

PRBB Intervals Course Proposal

Course Title

The craft of clear scientific writing

Proposed date(s)

Edition 1: 9, 11, 16 and 18 October 2018

Edition 2: 9, 16, 23 and 30 November 2018

Course Language

English

Course Leader(s) and very brief summary of relevant qualifications and experience (no more than 2 lines for each trainer)

Susan Frekko is an authors' editor, translator and trainer who helps scientists publish their research in English. Susan holds a Ph.D. in linguistic anthropology and a Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults. She has published her own research in indexed journals since 2009.

Carolyn Newey is an author's editor, trainer and consultant who edits biomedical texts in close collaboration with scientists and physicians in Barcelona.

Rationale for course (why is this course of interest for the PRBB staff?)

New researchers have to make the leap from consuming scientific knowledge to producing it. But having good ideas and good results isn't enough. In order to successfully place their articles in international journals, scientists also need to learn the craft of writing research articles.

Course aim - general

The central aim of this course is to create awareness of the elements of scientific writing that enable rapid communication between the writer and the reader and provide participants with tools for improving the quality of their writing so that they can achieve their publishing goals.

Specific learning outcomes (what new skills, knowledge &/or attitudes will participants take away from the course?)

Participants will:

- Become familiar with the structure and elements of an IMRaD paper
- Acquire planning strategies for writing an article effectively and efficiently
- Develop awareness of common mistakes in research articles
- Apply techniques to make writing clear, concise and cohesive in sentences and paragraphs
- Acquire techniques for time management
- Learn about ethical publication
- Learn what to expect from the journal review process

Course contents (outline of topics to be covered)

- The stages of the writing process
- IMRaD structure and process
- Developing a clear storyline
- The use of plain English: a close look at paragraphs, sentences, and words
- Writing challenges and time management tools

Training methods

This is an interactive course where participants learn through a series of steps broken down into multiple practical examples and tasks. The course has a flexible format and participants have the opportunity to discuss specific difficulties and problems as they arise. Participants will practice both critical reading and scientific writing.

Target group in PRBB (Senior scientists, postdocs, predocs, management/admin staff, all residents)

This course is for people who are starting out in writing papers and also for those who have already published papers but would like to update and hone their writing skills.

Number of participants (maximum)

15

Total course hours (Please specify: direct training with instructor present and required self-study)

Note: only the direct training hours will be included in the post-course certificate.

Number of hours of class time: 12

Number of hours of self-study: 3

Total number of course hours: 15

Distribution of course (hours/days)

Four 3-hour sessions

Pre-course preparation and/or between sessions?

There will be short assignments to do at home after each session.

Material participants need to bring (laptops, etc...)

Participants should bring a laptop with internet connection for some of the sessions – more information will be sent before the course.

Relevant background reading/ audiovisual/websites or other materials

Recommended reading:

Cargill, M. and O'Connor, P., 2013. *Writing scientific research articles: strategy and steps*. John Wiley & Sons.

Greene, A.E., 2013. *Writing science in plain English*. University of Chicago Press.

Hofmann, A.H., 2014. *Scientific writing and communication: papers, proposals, and presentations*. Oxford University Press.

Swales, J.M. and Feak, C.B., 2004. *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills* (Vol. 1). University of Michigan Press.