Scientific Writing for English-Language Publication in the Natural Sciences, Life Sciences and the Medicine

Content
Many scientists find writing a challenging task. This course is designed to integrate writing for publication into the scientific process. It approaches "writing a paper" as a series of discrete, manageable steps, that can be taken in logical order, and teaches researchers practical strategies for carrying written work to completion, submission, resubmission to another journal and publication. Most researchers find this approach relieves stress and makes the writing process more predictable and pleasant.

This course will take participants, in 4 half-day online sessions, from the theory to the practice of scientific writing for publication in English. The course has three components:

   • Short presentations to introduce and outline subject areas.
   • Hands-on exercises that help researchers master each stage of the process, from brainstorming to publication.
   • A take-home writing exercise: participants work on a draft of their own writing project.

Learning Objectives
By the end of the course, participants will know how to systematically define their paper's message, choose a journal, coordinate with co-authors and supervisors, write a first draft and revise it, properly submit articles, and respond effectively to reviewer and editorial comments. Students who have finished their analysis and identified their main findings can expect to come out of the course with a first draft of their paper.

Since most science is written in the IMRaD (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion) format, participants will learn the essential components of each IMRaD section, including methods for integrating scientific checklists and guidelines into papers. Scientific papers usually have multiple authors, and this course will teach researchers how to communicate clearly with co-authors and supervisors, throughout the writing and publication process. Researchers will also learn how to respond to reviewers, revise papers for submission to a second journal, and write cover letters, among other necessary tasks.

Note: This course focuses specifically on writing in English, so it includes essential concepts in English-language writing that are often overlooked in English language courses. These include the nature and function of paragraphs, and the difference between constructing sentences in English and in other languages (e.g., German or French) with more cases and gendered nouns. It is not a grammar course, but researchers will learn to leverage their knowledge of English grammar to build powerful, clear sentences that effectively inform and persuade readers. Researchers who have already taken a course that includes these latter components will still benefit from suggestions to further improve their work.

Individual Feedback
Participants will have their work checked regularly throughout the course and will receive oral and/or chat/text/email feedback throughout the class. The trainer will give written feedback between week 3 and week 4 of the course, on a writing sample not longer than 1500 words.

Trainer
Dr. Kristin Marie Bivens is the scientific editor for the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine (since 2021). Prior to this role, she was a professor of English in the United States and associate editor of a book series. She has been teaching writing to university students since 2001.

Target Group
PhD candidates and postdocs in life sciences, natural sciences, or medicine, who intend to publish research articles in English and who have completed their data collection and analysis.

Requirements
Researchers should have completed data collection and analysis for a scientific writing project such as a dissertation, a peer-review article, or a report. Researchers should bring laptops and their preparatory or initial work on their writing project. Instruction will be geared to MS Word users or users of Word equivalent programs. Those who write in other formats are encouraged to download a copy of MS Word to access some of its special functions.

Participants must also complete a pre-course preparation task by April 19, 2022. The pre-course preparation task should take no more than 75 minutes; it includes 4 steps: 1) creating an hypothes.is account, 2) joining the SciWrite group on hypothes.is, 3) reading "Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing," and 4) answering at least one option posted on the web article. For questions, please email kristin.bivens@ispm.unibe.ch.

Language	English
Participants	max. 15
Dates	Tuesday May 03, 10, 17, & 24, 2022 1:15 p.m.–5:45 p.m.
Location	Main Building HG, room 104, Hochschulstrasse 4
ECTS	recommended 1