

Faculty writing: A year-long approach to producing publishable manuscripts

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Overview

For faculty, the ability to write about their research and publish their findings can advance their academic career while contributing information to their field. Yet faculty often lack confidence in their ability to write for publication and struggle to find time to write.

An interdisciplinary faculty group asked us for help prioritizing their writing and meeting their publishing goals, and in response we developed a yearlong month-by-month program of achievable small tasks to guide the manuscript writing process and make publishing less overwhelming.

We are currently at the midway point of implementing this pilot program.

Description of program

- We introduced the program to the group at a meeting in January 2019.
- We then sent monthly emails, detailing each month’s tasks and offering individualized support to reinforce the writing program.
- The program was designed so that faculty who completed the January, February, March, and April tasks would be prepared to write a draft of their manuscript at the May writing retreat.

Early indicators of success

- 12 faculty members and 6 staff members participated in the retreat.
- All arrived with specific writing goals, and some had followed the preparatory steps outlined in the monthly guide.
- Participants spent the day working on on individual writing projects or in small groups if they were co-authoring.
- All participants made progress and left the retreat with plans to complete their manuscript.
- Immediately following the retreat, we emailed participants with strategies for maintaining writing momentum.
- A follow-up meeting was scheduled for June to allow participants to share progress, discuss challenges, strategize next steps, and receive support and encouragement from colleagues.

Monthly tasks to complete your manuscript

COMPLETE?

JANUARY

Determine who will be a co-author and assign each author’s role in preparing the manuscript.

Meet with a librarian to do a literature search.

FEBRUARY

Identify the gap your research fills.

Clearly articulate your research question (the purpose of your manuscript).

Select a journal and read the author guidelines.

MARCH

Assess your data.

Sketch your visuals (tables, figures).

APRIL

Draft structured abstract using the Abstract Tool.

Complete any unfinished tasks.

MAY

Attend the Writing Retreat, where you will work on completing a draft of your manuscript.

JUNE-NOVEMBER

Continue working on your manuscript by scheduling time for writing on your weekly calendar.

Attend follow-up writing group meetings to discuss progress and strategies for continued writing.

Ask for help from co-authors when needed.

Meet with a writing consultant for targeted support and feedback.

DECEMBER (OR AS SOON AS YOU HAVE A FINAL DRAFT)

Read the manuscript one last time and have co-authors read it too.

Check to be sure you have followed the journal’s author guidelines.

Submit manuscript for publication!

Next steps

Currently, all participants are actively working to complete manuscripts and submit them for publication. For the remainder of 2019, we will email participants on a monthly basis and provide individualized support as requested. We will also host writing group meetings on a bi-monthly basis. All of these efforts are aimed at supporting writing and encouraging accountability.

At the end of the year, we will assess the program by surveying participants. If the pilot is found to be useful, we plan to offer it to other faculty groups striving to increase scholarly writing and publishing.

For more information, contact the Office for Professional Writing, Publishing, and Communication: Jen Wilson: 215-503-0441, Jennifer.Wilson@jefferson.edu; Pam Walter: 215-503-2828, Pamela.Walter@jefferson.edu