

Academic Resource Center

GUIDEBOOK

Table of Contents

Academic Resource Center	1
ARC Fast Facts	2
Peer Tutoring	3
Course-Specific Workshops	4
Professional Academic Coaching	5
Student Transition and Adjustment	6
Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging	6
Academic Wellbeing and Outreach	8
Professional and Leadership Development	10
Peer Supports at Muhlenberg	12
Campus Resources	13

This booklet provides an overview of academic support at Muhlenberg College. More than half of our students are engaged in some form of academic support on campus — whether through individual tutoring, course-specific workshops, academic coaching, mentorship or employment opportunities. Academic community, and by extension, support, is an integral part of Muhlenberg and a strong liberal arts education. It is through these services that we work to realize our mission.

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) provides support for students' academic transition, engagement, integration, growth and achievement through a holistic, community-based approach.

In helping students to successfully navigate the rigors of a competitive academic environment and become lifelong learners, we provide opportunities to:

- Clarify and strengthen commitment to educational pursuits;
- Improve organization and planning skills;
- Develop efficient, effective, and strategic approaches to learning;
- Cultivate critical thinking and problem solving;
- Acquire knowledge and skills important to the practice of their discipline;
- Develop professional skills and demonstrate leadership abilities;
- Engage in a diverse and mutually supportive academic community.

Because the developmental needs of students change and evolve during their time at Muhlenberg, the Academic Resource Center works closely with faculty and staff to identify, connect with, and support students who may benefit from the culture of care that is embodied in the mission of our department.

For more information regarding ARC, our services, or support more broadly, please contact our office at **484-664-3433** or email at davidhallowell@muhlenberg.edu.

You can also visit our website at www.muhlenberg.edu/arc or stop by our office located on the lower level of Seegers Union between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Best regards,



David Hallowell
Assistant Dean for Academic Life
Director, Academic Resource Center

ARC FAST FACTS

ARC's tutoring program is certified by the **College Reading and Learning Association.**

Muhlenberg subscribes to a unique tutoring model where, upon request, students are assigned to work with a specific tutor for the duration of the semester.

We provide professional development opportunities for **250 peer tutors**, workshop facilitators and mentors each semester; tutors have an **average GPA of 3.7.**

More than 60% of student awards presented during the College's annual honors convocation are given to ARC tutors.

400 students are served each year through individual and small-group tutoring (representing nearly 6,500 appointments).

500 students are served each year through course-specific workshops (representing more than 7,500 points of contact).

70% of all students who participate in tutoring and/or course-specific workshops **end the semester with a B or higher.**

On almost every single diversity measure, our tutors and their students are representative of the College as a whole.

We average **more than 500 individual appointments** annually with students to improve their approaches to learning through professional academic coaching.

35% of our student employee budget comes from an endowment created through the generosity of donors who recognized the quality and importance of our work in support of student success.

Peer Tutoring

ARC employs nearly 250 tutors to work with students across a variety of subjects. The College Reading and Learning Association has certified our tutoring services at the master level since 1993. All certified tutors complete a minimum of 10 hours of training across five core competencies: learning theory, diversity and identity (including neurodiversity and disability), mental health and wellness, ethics and professionalism and leadership. Tutor requests are accepted through week 10 of the semester. Students are encouraged to apply for a tutor early in the semester and meet with their assigned tutor for an hour each week to get the most out of this service.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can get a tutor?

Individual and small-group tutoring is free and available to all Muhlenberg students. Tutor assignments are made based on tutor availability. ARC staff work to identify tutors in all of the major subject areas. Requests for advanced-level courses and special topics tend to be more difficult to fill.

What do tutors do?

Tutors help students clarify and reinforce critical course concepts, develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, realize active and strategic approaches to learning and work towards high levels of academic achievement.

How many tutors does the ARC employ?

The ARC employs 250 peer tutors in the fall and spring semesters.

How many students request tutors?

The ARC fills 1,200 individual tutor requests per year. Academic support is part of the culture at Muhlenberg. There is no stigma associated with tutoring. It's highly recommended by upper-class students. Many of our tutors have been tutored themselves.

How are tutors selected?

Applicants must receive a faculty nomination from within the subject area, meet specific GPA and course grade criteria, complete an application and pass an interview with ARC staff.

Are there specific GPA and course grade requirements to become a tutor?

