Introduction

Congratulations! You exemplify the qualifications that staff and faculty have deemed crucial to our team of Holland Help Desk Staff. You are now part of a service on this campus that serves students as its priority. Because students will view you as a role model and mentor, your actions and words will need to maintain the high standard of commitment to academics, dignity for all students, punctuality, confidentiality and respect. As a reward for this dedicated work, you will be a significant part of student success at Wayne State College.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

The Holland Help Desks will provide free assistance to all students enrolled at Wayne State College with the goal of achieving the greatest possible academic success, improving the retention rate of students, organizing new programs in response to student needs and providing opportunities for academically talented students to utilize their abilities.

HOLLAND HELP DESK GOALS

1. To provide academic support services to increase the probability of a student’s success in passing academic subjects.
2. To individualize the learning/teaching process for students.
3. To increase the student’s self-confidence and motivation.
4. To help students improve study habits and techniques that will permit them to become independent learners.
5. To communicate with faculty regarding course needs.
Help Desk Code of Ethics

The Holland Help Desk staff/student relationship requires adherence to a code of ethics. These statements are matters of basic honesty and consideration for others; however, as Holland Academic Success Center policy and for purposes of clarification, some particularly important items of ethics must be stated.

1. I will build the student’s self-confidence and ability to learn independently. The student’s independence is my ultimate goal.
2. I will continue to improve my own subject matter proficiency, study skills, communication skills and Help Desk skills.
3. I will strive to establish honest and supportive relationships with students.
4. I will not impose my personal beliefs, values, or lifestyle upon my students. I can only hope to offer a neutral or worthwhile example.
5. I will not discriminate against nor show any disrespect toward any student or other Help Desk staff.
6. I will comply with the college’s policy on sexual harassment by not verbally or physically forcing unwanted attention upon another student.
7. I will be considerate, courteous, friendly and cooperative with students and fellow Help Desk staff.
8. I will be punctual, accurate and reliable in the execution of all my duties.
9. I will respect the personal dignity of both my students and coworkers.
10. I will maintain confidentiality. I will not fall into the habit of discussing students with other Help Desk staff or students. Trust is at the heart of the Help Desk relationship, and if my students feel they can trust me, they will be more apt to want to learn from me.
11. I will adhere to the college policy, as well as personal honesty, by refraining from writing papers or homework assignments for students.
12. I will never criticize an instructor or another Help Desk Staff person to a student or make remarks which imply criticism. I will refuse to be drawn into a situation in which I must make derogatory judgments about an instructor or a student.
Help Desk Staff Job Description

1. Be punctual, accurate and effective while at the Help Desks.
2. Attend all Holland Help Desk training meetings and orientations.
3. Consult regularly with faculty members.
   * Introduce yourself to classes.
   * Maintain contact sheet and give to faculty if requested.
   * Stay informed on course changes, updates and content.
4. Schedule Help Desk sessions and post on appropriate bulletin boards
   * Distribute Help Desk schedules to appropriate classes.
5. Report accurately all hours worked and submit to Help Desk Office Assistant.
6. Report all contacts/timesheets and submit to Help Desk Office Assistant.
7. Notify the director if late or absent from training or scheduled sessions.
8. Schedule and conduct review sessions with groups (if requested by your faculty)
   * Reserve the room or facility where the session takes place.
   * Inform the instructor in advance of the session—ask for suggestions but DO NOT ASK FOR A COPY OF THE TEST
   * Post notices announcing the group session in appropriate places.
9. Respect and maintain confidentiality at all times.
10. Consult with the Director of the Holland Academic Success Center regarding individual student concern or student progress.
Student Responsibilities

1. Bring all necessary materials to the Help Desk session.

2. Bring specific questions over information already studied and problems you have attempted to solve.

3. Ask questions.

4. Create specific goals that need to be accomplished during the session.

5. Follow up on the material after the session.

6. Evaluate Help Desk Staff when requested.

7. Observe Help Desk rules of respect for other students and Help Desk staff.

8. Be motivated to accomplish goals.
Class Introductions

To prepare for class introductions:

- Prepare a schedule of your Help Desk sessions. Include your name, subjects, day and time, and location of Help Desks.
- Contact the department office assistant to request copies made for courses.
- If there is more than one Help Desk staff person for a subject area, coordinate with all the staff to decide which sections you will introduce.

