

Planning for the Graduate Writing Retreat

The Academic Learning Centre, in collaboration with the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, will host the Fall 2025 Graduate Writing Retreat from **Wednesday, December 17 to Friday, December 19, 2025**. This retreat takes place **9:00 AM to 4:00 PM** every day **in-person** at the Fort Garry Campus. **Attendees must commit to attending all three days.**

All graduate students are welcome to apply; however, preference will be given to students who are close to finishing their research proposal, thesis, or dissertation, and have a clear writing plan for the 3-day retreat.

Before you come to the Graduate Writing Retreat, we want you to identify what you need to do to finish your proposal/thesis/dissertation. Please read this whole document before starting the online application form and send any questions to academic_learning@umanitoba.ca.

If you are interested in attending the Fall 2025 Graduate Writing Retreat, you must **submit your application by Monday, December 1 at 12:00 PM Central**. We recommend preparing your responses in a word processing document (e.g., MS Word) before submitting.

About Your Project

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to help you think about your current writing project and why it matters. You may think of this in terms of drafting an elevator pitch.

1. **Describe your topic to someone unfamiliar with the subject** (under 750 characters, including spaces).
2. **Describe the main issue or problem your work is responding to** (under 750 characters, including spaces).
3. **Explain why your project matters** (under 750 characters, including spaces).

Graduate Writing Retreat Goals

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to help you think specifically about what you would like to get accomplished during the Graduate Writing Retreat. Before completing this section, you may want to create a list of all the tasks needed to complete your current research text. Then, think through what you're ready and able to do during the retreat.

Importantly, the goal of the retreat is to *write*! The words on the page at the end of the retreat don't need to be perfect. It may be tempting to focus on making sure every chapter is *just right*. However, this often gets in the way of getting all your ideas on the page.

Before the retreat, we would like you to name three related goals, differing in intensity. Each goal should be specific, testable, attainable, and relevant (see our [STAR Goals](#) worksheet).

- **Vague example:** Work on my research project.

- **Better example:** Write 2,000 words per day (total 6,000 words), focusing on the discussion section.
- **Best example:** Write 2,000 words per day (total 6,000 words). in the discussion chapter, focusing on how the results of my study align with or contradict my pre-existing theoretical framework.

With this in mind, draft three goals for the Graduate Writing Retreat: a bare-minimum goal, a reasonable goal, and a stretch goal.

4. **Bare-Minimum Goal:** What is the bare-minimum goal you hope to achieve during the retreat? Imagine what you might accomplish on a day that is challenging or when you aren't feeling your best. This will be your bare-minimum goal.
5. **Reasonable Goal:** What is the reasonable goal you hope to achieve during the retreat? Imagine what you might accomplish on an average day when you are feeling focused and productive. This will be your reasonable goal.
6. **Stretch Goal:** What is the stretch goal you hope to achieve during the retreat? Imagine what you might accomplish on a day when you are feeling your absolute best! Everything makes sense, connections are happening, and you are in the zone. This will be your stretch goal.

Action Plan

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to help you prepare for the graduate writing retreat, as well as for us to plan what supports may be beneficial. We encourage you to connect with your supervisor for support and guidance.

7. What can you do *before* the retreat to help you reach your stretch goal?
8. What can you do *during* the retreat to help you reach your stretch goal?
9. What can we do to help you reach your stretch goal?