OWCA Conference 2025
Writing Centers: Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive

24-26 April 2025

The Online Writing Centers Association invites proposals for its fourth virtual conference. We encourage all writing center folk to participate, including writing center professionals, graduate students, and undergraduates.

Deadlines and Conference Timeline
- Proposals Due - 15 October 2024
- Acceptances - 20 November 2024
- Conference Materials Due - March 2025

Call for Proposals

In this ever-increasing globalized world, universities need to accommodate more multilingual and multicultural student populations. These accommodations fall under initiatives like Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs, cultural houses for students, or academic resources targeting specific ethnicities. These resources are meant to support, mentor, and inform students on navigating the academia and entering the "real world" (i.e. industry/workforce) or graduate studies/teaching. DEI initiatives and academic programs have long fought for creating homeplaces on institutional campuses. Writing Centers (WC) can serve as a homeplace for a diverse pool of students who only need a desire to improve their writing. Thus, the WC is a space that's capable of transcending race and ethnicity. However, we cannot claim the same for language as there is always a dominant language practice within the space. How can WCs further support students as they navigate Global Englishes, the voice academia, and their mother tongues? How can we support and train tutors and help writers develop their skills while staying true to their lived experiences and cultures? How can WCs across the world prepare students to enter a world that sells the idea that "two languages are better than one"? What are the implications for monolingual environments?

This Call for Proposals asks you to consider how writing centers have, currently, and will continue to support, mentor, and inform our tutors, graduate students, staff, administrators, and student populations. This includes and encourages the consideration of language practices, inclusion of generative AI practices, student outreach, and professional development. Questions to consider may include:

- In these increasingly international, multilingual and multicultural contexts, how do we navigate these complex intersections of languages and cultures in the tutoring of writing?
- How can we balance the varying priorities writers have while preparing them for future careers?
- Should tutoring pedagogy utilize translingual approaches that privilege all languages and grammars?
- How do we more effectively serve multilingual student populations?
- How has the WC served as a space for mediation, safety and knowledge exchange?
- How can WCs use GenAI as a globalization tool?
- What is your writing center doing that has helped bridge language and cultural divides? And how can WCs support each other in these efforts?

- How do WCs respond to anti-DEI initiatives/legislation?
- What pedagogical approaches will aid us in mentoring students, tutors, graduate students, and faculty through writing center events, workshops, and forms of professional development?

Areas to Consider

Proposals for this theme may consider, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Administration: Budgeting, institutional support, the writing center's parent department, marketing and branding, physical location, etc.
- Writing Center Staff: Employment, contingency roles, staff professional development, graduate student professionalization, tutor employment, tutor training, emotional labor, etc.
- Student Populations: Overall enrollment, graduate v. undergraduate, STEM writing, multilingual writers, etc.
- Diversity & Social Justice: Marginalized groups, race/ethnicity, gender and sexuality, diversity, accessibility, access, working with academic program, etc.
- Questions of Value: Misconceptions of the writing center, skills transfer, the writing center and other academic support resources, student retention, writing center assessments, etc.
- The 21st Century: AI (ChatGPT, Grammarly, etc.), multimodality, online v. in person tutoring, synchronous v. asynchronous tutoring, pandemics and other major national or global events/crises, etc.
- Online Writing Centers: Administration, technology, barriers, populations served, synchronous v. asynchronous tutoring, etc.

Session Formats

The OWCA accepts proposals for the following session formats:

Asynchronous Formats

Asynchronous presenters will pre-record a presentation that will be available to attendees from 18 April 2025 through 30 June 2025. After this date, presenters can choose for their recording to be deleted from the OWCA website or to be moved to our public scholarship database.

Asynchronous presentations should be a maximum of 15 minutes in length. These sessions are ideal for:
- Presenting research that explores a specific topic, question, or collected data.
- Showcasing a particular technology or program helpful to writing center work.
- Outlining a technique or approach used in your writing center.

All asynchronous presenters will also be offered the opportunity to share or discuss their work live during the conference on 24-26 April 2025.

Synchronous Formats

Synchronous sessions highlight participation through interactive conversations or activities that provide explicit opportunities for attendees to discuss, share, and/or create. Synchronous sessions can be in one of the following formats:
- **General Workshop**: An interactive session that briefly introduces a topic then invites participation in activities to apply concepts or develop new materials.
- **Roundtable Discussion:** A collaborative conversation in which attendees are led by a moderator guiding the discussion through specific questions or prompts.
- **Research Networking:** A session that allows participants to share works-in-progress, create connections for collaboration, or seek feedback on current research projects.
- **Professionalization Forums:** An opportunity to present best practices in professional skills (job applications, interviewing, etc.) or to provide advice to those entering the writing center job market.

