Course Title (in English) | Academic Writing Essentials
---|---
Course Title (in Russian) | Основы академического английского
Lead Instructor(s) | Tikhomirova, Elizaveta

1. Annotation

Course Description
Academic writing skills are necessary for effective research, innovation, and educational activities in a multinational setting. The aim of the course is to provide guidelines and strategies for writing academic texts, focusing on relevant aspects of grammar, vocabulary, and style. The course includes analysis and practice of various forms of scientific and technical writing, and builds writing skills from sentences to paragraph structure, from summary to abstract, and lays the foundations for writing scientific papers and Master Thesis. Modern science is, for most purposes, a collective collaborative effort, so the course is designed to promote individual and group responsibility by providing mutually related and time-dependent tasks, such as peer review. The course is writing-intensive with ample opportunity to practice editing and peer-reviewing.

Course Prerequisites
Students should have at least "Upper-Intermediate" level of English and brush up on grammatical and syntactic issues.

2. Structure and Content

Course Academic Level | Master-level course suitable for PhD students
---|---
Number of ECTS credits | 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Summary of Topic</th>
<th>Lectures (# of hours)</th>
<th>Seminars (# of hours)</th>
<th>Labs (# of hours)</th>
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The syllabus is a final draft waiting for form approval
Contact Person | Elizaveta Tikhomirova
Contact Person's E-mail | e.tikhomirova@skoltech.ru
| Academic communication and discourse. Foundations. Sentence as the building block of the text. | Academic communication in an educational and professional environment. Audience analyses. Purpose. Overview of the main features of Academic language: peculiarities of vocabulary, grammar and style. Formality. The major scientific genres. An outline of a research paper: the main parts and their linguistic characteristics. The process of writing. “There is no such thing as a perfect first draft”: editing and revising one’s own writing. Peer review. Addressing typical problems of novice writers. Example of L1 (Russian) and its influence on the writing manner. Sentence as the main building block of a text. Typical sentence structures. Classic stumbling blocks: Word order and subject-verb coordination. | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The language of Science and peculiarities of particular disciplines. Sentence and its Clauses. | The language of Science and peculiarities of discourse in particular disciplines. Changes and tendencies in modern science writing with regard to grammar, vocabulary and style. Sentence and the structure of a typical clause. Extending bullet points into sentences and condensing sentences to bullet points. Sentence length and variety. From- old-to- new information flow within the sentence. Modern digital instruments that can help a (novice) writer. | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| From Sentence to Paragraph: structure, development of ideas, linking mechanisms. | A typical paragraph structure. Topic sentence. Supporting sentences. Concluding sentence. Unity and coherence: linking ideas inside the paragraph. Linking words and the way they are typically confused. Maintaining the logical flow of ideas. Varying clauses. Parallel structures. Varying the language: synonyms, collocations and set phrases. Modern digital tools for synonyms and collocations. Punctuating a sentence and a paragraph. Nominalization (zombie nouns) and ways to produce smart, clear and concise texts. Nouns and verbs in definitions. The balanced use of professional terminology. | 1 | 1 | 1 |
A perfect draft: writing and editing cycle.
Abstract.

- Writing and editing cycles. Editing tips and techniques. Structure-logic-language.
- Peer editing: ethical and technical issues.
- Abstract as a quintessential paragraph and summary. Types, function and linguistic peculiarities of abstracts.

Passive Voice: boosting objectivity or shifting responsibility?

- Function of the Passive voice and its manifestations in different parts of a research paper. Types of Passive constructions.

Academic writing genres. Essays and their types.

- Types of essays in Academic writing. Specifics and purpose of each type.
- Argument and Discussion elements and techniques. The language of persuasion.

Essay writing

- Describing data.
- Working on the Final Project: preparing the written text (essay) and oral Debate.

Essay writing (continued)

- Comparison/ contrast essays. Organization and implementation.
- Conditionals.
- Working on the Final Project: preparing the written text (essay) and oral Debate.

Applying what has been learned in the final draft

- Applying what has been learned: the final draft. Integrating peer and instructor feedback. Additional writing and editing tips and tools.
- Working on the Final Project: preparing the written text (essay) and oral Debate.

