

Planning for the Graduate Writing Retreat

Before you come to the Graduate Writing Retreat, we want you to identify what you need to do to finish your current research text (i.e., research proposal, thesis, or dissertation). This document will help you identify what writing needs to be done to finish your current research text, whether that is a research proposal, thesis, or dissertation.

Please read this whole document before starting and send any questions to academic_learning@umanitoba.ca.

If you are interested in attending the Spring 2026 Graduate Writing Retreat, you must **submit your application by Friday, April 10, at 12 PM Central**. We recommend you preparing your responses in a document before submitting.

Thesis Roadmap Exercise

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to help you think about your research and why it matters.

1. **Describe your research project to someone unfamiliar with the subject** (under 750 characters, including spaces).
2. **Describe the main issue or problem your research is addressing** (under 750 characters, including spaces).
3. **Explain why your research 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. Remember: a good thesis is a done thesis.

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, focusing on the discussion.
- Best example: Draft ~5,000 words in the discussion chapter, focusing on how the results of my study align with or contradict my pre-existing theoretical framework

4. **Bare-Minimum Goal:** What is the bare-minimum goal you hope to achieve during the retreat?
5. **Reasonable Goal:** What is the reasonable goal you hope to achieve during the retreat?
6. **Stretch Goal:** What is the stretch goal you hope to achieve during the retreat?

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.

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?