

Smith Communications OY

Scientific Writing Skills

Teacher: Steve Smith

Suggested participants: approx. 30 doctoral students/post-docs/research track students

24 September 2025, at 9.00 – 16.15

Registration: <https://konsta.utu.fi/Default.aspx?tabid=88&tap=22339>

Possibility to register to the waiting list.

Pre-course

(1-2 h work from students required)

- SS to send example paper in mid-August – Participants are invited to offer a very top-level critique of the piece
 - Instruction: no detailed feedback, spelling/grammar, etc – only structural comments and suggestions on how to make the overall content clearer (SS will offer examples to encourage the right level of feedback)
 - Prior to course day – participants return their critiques (deadline early September); SS to compile useful points for discussion.
 - Returning the paper is a prerequisite for participation on the course day. Cancelled places are offered to those still on the waiting list.
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Morning

First session

9.00 – 10.30

- Brief intro: about SS
 - Medical writing in industry and academia
 - What I've done and how
 - Icebreaker activity
 - Today's learning objectives
- Intro: what are writing skills and why are they important?
 - Why are writing skills important to you? How would you like to improve your skills? (Participant feedback, short list)
 - 'Packaging' your work for presentation to the community
 - Both content and 'packaging' are important for success
 - Always consider your readership: it might be wider and more diverse than you think

Break – 15 minutes

Second session

10.45 – 12.15

- The writing process
 - The value of not working alone – who are your co-authors and what roles are assigned?
 - Selecting an appropriate target journal – communicating with the editor
- Overview of development stages; the importance of following this order of working

Lunch break – 30 minutes

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Afternoon

Workshop

12.45 – 13.15

- ‘reverse outline’ task – groups of max 4 people
- Groups are assigned a section of sample paper
- Identify and mark prespecified essential components of sample paper
- Feedback to main group

Third session

13.15 – 14.15

- Titles and abstracts
- Types of titles – which is best for my paper?
- Writing impactful abstracts
- Submission prep; what happens after submission? Dealing with reviewer comments
- Summary of the writing process: Overall ‘dos’ and ‘don’ts’

Break: 15 minutes

Workshop

14.30 – 15.45

Two or three groups – re-examination of the sample text

- Each group to offer 5 bullet points on suggestions for how to improve the paper
- Spokesperson to feed back to the larger group – SS to show compiled version on-screen
- For each discussion point – what we agree should be done and why
- SS to add further discussion points if the groups did not identify them – “This is what the authors ultimately did, and their paper was published in *Journal X*”

Closing session

15.45-16.15

- What did we learn from the reviewing workshop?
- Summary of key pitfalls to avoid in writing a paper
- How does following the ‘correct’ process help avoid some of these pitfalls?
- This exercise underlines the value of not working entirely alone
- Summary; key take-aways

End