All tutors are required to have a minimum overall GPA of 3.2. Due to the competitive nature of the position, most tutors have a GPA of a 3.5 or higher and an A in the courses being tutored.

How are tutors trained?

All new tutors are required to attend five hours of mandatory training prior to the start of their employment. Ongoing training and professional development opportunities are offered each week during the semester.

How do students go about getting a peer tutor?

Students may request to be assigned to a tutor at any point up to week ten of the semester by completing the online tutor request form available on our website. Once submitted, the request is reviewed by our staff and the student is contacted within three business days regarding the availability of a tutor. If an assignment can be made, the tutor will be in touch with the student to schedule their first meeting.

MUHLENBERG Student Perspectives

What surprised you about the transition from high school to college?

- The amount of free time.
- The amount of reading and other independent work.
- I was definitely surprised by the pace.
- There's no one telling you what to do and when to do it.
- Faculty are less likely to cover everything you need to know for the exam.

What difficulties did you encounter as a first-year student?

- Adjusting to new responsibilities.
- Waking up for class on time.
- Learning how to focus and prioritize.
- Understanding faculty expectations.
- Balancing my academic and social life.
- Knowing when I've taken on too much and learning to say no.

What factors contributed to your academic performance?

- Learning how to use my time more productively and manage my energy.
- Staying organized and planning a week or two ahead.
- Making a schedule and using a to do list.
- Going to class prepared.
- Learning how to take good notes and study smarter.
- Putting myself out there and trying new things.
- Understanding that even great students need support and guidance.
- Talking to my faculty, going to workshops, and getting a tutor.
- Being surrounded with people who bring out the best in me.

Course-Specific Workshops

The ARC organizes course-specific workshops for a variety of gateway courses. Workshops are facilitated by trained peer tutors who meet weekly with the course instructor. No sign-up is necessary. Approximately 25% of all Muhlenberg students participate in workshops each semester. It is not uncommon for students to both attend workshops and work individually or in a small group with a peer tutor. The more frequently students attend workshops, the more likely they are to achieve success in the course.

Workshops offer students opportunities to:

- Clarify, reinforce, and deepen understanding of course material
- Develop the habits of mind that enable their long-term success
- Engage in dialogue around course content with peers
- Apply critical course concepts to supplemental problem sets
- Hone course-specific study strategies
- Prepare for exams

Workshops are typically offered in the following subjects:

- Accounting
- Biology
- Calculus
- Chemistry/Organic Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Macro- & Microeconomics
- Neuroscience
- Physics
- Psychological Statistics
- Psychology
- Research Methods in Psychology
- Statistical Analysis
- And more...

Professional Academic Coaching

The transition from high school to college-level study typically requires students to develop new skills, take different approaches, and invest significantly more time in their academics.

Our staff in both the ARC and Office of Disability Services can work with students to:

- Better understand their own academic needs
- Establish and track progress towards self-determined goals
- Adapt and refine their approaches to learning
- Develop organization and planning skills
- Improve academic decision-making

In exploring a student's approach to learning, our staff can introduce opportunities related to:

- Time management
- Concentration
- Procrastination
- College-level reading
- Note-taking
- Study strategies
- Memory
- Test-taking
- Effective use of academic resources



As a first-year student, it is easy to become overwhelmed. Our staff can help students navigate this transition and better understand themselves as learners. Because the goal of academic coaching is self-sufficiency, we expect appointment frequency will vary over time based on each student's place in their own development. Some students may benefit from a regular check-in during critical transition periods, while others may benefit from a handful of meetings over the course of one semester. All students may schedule a 30-minute weekly appointment.

Students working with the Office of Disability Services receive academic coaching through their assigned disability services specialist. All other students receive academic coaching through the ARC.

General inquiries regarding academic coaching should be directed to arcstudent@muhlenberg.edu.

Student Transition and Adjustment

The transition from high school to college brings with it many new experiences and expectations. From time to time, students may need some guidance or assistance in navigating this new terrain. In addition to resident assistants and faculty advisors, the College provides opportunities such as new student orientation, the required Personal and Professional Development (PPD) course and ongoing transition programming organized through academic life and student affairs.

In the ARC, we work in partnership with our colleagues to support the academic transition of a diverse student population. In addition to professional academic coaching, we also offer opportunities for peer mentorship and organize a variety of skills-based workshops. We work with other College offices, such as athletics and multicultural life, to provide more tailored academic programming for those populations, including first-generation and underrepresented students.

