

Full responses from AcWriMo participants at Maynooth University Library

Write for five minutes, in sentences not bullets, about your experience of AcWriMo. Include what worked for you and any other thoughts.

1

I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in AcWriMo. It was a great way to get me to write, but also a really nice way for me to get to know library staff that I haven't had a chance to meet in person yet. The format was good. We met each week and I liked that it wasn't too formal. I think we all felt comfortable speaking and taking feedback from each other. The group ran for the month of November and again the length of that was just right. It kept me focussed on producing the blog post (even though I was a week late in finishing it!).

Helen [the facilitator] was so supportive, and very generous with her time, experience, and expertise. She provided excellent feedback throughout. There is no way I would have written a blog without her. I now have a record of a fairly big experience in my life, and I'm quite proud of it. I have never done anything like this before and would be very interested in building on this experience.

2.

The idea of joining the academic writing group was quite daunting to me at first as I'm usually somebody who prefers to write without an audience and shies away from sharing my writing with others due to a lack of confidence. When I hear the word "academic writing", I tend to think of assignments or a formal style of writing which automatically brings me back to University standards and the pressure of deadlines. These are the thoughts that often make me hesitant to start any kind of writing exercise. However, after joining the Academic Writing group I started to see academic writing in a different way. I realised that it can be informal, fun, flexible and personal while still being informative and valuable to others. The entire experience was extremely enjoyable, and I feel that I gained more confidence in my own writing abilities. Everyone in the group was encouraging and supportive and helped to create a safe and open space where we felt comfortable sharing drafts, exchanging thoughts and discussing feedback. Not only did I love hearing about the different blog posts, but I was also fascinated in hearing the feedback and observations from others in the group and how this can change how you view your own writing in a positive way. From taking part in Academic Writing Month, I learned a lot about my own writing skills and abilities, the importance of peer feedback and how having confidence in yourself is the key ingredient to writing.

3

I signed up to AcWriMo without giving it a second thought. But then the reality of it hit and I found the prospect overwhelming, it seemed like a huge undertaking. I considered dropping out but said I would persevere for the first week anyway and then see what happened. My initial reservation was the whole idea of writing for an hour a day. I had visions of sitting at a blank screen waiting for inspiration. And not much was achieved the first week I'll be honest. However, I then attended the first group meeting and Helen [the facilitator] said to break your writing down into smaller instalments. The process took off from there for me. I also really enjoyed getting to know some of my colleagues that are new to the library. I have developed a friendship with one in particular and we are working together on a poster presentation. I learned so much from the tasks, hearing other people's writing and the feedback they received as well as the feedback I received for my own writing. I am delighted that my blog post was published online and I am already formulating ideas for the next one.

4

What helped make this a great success for me came from two very important aspects; one, having a team of colleagues that were undergoing the same challenge as I was and two, having a weekly meeting to share and provide feedback to each other. The feedback I received was critical for the editing stage. The feedback I provided helped me as well as I uncovered important aspects of writing a blog post that in fact helped develop my own writing skills. The support gained from this community and having the opportunity to meet colleagues I have yet to interact with added so much to the experience, especially amidst the pandemic. I looked forward to our Wednesday meetings every week very much. I do hope that in future years, AcWriMo at Maynooth University Library can still incorporate a virtual aspect to the event as I believe this made it easier for a fragmented team to come together on a weekly basis. Though, I want to add that while I appreciate the virtual aspect and flexibility that comes with it, I do look forward to having a writing group with an in-person component (which I know was not possible this time around due to COVID). In the future, I would enjoy a common space to share each other's work and provide feedback to each other outside of email or the weekly meetings.

From this community, I have gained a writing support network that I am sure I can reach out to for feedback anytime as I continue on my writing journey, and I, too, am happy to provide any of them feedback anytime. One of the greatest senses of accomplishments from our AcWriMo group has been to see my colleagues publish their posts. A truly successful venture.

5

I was very nervous starting out at doing this. I have never written a blog before and I wasn't sure where to start. The first group meeting was brilliant at putting everyone at ease and setting us up in the right direction. Once we had finalised what we were going to write about, we started on creating our title. We had five weekly group meetings. These were brilliant for discussing ideas about our blogs posts. The feedback and editing tips were great. I found the whole experience very worthwhile. It gave me a confidence boost and the interactions each week with the group were brilliant especially from a 'working from home' point of view. It didn't take up a lot of my work time either. I would highly recommend this month to anyone, especially to those who have never written a blog before. The bonus was having my blog post published on LibFocus blog.

6.

AcWriMo gave me the chance to dedicate time to writing on a topic related to the library profession. It was an extremely enriching experience that allowed me to reflect on a topic I was interested in. AcWriMo was also a great opportunity to connect with library staff across Ireland who read my published blog post. I also got to connect with colleagues within MU Library through AcWriMo. I found that writing alongside my colleagues was particularly useful, as I felt I wasn't facing the task of writing an article on my own.