

Writing Center Consortium for Graduate-level (WCCG) Professional Military Education Charter

Article 1. Name.

The group will be formally named the Writing Center Consortium for Graduate-level Professional Military Education, and will use the initialism, WCCG, in day-to-day correspondence.

Article 2. Background.

The Professional Military Education system at the graduate level (PME-G) combines many factors—mission, culture, profession, interdisciplinarity, duration, student body, and faculty expertise—that result in a unique educational environment. PME-G Writing Centers are tasked with operating at the intersections of these factors, which creates both unique challenges and surprising permutations of challenges found at traditional writing centers.

- **Assessments of effectiveness:** As is consistent with writing center work across the US and globally, our group struggles to assess and measure the effectiveness of its practices on student writing and critical thinking. To date, the large number of variables that influence student success have been impossible to accurately capture and record, despite an educational system that increasingly requires empirical and quantified evidence of student improvement and adherence to standard definitions across quite disparate disciplines.
- **Faculty understanding and involvement:** Writing centers offer the most benefit to an academic community when faculty members actively support and engage in directing students to the center. Yet, member writing centers must constantly address the faculty perception that their writing center is only for high achieving and low achieving (remedial) students. In fact, writing center work often brings the most benefit to the students between these groups. This “murky middle” may be the most hesitant or resistant to using the writing center for academic support. Likewise, identifying and targeting student populations is a consistent challenge to maintaining writing center value. Centers must also consistently manage expectations, define the role of the writing center consultants/instructors, and explain how they work with students and prioritize issues.

- **Time constraints:** PME writing centers serve a population facing constraints of time-compressed and accelerated course and degree work. But writing is a process that takes time to learn and incorporate into diverse academic and professional activities. Under these circumstances, the PME-G writing centers are challenged to better integrate and time their classes, workshops, and consultation services to the curriculum. Writing centers and indeed the PME-G community would benefit from a greater integration of the writing center into the curriculum design and scheduling processes to ensure students have opportunities to use the services. Students would benefit from greater clarity in writing assignments and writing outcomes better aligned to lesson, course and program outcomes, as well as institutional and joint learning outcomes.
- **Research on graduate-level writing center practices:** There is a growing though comparatively small body of academic research on graduate-level writing center practices and professional writing center approaches. The practice often requires a high degree of flexibility on the part of the educator and can lead to appropriately varying degrees of collaboration and variation in instructional approaches. Writing center practitioners are challenged to engage with students at the graduate level, protect student privacy, elicit the trust necessary for student growth, and participate at a level appropriate to the students' engagement, yet not infringe on student agency or departmental faculty authority.
- **Resource management:** WCCG members struggle to meet institutional expectations for the quality and quantity of the academic and instructional services they offer within the limited budgets provided. Accordingly, WCCG members wrestle with workload management and the administrative, faculty, and student expectations for what is often not merely a perceptual increase but a quantifiable increase in the demand for greater and more-frequent academic support.
- **Institutional location:** Writing centers within PME-G institutions vary in their organizational location, and the nature of the work often leads to greater degrees of autonomy. Those two variations contribute to the challenge of promoting writing and functioning as the institutional center for writing instruction. Disparate organizational locations lead to challenges participating in institutional discourse and decision making, maintaining a sufficient web presence, and sustaining contact with other parts of the institution, other levels of education within PME-G, and other PME institutions. The constraints of military technology, OPSEC requirements, and institutional compartmentalization add another degree of complexity to this challenge.

Article 3. Purpose.