These supports, both within and outside of the ARC, are geared towards helping students understand faculty expectations, meaningfully engage with opportunities for enrichment, become part of a community of learners, and strive for excellence.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Diversity, as affirmed in the College's mission statement, is a fundamental Muhlenberg value. The College believes that deeply engaging with the multiple concerns, forms and expressions of diversity enriches the liberal arts education of all our students, prepares our graduates for lives of leadership and global citizenship and enhances the quality of life on campus for all of our community members. We believe that the Muhlenberg community should cultivate a desire and an ability to understand, mutually respect and meaningfully engage with manifold perspectives and experiences, particularly those of historically underrepresented and marginalized groups.

The ARC is deeply committed to these ideals and supports this work in a number of ways including but not limited to:

- All ARC tutors are required to submit a diversity statement as part of our application process.
- We monitor the diversity of our recruitment and applicant pool to ensure that our tutors are representative of the college as a whole.
- We track engagement in services by affinity to ensure participation across groups is consistent with their needs.
- We disaggregate all departmental and institutional data by affinity to look for patterns and opportunities.
- Our professional staff participates in ongoing professional development that includes DEIB work.



Academic Wellbeing and Outreach

The ARC is part of a community of care at Muhlenberg that supports students' transition, engagement, integration, growth, success, and wellbeing. Beyond our most visible services, the ARC manages the core elements that make up Muhlenberg's broader academic safety net.

EARLY ALERT

Our week-three early alert process was piloted in spring 2018 to provide a systematic way of soliciting feedback from course instructors on individual students with the goal of impacting their academic engagement, performance, and ultimately, their trajectory. Given some early successes, we quickly expanded the process to include all new students, including transfers, students on academic warning or probation, students with an overall or term GPA less than or equal to 2.4, and students returning from a leave of absence. Muhlenberg has a long history of soliciting feedback from faculty, who typically know their students well due to small class sizes. The early alert process enables our faculty advisors and support staff to target their outreach efforts and more meaningfully connect with students around their emerging needs. Through the many collaborative efforts of our partners across campus, the ARC works hard to promote student success and retention.



ACADEMIC AUDITS AND GUIDANCE

In addition to early alert, Muhlenberg proactively identifies and provides outreach and support to students who may be in need of some encouragement or guidance. In particular, we look at things like:

- Faculty Concerns
- Midterm Grades
- Final Grades and Academic Standing
- Incomplete Grades
- Non-Registration
- Unsatisfactory Academic Progress
- Upperclass Students In Undeclared Status

Students with significant academic concerns arising during the semester are invited to meet with the Dean of Academic Life and/or their delegate(s) as part of an academic health review. Students in poor academic standing or with complex needs are strongly encouraged to meet on a regular, ongoing basis with a member of the professional staff, including the Academic Resource Center and Office of Disability Services.

ACADEMIC CASE MANAGEMENT

The ARC works closely with the Dean of Academic Life and the Dean of Students to support academic case management. Any member of the Muhlenberg community may submit a concern through the appropriate CARE form. Academic cases are assessed and triaged by the Assistant Dean of Academic Life in coordination with critical stakeholders including but not limited to the student's faculty advisor, Athletics, Office of International Student Support, Office of Multicultural Life, and the Office of Disability Services. As needed, outreach is provided by the appropriate stakeholder so that we can ensure students have a plan for academic success and are meaningfully connected to (or at least have an awareness of) existing supports and resources appropriate to their needs. Cases requiring enhanced review are escalated to the Dean of Academic Life and/or Muhlenberg's CARE team, which works to support student wellbeing. While quantifying this work is complex, to provide perspective, the Assistant Dean for Academic Life manages more than 100 academic cases each semester, representing well in excess of 1,000 emails, phone calls, and texts.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE, REINSTATEMENT, AND READMISSION

At some point during their time at Muhlenberg, a student may encounter circumstances where it is advisable to temporarily take a step back from their studies in order to attend to family needs, work, travel, or gain a fresh perspective on their intellectual commitments, career plans, or educational priorities. The College encourages students to carefully consider their situations, to clarify their objectives, and to evaluate whether they should interrupt their studies for a semester or, in some cases, two or more years.

