



Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
Statistical Consulting Center

SCC Volunteer Consulting Program, Description and Policies **Effective August 1, 2025**

The UGA Statistical Consulting Center (SCC) is a unit of the Department of Statistics within the University of Georgia's Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. It is also a core unit of the university's Office of Research. Its mission is to support research at the university and to provide an educational experience for UGA students who work or volunteer at the SCC. The SCC is led by Dan Hall, Director of the SCC, assisted by Associate Director, Dr. Jinae Lee. Drs. Hall and Lee are both faculty members in the UGA Department of Statistics.

This document describes the SCC's volunteer consultant program and lists the policies under which it operates.

Description of the SCC

The SCC provides statistical support to clients in the form of statistical consulting and collaboration. Clients include students and faculty affiliated with UGA as well as external clients from business, government, the non-profit sector, and other academic institutions. Statistical consulting services are provided on a pay-for-service basis according to rates published on the SCC website, <https://www.stat.uga.edu/consulting>. Statistical collaboration can be provided on the same pay-for-service basis or is charged according to terms negotiated with the client. Regardless, the statistical work is done primarily by SCC consultants, all of whom are UGA graduate students, under the close supervision of either the Director or Associate Director.

Consultant Roles

Graduate student consultants are primarily degree-seeking students of the Department of Statistics who have graduate-level training in data science, statistics, or a closely related discipline. The SCC employs several graduate student consultants every semester who are paid under graduate assistantships from funds under SCC control. In addition, the SCC has a volunteer consultant program under which unpaid volunteers may also serve as SCC consultants.

Paid consultants receive funds from assistantships less than or equal to the 50%-time graduate assistant pay rates established by the Franklin College. These consultants must be eligible for

this form of support according to the policies of the Franklin College and the Graduate School. In particular, they must be registered for a minimum number of credit hours in any semester under which they are supported (12 hours in Fall or Spring, 9 hours in Summer). Paid consultants work for the SCC for the number of hours corresponding to their rate of support (e.g., 20 hours/week for a 50% assistantship).

Volunteer consultants must be degree-seeking students who have a minimum level of training in statistics, data science, or a related discipline. This level is roughly equivalent to one year of master's level training. Volunteer consultants engage in similar activities to those of paid consultants: they meet with clients, provide advice, analyze data, write reports, and receive training from the directors of the SCC.

Volunteers are often less experienced than paid consultants and therefore serve in secondary roles. Typically, every SCC project is assigned a *lead consultant* and a supervisor. In some cases, an *associate consultant* is also assigned. Volunteers are often assigned the latter role unless or until they gain enough experience to serve as lead.

Activities of Volunteer Consultants

During any semester in which they volunteer, volunteers are expected to participate in at least one SCC project that involves data analysis or at least two SCC projects overall. They are also expected to attend a monthly SCC staff meeting, a monthly training event, and an additional monthly meeting that is led by consultants.

Specific activities of volunteer consultants include:

- Meeting with clients to familiarize themselves with the statistical problem to be solved and to communicate advice and results.
- Analyzing data, which can include data management, model-fitting, the generation of data visualizations and tables, statistical computing, and more.
- Writing reports.
- Participating in internal meetings including those with their supervisor, staff meetings, and training meetings.

Purpose of the Volunteer Consultant Program

The goals of the Volunteer Consultant Program are

- To provide students with a service-learning and student success activity that increases their skills in statistical analysis, statistical programming, communication, and time management.
- To provide students an experience that will make them better qualified for future opportunities such as a role as a paid consultant at the SCC, a summer internship, or a job in industry or academia after they have completed their degrees.

Although the use of volunteer consultants increases the capacity of the SCC to deliver its services to clients, this is not a primary goal of the program. Such an increase in capacity is small; the main purposes of the program are to provide an educational experience for SCC volunteers and to better prepare them for future roles at the SCC and elsewhere.

Policies

- Volunteers must be currently enrolled as graduate students at UGA taking at least three credit hours of coursework during the semester(s) in which they serve as volunteers.
- Volunteers must sign a FERPA agreement to allow their names and contact information to appear on our website and in reports written for clients.
- Volunteers must sign a document agreeing to abide by the Confidentiality Policy of the SCC. This policy is designed to ensure the confidentiality of our clients' research materials (including data, documents, and other information) and to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the subjects who may have provided the data supplied to us by the client.
- Volunteers must sign the Volunteer Agreement Insuring Volunteers at UGA, a form of the UGA Office of Insurance & Claims Management (OICM). Signed forms will be transmitted to OICM via e-mail in a timely manner.
- Volunteer consultants must conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner.