor that you're having issues using the chat option in the meeting space. You can communicate with the tutor while you troubleshoot using chat.

If your video is not working, turn it off and proceed with the tutorial. Since video is entirely optional for tutorials, the session should still be fully functional.

If your audio is not working, try these solutions:

- Check that the correct microphone and audio sources are selected in Zoom. Click the arrow next to the microphone icon in the meeting space toolbar to open audio options (see below).



Ensure that the correct options are selected (usually "same as system" unless you are using an external mic, headphones, or headset, which should be labeled and available in the list).

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Test your mic and audio with the new devices selected to ensure they work.

- If your audio still does not work, you can **use your phone for audio** instead of your computer.

To use phone for audio, use the same arrow next to the microphone icon to open options, then select "Switch to Phone Audio." A dialog box displaying the number to call, meeting ID, and participant ID will appear (see example below).



Use your phone to dial the first number listed (1-312-626-6799). When prompted, enter the meeting ID followed by pound (#), and do the same for the participant ID. You can now use your phone for audio.

Note: your meeting ID and participant ID will not be the same as the example listed above; these are unique to each Zoom meeting.

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Best Practices and Guidelines

17. Can I no longer work in the same document with the tutor, like I did in WCOOnline's videoconferencing tool?

All changes made while sharing your screen in Zoom are visible to both you and the tutor. However, if you want the tutor to be able to mark feedback in your document with you, you can use a work-around to provide this feature.

*Note: tutors **do not** make revisions for students directly. They may instead be able to provide comments and markings in your document that help you make revisions in the future.*

To work with a tutor in the same document (and allow them to make notes directly on your document):

- Begin your Zoom tutorial normally, and let the tutor know how you would like to work during this session. Keep the Zoom tutorial open while you finish the rest of this process.
- Go to <https://www.office.com/>. If prompted, log in using your Star ID and password.
- Next, should click the "Microsoft Word" icon to open the program.
- If the paper you want to work on is already in the program, select it, and the document will open in a separate window. If the document is not available, select "new document", then copy and paste the content of the paper from the original file to the new document online.
- While in the window with the document, select the "Share" button in the top right-hand corner.
- You must enable link sharing to give the tutor access to the document. To do this, select the top button, labeled "People you specify can edit", then select "anyone with the link" in the options that open. Make sure the "allow editing" box is checked. Then click "apply".
- Next, click "copy link" and then paste the link into the Zoom chat in your tutorial.
- The tutor will click the link to join you in the document. Their place in the document will be shown with a colored icon, but their changes will not be color-coded. Tutors will mark their changes this way: [[Tutor comment]], so that it is clear where they have marked in your paper.

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18. Can I save the chat from my Zoom session to use as notes for later revisions?

Since the chat in Zoom tutorials often serves as a place where tutors paste links, samples, or other information that may be useful after a session, students can download the chat of a session with the tutor's permission.

To download the chat transcript, open the chat box in your meeting. Then, click the "more" icon (represented by "..."), and select "Save". The chat transcript will be saved, and the file can be opened by clicking the link that reads "Open in folder".

19. Can I record a Zoom tutorial?

CAE tutorials are not to be recorded except as part of an accommodations plan arranged prior to sessions between the student and a CAE administrator. Contact Luke M. (luke.morgan@metrostate.edu) or Jules T. (jules.thompson@metrostate.edu) if you have questions about this policy or wish to make recordings part of accommodations.

Any agreements between administrators and students for the use of recordings in Zoom tutorials will be documented in the student's WOnline profile (just as extended time accommodations are.)

20. Can tutors use remote-control options in Zoom to help me with my paper?

No- using remote-control (even with permission) in writing sessions does not align with the CAE's values. It puts tutors in charge of moving through a document and even revising a student's work. Additionally, using remote-control through Zoom for tutorials creates security and privacy risks for our staff.

The only acceptable use of remote-control is as part of accommodations plan for documented disabilities. If you think you may need to use this feature during your tutorials, contact Luke M. (luke.morgan@metrostate.edu) or Jules T. (jules.thompson@metrostate.edu)