

Writing Skills Courses

Effective Academic Writing: Creativity & Craft

Tackling a Literature Review

Technical Writing Two Hour Workshop

Technical Writing Lecture Series

Writing Up Your Research for Publication



Refining your writing style is one of the most important aspects of the PhD process and GSEPS provides a series of workshops designed to cover everything from the basics of grammar and style to creative writing, and writing for journals. Topics include how to plan and complete your literature review, organise your thesis and produce technical documents in a variety of formats.

Below is a suggested course order ranging from basic to more advanced forms of writing, but please check the individual course descriptions to assess the level of assistance you require.

Writing Skills: Suggested Course Order:

Technical Writing Lecture Series
Technical Writing Two Hour Workshop
Effective Academic Writing: Creativity & Craft
Writing Up Your Research for Publication

For course dates please login to the GSEPS Blackboard site:
<http://learn.imperial.ac.uk> and enter your college username and password

Effective Academic Writing: Creativity & Craft

Suitable for: All postgraduate students.

This one-day workshop demonstrates a range of skills that help research students to tap into their own creativity in order to generate ideas and solve problems, and then apply the crafts of planning, structuring, researching, and writing more effectively.

We will review the elements of effective academic writing, consider the roles of both creativity and craft, and see how to alternate between creativity and craft in the planning, structuring, researching, and drafting of your paper or thesis.

We will practice one method of structuring your work that

- Focuses your research
- Helps you plan your time more effectively
- Enables you to restructure your work much more quickly and effectively
- Produces a coherent and clearly reasoned thesis
- Reduces the number of drafts you need
- Keeps you and your writing fresh

We will then practise a meditative technique that enables you to draw on the creative power of your subconscious mind in order to generate ideas and solve problems. We will examine and practice the skills of producing a presentation draft that is not only grammatically correct but also clear, precise, vigorous, and concise.

Tackling a Literature Review

Suitable for: All Research students (especially first year). Master's students may also benefit.

Difficulties often beset researchers when faced with the prospect of writing a literature review; these problems typically originate in a lack of understanding of what a literature review is, how it is used by others, and what exactly is expected. Frequently the earliest task in the research process, the objective of this session is to equip delegates with the skills needed to plan, research, organise and compose a literature review.

Selected Topics

- Understanding what a literature review is - and what it is not
- Scoping the literature review - do I have to read everything?
- Formulating questions and a working thesis
- Strategies for finding relevant material
- Reading and evaluating literature effectively
- Organising material - anatomy of a literature review
- Citation styles and usage; avoiding plagiarism

The workshop will begin by ensuring that delegates understand the objectives and purpose of writing a literature review. With this understanding as a basis, the workshop will continue with a discussion of the features and framework of a literature review.

You will talk about the specific questions that the literature review will address. Integral to this is the literature search, evaluation and selection process. The importance of "active reading" and appropriate note taking will be emphasised as the foundation of a successful literature review. Then, honing the draft into the finished product and examine good style, citation standards and how to avoid plagiarism.

Technical Writing Lecture Series

Suitable for: First year research students although all postgraduate students may benefit. This course is **not** suitable for Department of Humanities' students. This is an intermediate/advanced workshop and is therefore not suitable for those with severe problems with the English language. (Non-native speakers of English should see page 53 for details of the English Language Support Programme). Students who took the undergraduate "Technical Communication" course in Electrical & Electronic Engineering Department may find some overlap with this session.

This course covers the following topics:

- **Organising a Technical Report** - How to consider the needs of both material and reader in writing a paper, thesis and proposal
- **Constructing Text** - How to write clear, readable prose by following simple rules of form and logic and keeping the reader in mind
- **Thinking about Grammar and Style** - How to be consistent, interesting and avoid common grammatical mistakes

This course describes how to write clear, easy-to-follow, technical articles and reports that are appropriate for any given audience. Instruction progresses from the basic philosophy of communication and how this affects the core content and style of a document to article structure, paragraph and sentence construction, and use of vocabulary and punctuation. This deeper understanding will allow students to make better choices when faced with the many grey areas involved with technical writing. Finally, the course will help participants to develop an eye for problems in their own writing and that of their colleagues.

Technical Writing Two Hour Workshop

Suitable for: All postgraduate students in all years.

Technical writing is undergoing rapid evolution. The modern trend is towards a clearer, more direct style, packing more meaning in to fewer words.

There is also a move towards producing technical documents in digital form such as HTML and pdf files. Special issues concerning digital documents are also covered.

- Writing for the expert
- Writing for the layperson
- Technical writing and "plain English"
- Effective use of graphics
- Principles of good layout and document navigation

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Writing Up Your Research for Publication

Suitable for: All research students.

This one day course is for all PhD students who wish to learn more about getting published in refereed journals.

- Becoming known in your field
- Viewpoints and motivations of participants in the publishing process
- Choosing where to publish your paper
- Submitting the paper
- The refereeing process
- Writing the paper
- At the proof stage



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