Things to remember during your introduction:

* Smile and be friendly.
* Distribute the schedule of your Help Desk hours.
* State your name and the academic subject of your Help Desk.
* Explain the Holland Help Desk Program—a service provided by WSC, free to WSC students
* Location of your specific academic Help Desk.
* List the items students need to bring to the session. (books, notes, calculator, specific subject material)
* Explain how the Help Desks work (no appointment needed, announced review sessions, individual arrangements can be made)
* Date when the Help Desk opens
Suggestions for a Positive Start to the Help Desk Session:

1. Introduce yourself and find out the student’s name and a little bit of personal information about the student.
2. Ask questions about the student’s feelings toward the course, background in the subject area. Like or dislike the course?
3. Be sensitive to cultural, personal and learning differences.
4. Explain the usual procedures of the Holland Help Desks. Explain the role of the Help Desk staff and any forms that the student may be asked to sign.
5. Ask the student about the goal for the session. What would he/she like to accomplish during the allotted time together.
6. Always be mindful and purposeful toward accomplishing the goal that was set by the student.
7. Never discuss other students, Help Desk staff or professors by name. Always respect privacy.
8. Do not judge the student, the quality of his/her work or indicate the grade you would give the work. Do not judge the lateness that he/she may have brought the work in.

Suggestions for a Positive End to the Help Desk Session:

1. Ask the student to summarize the information or skills you explained.
2. Review any material that seems unclear.
3. Be proactive about the next appointment. State your Help Desk times and ask, “When would you like to meet again?”
4. Discuss upcoming quizzes or tests or papers.
5. Ask if the session was helpful.
6. Encourage the student to visit the professor.
Help Desk Tips

- Avoid lecturing and other non-facilitative behaviors. Help the student to think for him/herself.
- Avoid student manipulation. Relate to your students as equals and avoid a patronizing tone.
- Recognize your own fears and limitations in the tutoring process.
- Understand your learning style and realize that each person is different.
- Learn to deal honestly with situations, feelings and students.
- Follow the Help Desk ethics.
- Be creative in your Help Desk methods. Look for ways to motivate your students and involve them in the process.
- Avoid assuming the role of teacher or parent.
- Avoid lowering standards based on an assumption that the student cannot attain them.
- View the relationship as a partnership, not a teacher/student relationship.
- Understand that the student may not trust you immediately; this is a relationship that will build over time.
- Incorporate the student’s interests into discussions and examples.
- Do not attempt to buy acceptance with your student by altering your behavior to include slang or inappropriate vocabulary.
- Avoid expressing strong opinions concerning situations which might involve the student’s personal problems.
- Do not use the student as an audience for personal plans, experiences, or opinions.
- Do not assume the student always understands the basics of the Help Desk subject.
- Be aware of the student’s reading and writing abilities.
- Recognize that the student may have had much failure in the subject previous to his/her coming to the Help Desk.
- Avoid introducing too many concepts at once.
- Recognize that a student may feel uncomfortable due to cultural or language differences.

Adapted from *High Point University Tutor Manual, Level 1*
BASIC HELP DESK DO’S AND DON’TS

DO......

• Help the student break down big problems into small, manageable ones.
• Guide students to the next step they can take independently.
• Answer questions by giving only enough information for the student to use immediately and independently.
• Compliment a student 4 times for every critical comment.
• Help the student know what they know.
• Wait 10 seconds for a response, repeat up to 3 times.
• Help students set short-term goals.
• Have students write down rules, formulas for future reference.
• Summarize the material covered at the end of the session.

DON’T....

• Play the teacher role.
• Do students’ homework or labs.
• Discuss the faculty member negatively.
• Do anything other than focus on your Help Desk session.
• Be late
• Expect to be able to help a student who does not come to a session prepared.
• Hesitate to ask another Help Desk staff person for help.
• Expect all students to function at the same level as you

Source: From the DeVry Institute, at Columbus, Ohio.
### SUPPORTIVE AND POSITIVE OR DESTRUCTIVE AND NEGATIVE COMMUNICATION

Gibbs Communication Model (1961)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESTRUCTIVE</th>
<th>SUPPORTIVE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Describe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Assist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulate</td>
<td>Facilitate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>Equal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certain</td>
<td>Possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indifference</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Key:** Train self away from destructive and toward supportive. Separate the student from the problem!

Bell, Diana Calhoun. Positive and Supportive Communication,

Handbook for Training Peer tutors and Mentors. Agee and Hodges
Suggestions/Alternatives to “Talking at Students”

1. Demonstration
   - Use the board
   - Provide handouts that show a process
   - Highlight or underline the text together
   - Rework information into other formats, such as a map or chart
   - Think of test questions together showing levels of complexity

2. Review Old Tests
   - Look for important information.
   - Look at how the instructor formulates the questions
   - Look at the type and number of questions.

3. Group Inquiries
   - Prepare a series of questions based on information covered during previous study sessions.
   - Have students work in pairs or individually to find answers
   - Have students explain answers to the whole group.

