

How the Research Writing Consultants can help you

Dr Greg Maguire has been the Full-time Research Writing Consultant for the Faculty of Health, Engineering and Science (FHES) but from the week beginning June 2015, he has only worked Mondays and Tuesdays plus every second Wednesday as part of a Transition to Retirement over 18 months. The other half of the job is covered by our new Research Writing Consultant, Dr Amanda Harris, who works Thursday-Friday each week and every second Wednesday.

Most of our time is devoted to assisting individual clients, with their Proposals, Thesis chapters, Manuscripts and Graduation Citations, or running workshops on writing issues and preparing Proposals. Our workshops are advertised in the Faculty's e-newsletter Connexions, which enrolled research students should receive; bookings are made through the Faculty's Research Support Coordinator, Joseph Sim j.sim@ecu.edu.au. Greg has also developed on-line training resources for improving writing skills (see below).

Having previously taught academic writing for nine years at the University of Tasmania, Greg has worked in this role for ECU since mid-2007 and enjoyed it particularly because of the diversity of the material on which he comments and the interaction with research students, mostly on a one to one basis. Our role is style not content except for structuring of arguments. Our primary goal is to help research students in this Faculty to become better writers (PhD, DIT and Masters by research). There are two Learning Advisors (Postgraduate) in FHES, Dr Teresa Lawrence t.lawrence@ecu.edu.au and Diane Bunney d.bunney@ecu.edu.au, who work with Honours and some Coursework Masters and Doctorate students. We no longer assist staff directly unless they are enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research in this Faculty.

The ideal situation is where a Research Writing Consultant gets to work with research students on their research proposals and then continues the working relationships through their research projects. (We would be very pleased if students send the first 6-10 pages of text of their draft proposals to us after they have reached agreement on a draft Table of Contents with their Supervisors.) Our aim is to progressively improve your writing skills so that, for example, you can help their own research students more effectively in the future. We also attempt to attend your Proposal Seminar if invited.

As with other writing consultants, we do not usually do electronic editing (unless it is to highlight errors rather than fix them) but will scan our annotated copies and email it to the client. As is standard at ECU, we will only edit two chapters of a thesis plus the Abstract. (Preference is given to students who we have worked with previously; this may be in workshops or through commenting on their Proposals or draft manuscripts.) However, we will look at an entire draft journal manuscript or book chapter (even after you submit your thesis as long as the research information is included in the thesis). In addition to our usual workshops advertised in Connexions, we will also put on workshops by request for groups of five or more, if the topic is within our sphere of competency and if we have time.

Our role is to build your writing skills rather than be an editing service. We are keen on commenting on at least one draft of a section of your work before you send it to your supervisor. The aim is to get it into a state where your supervisor just has to deal with content issues. (We also want to work on your "raw writing" not your Supervisor's editing although you should have already consulted with your Supervisor(s) on the planned content.) If you are not using the APA referencing system (not compulsory for research students), please let us know which system you are using. All of our comments are suggestions for you to consider, but not necessarily accept, as it is your thesis/manuscript not ours.

Please let us know the names of your supervisors and your student number. There is no charge for our help. We can also refer you to a commercial editor or a proof reader who will look at more of your draft thesis but they charge for these services; please let your Supervisors know if you plan to use such commercial help.

We are based at the Joondalup Campus but will travel to the Mount Lawley Campus, if we have clients. Our office at Joondalup is Room 5.107, ph. (61 8) 6304 5191. Greg's mobile is 0404 991 245 and email is g.maguire@ecu.edu.au (Amanda's email is amanda.harris@ecu.edu.au). Greg usually deals with PhD and Master by Research students in the Schools of Engineering, Computing and Security Science, and Natural Sciences while Amanda works with the Schools for Medical Sciences, Nursing and Midwifery, Psychology and Social Science and Exercise and Health Sciences.

The link to our editing documents and tools, is given below:

<http://www.ecu.edu.au/faculties/health-engineering-and-science/research-activity/research-support/academic-writing-resources>

Quantitative statistics and experimental design are supported very well by the Faculty's Research Consultant; Dr Jacqui Coombes, [JO5.119](mailto:j.coombes@ecu.edu.au), 08-6304 2892, j.coombes@ecu.edu.au.

ECU is very keen for students to publish manuscripts during their PhD and on developing the ability to communicate their findings to potential users e.g. in industry, or the general public. The latter involves a different style of writing to academic writing. In this context, we work with all FHES Doctoral Research students to improve their Citation, which is a popular summary of your project written in a readily understood form so that it can be read out at your Graduation Ceremony. Usually, we will also ask for your draft Abstract to provide more background on your research. An advisory document on preparing Citations is included in the above academic writing resources link.

Greg's background is as an aquatic biologist and he has worked as a researcher, research manager, academic and academic manager. Fortunately, his earlier interests were very broad and extended beyond applied biology to profitability analyses and industry development including government approval systems. Greg also completed university units in Australian History, Drama, Philosophy and Education (before or after his PhD) and his research, extension and consultancy activities have included aquaculture, water chemistry, pumping systems, pond construction, and nutrition. Some of his most recent research was qualitative research, on supervision of international research students, and his reflections on collaborative research with industry. He also undertook some research in Sweden in 2014 related to hatchery rearing of oyster larvae. Greg's private interests include jazz, bushwalking and travelling.

Amanda's experience spans both biological and social sciences. Formerly a molecular biologist undertaking research in the USA and Australia, she later completed a PhD in medical anthropology based on research in Sarawak. She has since conducted research in Aboriginal Australia, China and Malaysia on a range of topics including medical and healthcare services, birthing and midwifery policies and traditional healing practices and health seeking behaviour. Amanda has taught at four Australian universities and supervised numerous postgraduate students. She has also worked as a consultant anthropologist in Indigenous cultural heritage for a range of private sector and government clients across Western Australia and for several years, worked in international development including the Australian Government aid program (AusAID).

updated: 10-8-2015