



2012 Writing Academy Evaluation

Office of Access & Lifelong Learning
Access Centre
Mature Students' Adviser's Office

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Writing Academy Evaluation Results 2012

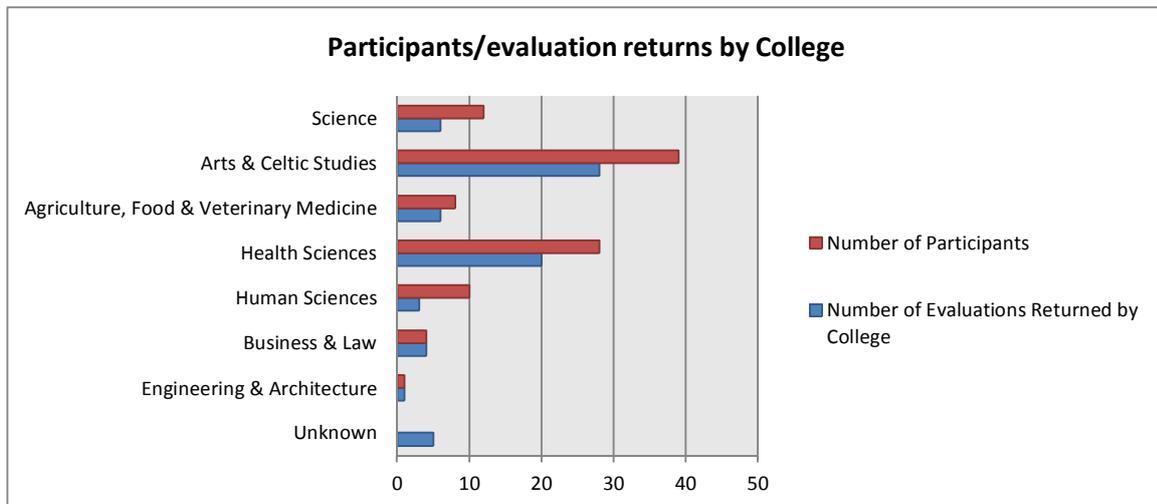
The results of the evaluation of the 2012 Writing Academy are below. The Writing Academy is offered as a pre-registration support to all entering mature students. This year's Academy ran during the week of 20 August 2012 and was offered in two identical sessions which each ran 2 ½ days.

A total of 102 mature students entering 7 UCD Colleges and 20 distinct degree programmes participated in the 2012 Writing Academy. Of those who participated, 73 returned evaluations which was a 72% return from those participating in the programme.

This year as an experiment in teaching and learning the first session of the Writing Academy was taught in the traditionally one tutor/one classroom method and the second session was co-taught by three tutors with all participants in one room. Evaluation results from participants did not vary significantly from session to session and so they are supplied as one body in this evaluation. One comment suggested the number of participants in second session's classroom was too many. It also should be noted that the tutors need to work well together for co-teaching to be successful.

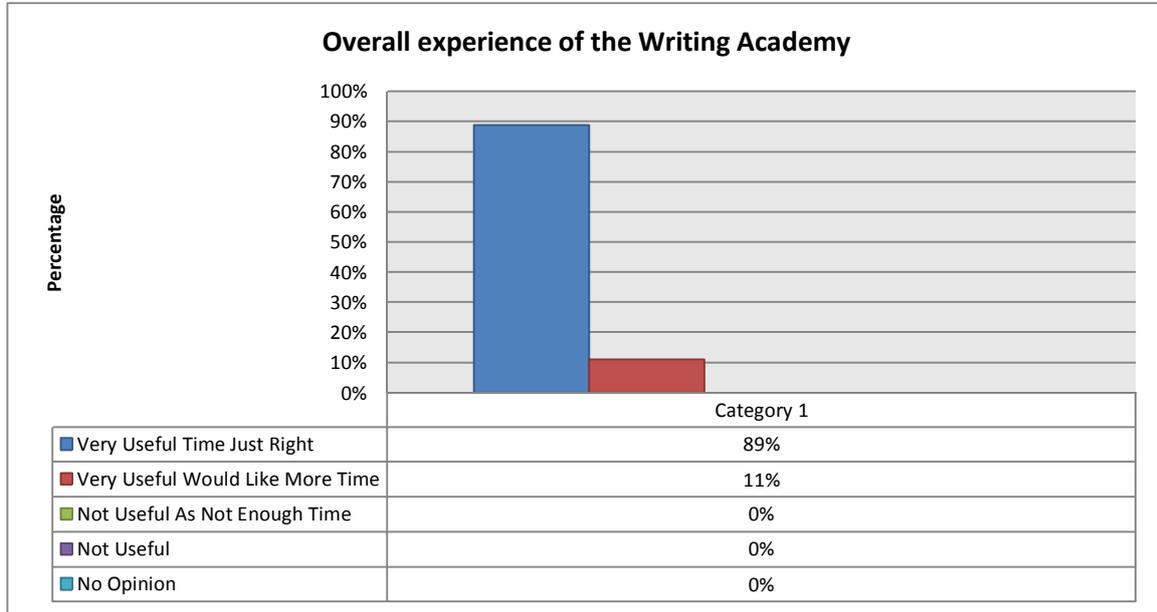
Results of participants' evaluation of the 2012 Writing Academy follow below.

