Training in Scientific Writing and Publishing

With *Nature Masterclasses*, researchers learn from *Nature journal editors* how to turn great science into great papers.
59% of post-doctoral researchers feel they do not have well-developed writing skills.

54% receive only informal training from thesis mentor.

12% receive no training at all.

THE NEED FOR TRAINING

The importance of publication

Publication is important for developing the careers and academic reputations of researchers, for raising an institution’s profile, and for ensuring that scientific ideas reach the people they need to reach.

But getting published in a top tier journal can be competitive. The number of researchers has been growing steadily by 4-5% per year, yet the average acceptance rate at scientific journals is only around 50%.¹

Informal training is not enough

To ensure that researchers’ papers are read by the most appropriate people and have impact, it’s important that researchers understand how to write effectively and how the publishing process works.

However, in a recent Current Science survey²:

- 59% of post-doctoral researchers said they do not have well-developed writing skills
- 54% said they receive only informal training from thesis mentors
- 12% said they receive no training at all

Informal training can be of variable quality and result in a large workload for senior staff.

A solution

Nature Masterclasses was developed in response to the need for more professional training. It started in 2011 as face-to-face training sessions held at institutions, followed by online training in 2015.

¹Ware M, Mabe M. (2015). The STM report. An overview of scientific and scholarly journal publishing
“I have a renewed confidence to aim higher with future submissions.”
UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

“In addition to the basics of writing, I have learnt more about the perspective of the editors which has been an amazing experience.”
UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

“...A really worthwhile investment in time for anyone planning to publish, irrespective of discipline or previous authoring experience.”
PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY, UK
Nature Masterclasses online and face-to-face training is aimed at researchers of all levels, in the natural sciences. The training is delivered by editors from the Nature series of journals, giving researchers a first-hand insight into publishing at top tier journals.

Key skills and career development for researchers
- Refine writing skills and build confidence in writing for a top tier journal
- Gain clarity on the editorial processes at top journals, often seen as a ‘black box’
- Find out the best ways of working with editors when submitting a paper or completing a review
- Learn about issues such as the reproducibility of research and using research metrics responsibly

Outcomes for institutions
- Support the professional development of your researchers
- Help improve the quality of your scientific publication output
- Show your commitment to high quality research
- Save supervisors’ time on mentoring
Scientific Writing and Publishing
Learn from Nature Journal Editors

16 MODULES

WHAT YOU’LL LEARN

- How to get the most out of the writing process
- How the manuscript selection process works
- What happens to your paper after publication
- What it takes to get published in top journals

1 item

THE INSTRUCTORS

Elena Semeyko
Institutional Designer, Nature Publishing Group
8 followers 5 following

Bart Verberck
Senior Editor, Nature Physics, Nature
Our online course takes researchers through the entire publishing process, from writing a paper to publication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15 MODULES, ~15 HOURS LEARNING TIME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLANNING/Writing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Data Management</strong>&lt;br&gt;Module time: 1 hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to collect and manage your data, and what to look for when storing and publishing it</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What Makes a Great Paper</strong>&lt;br&gt;Module time: 2.5 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>What top tier journal editors look for in a paper</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Elements of Writing Style</strong>&lt;br&gt;Module time: 1 hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>The golden rules of writing and structuring the text in your paper</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Titles and Abstracts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Module time: 1.5 hours</td>
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<td>How to coax your target audience from the title to the paper itself</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>From Introduction to Conclusions</strong>&lt;br&gt;Module time: 1.5 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>A section-by-section guide to making the most of the main text</td>
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The course is delivered by over 30 editors from over 20 of the Nature journals. Researchers can watch over 170 videos with the editors, giving them a first-hand insight into publishing at top-tier journals. Plus, all the course content has been peer-reviewed by Nature journal editors.

“IT IS PARTICULARLY USEFUL TO GET SOME INSIGHT FROM THE EDITORS THEMSELVES ABOUT THEIR FAVORITE PAPERS AND WHY.”

“For me the whole experience made Nature more approachable and broke the taboo of ‘I’ll never publish in Nature’.”

EDITORS FROM THE NATURE JOURNALS

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

Tanguy Chouard, Senior Editor at Nature, introducing ‘An exemplary paper from Nature’
The bite-size videos, activities and posts have been designed for time-poor researchers.

Researchers can ask editors questions directly.

Researchers can create their own profile.
Designed for busy researchers

The course is made up of bite-size videos and activities, enabling researchers to choose their own path thorough the training and learn at their own pace.

Researchers can complete the training systematically, completing each module in order, or they can watch individual videos and complete individual activities of their choosing – whether that’s using a spare 5 minutes in the lab, or for writing a specific section of a paper.

Interactive

‘Activities’, such as multiple-choice questions and pairing games, encourage engagement and critical thinking.

Researchers can put questions directly to the editors in the ‘Ask Our Editors’ section.

Networking

Researchers become part of an online ‘Community’, allowing them to network with peers internationally.
Our scientific writing and publishing webinars enable peer learning and provide an opportunity for interaction with Nature journal editors in real time. They can also increase researcher engagement with the online course (when the webinars and course are combined in a training package).