Students may take up to four semesters of leave while at Muhlenberg. Students needing additional time have the option to withdraw from the college and seek readmission at a later date. Under some circumstances, students may also pursue studies through the division of Graduate & Continuing Education.

Regardless of the path students take, Muhlenberg will be there at every step along the way to support, encourage, guide and mentor our students on their journey towards graduation and beyond.

Professional and Leadership Development

The ARC offers a variety of employment opportunities that encourage the professional development of students looking to support a culture of academic excellence at Muhlenberg.

PEER TUTORS

Peer tutors work with students individually and in small groups to better understand course content and develop course-specific learning strategies.

Qualifications:

Students must be in good standing, maintain an overall GPA of 3.2* or higher, have an A in the course tutored, be nominated by the instructor for that course, and have no significant history of judicial or academic integrity code violations. (* First-year students must have a minimum GPA of 3.5.)

How to Apply:

Students who have been nominated by one or more faculty and meet our qualifications will be sent an application. Applications are accepted for the fall and spring semesters. Applicants must complete a competitive interview and participate in an introductory orientation and training.

FEDERAL WORK-STUDY STUDENTS

The ARC employs a number of federal work-study students throughout the academic year to support our general operations, participate in program evaluation, and contribute to the planning and implementation of high-value projects.

Qualifications:

Applicants must have federal work-study eligibility determined by financial aid. Preference is given to students in good academic standing.

How to Apply:

Students must apply for all work-study positions through Handshake. For additional information about Handshake, please speak with the Career Center.

HEAD TUTORS

Head tutors facilitate new tutor training and create opportunities for ongoing education and professional development. Head tutors also mentor a cohort of approximately 25 assigned tutors. Senior head tutors are invited to attend and participate at a national tutoring conference in the spring of their senior year.

Qualifications:

Students must be certified tutors (level 1 or above) before they are eligible to apply for this position. Priority is given to tutors who demonstrate a commitment to the ARC, evidence strong student evaluations and show leadership ability. Head tutors must maintain a GPA of 3.5 or above.

How to Apply:

Unsolicited applications are not accepted. Current tutors should speak with us about their interest in this position prior to application. Applications are only accepted in the spring semester. Applicants are required to complete an individual interview with a member of our professional staff as well as a group interview with a selection of existing head tutors.

TRANSITION MENTORS

Transition mentors facilitate workshops on academic excellence and work with students individually to refine their approaches to learning.

Qualifications:

Students must be certified tutors (level 1 or above) and be nominated by a member of the ARC professional staff before being invited to apply.

How to Apply:

Unsolicited applications are not accepted. Current tutors should speak with us about their interest in this position prior to application. Applications are accepted in the spring semester only.

WORKSHOP TUTORS

Workshop tutors help students deepen their understanding of core course concepts and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They work in collaboration with their assigned faculty partner to facilitate weekly course workshops.

Qualifications:

Students must be certified tutors (level 1 or above) before they are eligible to apply for this position.

How to Apply:

Unsolicited applications are not accepted. Current tutors should speak with us about their interest in this position prior to application. Applications are accepted in the fall and spring semesters. Faculty recommendations, past job performance, and communication skills are heavily weighted in making our final decision.

LEARNING ASSISTANTS

Learning assistants help students deepen their understanding of core course concepts and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They work in close partnership with their assigned faculty partner, are integrated into the course, facilitate weekly course workshops and hold office hours.

Qualifications:

Students must be certified tutors (level 1 or above) before they are eligible to apply for this position.

Learning assistants must complete a one-unit course on personal and cognitive development in the fall semester concurrent with the start of their position.

How to Apply:

Unsolicited applications are not accepted. Current tutors should speak with us about their interest in this position prior to application. Applications are only accepted in the spring semester. With only 25 total positions each year, the selection process is highly deliberative. Our decisions are based on a variety of factors including but not limited to overall and major GPA, strength of faculty recommendations, past job performance and communication skills. Because each faculty partner works so closely with their assigned learning assistant, their recommendations are heavily weighted in making our final decision.

MUHLENBERG Student Perspectives

What strategies have you found to be most useful for reading, studying and preparing for exams?

- Read the course syllabus carefully.
- Divide up large readings into smaller chunks.
- Take notes in the margins and highlight main points.
- Attend every class and pay attention.
- Review notes after class and add to them based on readings.
- Don't let things pile up, especially during flu season.
- Don't wait until the day before to prepare for exams.
- Get enough sleep.