Number of participants and evaluation returns by College



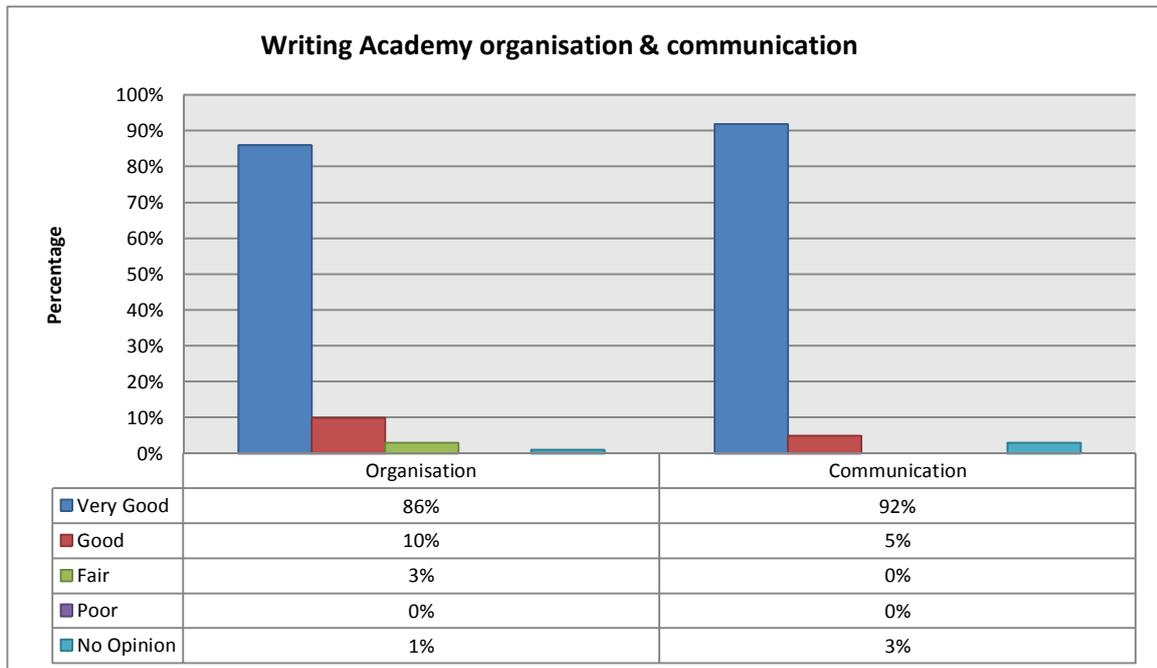
Overall experience of the Writing Academy

Participants were asked a series of questions regarding the different elements of the Writing Academy programme including an evaluation of their overall experience of their time spent over the 2 ½ days.