4. Make or collect worksheets, flashcards, create a worksheet, or create their own math devices or diagrams

5. Brainstorm with the student

6. Seek out other sources of information and present such as websites or videos and present.

7. Make a list of definitions or basic words used in the course.

8. Have a “question and answer period at the end of the session.

9. Ask the student to “talk through” a word or math problem or teach a student how to use the calculator in a new way.

Adapted from the Training Manual, High Point University, CRLA Level I Training Manual
Open-Ended Questions for Effective Help Desk Sessions

As Help Desk Staff, use questioning to establish the level of content that the student knows. Before you can help a student, you must evaluate what the student knows and does not know. One method of obtaining this information is by asking the student “open-ended questions”. Open-ended questions do 2 things:

1. They make it easier for the student to accept responsibility for the solution of his/her problem
2. This narrows the area of difficulty so the Help Desk staff person can more efficiently help the student.

Example: “David, what parts of your notes are confusing?”

The response to open-ended questions tells information about the student’s level of understanding:

1. Some students know exactly what their problem is.  
   Example: “I know why I transposed my answer. Can you give me a way that will help me understand the rule?”

2. Other students have less of an understanding. They can tell you only the general area that is causing their problem.  
   Example: “I think I am having problems applying this formula correctly, but I am not sure.”

3. Other students have only a vague idea of what they do not understand. They reflect this understanding in their questioning response.  
   Example: “I just don’t understand physics at all. I’ll never get through it.”

In Example #1, the Help Desk Staff can give a specific response to the specific question in a short amount of time.  
In Example #2 and #3, the Help Desk Staff will need to take time to get to the specific parts that the student doesn’t understand. This will require many questions and trials to isolate the problems.
Questioning Strategy Guidelines:

1. Try not to use questions that require a simple yes or no.
2. Do not answer your own questions.
3. Do not give too much information in the question you ask.
4. Do not ask the obvious. All questions should require some thought.
5. Do not ridicule wrong answers. Be patient.
6. Rephrase the question to clarify when needed. Do not ask the same question.
7. Ask the student to explain an incorrect answer. Then, clarify the question or ask the question with simpler content.
8. Offer your help or guidance in the form of questions. Keep the giving of information to a minimum.
ACTIVE LISTENING TRAINING

How much do you listen/talk during a session? (Guess at %)
How much do you encourage your students to think out loud during a session?

ACTIVE LISTENING INCLUDES....

1. Verbal Active Listening
   a) Paraphrasing- rewording the student’s words so the student hears his thoughts, which gives an opportunity to reflect and process.
   b) Encouraging- uh-huh, okay, yeah—tutor is following
   c) Summarizing-recaps the whole conversation-this takes practice

2. Nonverbal Active Listening – used in social lives
   a) Looking directly at the person
   b) Eye contact
   c) Use voice quality and tone to show warmth
   d) Having open body language

Types of listening:
Social listening to Listening for understanding –

Listening for Diagnostic Purposes-
Dealing With Difficult Help Desk Situations

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<tr>
<th>Style of Difficulty</th>
<th>Behavior Characteristic of Difficult Help Desk Situation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blocking</td>
<td>Students typically withhold or avoid communication. When questioned, they may say, “I don’t know,” and then remain silent. Blocking students typically have a low tolerance for frustration and become agitated, saying “I’ll never get it.” They may respond emotionally to frustration or become uncomfortably quiet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>Confusion is a variation of blocking; however, instead of withholding communication, students try to focus the content of the session on their own frustration. They say they do not know what the professor wants or where they should start. They may question the value of course content, asking, “Why do we have to know this, anyway?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miracle Seeking</td>
<td>Students expect staff to take control of the Help Desk session. They believe that the staff are the solution to their problems; they have unrealistically high expectations for the staff. Students may flatter them or compliment their skill often, and although staff may feel good about the compliments, they may find themselves enabling students and doing too much of the work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over-Enthusiasm</td>
<td>This situation is a variation of miracle-seeking, but students want to complete all the work. Students have inflated goals and expect staff will devote themselves to the cause. Students may request additional hours beyond limits set by policy, offer to pay for additional sessions or contact help desk staff after hours for additional help.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resisting</td>
<td>Students directly or indirectly oppose changing their behaviors. They fail to implement agree-upon strategies or complete work prior to sessions. Students may directly refute staff’s use of strategies during a session or question staff credibility in the subject area. Students may appear confrontational or hostile toward staff. Staff may interpret resistance as lack of interest in the course or in college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passivity</td>
<td>Students care more about seeking approval, pleasing others, avoiding conflict, and maintaining relationships than about expressing genuine concerns. They may therefore prefer less challenging assignments and courses. Students may not believe that their thoughts and ideas are as important as the staff’s. Students may also be anxious and overly concerned about being critiqued.</td>
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Evasion

Students may or may not consciously realize that they are avoiding the content of the Help Desk sessions by discussing topics unrelated to the Help Desk sessions, such as social or current events, and changing the topic of conversation several times throughout sessions. Students who are more aware of their evasion may provide vaguely worded responses or provide several plausible answers without choosing one particular answer, in an attempt to manipulate staff to provide answers.

