

## Syllabus *Biomedical English Writing: 2019-21*

### Introduction

There is a wide gap between the way you have been taught to write in the past and the way journals want you to write. Teachers usually read students' work in order to assess your understanding of your subject, whereas journal editors - and the audience of the journal itself - read simply to understand your ideas and to judge whether these ideas have significance to the field and/or can add value to their own research. This course will focus on bridging this divide. More specifically, you will help each other to do so. You will be asked to work in groups, peer-reviewing each other's work at home and discussing the feedback in class. In our experience, this participation helps students to develop a critical "eye", making the ideas discussed in class become clear and useful. Apart from the homework, you will be asked to read some journal articles in your field so that you gain insights into the expectations of your target audience.

As the table on the next page shows, the sessions will focus on learning how to write clearly and economically. Readability will be a dominant theme: structure - on the document, paragraph, and sentence levels - as well as grammar and punctuation will be the focal points. The classes dedicated to structure will go into detail about deciding what information should be reserved for each section of the article and what is involved in maintaining that structure. Furthermore, we will examine sentence and paragraph structure in the context of information flow. The grammar will be incorporated within the overall scheme of each session and will also focus on some of the most common grammatical errors as well as Dutchisms. Correct punctuation use is essential in formal/academic writing and will be examined in the context of improving readability and precision. The materials for each class will be available on Canvas before each session. You will be expected to prepare for each lesson and to complete any written homework before the due date.

### Aims

In summary, this course has three main aims:

- to help you to communicate clearly the relevance and value of your work
- to help you to think critically and write with your readership in mind
- to help you to gain experience with the peer review process

### Entry requirements

This course is organised primarily for PhD candidates. The goal of the course is to improve on an article the participant intends to develop during the course. **Without an early draft of an article, not necessarily complete but definitely a substantial start, it is impossible to participate.** PLEASE NOTE: this is not an English class. Participation in this course requires a good enough grasp of English to read, write, and speak the language well.