Course Specification

Part A

(CAWT003)

MA in Academic Writing Development and Research
Postgraduate Diploma in Academic Writing Development and Research
Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Writing Development

Centre for Academic Writing

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

We regularly review our course content, to make it relevant and current for the benefit of our students. For these reasons, course modules may be updated.

More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content, and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the Module Information Directory (MID), student module guide(s) and the course handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.
Part A

MA in Academic Writing Development and Research
Postgraduate Diploma in Academic Writing Development and Research
Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Writing Development

1. Introduction

This innovative, blended and distance learning Master’s degree in Academic Writing Development and Research, with its associated Diploma and PG Certificate, will be a new qualification in the UK and Europe. Offered by the Centre for Academic Writing (CAW) at Coventry University, the programme examines key areas in the field of Academic Writing and reflects a commitment to supporting academic writing at every level from undergraduate study to research dissemination. The title of the award underlines writing teachers’ and writing researchers’ commitment to understanding how writing develops—its context, opportunities and challenges.

Recent changes to HE have prompted universities to invest in the student experience and in high-quality academic support for students, as well as in support for academics in writing for publication and other forms of research communication. CAW’s MA programme will offer a qualification that is aimed at graduates, academics, and other professionals working as—or seeking a career or specialism as—‘writing developers’ who carry out this type of writing support with students and colleagues. This is the professional status that those studying for this MA/PGDip/PGCert will aspire to achieve or enhance.

This MA/PGDip/PGCert is first of all a practical course. It will target professionals and aspiring professionals who support student and professional writing in the UK and in areas where English is an additional language, such as the increasing number of taught Master’s on the continent which are delivered in English. The course will help these professionals and aspiring professionals to better support students and staff, and will prepare them to run their own academic writing centres and programmes. In addition, academic writing has been extensively researched and theorised, and the programme will introduce students to this research field and theory, and enable them to undertake research within their own contexts.

The course will address the needs and interests of a number of groups. The first is staff working in support units in UK, EU, and overseas universities who wish to improve the quality and professionalism of support for students. As universities become increasingly competitive in areas such as completion and aim for higher rates of student attainment, a growing number are establishing or increasing the writing support given to students (Ganobcsik-Williams 2017, McClay 2017, Ttoouli 2017). The CAW MA will teach both best practice in writing support and writing centre/writing programme development and management.

The programme and its blended/distance learning mode of delivery have been designed to encourage participation by academics and support staff who currently work full time in support provision, and the options to do PGCert/PGDip qualifications will encourage those who have Master’s degrees already but wish to learn about, for instance, writing programme development and management, as part of their continuing professional development.

Another target group is staff from European and overseas HEIs who wish to support staff or students in writing and publishing in English. English has become the default language for research communication, and many European universities offer degree courses that are delivered in English. Staff from these institutions who support professional development need training to support colleagues who must disseminate their research in English as a Second or Additional Language. There is also a growing, documented, interest in teaching academic writing in the first language as well as in additional languages, and CAW’s MA programme will support this.

A third group of potential students is home and international applicants who already have undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications in Education, Linguistics, Composition and Rhetoric, Literature and strands of Social/Cultural Studies. CAW’s postgraduate degree will offer these students a qualification combining expertise in writing development pedagogies and research to help them tailor their graduate careers in keeping with current job market demands at home and abroad, especially in the areas of writing consultancy and coaching in both academic and non-academic environments.
The CAW MA programme contributes to the Coventry University Group Education Strategy 2015-2021 by being research led, both in its research-inspired teaching and in the research-writing skills that the course team will impart to students. One module focuses on establishing and running a writing centre or writing programme, which advances the goals of embedded employability and creativity and enterprise within the Strategy. Another module analyses the benefits and challenges created by the dominance of English as an academic Lingua Franca and the effects this has on academic writers (and on the teaching of writing) internationally. Externally, the programme will be a significant contribution to the growing international community of writing support professionals by addressing the gap in writing development qualifications currently faced by this community of practice. Also, the programme will teach digital fluency in terms of teaching students to utilise and practice pedagogies for delivering writing support online, synchronously and asynchronously. In these ways the programme responds to all six pillars of education and student experience outlined in the Coventry University Group Education Strategy 2015-2021.

