Smith Communications OY

Proposal for day course: Scientific Writing Skills

Prepared by Steve Smith (SS) 08.10.2024 for Eeva Rainio, University of Turku

Suggested participants: 20-30 doctoral students/post-docs

Event 27th Feb 9.15 – 16.15

Registration opens 28th Nov, closes 17th of Jan

Pre-course (1 h work from students required)

- SS to send example paper 24th of Jan (– 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)
- 1 week prior to meeting (already at 7th of Feb to give time to send the reminders) – participants return their critiques; SS to compile useful points for discussion

<u>**Morning**</u>

Presentation: 90 minutes (allows for 30 mins discussion throughout)

- Brief intro: about SS
    - Medical writing in industry and academia
    - What I've done and how
    - Icebreaker activity (5 minutes to get the participants talking)
    - 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

Presentation: 90 mins (allows for 30 mins discussion throughout)

- 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

Smith Communications OY

<u>Afternoon</u>

Workshop: 30 minutes

- 'reverse outline' task – groups of max 4 people
- Groups are assigned a section of sample paper (duplications possible, if needed for numbers)
- Identify and mark prespecified essential components of sample paper
- Feedback to main group

Presentation: 60 minutes (allows for 30 minutes discussion throughout)

- 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 (75 minutes)

- Two or three groups, depending on numbers – 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*"

Presentation (15 minutes):

- 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