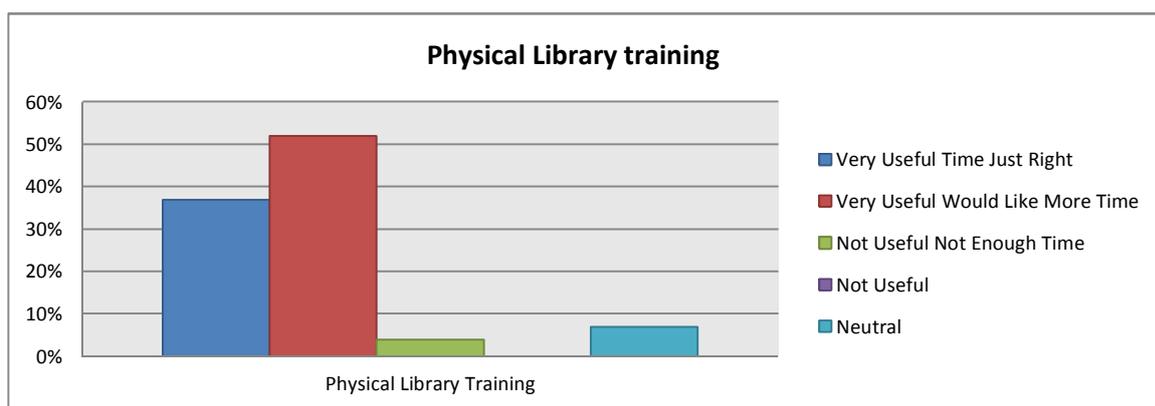
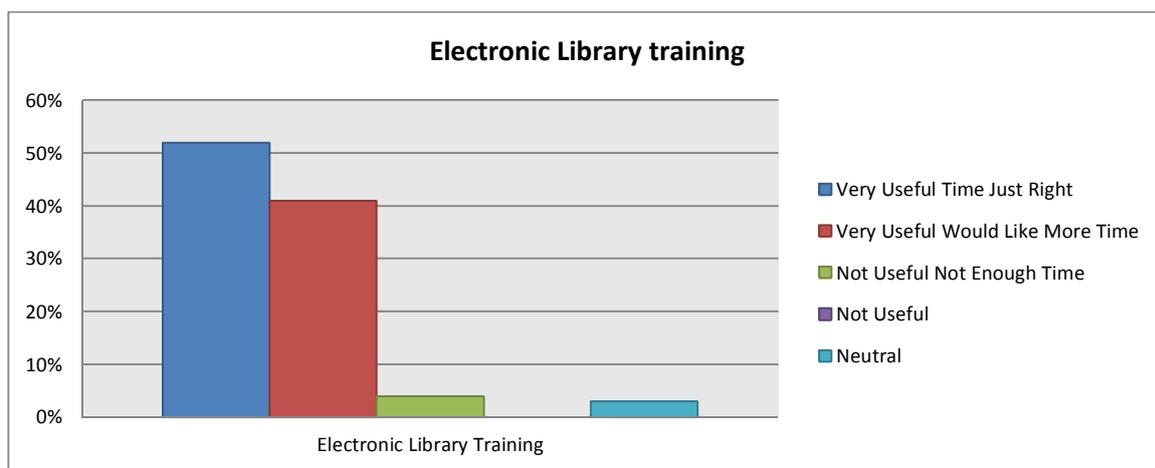
Writing Academy organisation and communication

Participants were asked for their perception of overall organisation and communication throughout the Writing Academy



