



RTU Course "Academic Writing"

01A01 Speciālā lietojuma valodu katedra

General data

Code	VIA311
Course title	Academic Writing
Course status in the programme	Compulsory/Courses of Limited Choice
Course level	Undergraduate Studies
Course type	Professional
Field of study	Languages
Responsible instructor	Anna Mēbele
Academic staff	Oksana Samuilova Tatjana Hramova Anita Eiholca
Volume of the course: parts and credits points	2 parts, 4.0 Credit Points, 6.0 ECTS credits
Language of instruction	LV, EN
Possibility of distance learning	Not planned
Abstract	<p>The course provides students with practice they need in order to incorporate new knowledge and skills.</p> <p>The first part of the course introduces students into comprehensive rhetoric, conventions and style of English academic writing. It intends to develop the basic skills of paragraph organisation, sentence structure and specific strategies of English academic writing.</p> <p>The second part of the course provides samples of academic writing and appropriate practice materials for students who need to write exam essays, abstracts, summaries, reports etc. in English. The aim of the course – to enable students to write better for academic purposes — is achieved through applying a process-genre approach to writing, using authentic source texts, and a step-by-step method of teaching academic writing. All the classes in the course are conducted in the form of student-centred collaborative writing workshops to allow maximum time for writing, to foster students' independence and to facilitate meaningful written communication.</p>
Goals and objectives of the course in terms of competences and skills	<p>Aims of the course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •to develop the skills of writing academic texts in English; •to study the conventions of different types of academic writing; •to form an academic writing portfolio with samples of various types of academic essays: descriptive, expository, evaluative, reflective, etc. <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •to study the components of academic writing style; •to master the conventions of academic writing: language, paragraph structure, format, etc.; •to study different forms of academic text organisation and development; •to improve clarity, accuracy, and fluency of writing in academic English; •to develop individual writing strategies and learning strategies
Structure and tasks of independent studies	Developing individual learning strategies for mastering conventions of academic writing; extensive writing in class and at home; presenting course portfolios with text samples of different forms of exposition and various types of academic essays.
Recommended literature	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Butler, L., (2006) Fundamentals of Academic Writing (The Longman Academic Writing Series, Level 1), Longman, UK 2. Cantor, J. A., (2003) A Guide to Academic Writing, Praeger Publishers, USA 3. Leki, I., (2008) Academic Writing: Exploring Processes and Strategies 4. Mulvaney, M. K., Jolliffe, D. A., (2004) Academic Writing: Genres, Samples, and Resources 5. Oshima A., Hogue, A., (2005) Writing Academic English (4th Edition), Longman, UK 6. Richards, J. C., Miller, S. K., (2005) Doing Academic Writing in Education: Connecting the Personal and the Professional 7. Swales, J. M., Beer Feak, C. A., (2004) Academic Writing for Graduate Students, Second Edition: Essential Tasks and Skills (Michigan Series in English for Academic & Professional Purposes), Michigan Series, USA
Course prerequisites	English language skills at B2 level according to CEFR

Course outline

Theme	Hours
Analysis of students' needs and expectations of the course. Organization of the study process: identifying purpose	2
Types of texts: expressive, vocative, informative. Scientific technical discourse. Text analysis.	4
Terminology, semantic fields. Meaning. Context. Discourse. Register.	6
Differences between written and spoken English. Writing strategies, setting priorities. Text transformations.	2
Structure and layout of the text. Sentence structure. Simple, compound, and complex sentences.	2
Sentence combining and punctuation. Capitalisation, commas, colons, semicolons, punctuation marks.	2
Paragraph structure. Topic sentence, supporting information, concluding statement, transitions.	2
Paragraph organisation: time order, space order. Direction in development of paragraphs. Modes of discourse	2

Types of paragraphs. Narrative and descriptive paragraphs. Expository paragraphs. Patterns of paragraphs	2
Types of paragraphs: Definition (class relationships). Informal, formal, extended academic definitions. Classification	2
Steps to successful academic writing. Pre-writing, research, drafting, word processing, revision.	2
Reviewing. Writing of summaries, abstracts, and references. Summarising points of view.	2
Developing editing skills: clarity, unity, consistency, variety, and propriety.	4
Refining academic writing style. Stylistics of academic writing.	2
Presentation and peer evaluation of students' portfolios.	4
Developing creativity and critical thinking skills for academic writing.	2
Pre-writing techniques: free-writing, brainstorming, listing, clustering, etc.	2
Writing conventions for the academic essay. Writing titles. Introductions: attention-getting sentence, background info	2
Selecting a topic for an essay. The outline of the academic essay. Modes of development. Supporting techniques. Criteria	2
Types of essays and patterns of academic essay organisation.	4
Expository essays. Forms of exposition. Contrastive analysis of L1 and L2 expository rhetoric.	2
Descriptive essays. Describing spatial relationships and physical state.	2
Argumentative essays. The difference among persuasive, expository, and argumentative academic writing.	2
The process-analysis essay. Analysing steps and stages in a process.	2
Using citations. Rules of writing quotations. Quoting electronic sources.	2
Analysis of common errors in student writing. Taking account of peer comments in assessment.	2

Learning outcomes and assessment

Learning outcomes	Assessment methods
Students are able to discuss theoretically the knowledge acquired during the course on the principles, methods and techniques of scientific writing, and apply it practically.	Assessment: practical tasks, seminars, exam. Students select the theme to be discussed in the scientific paper (term paper) according to their interests and competences.
Students are able to identify and select purposefully features, forms and structures of scientific and popular scientific style.	Assessment: practical tasks, seminars, term paper. Are able to formulate the aims and tasks of the scientific paper, providing logical basis for the framework of the work and selecting relevant principles of work layout.
Are able to analyze scientific and reference literature, periodicals, internet catalogues etc., and practically apply the skills acquired in the conceptual framework of the course, developing formal and structural standards.	Assessment: draft of the term paper, exam. Students submit the draft of the term paper providing relevant conceptual and structural framework of the work.
Students are able to present relevantly term papers, reproducing written speech.	Students are able to coherently present the developed term paper, using PowerPoint presentation. Evaluation: presentations during semester – tested/not tested, exam – mark according 10 grade scale.

Study subject structure

Part	CP	ECTS	Hours per Week			Tests		
			Lectures	Practical	Lab.	Test	Exam	Work
1.	2.0	3.0	0.0	2.0	0.0		*	
2.	2.0	3.0	0.0	2.0	0.0		*	