The webinars are available to institutions, for up to 100 of their researchers at a time. Each webinar lasts approximately 90 minutes and is led by two experienced science editors, including at least one editor from a Nature journal.

**Interactive**

Participants will work through examples, and have the opportunity to interact with editors throughout the webinar. They will also share their experience with their peers by participating in polls and Q&A sessions.

**Tailored**

The webinars are tailored to the disciplines and publishing experience of the researchers taking part.

The presenters are matched as closely as possible to the research interests of the attendees and the editors use discipline-specific examples – such as exemplary papers, guidelines for figures and writing tips.

From a webinar ‘Think like an Editor!’, where researchers learn to see their paper from the perspective of editors, readers and reviewers
Our face-to-face masterclasses in scientific writing and publishing have been running since 2011. They are available to public and private institutions globally to host on-site.

Host institutions are encouraged to invite 25 of their researchers¹ and can request a one-, two-, or three-day masterclass.²

Nature journal editors

Each masterclass is presented by two experienced science editors, with at least one of the editors from a Nature journal.

Every researcher receives one-on-one interaction with the editors. They are also able to discuss their own draft abstract with an editor in detail, to help them understand its strengths and weaknesses. This helps reinforce the themes that are developed in the rest of the masterclass.

Interactive

The masterclasses are conducted as interactive workshops based around real examples. Short lectures are interspersed with activities, group discussions and Q&A with the editors.

“The one-on-one tuition for my abstract was a great opportunity.”

SHANGHAI TUMOR HOSPITAL

“Everyone that takes this workshop will walk away having learned something new”.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

¹Seminar-style masterclasses are available for groups of up to 100 researchers on request.

²As well as these “sponsored” masterclasses, we offer “open” masterclasses: hosted at one institution and open to individuals from different institutions.
TAILORED

Each masterclass is customized to the sponsor institution.

**Publishing experience**

Participants at a similar career level typically have similar interests and questions, which means that they enjoy the masterclass more.

For researchers with minimal writing and publishing experience, the masterclass can be tailored to focus on the basics of preparing and writing a paper.

For researchers with more experience - for example, post-doctorate researchers and faculty staff – the masterclass can focus on the finer details of publishing.

However, a mixture of experience can work well if the participants all work within the same discipline, as attendees are encouraged to share their writing and publishing experiences with the group.

**Discipline**

The editors who lead the masterclass are matched as much as possible to the discipline of the researchers taking part. The editors also use relevant exemplary papers and tips for manuscript writing and structure.

Participants tend to benefit more from the masterclass if they all work within the same broad area of research.
What makes a great paper?

- Great research!
- Strong evidence
- Noteworthy conclusions
- A compelling story
- Effective, clear writing
- Know your audience

- Grant application
- Refinement of ideas
- Experiments and analyses
- Publication
- Paper writing
- Submission and revision
### SAMPLE ONE-DAY MASTERCLASS

The agenda is put together based on the institution’s needs. For a 1-day masterclass we recommend 6-8 modules, which will be covered in short lectures, and 2-4 activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:15</td>
<td>What Makes a Great Paper</td>
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<td>What top-tier journal editors look for in a manuscript, with examples from Nature publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Activity 1: You’re the editor!</td>
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<td>10:30</td>
<td>Data Presentation</td>
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<td>Choosing an appropriate format for your data and best practices</td>
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<td>11:15</td>
<td>Activity 2: Displaying data</td>
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<td>11:45</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Elements of Writing Style</td>
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<td>Golden rules of writing and structuring the text in your paper</td>
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<td>12:45</td>
<td>Q&amp;A with the editors</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>14:00</td>
<td>Titles and Abstracts</td>
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<td>Creating an engaging title, what to avoid, plus abstract templates you can apply to your own writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:45</td>
<td>Activity 3: A review of participants' abstracts and titles (provided in advance)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:15</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>From Introduction to Conclusion</td>
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<td>What to include in (and exclude from) each section, common pitfalls, and how to create a narrative flow</td>
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<td>16:00</td>
<td>The Editorial Process and Peer Review</td>
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<td>What happens to papers once they’ve been submitted, and a crash course in peer review</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:45</td>
<td>Recap and Q&amp;A with the editors</td>
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Online training

Annual Subscriptions
- Lab subscriptions for up to 15 researchers
- Institution-wide subscriptions by IP range

Subscription support
- Usage reports
- Promotional resources to drive usage
- Dedicated account support

Webinar training

Format
- Up to 100 researchers
- Approximately 1.5 hours

Support
- Resources to drive and capture researcher registration
- A post-webinar engagement and enjoyment report
- Dedicated account support

Face-to-face training

Format
- Approximately 25 researchers
- One-, two- or three-day, on-site at your institution

Support
- Dedicated account support
- Workbooks and certificates of achievement for all participants
- A comprehensive report after the masterclass, including participant feedback