### 2 Available Award(s) and Modes of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Award</th>
<th>Mode of attendance</th>
<th>UCAS Code</th>
<th>FHEQ Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MA in Academic Writing Development and Research</td>
<td>2 years Blended/Distance Learning (MA and PgDip)</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Level 7 (Masters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma in Academic Writing Development and Research</td>
<td>1 year Blended/Distance Learning (PgCert)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Writing Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3 Awarding Institution/Body

Coventry University

### 4 Collaboration

Not Applicable

### 5 Teaching Institution and Location of delivery

Main teaching institution: Coventry University

Blended/Distance Learning

Location-independent, with optional face-to-face sessions held at Coventry University or at a designated location.

### 6 Internal Approval/Review Dates

Date of latest review: March 2017

Date for next review: 2025/2026

### 7 Course Accredited by

Not Applicable

### 8 Accreditation Date and Duration

Not Applicable

### 9 QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and/or other external factors

As these qualifications are new, and the field of Academic Writing is a new field of study in the UK context, there are no subject benchmarks and/or professional body requirements. Reference has been made to the document, Master’s Degree Characteristics (QAA, March 2010), to assure that students who engage fully with this programme will attain the learning outcomes expected of Master’s students. In particular, students will develop a systematic knowledge of current understandings of the practice and context of the field of Academic Writing, an understanding informed by the most current research.
and their own knowledge and practice of research methodology in the study of academic writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 Date of Course Specification</th>
<th>23rd March 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 Course Directors</td>
<td>Dr. Erik Borg and Dr. Dimitar Angelov</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12 Outline and Educational Aims of the Course

Broad Educational Aims of the Course:

- To equip students with the knowledge and skills to become qualified experts in supporting and developing student writing;

- To equip students with the knowledge and skills to become qualified experts in supporting and developing the writing of academics and researchers;

- To equip students with the knowledge and skills to conceptualise, establish, and manage writing provision in HE and other professional contexts;

- To equip students with the knowledge, skills, and experience to design and conduct research in the field of Academic Writing.

- To equip students to join and become full participants in the international community of writing development professionals.

Currency within Academic, Professional, and Employer Communities

A network of academic writing professionals has emerged across the UK and Europe in recent years, forming professional organisations including the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW) and the Writing Development in Higher Education Network (WDHE), which have linked with writing development colleagues worldwide and professional organisations such as the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) and the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA). In the UK and in many other countries, the massification of HE has brought widening participation and a concomitant need for student writing development and support, as well as a need to provide personalised learning support that will increase student attainment and student satisfaction. At the same time, academics and researchers around the world are being increasingly expected to publish their research at a very early stage of their careers and to maximise the number and impact of their research outputs. As a result of these factors, there is a growing need to support HE students’ writing development and academics and other colleagues in writing for scholarly publication. The field of Academic Writing development is therefore expanding, and there is an increasing need for the professionalisation of staff in writing development roles. The MA/PGDip Academic Writing Development and Research, and PGCert Academic Writing Development will be based upon Coventry University’s pre-eminence in the teaching and research of academic writing at its Centre for Academic Writing, which is well-established and well-regarded within the writing development community internationally.
13 Course Learning Outcomes

The Course Learning Outcomes are:

CLO1: Be able to apply and evaluate different approaches to teaching and supporting academic writing, ranging from student writing to writing for scholarly publication.

CLO2: Demonstrate the ability to identify, resolve and reflect upon problems arising from applying academic writing pedagogies in practice.

CLO3: Propose theoretical and practical solutions for key challenges facing native and non-native speakers of English who wish to engage in the process of writing and publishing their research.

CLO4: Recognise ways in which different institutional and cultural constraints shape the practice of academic writing provision.

CLO5: Identify researchable questions in the study of academic writing, ranging from student writing to writing for scholarly publication.

CLO6: Critically evaluate a variety of theoretical models and research methodologies and demonstrate the ability to select appropriate ones to investigate issues in academic writing, ranging from student writing to writing for scholarly publication.