What have you learned from your mistakes?

- The importance of showing up to class prepared.
- Avoid information overload and don't ever pull all-nighters.
- Don't wait until 11 PM to start homework: do stuff throughout the day.
- You can do well academically and still have a lot of fun.
- It's OK to ask for help even if you don't know what you need.

What's one piece of advice you have found useful as a first-year student?

- Get involved.
- Be curious and ask questions.
- Focus on quality over quantity.
- Try not to take on too much all at once.
- Sometimes, the courses you will remember 20 years from now are the ones outside of your major.
- Take advantage of the many resources and opportunities available to you.
- With freedom comes responsibility.
- Help each other out.

Peer Supports at Muhlenberg

COURSE-SPECIFIC WORKSHOPS

ARC organizes course-specific workshops for a variety of gateway courses. Workshops are facilitated by trained peer tutors who meet weekly with the course instructor. No sign-up is necessary.

DIGITAL LEARNING ASSISTANTS

Digital learning assistants provide individual and small group drop-in sessions (2-3 students) on digital technologies, tools and practices that are currently used, or emerging, in courses and programs at Muhlenberg.

INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL-GROUP TUTORING

Peer tutors are available for weekly individual or small-group appointments through the academic resource center. Tutors help students take a more active role in their own learning.

LANGUAGE CONVERSATION PARTNERS

Peer language tutors from the academic resource center are available for drop-in through the language commons for conversation practice.

RESIDENT ADVISORS

Resident advisors serve as the backbone of our residential community: planning events, helping peers with intentional conversations, providing mediation, and helping students navigate campus policies, processes, and resources.

TRANSITION MENTORS

Transition mentors facilitate workshops and meet individually with first-year students to help them more quickly acclimate to faculty expectations and the demands of the college classroom.

WRITING ASSISTANTS

Writing assistants are embedded within all first-year seminars and support the development of students' written expression.

WRITING TUTORS

Writing tutors are available for walk-in appointments through the writing center. They are available to help students improve their writing across the curriculum, including but not limited to the interpretation of assignments, development of a thesis statement and organization of written assignments.

Campus Resources

Academic Resource Center provides support for students' academic transition, engagement, integration, growth, achievement, and retention through a holistic, community-based approach. Services include but are not limited to: individual and small-group tutoring, course-specific workshops, academic coaching and transition programming.

Career Center can help students clarify their values and interests, explore their long-term aspirations, and find opportunities that will contribute to their professional development.

Chaplain's Office provides students from all religious faiths and beliefs with confidential counsel on a variety of religious and personal concerns.

Counseling Services provides brief therapeutic support in addressing a variety of mental health needs which could impact academic performance and overall well-being. Counseling services can, among other things, help students build self-awareness, agency and coping skills.

Course instructors can help students navigate course expectations and develop skills necessary for success in the discipline. Most faculty post their office hours on the syllabus.

Disability Services provides disability determination, accommodation planning, and academic coaching to ensure an accessible and inclusive campus and learning environment.

Faculty advisors can help students in their course selection, navigate the registration process, make schedule changes, understand the requirements of the curriculum, and explore their major of interest.

Health Center provides a variety of health and wellness services including clinical exams and laboratory services.

International Student Support provides comprehensive guidance, advisement, mentorship, learning community, and social programming for F1 students and the broader community in promoting the college's internationalization efforts.

Multi-Cultural Life and Student Affinity Groups exist to support an inclusive and welcoming academic and social community for students from underrepresented and diverse backgrounds, including LGBTQIAP2S+ students.

Pre-professional Advising provides support for students and alumni preparing for careers in law, medicine, health professions, and theology. Contact:

Dr. Adam Clark, Pre-Engineering

Cailin Cordon-Waldman, Health Professions

Dr. Giacomo Gambino, Pre-Law

Rev. Janelle Neubauer, Pre-Theology

Reference librarians can help students as they navigate an extensive array of physical and electronic resources that support their learning, research activities, and ongoing education.

Writing Center can help students improve their writing across the curriculum. This may include the interpretation of assignments, development of a thesis statement, and organization of written assignments.



Academic Resource Center

arcstudent@muhlenberg.edu | 484-664-3433

muhlenberg.edu/ARC



2400 Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18104-5586

©2022 Muhlenberg College. All rights reserved.