

## Become an Excellent Scientific Writer: Essential Skills for Strategic Planning, Effective Writing, and Painless Publishing in Life Sciences and Medicine

### Content

Many scientists find writing to be a challenging task. This course relieves the stress brought on by writing projects by teaching participants how to integrate writing for publication into the research process. Participants will approach “writing a paper” as a series of discrete, manageable steps, which they can follow in a logical order. This approach saves time, makes the writing process more predictable and pleasant, and delivers high-quality articles.

In four half-day sessions, this course will take participants from the theory to the practice of scientific writing for publication in English.



Each session has four components:

- Short presentations to introduce essential topics, with many examples, tips, and tools.
- Hands-on exercises that help participants grasp each stage of the process, from brainstorming to publication.
- Writing to do at home (participants work on a draft of their own writing project).
- Personalized coaching to improve participants’ publication planning and writing skills.

### Learning Objectives

To easily write and publish excellent scientific articles, participants will learn:

- how to systematically organize their writing process, define their paper’s message, and choose a journal.
- how to integrate reporting guidelines and checklists into papers.
- the essential features of the most important parts of the paper. These include the Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion (referred to as IMRaD) sections, Tables & Figures, Title & Abstract, and various summary elements (Highlights, Plain Language Summary, etc.).
- how to write concisely and clearly in English and self-edit a draft.
- how to design effective tables and figures
- how to use artificial intelligence-based writing tools (such as ChatGPT) ethically, effectively, and efficiently.

- how to communicate clearly with co-authors and supervisors throughout the writing and publication process.
- how to write cover letters, respond to reviewers, revise papers for submission to a second journal, and do other tasks necessary for publication.
- strategies to boost their productivity and to improve their project management skills, which will help them manage multiple writing projects simultaneously without missing deadlines.

Participants who have already finished their data analysis and identified their main findings can expect to leave the course with a first draft of their paper.

### **Note**

This course focuses specifically on essential concepts in English-language writing that are often overlooked, such as sentence construction and the nature and function of paragraphs in English (as compared to German and French). This is not a grammar course, but participants will learn to leverage their knowledge of English grammar to write powerful, clear sentences that inform and persuade readers.

### **Individual Coaching**

Participants will have their work checked regularly throughout the course. The trainer will also give written feedback between Day 2 and Day 4 of the course, on a writing sample of 1500 words or less.

### **Trainer**

Dr Sampoorna Rappaz is an academic writing tutor at the University of Bern Medical Library and a professional medical writer and editor. An associate editor of *Medical Writing* (European Medical Writers Association's quarterly publication), she has extensive experience in scientific and medical communications in academia and the industry. She specializes in communicating complex science in a clear, accurate, precise, coherent, ethical, and audience-appropriate manner.

### **Target Group**

This course is aimed at PhD candidates and postdocs in life sciences or medicine, who intend to publish research articles in English.

### **Requirements**

Participants should bring laptops to class as well as their preparatory or initial work on their writing project. Instruction will be geared to users of MS Word or of programs equivalent to MS Word. Those who write in other formats are encouraged to download a copy of MS Word to access some of its special functions.

Participants must complete a needs assessment form, which includes a pre-course writing task. The date of submission is specified in the form, which will be sent a few weeks before the course start date. The information and writing samples provided by the participants will be used to tailor the course content to the participants' current writing needs and to provide writing examples relevant to their research topics and study design. For questions, please email the lecturer: [sampoorna.rappaz@unibe.ch](mailto:sampoorna.rappaz@unibe.ch)

**Participants:** max. 15

**ECTS:** recommended 1

**Location:** Main Building, Hochschulstr. 4, room 104 (May 27, June 3 & 10), UniS  
Schanzeneckstr. 1, room A 015 (June 17)

**Dates:** Mondays, 9:30 a.m.– 3:30 p.m.; May 27, June 3, 10, & 17, 2024