

University of California, Los Angeles
SURVEY OF GRADUATE COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Survey of Graduate Communication Support

RESEARCHERS: Marilyn Gray, Graduate Writing Center, UCLA; Michelle Crow, English Language Support Office, Cornell University; Talinn Phillips, English Department, Ohio University

IRB NUMBER: IRB-24-6258

INTRODUCTION

Marilyn Gray, Director of Graduate Writing Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, along with Michelle Crow, Director of the English Language Support Office at Cornell University, and Talinn Phillips, Professor of English at Ohio University, are conducting a research study. You are a potential participant in this study if you directly provide communication support to graduate or professional students or supervise others who provide this support. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

We invite you to participate in this study if you directly provide communication support to graduate students or supervise others who do. We ask you to take an online survey to help us understand the ways that institutions support graduate and professional students with their communication needs (writing and speaking), recent trends related to this support, and the professionals who do this support. Your responses will inform scholars, practitioners, and decision makers about current graduate communication support options and practices, which could benefit graduate and professional students, graduate communication support professionals, and graduate education overall.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to complete an online survey, which asks for contextual information about your institution, the kinds of graduate communication support offered across your institution and within your program/unit, and your position and professional background. Some questions concerning information about the institution, services, and structure of your position, and which are generally publicly available, are required questions. The survey is confidential, but it does require the institution and program names and program website that will help the research team clean response data and create accurate profiles of institutions and programs. The length of time needed to complete the survey scales with your direct knowledge of the graduate communication support programs your institution provides and with the size of those programs. We estimate that people with significant knowledge of graduate communication support programs will need 30-60 minutes to complete the survey while others with more limited involvement will need less time.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR SOCIETY

This study is important to scholarship and practice because graduate communication support is a growing area of expertise in higher education. It is important to understand what kinds of communication support are being offered to graduate and professional students, trends and practices for this support, and how that support scales with institution and graduate population size. Insights gained from this research are not expected to benefit study participants directly, but there are practically no risks to individual participants, and the anticipated findings will usefully inform the work of the graduate communication support field, which will in turn benefit graduate communication support professionals, graduate and professional students, and graduate education overall.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Much of the data requested is publicly available in a dispersed form (university websites, institutional reports) but not easily synthesized into a report that addresses the state of the graduate communication field. Other data from individual respondents, such as motivation and preparation for graduate communication work, or assessment of the sustainability of programs, will be reported in aggregate and not in any way that could be individually identifiable. We will report results largely in aggregate form and only make references to specific programs or institutions as positive or neutral examples. As such, we do not anticipate any notable risks or discomforts.

COMPENSATION

Participants will not receive individual compensation for completing the survey. An opportunity drawing was offered in the first round of data collection in February-April 2024 but is not being offered in later stages of data collection.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORDS

The survey is confidential but collects identifying institutional and program information for the purposes of data cleaning and analysis. The results of this study could be published, but we would not disclose any information that could identify individual respondents. All data will be collected in a secure University Qualtrics account that is password protected; data may also be stored on secure, password-protected computers or university-approved virtual storage. All relevant research security policies will be followed. Your data may be kept for future research. Research data will be saved indefinitely to help identify trends in graduate communication support over time.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal rights because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may contact the UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program by phone: (310) 206-2040; by email: participants@research.ucla.edu or by mail: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

Please note: If you are currently residing in - or are “ordinarily resident” - in any of the following countries/territories you are unfortunately NOT eligible for participation in this survey due to U.S. sanctions: Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Crimea region of Ukraine, Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR), Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR), Russia, Belarus, and Venezuela. (“Ordinarily Resident” applies to you if you spend six months or more out of the year residing in any of the above locations or if you own property there.) If one or both of these apply to you, please disregard this request as we are prohibited from soliciting your input at this time.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR AND CO-INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact any of the research team.

Dr. Marilyn Gray at (310) 267-5622 by phone; or by email mgray@saonet.ucla.edu; or write to her at the UCLA Graduate Writing Center; 220 Westwood Plaza, Suite B11; Los Angeles, CA 90095-7218.

Dr. Michelle Crow (formerly Cox) may be contacted at (508) 364-8356 by phone or by email michelle.cox@cornell.edu.

Dr. Talinn Phillips may be contacted at (740) 593-2946 by phone or by email tiller@ohio.edu.