

# Introduction to Academic Writing in English

Programme 2012

## Graduate School, Open Universiteit

### Description:

The course takes you through the process of writing an academic paper in English, focusing on the genre of the research paper. The research article structure serves as a model, even if you are writing other genres such as review articles or theoretical papers.

This course focuses in particular on how you can convey meaning through the use of rhetorical structures: it takes you through the characteristic structure and organization of scientific research articles, especially those published in fields closely related to your own research.

Attention is also paid to aspects of grammar and style, characteristic problems, and the options in English to express nuances of meaning.

The outline below presents the planned schedule, but it is subject to change in light of participants' needs and wishes.

### Trainer:

Bob Wilkinson

Maastricht University, Language Centre, PO Box 616, 6200 MD Maastricht.

tel: 043-388 5093 (secretary's office)

[b.wilkinson@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:b.wilkinson@maastrichtuniversity.nl)

### Schedule

Session 1:

- Principles of clear scientific writing
- Organization and structure: research articles

Session 2:

- Readability: what features make texts easier to read
- Cohesive techniques in writing: how texts hang together

Session 3:

- Organizing and structuring scientific research articles, especially those published in fields closely related to your own research
- Introducing the article: features of introduction sections

Session 4:

- Article introductions (continued)
- Citing and paraphrasing the thoughts of other authors
- Reporting verbs: author's vs. writer's stance

**Session 5:**

- Research articles: Describing the design, the methods, and the results
- Presenting visual data (tables, figures, etc.)
- Punctuation matters

**Session 6:**

- Research articles: discussion and conclusion sections
- Argumentation and the meaning of modal verbs
- Qualifying generalizations

**Session 7:**

- Discussion & conclusion sections (continued)
- Hedging in scientific writing
- Limitations and reservations: how cautious should you be?

**Session 8:**

- Analysing the text as a whole
- Linking ideas and arguments
- Expressing shades of meaning

**Session 9:**

- Writing abstracts and summaries
- Dealing with common errors

**Session 10:**

- Checking and editing your work
- Outstanding questions on scientific writing?
- Summing up and evaluation

Note that the order of items is subject to change, as some items may be brought forward or delayed depending on the group wishes. More time may be spent on one item as the group requests.

**Procedure**

Materials will usually be sent to the participants in advance electronically.

Participants will work on a series of short tasks focusing on the aspects introduced during the sessions. In general, participants will work in small groups of 3-5 people on these tasks.

In addition, participants will write parts of a scientific research text (usually submitted in advance of each session). Participants will analyse extracts of these in small groups that are relatively homogeneous regarding disciplinary areas.

**Dates**

Tuesdays 10.00-12.00

24, 31 January, 7, 14, 28 February, 6, 20, 27 March, 3 and 17 April 2012.