THESIS AND DISSERTATION
BOOT CAMP

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What is Thesis and Dissertation Boot Camp?

• Dedicated time and space to work in a focused environment that gives you no excuses to leave
• Ongoing access to food, drinks, caffeine, and a bathroom right down the hall
• Open to students at all stages
Why?

• Students Have Challenges
  - Writer’s block
    – Stuck at a particular stage
    – Fear or unfamiliarity of writing and editing
    – Writing in non-native language
  - Time management
    – Graduate assistantship
    – Full time employment

• Daily distractions
  – Family
  – Dishes
  – Laundry
  – Social media
  – “Me” time
  – Any excuse not to work on thesis or dissertation
Also...

Students Need Support

- Faculty support
- Peer review
- Help writing
- Technical assistance
- Formatting help
- Group encouragement
- Physical breaks
Access to Resources

- Library Staff
- Graduate Faculty
- The Dean of Graduate Studies
- Thesis and Dissertation Reviewer
- Center for Academic Achievement - Writing Center
- Hotels & On Campus Housing
• Discussion Boards
• Time Management
• Personal Life
• Technical Issues
• Timeline and Rewards

• Homework Dropbox
• 10 pages of writing or an update on progress due before the start of each session
• Timelines due 1st and final weekend
Workshops

- Getting Started
- Review of Writing Mechanics
- The Review and Editing Process
- Cloud Computing and Literature Review
- Academic Searching
- Turnitin Training
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) Process
- ETD Submission and Review process
49 HOURS of dedicated writing time

More than a typical work week
Participating Disciplines 2012-2017

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Criminal Justice
- Early Childhood Education
- Educational Leadership
- English
- Geosciences
- Professional Communication
- Sport Physiology
- History
- Liberal Studies
- Nursing
- Public Health
- Technology
- Fine Arts
- Other Universities!
## Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boot Campers who have graduated</th>
<th>attended 88% of the time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boot Campers who have not yet graduated</td>
<td>attended 65% of the time</td>
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Success

11 Boot Camps

137 Registrants
(in all stages)

81 Graduates
WHERE AND WHEN?

1 Camp Per Fall and Spring Semester
4 Weekends Per Camp

- Friday Evenings
  - Sherrod Library, room 311
  - 5:30pm-9:30pm

- Saturdays
  - Sherrod Library, room 311
  - 9:00am-8:00pm
Advertisement and Registration

• Advertisement
  • E-mail
  • Flyer
  • Press release
  • Graduate School and ETD web sites
  • Social media
  • Word of mouth

• Registration
  • Office of Professional Development
  • Links to registration provided in e-mail
Summary of THE BOOT CAMP model at East Tennessee State University

WHO

• School of Graduate Studies
• Graduate Council
• Librarians
• Graduate Faculty
• Office of Professional Development
WHAT

• 1 camp per semester, 4 weekends per camp. $150 transferable fee.
• A focused and collaborative environment dedicated to students writing a thesis or a dissertation. Also open to students working on proposals or projects.
• Students are given direct access to resources such as help with writing, mentoring, and technical assistance.
• Committee Chair collaboration encouraged.
• Focus is on productivity and making considerable progress regardless of the writing stage with graduation as the primary goal.
BOOT CAMP model at University of Pennsylvania

WHO
• Graduate Student Center

WHAT
• Limited to 20 students
• Bi-annual two-week dissertation writer’s retreat that provides an environment and support for intense, focused writing time. $25 non-refundable materials fee. $50 fee if rules are not followed.
• Focus is on productivity
BOOT CAMP model at Stanford University, CALIFORNIA

WHO
• Hume Writing Center

WHAT
• 8 camps are offered throughout the year, limit 16 students per camp, 10 writing days each. $100 refundable deposit upon completion of the camp.
• Classic, before dawn, after dark camps offered to serve students with varying schedules
• Provides
  – 1) space with minimal distractions;
  – 2) writing regimen/routine;
  – 3) peer motivation and support; and
  – 4) expert writing consultants.
• Focus is on making serious progress on a dissertation, master’s thesis, or other graduate writing project
The boot camp model at UCLA

WHO

• UCLA Graduate Writing Center

WHAT

• Free, registration required, limited space
• Dissertation boot camps with different writing focus categories
  – Social sciences: proposal session, qualitative session
  – Humanities: general session, prospectus focused session
  – STEM/Quantitative Writers Retreat
• Meeting times are once a week for approximately
• 2.5 hours during one of five 6-week summer sessions.
• Master’s Thesis Writing Program
  – Getting Started workshop
  – Writer’s retreat, 1 weekend
Organizing a Boot Camp at your Institution

Things to Consider:
- Student challenges
- Demographics
- Stages of writing
- Cost
- Resources and volunteers
- Faculty contributions
- Space, time, and scheduling logistics
RESOURCES


• UCLA Graduate Writing Center. (n.d.). Summer Dissertation Programs 2017. [https://gwc.gsric.ucla.edu/Programs/Diss](https://gwc.gsric.ucla.edu/Programs/Diss)

• UCLA Graduate Writing Center. (n.d.). Master’s Thesis Writing Program, 2016-2017. [https://gwc.gsric.ucla.edu/Mt/Mt-Program-2016-2017](https://gwc.gsric.ucla.edu/Mt/Mt-Program-2016-2017)


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