

Setting up your own Writing Retreat

A BDC guide and checklist



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What is a writing retreat?

A writing retreat is a structured event dedicated to writing alongside your peers. You're all in the same boat and that gives you all a common purpose and ability to hold each other accountable.

Steps to follow

1. Determine the length and capacity



How long and what time will the retreat be?

- Writing blocks can be anywhere from 25 minutes to 1.5 hours.
- Determine how long each block will be and how many blocks to include in your retreat
- Consider what time of day works best



How many people do you plan to include?

This will help you determine what kind of venue would be most appropriate

2. Create a structure for the retreat

A Writing Retreat structure generally includes the following

Discussion

Spend 5 to 10 minutes discussing your writing goals for the session.

Other topics could include:

- What helps you write?
- What stops you from being productive?
- What are you working on?

Warm up

Start with a 5-minute writing warm up. Grab a pen and paper and write about something low stakes, such as your dream holiday or favourite meal. Keep writing without worrying about quality or getting it right. This is just a chance to get words flowing before you turn to your research.

Writing block followed by a break

- The number of writing blocks is up to you.
- Breaks can incorporate a movement-based activity or getting up for a cup of tea and a chat.

Writing goal review

Finish off the session by discussing with your peers how the session went. Other discussion prompts can include:

- How do you feel?
- Did you achieve what you hope? If not, why not?

Sample structure

Time	Activity
9 am	Welcome and discussion
9:10 am	Writing warm up
9:15 am	Writing block
10:30 am	Break
10:45 am	Writing block
12 (noon)	Writing goal review and goodbye

3. Choose and book a venue

PGRs can book the Training Room 2.22 or Breakout Space 2.21 located in the PGR Hub. Information about booking these rooms is available on the [PGR Hub website](#).



The Training Room 2.22 is suitable for up to 40 participants.



The Breakout Space 2.21 is suitable for 6 to 8 participants.

There are several other spaces available to [book a group study room](#) on UoB campus.

Step 4: Get the word out



You can let people know about your writing retreat by posting on social media or using WhatsApp. Ask that interested parties confirm their attendance with a direct message.

If you would like the BDC to help promote your writing retreat, contact bdc-engagement@bristol.ac.uk. Please note that, as per BDC's remit, any events we promote must be open to PGRs of all levels and disciplines.

Checklist



Once all the above steps have been completed, send interested participants a calendar invite that includes:

- Date/time
- Location
- Details of what to expect (schedule of writing retreat)
- Items to bring on the day
 - ✓ Schedule
 - ✓ Timekeeper
 - ✓ Laptop and charger cable
 - ✓ Paper and pens for warm-up writing
 - ✓ Snacks for breaks

Further support

If you have any questions or concerns, email us at doctoral-college@bristol.ac.uk.