The WCCG is founded to improve the quality of professional military education broadly but with an emphasis on improving the ability of students and faculty to leverage communication—written, oral, and multi-modal—throughout their careers and in their classrooms. The WCCG aims to extend the reach of WCCG programs, improve efficiency, refine assessment, and ensure effective reporting. To those ends the WCCG facilitates collaboration in the following areas and activities:

- **Learning resources:** Share and collaborate on the development of resources related to teaching pedagogy, reference materials, course/workshop content, technology, timing of offerings, and student-records management.
- **Faculty development programs:** Exchange materials and best practices for improving the faculty’s ability to teach writing in the classroom, especially regarding participation in new faculty orientation, providing feedback, writing assignment design, and language for syllabi related to the writing center and its services.
- **Center management:** Exchange best practices related to systems, SOPs, technology, budgeting, reporting, hiring, contracting, orientation guides, time management, and goal setting.
- **Student-assessment models and practices:** Share and collaborate on intake and final-assessment exams, surveys of students and faculty, definitions, rubrics, software experimentation, and contributions to accreditation efforts.
- **Professional development of WCCG leadership and staff:** Share information on professional development opportunities and trajectories, mentoring, and position descriptions; and invest in the professional development of representatives and their team members through resource sharing, mentoring, intra-WCCG workshops, collaborative research and panel presentations, and similar activities.
- **Graduate-student research:** Share literature on graduate-student and PME-G writing-center research relevant to PME-Gs and their unique student populations, institutional constraints and opportunities, and missions; and collaborate on original research.

Article 4. Participation and Voting Rights.

1. The WCCG recognizes that broad and inclusive participation is essential for developing a viable and sustainable organization. To that end, the term “writing center” should be broadly construed to include all education-based activities

associated with writing center work, such as writing across the curriculum and faculty development efforts, and communication support and service programs operating within a DoD educational institution. And participation includes all employees who work in those areas, whether civilian, active duty, or contractor.

2. Participation in the activities of the WCCG can include all those affiliated with the activities of a writing center at the undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate levels within the DoD Professional Military Education system.
3. Voting rights are limited to one representative from a recognized DoD graduate educational institution and may only be exercised by a DoD civilian or DoD Military service member.
4. The WCCG recognizes the following institutions for representation:
 - a. Air University
 - b. Army University
 - c. Marine Corps University
 - d. National Defense University
 - e. Naval Postgraduate School
 - f. Naval War College
 - g. Army War College
5. The recognized institutions shall determine and designate a representative who shall convene at meetings as the representative.
 - a. As necessary, an institution can designate an alternative member to exercise voting rights.
6. All representatives will be called the Voting Body of the WCCG.
7. Representatives from the Voting Body can motion to recognize additional writing centers within the DoD PME system.
8. The presence of one more than half of the total Representatives of the Voting Body constitutes quorum of a simple majority.

Article 5. Governance.

1. An Executive Council, also known as the WCCG-EC, will preside over the WCCG.

2. The WCCG-EC will include an Executive Council Chair (ECC), an Executive Council Associate Chair (ECAC), and an Executive Council Secretary (ECS).
3. The Voting Body of the WCCG will elect, by a simple majority vote, all three positions listed in Article 5.2.
4. The ECC, or the ECAC as delegated, may make motions or recognize motions from representatives in the Voting Body, Observers, and participants.
5. The ECC will be elected by the Executive Council by a simple majority to a term of two years. The ECC will be responsible for developing agendas for and leading WCCG meetings, functioning as the foremost representative for the group's interests, and providing strategic direction for the WCCG.
6. The ECAC will be elected from the primary membership body by a simple majority to a term of two years. The ECAC will be responsible for supporting the ECC and assuming responsibilities as delegated by the ECC.
7. The ECC and the ECAC must not be from the same institution.
8. At the end of the ECC's term, the ECAC will be promoted to the ECC's position for a two-year term, and the membership body will elect, by simple majority, a new ECAC for a two-year term.
9. Voting on the positions of ECC, ECAC, and ECS will take place at the conclusion of the EC member's two-year terms, or sooner if the ECC, ECAC, or ECS steps down or is removed.
10. The transfer of responsibilities from outgoing ECC to ascending ECAC, and from ascending ECAC to incoming ECAC, shall take place immediately following the vote. The transfer of responsibilities from outgoing ECS to ascending ECS shall take place within 24 hours, allowing the outgoing ECS to provide meeting notes to the ECC.
11. The ECS will be elected from the primary membership body by simple majority to a term of two years. The ECS will be responsible for 1) taking notes during meetings, 2) providing meeting notes to the ECC for finalization, 3) distributing meeting minutes to members, 4) maintaining WCCG's organizational documents, such as rosters, reports, agendas, and flyers, in an online site shared with the ECC and ECAC, and 5) organizing informal professional development meetings.