Library aspects of the Writing Academy

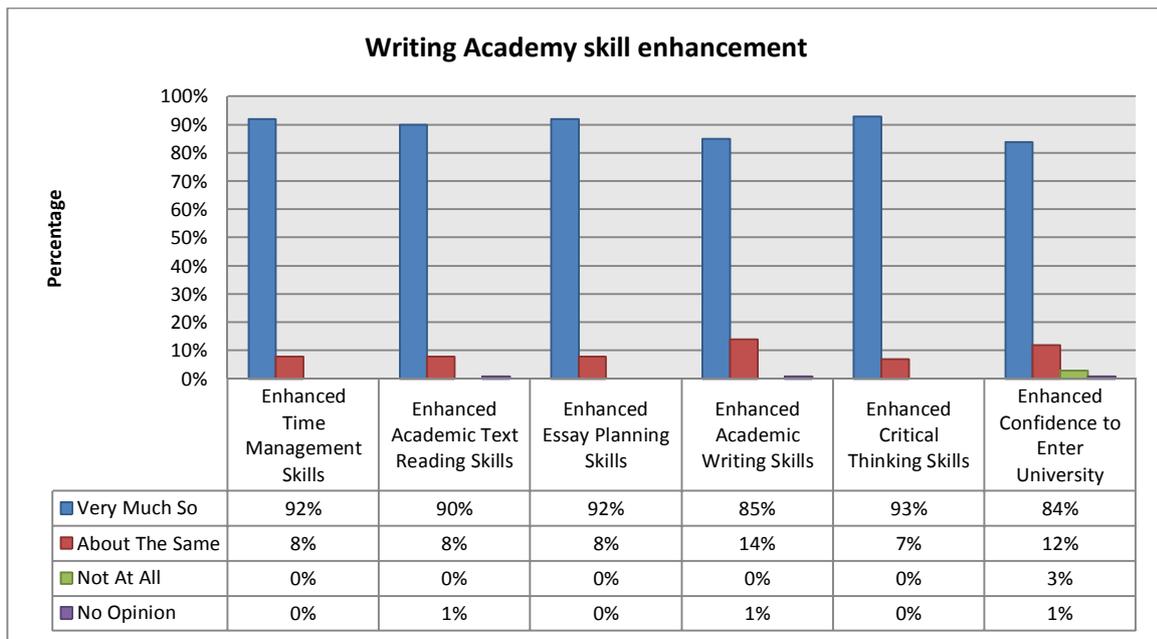
Writing Academy participants received training on how to use the Library electronically and also were brought into the Library and shown how to use its physical environs. Participants also used the Library as part of their work during the Writing Academy. Participants were asked if these exercises were useful.



Academic Skills, critical thinking and confidence

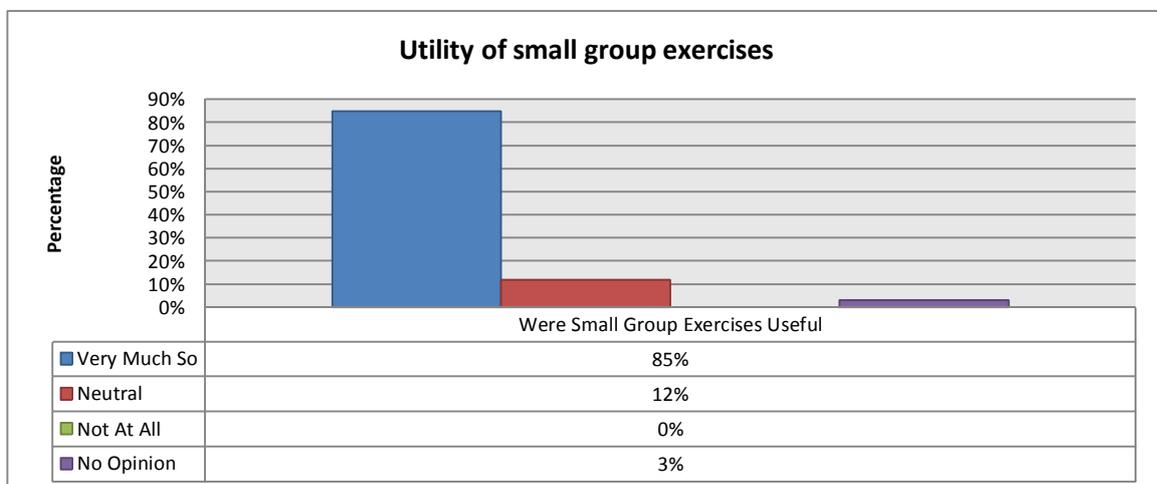
The primary aim of the Writing Academy is to enhance a number of academic skills of the participants prior to their entry into university and their uptake of modules.

Writing Academy participants were asked if their participation in the Academy enhanced their academic, time management and critical thinking skills and their confidence regarding coming into 3rd level.