FINAL CLASS
Editing Round Table discussion

1. In-class editing task
2. Participation in the Round table discussion of the Final Project

3. Assignments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Type</th>
<th>Assignment Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Listening: educational video/ podcast on the topic of the lesson: The role of writing in Academic communication. 4. Writing: A formal email</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Homework | 1. Grammar: Sentence clauses. Practice  
2. Vocabulary: Academic vocabulary exercises  
3. Listening: educational video/podcast on the topic of the lesson  
4. Writing: Making a slide from a piece of text. Making a text from a slide.  
5. Speaking: Self-video (90 seconds) How would the Humankind benefit from my research. |
|---|---|
| Homework | 1. Grammar: Sentence clauses. Practice  
2. Vocabulary: Academic vocabulary exercises. Linking words, Synonyms, zombie nouns  
3. Listening: educational video/podcast on the topic of the lesson  
4. Writing: a paragraph from prompts.  
5. Editing a text for zombie-nouns.  
| Homework | 1. Grammar: Reported speech  
3. Listening: educational video/podcast on the topic of the lesson  
4. Writing/ editing: Edit a text containing a Quotation and a Reference. Writing an annotated bibliography entry from prompts.  
5. Speaking: Self-video (90 seconds) on attitudes to plagiarism. |
3. Listening: educational video/podcast on the topic of the lesson  
4. Writing: Paraphrasing a paragraph. Writing an annotated bibliography entry  
3. Listening: educational video/podcast on the topic of the lesson  
4. Writing: Abstract, v 1  
5. Speaking: Self-video (2 minutes) Presenting the overview of your work |
3. Listening: educational video/podcast on the topic of the lesson  
3. Listening: educational video/podcast on the topic of the lesson  
4. Writing: Abstract v 2  
5. Speaking: Self-video (2 minutes): Reflecting on the changes that were suggested by the peers. Answering the critical remarks. Argumentation. |
3. Listening: educational video/podcast on the topic of the lesson  
4. Writing: Essay v 1  
2. Vocabulary: Academic vocabulary exercises. comparison and contrast vocabulary  
3. Listening: educational video/podcast on the topic of the lesson  
4. Writing: Peer Review of Essay v 1  
Homework
1. Grammar Review.
3. Listening: educational video/podcast
4. Writing: Essay v 2 //OPTION: Written DISCUSSION in Canvass
5. Speaking: Self-video: Reflecting on the changes that were suggested by the peers and the instructor. Addressing the critical remarks.

Project
Final Project.
1) Essay on the given topic
2) Editing practice: Edit a paragraph focusing on particular issues.
3) Participating in a Round Table / Debate on the topic of the Essay.

4. Grading

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<tr>
<th>Type of Assessment</th>
<th>Pass/Fail</th>
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<tr>
<th>Grade Structure</th>
<th>Activity Type</th>
<th>Activity weight, %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>20</td>
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Grading Scale

5. Basic Information

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<tr>
<th>Attendance Requirements</th>
<th>Mandatory with Exceptions</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Number of Students</th>
<th>Maximum Number of Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall:</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Group (for seminars and labs):</td>
<td>15</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Term (in context of Academic Year)</th>
<th>Term 1B (last four weeks)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term 2</td>
<td>Term 2</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Delivery Frequency</th>
<th>Every year</th>
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<tr>
<th>Students of Which Programs do You Recommend to Consider this Course as an Elective?</th>
<th>Masters Programs</th>
<th>PhD Programs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Master Programs</td>
<td>All PhD Programs</td>
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<tr>
<th>Course Tags</th>
<th>Arts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
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6. Textbooks and Internet Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Textbooks</th>
<th>ISBN-13 (or ISBN-10)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oshima A., Hogue A. Writing Academic English Level 4. Longman</td>
<td>9780131523593</td>
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7. Facilities

Equipment

computer, loudspeaker, projector

8. Learning Outcomes

Knowledge

Students will get knowledge of the main features of Academic Communication in English; genres, language, grammar and style of Academic Writing; strategies for working with sources and avoiding typical pitfalls to produce clear, correct and coherent texts.

Students will know the foundations of Academic Integrity and ways to avoid plagiarism.

Students will brush up on the main grammatical and vocabulary issues of Academic writing and will know how to identify and apply them in own writing.

Skill

Students will polish the following skills: critical analyses of Academic texts; peer reviewing; editing own and peer writing.

Students will practice such important skills as summarising and paraphrasing, as well as referencing and quotation.

Students will develop their active listening and speaking skills.

Experience

Students will experience writing texts of different length, complexity and genres, from bullet points on a presentation slide to paragraphs and coherent multi-paragraph texts.

Do you want to specify outcomes in another framework?

Knowledge-Skill-Experience is good enough

9. Assessment Criteria

Select Assignment 1 Type

Homework

Assessment Criteria for Assignment 1

Grammar - 5 points
Vocabulary - 5 points
Listening - 5 points
Writing - 10 points
Speaking - 10 points

10. Additional Notes
Individual study (homework) is an integral component of learning to write.