

Refining Academic English: a course for Doctoral Writers

In-person course

Lecturer: Edward Phillips

Duration: 16 hours

Sessions: 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, 23, 25 of March 2026 | 17:00-19:00 h.

Classroom: Aulas: lunes 2, 9, 16, 23 Aula 2.3.A04 y miércoles 4,11, 18, 25 Aula 2.3.B04 (Leganes Campus)

English level required: B2 / C1 (with validation from lecturer)

Credits: 2 cross-curricular credits

A minimum attendance to 6 sessions is required to obtain the credits

Objectives:

This course is designed to help doctorate students strengthen the linguistic aspects of academic writing in English.

The emphasis will be on developing a more natural, accurate, and stylistically appropriate academic voice in written communication. Learners will build practical strategies to revise and improve their texts.

Duration:

This course has a duration of 20 hours distributed as follows:

- 16 hours of class input
- 4 hours of tutorial (upon request by the student)
- The duration of each session is 2 hours

English language requirements:

Minimum required language level is B2/C1 or equivalent. If students do not have an official language certificate, a level test can be completed.

Contents:

- Learn the differences between academic and non-academic English.
- Express ideas using the correct level of formality and tone in an academic context.
- Learn vocabulary and structures to explain and summarise visual data.
- Explain technical information and technical concepts clearly.
- Practise using signposting language to structure coherent paragraphs with a logical progression.

Methodology:

Students will participate in interactive tasks based on structures and expressions in their own academic writing in English. They will pay special attention to areas that typically present difficulties for advanced level learners.

- Anonymous excerpts of students' own writings may be reviewed for educational purposes.
- Active participation in class discussions and writing activities is expected.
- Independent work outside the classroom will be required to consolidate the material covered.
- Students must complete weekly assigned tasks individually receive feedback.

Evaluation and attendance:

- Continuous evaluation based on attendance, participation and the work done in and outside the classroom.
- The final grade is based on continuous evaluation (40%) and practical tasks (60%)
- A minimum of 75% attendance is required

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Objetivos

Este curso está diseñado para ayudar a los/las estudiantes de doctorado a fortalecer los aspectos lingüísticos de la redacción académica en inglés.

Se hará hincapié en el desarrollo de un estilo escrito más natural, preciso y adecuado al registro académico. El alumnado trabajará estrategias prácticas para revisar y mejorar sus propios textos.

Duración

El curso tiene una duración total de 20 horas repartidas de la siguiente manera:

- 16 horas lectivas.
- 4 horas de tutorías (previa petición de los /las estudiantes).
- Cada sesión dura 2 horas.

Nivel de inglés requerido

El nivel mínimo de acceso al curso es B2/C1 o equivalente. Si un estudiante no tiene una certificación oficial deberá realizar una prueba de nivel.

Contenidos

- Aprender las diferencias entre el inglés académico y el no académico.
- Expresar ideas usando el tono de formalidad adecuado en un contexto académico.
- Aprender vocabulario y estructuras para explicar y resumir datos visuales.
- Explicar información técnica y conceptos teóricos de manera clara.
- Practicar el uso de frases de señalización (*signposting*) para estructurar párrafos coherentes y con una progresión lógica.

Metodología

Los/las estudiantes participarán en tareas interactivas centradas en estructuras y expresiones propias de la escritura académica en inglés. Se prestará especial atención a las áreas que suelen presentar mayores dificultades para aprendientes de nivel avanzado.

- Se podrán revisar fragmentos anónimos de textos del propio alumnado con fines formativos
- Se espera una participación activa en las discusiones en clase y en las actividades de redacción.
- Se requerirá trabajo autónomo fuera del aula para consolidar los contenidos trabajados.
- Se asignarán tareas semanales que deberán completarse de forma individual y serán objeto de retroalimentación.

Evaluación y asistencia

- Evaluación continua basada en la asistencia, participación y el trabajo realizado dentro y fuera del aula.
- La nota final se calculará a partir de la evaluación continua (40%) y los trabajos prácticos (60%)
- Se requiere una asistencia mínima del 75%

Bibliography and references | Bibliografía

Available from UC3M library | disponible en la biblioteca UC3M

Bailey, S. (2018) *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students*, 5th ed. (Routledge)

https://bibliotecas.uc3m.es/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=34UC3M_ALMA21236889990004213&context=L&vid=34UC3M_VU1&lang=es_ES&search_scope=TAB1_SCOPE1&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&isFrbr=true&tab=tab1&query=any,contains,A%20Handbook%20for%20International%20Students&sortby=date&facet=frbrgroupid,include,46450392&offset=0

Cambridge ESOL (2009) *Top Tips for IELTS Academic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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McCarthy, M. & O'Dell, F. (2016) *Academic Vocabulary in Use: vocabulary reference and practice: self-study and classroom use*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

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Side, R. and Wellman, G. (2002) *Grammar and Vocabulary for Cambridge Advanced and Proficiency*, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

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Wallwork, A. (2013) *English for Academic Research: Writing Exercises* (Springer)

https://bibliotecas.uc3m.es/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=34UC3M_ALMA51234746320004213&context=L&vid=34UC3M_VU1&lang=es_ES&search_scope=TAB1_SCOPE1&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&isFrbr=true&tab=tab1&query=any,contains,wallwork&offset=0

Wallwork, A. (2023) *English for Academic Research: Grammar, Usage and Style*, 2nd ed. (Springer)

https://bibliotecas.uc3m.es/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=34UC3M_ALMA51343063150004213&context=L&vid=34UC3M_VU1&lang=es_ES&search_scope=TAB1_SCOPE1&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&isFrbr=true&tab=tab1&query=any,contains,wallwork&sortby=date&facet=frbrgroupid,include,104501363&offset=0

Other books | otros libros

Check Your Vocabulary for Academic English - Porter, D. (Macmillan)

Improve Your IELTS Writing Skills - McCarter, S. & Whitby N (Macmillan)

Online resources | recursos online:

Monash University: Academic Writing for Undergraduate Students
<http://www.monash.edu.au/lis/llonline/writing/general/academic/index.xml>

Purdue University: Online Writing Lab <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2/>

The Academic Phrasebank (PDF): <https://phrasebankresearch.net/>

University of Toronto: Writing <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing>

Using English for Academic Purposes <http://www.uefap.com/writing/>

IELTS IDP: Writing task1 (tables, graphs and charts)