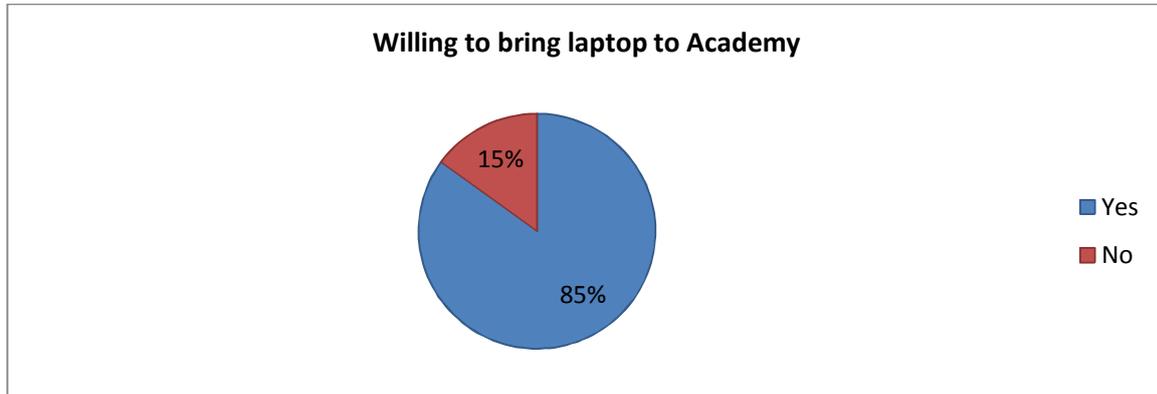
Small group work

Working in small groups is a situation university students often find themselves in and the Academy tries to replicate where possible the environment of the classroom. Small group work is therefore one part of the 2 ½ day Writing Academy. Participants were asked if they found these exercises useful.



Laptops

We wondered, for our own purposes in future Writing Academies, if participants would be **inclined to bring laptops to the Academy. The percentage responses are below. Additional commentaries** on this question are available upon request.



Additional Comments

Evaluators were asked for any additional comments they wish to make and 57 additional comments were received and all are reprinted below.

Comments:

'Thank you so much, it was very helpful! I feel much more confident about academic writing. Arlene was very confident and engaging and I truly appreciated the work you put into the Writing Academy. I would definitely recommend it to other mature students! Thank you very much!'

'Felt very comfortable asking questions. Gillian was very helpful and extremely approachable. On a negative note I feel slightly nervous about writing my essay as there is a lot to take into consideration I'm very glad I took part in this Academy. Thanks''

'I found Ciara very helpful and any questions I had she answered them all for me. Feel a lot more confident about starting now. Thanks Ciara :)'

'Just to thank Ronan and the instructors! They were very helpful, friendly and reachable.'

'The writing is a great benefit to mature students. I got to know people in my course. I now feel less anxious about going to university.'

'I found the Academy very valuable and would recommend it to other mature students. It was nice to have a brief introduction to the campus and library although I think more time could have been spent showing us how to access precisely what we are looking for in the library. Overall a great course.'

'I think this Academy is essential for mature students who have been away from formal education for some time. Who knew there was so much to writing an essay! :) thank you.'

'I would highly recommend the Writing Academy to any future mature students. Without it I would undoubtedly struggle with my first assignments. All the tutors give tips and advice that stretched beyond the course itself and were willing to answer any questions they could on academic life at UCD'

'I found it very helpful. Some of the advice was daunting at first and it nearly made me think that college was actually going to be harder than I thought. But overall my feeling is positive and I am very glad that I attended. Thanks a lot.'

'The most useful information I have ever received. Well done'

'Course v. good. Learned how to write critically not critical. Learned about mind mapping and power points Learned how to effectively read texts: i.e. key words not read the whole book. Thank you for this opportunity in Writing Academy'

'Found the Academy very useful as my confidence in my own ability has increased significantly and now I have a much clearer picture of what I must work on to achieve what I would like to achieve when writing Thanks.'

'Would highly recommend this course to anyone entering UCD for the first time'

'All three instructors were very approachable and friendly from our 1st meeting on Wednesday. This course is an extremely important part of our integration into student life. It has given me the confidence to begin my degree with the tools that is needed to succeed. Being a mature student is exciting and frightening so all help given is much appreciated. Thank you.'

'Without this Academy I would have been floundering with my essay preparation critical thinking and research. Using the Library facilities would have been a minefield – practice makes perfect!! Many thanks to all of you.'

