

## PRBB Intervals Course Proposal

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### **Course Title**

Becoming a Scientific Writer: Putting 'Why' before 'How' - Online

**Proposed date(s)** 1st and 2nd March 2021

### **Course Language**

English

### **Course Leader(s) and very brief summary of relevant qualifications and experience (no more than 2 lines for each trainer)**

[Gavin Lucas \(link\)](#)

Gavin Lucas is a biomedical scientist with more than 13 years of experience in research and scientific publishing, and 12 years of experience as an author's editor, consultant and trainer.

### **Rationale for course (why is this course of interest for the PRBB staff?)**

This workshop takes an important qualitative step beyond '*HOW to do scientific writing*', and provokes publishing scientists to ask '*WHY do I write it like this?*'. It's important for us to have a clear perception of what motivates us as writers, what causes our most common mistakes, how our readers perceive our work, and of what makes good scientific writing attractive and accessible. This new perspective will inspire publishing scientists to become more effective, more autonomous, and more productive science communicators.

### **Course aim - general**

The aim of this course is to help publishing scientists develop a more impartial, analytical view of scientific writing, to better understand their readership, and to make them more efficient writers and editors. Their writing will no longer be driven by the standard formula for 'How?' to write a paper, but will be inspired by the question, 'Why?'

### **Specific learning outcomes (what new skills, knowledge &/or attitudes will participants take away from the course?)**

In this workshop, participants will develop a deeper understanding of the structure of scientific papers, with a renewed focus on the purpose of each section and the connections between them. They will practice applying this knowledge to the task of constructing a scientific manuscript from scratch. They will gain a global framework to conceptualise the entire publishing process, and the profile of their readership. They will explore some common problems of language construction that make our writing unclear, and why we are prone to these problems; we will practice some intuitive editing tools to address them. A common thread will be greater awareness of how our own particular psychology as researchers can influence the transmission of our scientific message, and our reader's perception of that message.

### **Course contents (outline of topics to be covered)**

- Five stages of Publishing
- The Reader

- Destination and Roadmap
- Building structure and connectivity
- From scientific report to a scientific argument
- Tools for scientific editing

### ***Training methods***

This is a highly interactive online training workshop with extensive elements of partner work, exercises, group discussion, and including some offline homework tasks. We use innovative online tools combined with proven didactic techniques to reproduce as much as possible a real workshop situation. We place a special emphasis on sharing and learning from participants' own expertise and experience. We will work with papers from the participants' field, including their own papers. Participants will be required to reserve time for individual preparatory work before the workshop, and between each session.

### ***Target group in PRBB (Senior scientists, postdocs, predocs, management/admin staff, all residents)***

Mid-career scientists; late pre-docs and post-docs

### ***Number of participants (maximum)***

16

### ***Total course hours (Please specify: a) direct training with instructor present b) required self-study.***

*Note: only the direct training hours will be included in the post-course certificate.*

7

### ***Distribution of course (hours/days)***

Two 3,5 -hour online sessions. Please also allow 1-1.5 hours for homework after the first session

### ***Pre-course preparation and/or between sessions?***

Before the course the trainer will send some reading material and a simple preparatory task based on a published paper from the participant's field.

### ***Material participants need to bring (laptops, etc...)***

Participants need a laptop with audio and video, and a strong Internet connection.

### ***Relevant background reading/audiovisual/websites or other materials***

None