Synchronous sessions will run for 45 minutes on 24-26 April 2025.

Accessibility

The OWCA requires presenters and facilitators to share accessible materials for their session prior to the actual conference dates. These materials are necessary to fulfill OWCA's commitment to accessible, equitable, and inclusive interaction. The OWCA reserves the right to edit presentation materials for digital accessibility.

Asynchronous presenters will need to share the following materials:
- **Slide decks or other materials used in the recording by 3/15/25.** Presenters who are using slide decks must provide the slides as a PowerPoint (PPT) file. Other files should be shared as Microsoft Word documents. These files will be available to attendees.
- **Session recording and closed captions by 4/1/25**. Presenters who propose an asynchronous presentation will record their presentation and upload it to YouTube. We recommend setting your video privacy setting to "unlisted" and turning off comments and ratings. Presenters will be asked to edit the closed captions on their video for accuracy before sending the YouTube link to the OWCA. For assistance, use these resources on [How to make a YouTube video unlisted](#) and [How to add closed captions in YouTube](#).
- **Handouts [if applicable] by 4/1/25.** Presenters who plan to share handouts must provide these files as Microsoft Word documents to the OWCA.

Synchronous facilitators will need to share the following materials by 4/1/25:
- **Detailed outline:** Facilitators should prepare a detailed outline that includes any scripted portions of the session, outlines the major topics and the order of activities, and includes directions for any activity and/or the specific discussion questions being put forward.
- **Slide decks [if applicable]:** Facilitators who are using slide decks must provide the slides as a PowerPoint (PPT) file to the OWCA to be available to attendees.
- **Handouts [if applicable]:** Facilitators who plan to distribute handouts must provide these files as Microsoft Word documents to the OWCA. We recommend a handout if you plan to utilize Zoom breakout rooms to support smaller group conversations.

In order to support presenters and facilitators in developing accessible materials, the OWCA will provide the following:

- A pop-up event on making your conference materials accessible will be offered in early March (co-hosted by OWCA's Accessibility and Virtual Events Committees).
- Training materials, guides, and support to help presenters develop accessible presentation materials. Please visit OWCA's Accessibility Resources page.
- American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters in all synchronous sessions. The OWCA works with Morr Interpreting for ASL interpretation.
- Recordings of all synchronous sessions and their ASL interpretation
- Edited closed captions for all synchronous video recordings.

If you plan to present or attend and we have not appropriately planned for your accessibility needs, please email the OWCA Accessibility Committee at access@onlinewritingcenters.org.

Registration

An OWCA membership is required to present and/or attend OWCA 2025 as well as to access conference materials. One-year OWCA memberships are $5-15 for students and $40 for professionals. Learn more about OWCA membership dues and benefits.

Submit a Proposal

Conference proposals are due on **15 October 2024**. After initial review of proposals, there will be an opportunity to revise and resubmit the proposal based on feedback from the conference committee. Submissions must include the following:

- All presenter name(s), role(s), institution(s), and email(s)
- Working title
- Session format and the reasoning for this particular format
- Topic category or categories
- An abstract in written (about 500 words) or audio/video (5 minutes or less) format

OWCA Conference 2025 Proposal Submission form.

Proposal Scoring Rubric

Conference proposals will be scored using the following rubric:

- **Is the focus of the proposal clear and innovative? (scale of 1-4)**
  - 1 = unclear topic; replicates previous contributions
  - 4 = clear topic; proposes new idea; draws new connections or conclusions
- **Would this proposal contribute to varied perspectives and interpretations of the conference theme and writing center work? (scale of 1-4)**
  - 1 = irrelevant to writing centers; irrelevant to the conference theme

- ○ 4 = exceptionally meaningful to writing centers; compellingly responds to conference theme
- **Is the proposal already situated in an existing body of research or does the proposal have the potential to be situated in an existing body of research?**
  - ○ Yes _____
  - ○ Somewhat _____
  - ○ No _____
- **Does the proposal address diversity/inclusivity and/or offer a perspective from an underrepresented group or institution?**
  - ○ Yes _____
  - ○ Somewhat _____
  - ○ No _____
- **For synchronous sessions only: Does the proposed session provide opportunity for active participation of attendees?**
  - ○ Yes _____
  - ○ Somewhat _____
  - ○ No _____
- **Would you recommend we accept the proposal?**
  - ○ Yes
  - ○ Invite to revise and resubmit
  - ○ No