'I found the 2 ½ days very worthwhile. I learned quite a lot, but equally I had a lot of points confirmed. In addition there was also some very useful off topic information. This helped to remove some anxieties. A very useful and informative exercise.'

'Very useful first step into university/academic life. Would highly recommend attendance.'

'I found this course very useful. It was great to meet some of the other incoming mature students. I found the course content really helpful. It's a great introduction to starting college and has done a lot for my confidence. Thank you!'

'Thanks'

'More time on critical writing and on science reports' (DN200)

'...for me is important, because my English is not my first language and I use dictionaries'

'Found the workshop flowed well and allowed participation throughout even though assignments weren't 'complete' to be encouraging! (Thank You!)

'It is fantastic to bring mature students in to such a warm helpful and academic environment. Arlene was so clear and actually made me look forward to being a student. Thank you.'

'The instructor was actually lenient with students coming back late from the breaks and disrupting the class.'

'3-4 full days would be ideal. Excellent course that merits being made compulsory. Gives good academic direction and useful practical tips. Gillian is an excellent teacher, approachable and open. Well done to all involved in creating this writing academy.'

'An excellent teacher and very approachable. All info helped to build my confidence. Very glad I did this course. Thanks.'

'I found Ciara to be very helpful and approachable. She answered every question big and small with the same enthusiasm.'

'Overall very good and useful course. Instructor was great. Think course could be condensed as it was slightly repetitive at times.'

'No further comments. Excellent to get the opportunity to take part in the writing academy. It made me feel a lot more confident about writing essays.'

'Provided an excellent start to the academic year, would recommend it.'

'Most importantly for me what that it was very easy to ask questions without feeling silly. The tutor was very approachable throughout in her approach.'

'Most enjoyable and helpful. Thank you Ciara.'

'Thank you so so so much!!'

'This was a very helpful course. Arlene was very knowledgeable, friendly and helpful. Delighted I did it!'

'Lecturer was very knowledgeable and communicated content extremely well. However more time should/could be allowed for individual questions/feedback.'

'I enjoyed the workshop and I was very satisfied with it however I thought a bit more time would have been useful to process the information given.'

'The exercise was helpful for me. I got to know some peer mature students ahead of registration. The length of the academy (2.5 days) helped towards the objective of proceeding in essay. However much of the time was devoted to an overload of powerpoint slides/bullet points many of which were tautological.'

'Gillian Extremely helpful'

'Excellent Academy. Great Information. Would recommend to every incoming mature student. Many Thanks!'

'Thank You!!!'

'Very useful and well run course'

'Very informative Academy overall and glad that I attended'

'Overall very good'

'Probably academic class was a bit big. More instructors per head. Otherwise very helpful.'

'It was a good experience to come to the Writing Academy gave me a bit more knowledge what to expect with assignments.'

'Thank you :).'

'Would highly recommend this Academy to other mature students. It was an excellent insight into what is expected when writing essays at 3rd level.'

'I would highly recommend this course for mature students next year. I am delighted that I did do it. My confidence to do assignments has risen and I don't have a fear of doing my first one!'

'I found it very good for confidence and great to be in UCD before the rush of the open days.'

'Found course very useful feeling much more confident about starting in Sept. Would have liked second chance to get info re Horizons meeting with Ronan'

'All instructors were very encouraging and easy to listen to'

'Absolutely brilliant resource, very glad I attended. Would highly recommend to future mature students'

'Very good and helpful presentation. I would emphasise on the speakers projecting their voices a bit more. I have slight hearing loss and others also mentioned it could be hard to hear sometimes.'

'I found the 2 ½ days very beneficial and interesting. The 3 tutors looked very well also! Which made it that bit easier to pay attention.'

'I found the Writing Academy thoroughly enjoyable and helpful. I would definitely recommend it to any incoming mature students. It would be useful for some of the information provided to be available on line for students who could not make it here.'

'I have found the Academy has made the idea of approaching future tasks less daunting.'

'The Writing Academy was a very useful tool and has definitely given me a lot more confidence and drive to get cracking with university life. I would like to thank Ronan and the 3 ladies (Arlene, Gillian and Ciara) for making it so informative and so enjoyable.'