12. Should either the ECC or the ECAC step down prior to the end of their term, the representatives will elect a new chair, and the new chair will fulfill a full two-year term, plus the time until the next semi-annual meeting.
13. Should the ECS step down prior to the end of their term, the representatives will elect a new ECS, and the new chair will fulfill a full two-year term, plus the time until the next semi-annual meeting.
14. Should the ECC, ECAC, or ECS require short-term leave, an acting ECC, ECAC, or ECS will be appointed by the outgoing official. Short term is defined as between one month and six months. Outgoing officials shall make preferences toward maintaining organizational diversity in selecting an acting ECC, ECAC, or ECS.
15. The Voting Body may vote to remove the ECC, ECAC, or ECS by a two-thirds majority. The Voting Body must notify the affected position 72 hours prior to the vote and allow the affected position to attend. The Voting Body must provide an explanation for convening the vote that is entered into meeting minutes as an official WCCG document. The Voting Body must notify the affected position of their removal in writing, and the notification must include an explanation from the two-thirds of the Voting Body regarding why the person was removed from the position.
16. Potential ECCs, ECACs, and ECSs may self-nominate or be nominated by a representative from the Voting Body.
17. Potential ECCs and ECACs must be DOD civilians or active-duty service members.
18. Potential ECS may be DOD civilians, active-duty service members, or contractors directly affiliated with recognized members or observer status institutions.
19. Previous ECCs may not be elected to the ECAC without at least a three-month gap between their previous tenure on the EC and being voted into the new position by the Voting Body.
20. The ECC, ECAC, and ECS may vote as the representative of their institution.
21. Observers are formally recognized participants included in Voting Body deliberations and are asked to contribute their knowledge and perspective. Observers are not conferred voting privileges. Observer status applies to all participants from foreign institutions (i.e., not U.S. Government-based programs), U.S. programs that are solely represented by writing consultant contractors, and PME administrative and/or teaching faculty who have formerly overseen a PME writing center. Observer status

must be formally established by a simple majority vote of the Voting Body. U.S.-based programs are eligible for permanent recognition when the Voting Body determines that a program meets the criteria for representation.

22. Institutions formally recognized as Observers include:
 - a. The Royal Military College of Canada
 - b. National Intelligence University
 - c. Air War College
 - d. Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT)

Article 6. Meetings.

1. The WCCG will have semi-annual meetings.
2. The WCCG ECC will be responsible for soliciting issues, setting the meeting agendas, and leading the meetings.
3. One of the semi-annual meetings will convene as part of the International Writing Center Association Annual Conference in or around October of each year.
4. If an ECC vote takes place during a meeting, the newly ascended ECC shall be responsible for formally concluding the meeting.
5. One of the semi-annual meetings will be hosted, on a rotating basis, at a recognized institution.
 - a. The meeting will occur in spring each year.
 - b. The meeting will also function as a workshop to develop WCCG research and/or teaching acumen and may also function as faculty development for the hosting institution. The accepted host will determine the workshop topic(s).
 - c. The ECC shall call for representatives, as defined in Article 4.4, to self-nominate their institution to host the meeting one year in advance (e.g., the nomination and vote for the 2024 WCCG Spring meeting should occur at the conclusion of the WCCG 2023 Spring meeting). The ECC shall also call for representatives, as defined in Article 4.4, to self-nominate their institution to host the meeting in the case that the primary nominee is unable to host.

- d. The ECC shall call for the representative body to vote on the nominations, which will be determined by a simple majority.
6. The representative body and participating members can request the ECC convene a conference call or VTC meeting of the WCCG.

REVISED: 5 June 1) addition of a secretary role within the Executive Council, 2) addition of Air Force Institute of Technology as an observer.

ADOPTED: