

## Converting Research to Outputs in One Week: The Efficacy of Writing Retreats

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### Abstract

Academic teaching staff are beset by a host of demands and responsibilities in these challenging times – for many, the onus of demonstrating that they are ‘research active’ and producing scholarly publications threatens to become the final straw. This presentation will outline one possible solution that some Te Pūkenga subsidiaries, including our own, have found highly effective. Since the 2016 inauguration of Toi Ohomai, the research office have been convening an annual, off-campus, week-long writers’ retreat for staff. We have also recently added a second event specifically for Māori researchers. Objectives include developing academic writing capability, achieving publications/research outputs, and progressing theses/dissertations. Feedback from the 4 to 12 participants at each event has been generally enthusiastic, and anecdotally there appears to have been a high rate of conversion of writing to publication. Further, the literature suggests that writing retreats offer additional benefits; coaching relationships, cross-disciplinary connections and collaborations, and a new or renewed engagement with research culture. Our research team decided that a more formal evaluation of retreat participant outcomes would be timely, and would potentially allow us to promote this initiative to Te Pūkenga’s research strategy development arm. Using a multi-method design, we reviewed survey feedback from the seven retreats held between 2017 and 2021, and verified research outputs registered with our institute’s research management system. We then developed and piloted interview questions, and met with nine past retreat attendees. This paper shares our emerging findings, including enablers and barriers to attendance and productivity, and suggested work-arounds. We believe that this approach to assisting staff to progress their publishing careers is easily transferable across other subsidiaries, and hope that colleagues, managers, and the teaching and learning teams who support them will find some of our learnings helpful.

Keywords: Writing retreat, academic writing capability, academic publishing, Te Pūkenga staff

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