Leading a Group Tutoring Session

1. **Schedule a study group after discussion with the instructor.**
   - Make sure you know the format for the test and possible areas of emphasis. Some instructors will share old tests or sample questions. Encourage students to look through old tests.
   - Remember that study skills for essays are different than study skills for multiple choice tests.
   - Plan the topics to be covered in advance with the instructor. You may want to create a study guide if one is not provided.
   - Schedule time frames to cover what you have planned. Post your session in advance.
   - Inform students to bring notes and questions.

2. **Schedule study sessions for no longer than two hours at a time.**
   Provide a 5-10 minute break in your session after 50 minutes.

3. **Introduce yourself and group members can do that also.**

4. **Use the whiteboard/encourage use by students also.**

5. **Students should come prepared to ask and answer questions.**
   - A round robin technique will eliminate the problem of one student monopolizing.
   - Make sure you facilitate the learning! Do not answer all the questions!
   - Assign the task of staying on task to a student.

6. **End the group session when the planned time is up. Have a student summarize the session.**
   - Regardless of what is complete and incomplete, end the session when the time is up. You stay in control and students get the message that you are vital and important. The student must own the learning.
   - Set a timer if time management is a concern.

*Adapted from The Tutor Manual, HighPoint University, CRLA Level One Training Manual*
Tutoring Students of Diverse Cultures
Building your understanding of other cultures, their communication styles and behaviors can contribute to a trust factor between tutor and student. These tips will improve your communication skills with the culturally diverse student.

Intercultural Communication Tips:

- Be patient-Sometimes the message you “think” you are communicating does not get communicated and this can be frustrating.
- Ask questions-When you don’t understand something or want to know why someone behaved in a certain way—ask. Don’t assume you know the answers. This also builds your intercultural knowledge.
- Respect- The foundation of all relationships is respect. It helps create trust. Refrain from stereotyping or generalizing groups of people.
- Attitude- Have an open attitude and capitalize on common areas between cultures. Be flexible.
- Write- Sometimes writing a message provides more time for the student to respond without having to respond verbally.
- Humor-Take caution, as a joke in one culture may be an insult in another.
- Check and Check again- Make sure all parties are on the same page when communicating by double-checking.
- Clarify your own beliefs and attitudes

When Language Skills are not the same:

- Listen very carefully to the speaker’s message and ask questions to confirm the interpretation of that message.
- When speaking, avoid use of slang, jargon, local language or idioms. Speak slowly and clearly and avoid using contractions.
- Watch your body language to make sure your message is open to the student.

Body Language Same in all Cultures:

- Smiling when happy
- Crying when sad or in pain
- Laughing when amused
- Waving a greeting
- Shrugging for “I don’t know”
- Standing straight when alert
- Startling when in shock
- Frowning when concerned

Adapted from www.phy.ilstu.edu
Strategies for Tutoring Students of Other Cultures

- Communicate expectations – Let the student know how the tutoring system works at Wayne State. They need to know how often they can attend, where the location will be and that they need not make an appointment.
- Provide rationales – Explain the benefits of learning a concept, skill or task. Wrap the new information in some context.
- Use before and after summaries – At the beginning of lessons, give the students an overview and purpose of the activity and at the end of the lesson, summarize its main points.
- Provide frequent reviews of content learned – Check with the student to see if they have understood everything thus far.

While these strategies are useful for students of diverse cultures, they are excellent strategies for all students.
Use of Probing Questions

Should Help Desk ask questions or provide answers?

Help Desk Staff should ask questions to involve the student in the learning process. The answer given gives the staff information as to what is understood and what is not clear. Often, the student may not be clear on what he/she knows. If the Help Desk Staff person continually provides answers, the student becomes passive, letting the staff take sole responsibility for learning.

Probing questions have several purposes. There are several types:

1. Probing questions follow-up on a response.
   “What made you think of that”?
   “What is the opposite of that position”?
   “What will happen if what you said is true?”

2. Probing questions clarify a vague or unclear answer.
   “Could you tell me more about that”?
   “What do you mean by _______________”?
   “Could you put that another way”?
   “Could you give me an example”?

3. Probing questions make students justify their statement or dig for underlying causes
   “Why did you say that”?
   “How does that apply to this case”?
   “Do you have any evidence for that”?

4. Probing questions keep the students’ responses relevant
   “How is what you are saying relevant to what I asked”?

5. Probing questions check for accuracy and completeness
   “How do you know that is true”?
   “How does that compare with what you said before”?
   “Did you leave anything out”?

6. Probing questions ask the same question again to get more detail as understanding crystalizes.
   “What steps did you use”?
   “What did you do next”?

Be prepared to wait for answers. Some students will need more time than you think.

Adapted from
http://www.cvcc.edu/Resources/Learning_Assistance_Center