

Universidad de Costa Rica  
 Sistema de Estudios de Posgrado  
 Escuela de Lenguas Modernas  
 Maestría Profesional en la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera  
 Modalidad: Virtual  
 NF-0301 Escritura Académica para Elaborar Reportes de Investigación (en Inglés)

Nombre: Escritura Académica para Elaborar Reportes de Investigación (en Inglés)	Requisitos: ninguno
Código: NF-0301	Co-requisitos: ninguno
Créditos: 2	Ciclo: Etapa Nivelación
Trabajo en clase: 6 horas semanales a. Sincrónico: 1 hora b. Asincrónico: 5 horas	Clasificación: Propio
	Modalidad: Virtual

### **Proposed Course Syllabus**

#### **I. Description**

The Academic Writing Workshop is offered by the MA Program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language as a resource for students before their first semester courses. The workshop consists of eight synchronous sessions lasting one hour and eight asynchronous sessions requiring five weekly hours of out-of-class work.

This is a required course for students who must enroll in the leveling stage because their academic writing skills in the admission essay were slightly below the required level, with a score between 7.0 and 7.75. The main goal of the class is to provide key resources that can help students to expand their graduate-level writing skills, increase their awareness of issues affecting the quality of texts, and apply writing strategies for dealing with those issues. Workshop tasks include the analysis of available writing samples to identify improvement needs, practice on specific strategies, and the rewriting of texts in need of improvement. Students are expected to apply the knowledge and strategies learned to propose revisions of their own previously written academic texts.

#### **II. General objective**

By the end of the workshop, students will be able to:

Show their command of academic writing in English by writing an essay demonstrating the correct application of its principles.

### III. Specific objectives:

By the end of the workshop, students will be able to:

1. identify features of writing resulting in unnecessary indirectness or lack of clarity in sentences in academic texts;
2. produce clear, concise, and strong sentences in academic texts by eliminating unnecessary indirectness and vague expressions;
3. identify non-coherent elements of academic outlines and paragraphs;
4. write fully coherent outlines and paragraphs by eliminating incoherent sections and making necessary modifications;
5. identify flaws in text cohesion caused by inappropriate use of cohesion strategies;
6. improve text cohesion by fixing problems and appropriately using cohesion strategies;
7. identify the correct and incorrect use of transition devices in academic texts;
8. connect sentences and paragraphs with appropriate transition devices and correct punctuation;
9. write logically equivalent transformations of sentence sequences by using alternative transition devices and syntax;
10. assess the quality of paraphrases based on academic text excerpts through the criteria of lexical variation, syntactic variation, and semantic completeness;
11. write effective paraphrases meeting the criteria of lexical variation, syntactic variation, and semantic completeness;
12. write an effective academic essay fulfilling the criteria of clarity, necessary degree of directness, coherence, cohesion, appropriate logical connections, and appropriate use of direct quotations and paraphrases.

### IV. Contents

TOPIC	SPECIFIC CONTENTS - SKILLS
Directness vs. indirectness in academic writing	Identifying main claims, evaluating directness and clarity of main claims, identifying elements resulting in indirectness or lack of clarity, discussing the effects of indirectness / lack of clarity
Directness vs. indirectness in academic writing	Features of writing resulting in indirectness / lack of clarity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Topic delay through expletives <i>it is+adj+to+verb; there is/there are + noun + adjectival clause</i></li><li>b. Vagueness caused by too-general words (things, issues, related to, etc.), vague determiners/determiners used as fillers (some, several, etc.)</li><li>c. Confusing synonyms to avoid repetition (linked to clear cohesion)</li></ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Redundancy (via similar word pairs linked by <i>and, or</i>)</li> <li>e. Unnecessary adjectival clauses</li> <li>f. Unnecessary passive constructions</li> <li>g. Lengthy or excessive subordination</li> </ul>
Directness vs. indirectness in academic writing	Techniques for improving directness/clarity resulting from features a – g
Unity and coherence	Evaluating outlines for coherence, identifying non-coherent elements of outlines; evaluating paragraphs for coherence, identifying non-coherent elements of paragraphs; raising awareness of the effects of lack of coherence
Unity and coherence	Improving coherence in outlines and paragraphs
Cohesion strategies	Purposeful repetition of words, pronouns, summary sentences
Transitions	Evaluating use of transitions; linking sentences correctly with appropriate transitions; creating equivalent logical relationships with different syntax
Paraphrasing	Assessing paraphrases; producing effective paraphrases
APA documentation	How much to quote directly vs. how much to paraphrase Assessing use of direct quotations vs. use of paraphrases. How much to include of the writer's own production/discussion.
Punctuation	Fixing common errors: comma splices, commas after subordinators.

## V. Methodology

*Academic Writing for Research Reports* is a 100% virtual course hosted in UCR's platform *Mediación Virtual*. Communication between students and the instructor will take place both synchronously and asynchronously in this learning platform and via institutional email. The class will meet in Zoom or another platform designated by the program for weekly synchronous sessions. Working individually and in teams, the students will carry out text analysis tasks, participate in interactive presentations about issues in academic writing, do exercises focused on specific writing issues, and analyze their own previous written production to propose revisions considering the material learned in the workshop.

## VI. Evaluation

Homework (exercise handouts, peer feedback) ----- 50%

Essay evaluation (group evaluation of admission essays) ----- 20%

Final essay (rewrite based on admission essay evaluation) ----- 30%

## VII. Bibliography

Bennet, K., & Muresan, L. (2016). Rhetorical incompatibilities in academic writing: English versus the romance cultures. *SYNERGY*, 12(1). 95-118.

Ferris, D. (2014). *Language power: Tutorials for writers*. Bedford/St. Martin's.

Hinkel, E. (1997). Indirectness in L1 and L2 academic writing. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 27(3), 361-386.

Kaplan, R. B. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in inter-cultural education. *Language learning*, 16(1-2), 1-20.

Montaño-Harmon, M. R. (1991). Discourse features of written Mexican Spanish: Current research in contrastive rhetoric and its implications. *Hispania*, 74(2), 417-425.

Saborío, I. P. (2007). Modes of discourse: A cross-cultural study of essays written in English and Spanish by EFL students in Costa Rica (Part 1). *Letras*, 1(41), 93-103.

Swales, J., & Feak, C. B. (2012). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills*. The University of Michigan Press.

### VIII. Tentative timetable\*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics and activities</b>
1 March 13	Introduction to the Course Directness vs. indirectness in academic writing
2 March 20	Directness vs. indirectness in academic writing
Easter Week March 27	
3 April 3	Clarity vs. vagueness
4 April 10	Unity and coherence
5 April 17	Cohesion
6 April 24 <b>Semana U</b>	Use of transitions Sentence transformations
7 <b>Holiday: May 1</b>	
8 May 8	Assessing paraphrases
9 May 15	Writing quality paraphrases
10 May 22	Direct quotations vs. paraphrases In-text citations
11 May 29	The writer's voice: cited material vs. own production
12 June 5	Fixing common errors (punctuation) APA formatting
13 June 12	Criteria for essay evaluation
14 June 19	Essay evaluation
15 June 26	Feedback on essay evaluation
16 July 3	Final essay
Finals week July 10	Feedback on final essay

\*This timetable is tentative and subject to change as deemed necessary by the instructor depending on the group's progress and other factors.