CLO7: Design and implement a small-scale research project in any aspect of academic writing.

N.B. There are no relevant Subject Benchmark statements in the QAA document. The CLOs have been derived from the ILOs of individual modules.

14 Course Structure and Requirements, Levels, Modules, Credits and Awards

Course structure:

The course structure begins by teaching key pedagogies for supporting academic writing for both study and professional writing purposes. It also provides grounding in the theories and practices of how to set up and manage a writing centre, programme, or initiative. The course then offers in-depth learning about how to support postgraduates, academics, and researchers in writing for publication in English, and about how to develop students’ writing in the disciplines. Importantly, students will also learn how to research academic writing, and MA students will write a dissertation or portfolio based on an individually chosen research project, to inform their professional development.

All students will study four core modules:

- Teaching and Supporting Academic Writing
- Contextual Issues in Developing Research Communication
- Supporting Research Active Staff with Research Communication
- Writing Centre and Writing Programme Development and Management

MA/PgDip students will also study four advanced modules:

- Researching Academic Writing
- Writing in the Disciplines
- Academic Writing, Multilingualism and Knowledge Production
- Academic Writing in a Multimodal World
MA students will complete a Dissertation

**Modes of attendance:**

The programme will be delivered through online module materials, optional face-to-face teaching, and independent study, allowing students to fit their studies around other commitments. A wide variety of resources will be made available via the online study platform, including: lecture notes, videos, specialist resources from the Centre for Academic Writing library collection, discussion forums, and research produced by teaching staff.

The PGCert will be studied over 1 year and the MA/PGDip over 2 years, either by blended learning or distance learning. At each stage, students will have the opportunity to attend a short, residential workshop (up to 5 days) to provide core learning. Workshops will be optional, but attendance will be encouraged to underpin learning, to meet cohorts and teachers, and to build students’ professional networks. Normally, workshops will be held at CAW’s Academic Writing Studio. Students who are unable to attend the workshops will study independently using online materials.

**The course offers the following unique features:**

The study of the teaching and research into academic writing has been fragmented; in Britain and Europe, this study has largely been set in Applied Linguistics programmes which focused on the challenges faced by second language speakers of English in writing for academic purposes. On the other hand, Rhetoric and Composition programmes in North America developed to help students that we would identify as belonging to widening participation groups, but who were largely native English speakers. Uniquely, CAW’s programme will bring together support and research into the challenges faced by both second language speakers and the many native English speaking students who find academic writing challenging.

Another unique aspect of CAW’s programme is its attention to the needs not only of students, but also of researchers who must disseminate their findings in the highest quality appropriate outlet. Although the programmes alluded to above address the needs of students, no programme systematically prepares writing developers to support researchers in writing for publication. CAW’s programme will be the first to do this.

The course will enhance students’ career prospects for working with students, academics, researchers, and other colleagues through supporting, teaching and carrying out research on academic writing. The qualifications offered by the course will combine the theory and practice necessary for working effectively as a writing developer in writing centres, learning centres, staff development centres, and research centres, and for providing writing support in disciplinary or workplace contexts, in the UK and internationally.

The MA in Academic Writing Development and Research will also prepare students to undertake doctoral study in the fields of Academic Writing, Composition and Rhetoric, Education, and related fields.

**Cascade of Awards:**

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PgCert in Academic Writing Development
↓
DgDip in Academic Writing Development and Research
↓
MA in Academic Writing Development and Research
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Modules within the course, their status (whether mandatory or options), the levels at which they are studied, their credit value and pre/co requisites are identified in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module credit level</th>
<th>Module Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit Value</th>
<th>Mandatory/Optional</th>
<th>Course Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7013CAW</td>
<td><strong>Teaching and Supporting Academic Writing</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>CLO1 and CLO2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7014CAW</td>
<td><strong>Contextual Issues in Developing Research Communication</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>CLO1 and CLO3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7015CAW</td>
<td><strong>Writing Centre and Writing Programme Development and Management</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>CLO1 and CLO4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7016CAW</td>
<td><strong>Supporting Research Active Staff with Research Communication</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>CLO1, CLO2 and CLO3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7017CAW</td>
<td><strong>Researching Academic Writing</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>CLO5, CLO6 and CLO7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7018CAW</td>
<td><strong>Academic Writing, Multilingualism and Knowledge Production</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>CLO3 and CLO4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7019CAW</td>
<td><strong>Writing in the Disciplines</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>CLO1 and CLO2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7020CAW</td>
<td><strong>Academic Writing in a Multimodal World</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>CLO1, CLO4 and CLO5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7021CAW</td>
<td><strong>Dissertation Research and Writing</strong></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Core option</td>
<td>CLO5, CLO6 and CLO7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15 Criteria for Admission and Selection Procedure

The course is subject to the general University admission procedures and access policies. To be accepted for the course students must possess a good honours degree 2.2 or above in any academic discipline in the Humanities, Social Sciences, or Sciences, and have an interest in teaching, supporting, and researching academic writing. Applicants who can demonstrate relevant experience at an appropriate professional level but do not have the formal academic entry qualifications may be admitted subject to an application and assessment.

Careful monitoring of applications to ensure that successful applicants are suited to the course takes place. Where necessary, applicants are interviewed, especially those who do not appear to meet standard admissions criteria. Where deemed appropriate, a written exercise may be administered to establish suitability.

Applicants who are not native speakers of English must have a minimum 6.5 IELTS test score, normally with a minimum score of 7 in writing. Equivalent English language proficiency qualifications or evidence of ability will be considered on an individual basis.

Accreditation for prior learning (AP(E)L) is in accordance with University regulations.

16 Academic Regulations and Regulations of Assessment

This Course conforms to the standard University Regulations.
17 Indicators of Quality Enhancement

- Students benefit from specialist teaching, supervision, and Academic Writing research expertise provided by Academic Writing lecturers at Coventry University’s internationally-recognised Centre for Academic Writing (CAW).
- The course comprises an original, current and research-informed curriculum.
- Academic Writing research and publications produced by members of the CAW teaching team are included in the REF.
- The ‘MA and PgDip Academic Writing Development and Research’ and ‘PGCert Academic Writing Development’ are pioneering courses in Europe that explore the fast-expanding field of Academic Writing Development and Research.
- The course offers a flexible mode of delivery (Blended/Distance Learning) designed to fit around students’ work and/or personal commitments.
- The course provides online learning resources suitable for self-directed study, and individual, online student support through Skype.
- The course offers opportunities for an international learning experience and face-to-face teaching to enable students to meet their cohort and lecturers.
- The course provides an opportunity to compare writing development teaching practices, research projects and findings, and writing centre/writing programme models from around the world.
- The course teaches how to apply writing pedagogy and research to support both native and non-native English-speaking students.
- The course teaches how to conduct research into Academic Writing (the MA course supports students in conducting an Academic Writing research project on student or professional academic writing that is applicable to their own professional aspirations or job context).
- The course introduces students to (and scaffolds them in participating in) national and international writing development conferences and professional organisations.
- The Quality Assurance Agency for HE has identified CAW’s contribution ‘to the student learning experience’ as a feature of good practice at Coventry University, and has noted that the ‘Centre for Academic Writing is regarded very positively by students as a source of guidance’ (QAA 2015: 26, 2).
- The October 2016 Universities UK ‘Working in Partnership; Enabling Social Mobility in HE’ report showcases CAW as a best practice example for supporting students with disabilities: ‘Coventry University Maths Centre and Centre for Academic Writing provide dedicated support to students with dyslexia or dyscalculia as part of the university’s commitment to supporting disabled students throughout their studies. In three years, continuation rates for disabled students have risen by 6.7% to 90.8%, indicating that the programme is having an impact’ (76) http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2016/working-in-partnership-final.pdf

18 Additional Information

Enrolled students have access to additional, key sources of information about the course and student support including:

- Central Registry Information
- Student Handbook
- Module Guides
- Module Information Directory
- Study Support information
- Individual support through Personal Tutor
- Academic Writing Support (CAW)
- Quantitative Research Support (sigma Maths and Stats Centre)