

## Writing Groups

The group consisted of a cohort of students that regularly met to discuss writing in graduate school. The group focused on relevant genres (articles/journals, proposals, thesis/dissertation) and provided opportunities for editing, revising, and creating a final written work. [Sample Writing Group](#).

### Student Feedback

A majority of the students felt the educational value of the group was excellent, with the remaining finding it very good or satisfactory. Overall, students felt they had a better understanding about the expectations for writing and editing in graduate school after having participating:

*"I was exposed to different styles of writing that allowed me to think about my own style and how to communicate my science better."*

*"It was very helpful to expose my writing to a group of people outside of my field so that I can learn how to write to a scientifically adept audience that does not have extensive knowledge of my field."*

*"I now understand what "tailor to your audience" actually means, what kind of edits are actually useful, and how to be a good editor."*

*"It was also helpful to have some guidance from a faculty member (that is not my own advisor) when it came to writing the proposal."*

Students felt the most relevant topics were: writing a qualifying exam proposal, tailoring writing to a particular audience, writing and editing strategies, peer reviewing, and grant writing. Students would like more direction on how to review one another's writing and provide constructive comments. The group could have benefited from more structure and organization, which could improve if the group was formalized into a course. Several students felt the group could have focused entirely on writing and editing the qualifying exam proposal for the duration of the time rather than including a variety of writing topics. They felt the writing group would improve in an in-person environment and with additional faculty instructors or faculty support.

Overall, all the students indicated they would like the program to offer the resource again. Students would also like to see a course for students who have passed the qualifying exam that focuses on writing the thesis and dissertation.

### Summary

A structured writing group or course encourages graduate students to devote time to writing, reviewing, and editing. This resource can provide graduate students with essential editing and writing skills they may not receive elsewhere. While informal groups may be easy to launch and offer, formal writing courses may provide the best avenue for delivering this content. A course would require a set syllabus with organized writing assignments and activities. Graduate programs should consider focusing on one particular writing genre (qualifying exam proposal, thesis/dissertation, grant proposal) and focus the course on building to a final draft. Therefore, graduate programs may want to consider offering multiple

writing courses on a variety of topics that address different graduate milestones and serve graduate students throughout their degree programs.