

University of Toronto Mississauga, Office of the Dean
Writing Development Initiative (WD) Call for Proposals, 2017-2018

The Office of the Dean is pleased to invite Departments to submit proposals to the 2017-2018 Writing Development Initiative (WDI) program.

As in previous years, a pool of funds is available to support projects that integrate writing instruction in core courses across the curriculum. We are inviting Departments to submit proposals for projects that will use writing exercises and instruction to help students learn, assimilate, and use course content, and also to enhance students' ability to write according to the requirements of their discipline. The Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) offers support for funded projects, while encouraging individual Departments to integrate forms of writing instruction that meet the unique needs of their students. Some key areas of writing proficiency targeted in funded projects include organization, editing and revision skills, coherence, sentence-level mechanics, and discipline-specific conventions for integrating sources.

Submission Requirements:

Please note that proposals that have already been approved, received funding, and been carried out in 2016-2017 do not need to be resubmitted: rather, the details in the project's Final Report will be used by the Committee to determine the project's continued funding. Instructors will be able to signal changes in the course, the project, and/or the budget in their Final Report. A template for Final Reports will be distributed to instructors.

To submit a **new proposal**, please go to <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/faculty/writing-development-initiatives-wdi-program> to download, complete, and submit the fillable PDF form found there. Please ensure that your Department's Chair has approved the proposal before you submit it. The deadline for submission of new proposals is **April 16, 2017**.

Funding decisions for both new proposals and renewals of existing proposals will be made by a committee consisting of representatives of the RGASC, the Dean's office, the Library, and Departments from across the disciplinary spectrum.

Assessment and Final Report

Proposals must indicate the project's desired learning outcomes; these will be used to craft assessment mechanisms, designed by the instructor (or Department contact) and the Writing Specialist in collaboration.

Beginning in the 2017-2018 year, the RGASC will take responsibility for conducting basic assessment of all funded WDI projects, but will require some minimal assistance from participating instructors and TAs (e.g., for in-course data collection, reminding students to complete a survey, filling out reflective questionnaires). This basic assessment structure prevents assessment planning and execution from being too onerous for Departments or instructors; that said, the RGASC is happy to collaborate or support in the development of more specific or detailed assessment mechanisms, especially as projects develop over several iterations.

Basic assessment will, at a minimum, include the following three things:

- 1) Objective assessment of writing submitted in pre- and post- samplings (ca. 10-15% of participating students), with specific regard to the funded intervention: in other words, testing not for overall improvement but rather improvement in the competencies identified in the application;
- 2) Pre- and post- information regarding student attitudes both towards the techniques or skills taught in the intervention, and towards their own writing, to be elicited through surveys, focus groups, or other means;
- 3) TA and instructor reflective assessment of the project and the changes in student writing or attitudes about writing (e.g., a questionnaire or a short, written description).

The RGASC will provide the resources to administer basic assessment, with the Writing Specialist taking the lead. Resource sharing for more complex assessment plans will be negotiated between the Writing Specialist and the course instructor or Departmental contact as applicable.

A link to an online **Final Report template** will be provided to instructors to document the details of the assessment of, reflection on, and changes to the project. Final reports for 2017-2018 projects will be due by **May 31 2018**, although instructors are encouraged to submit them earlier for Fall courses.

RGASC Support

The RGASC is pleased to make a variety of centralized resources and services available to Departments participating in the WDI. As much of the additional writing work and instruction that the WDI supports is done by TAs, we offer training and support to assist them, and also to provide them with valuable professional development: This training is in the form of a 4-hour WDI Writing TA Training Session for all **new** TAs:

- 1) 1 hour on the principles of Writing across the Curriculum (WAC), Writing in the Disciplines (WID), and methods of using writing in classroom and tutorial, and
- 2) 3 hours on a) grammar/sentence level awareness, b) assessment best practices, and c) group practice in assessing (both with and without rubrics), with this training on assessment divided by discipline and drawing on authentic exemplars and assignments.

If the proposal's execution requires further training for course TAs, such training (not to exceed 4 hours per TA per course) can be designed collaboratively by the Writing Specialist and the course instructor or Department contact.

In addition to these TA training opportunities, the RGASC is also pleased to offer the option to set up "dedicated drop-ins" at the RGASC during the term, in which students in WDI-funded courses can receive special consultations with RGASC strategists on an assignment-specific basis. These special drop-ins are additional support above and beyond our regular face-to-face and online appointments and workshops, all of which are available to all UTM students. And as

always, faculty and staff at the RGASC will be available to assist instructors and Departments with assignment design, classroom instruction, and other activities that integrate writing into their curriculum.

The amount of money allocated to a single project will depend on a variety of factors, including but not limited to the number of students enrolled in the targeted course(s). Please note as well that preference will be given projects embedded in courses that are part of a program of study in which emphasis on developing writing skills extends beyond the individual course.

Contact Information

For guidance in planning proposals or to learn more about other Departments' approaches to discipline-specific writing instruction, please see the selection of past successful proposals that has been posted at the RGASC's Resources for Writing Instruction Blackboard shell (accessible through <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/faculty/writing-development-initiatives-wdi-program>).

Proposals for new projects should be submitted to Michael Kaler at the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre by **April 16, 2017** at this address: academicskills@utm.utoronto.ca. Decisions on funding will be made by **June 16, 2017**.

If you have any questions regarding the WDI or your specific proposal, please contact Michael (michael.kaler@utoronto.ca).