UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WRITING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Introduction

In 2015, the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) constituted a committee to consider the institutionalization of the teaching of a course on academic writing for graduate students. The committee's report was submitted to SGS and subsequently a proposal based on the report was submitted to the Academic Board. The proposal was approved by the Academic Board in 2017. The following guidelines for the implementation of the proposal are presented.

Teaching and Learning

The following issues are noted to ensure the effective teaching of the academic writing course for graduate students.

Course Title: Academic Writing for Graduate Students

Course Code: SGS 801

Course Description: It is expected that the following description will be used by all faculty/school-based academic writing course.

The course offers an opportunity to the student to acquire and develop rhetorical knowledge and practices for studying and writing within discipline-specific contexts. Specifically, the student identifies general features of academic writing, using mainly the genre approach, some key linguistic/rhetorical theories, and concepts underpinning academic writing. The final part of the course will focus on other practical issues in research writing and publishing.

Course Structure: An intensive three-credit bearing course that spans over an entire semester of thirteen (13) weeks is expected.

Course Aim: The goal of this course is to acquaint postgraduate students with the theoretical, procedural, and practical aspects of writing effectively a range of genres and part-genres within discipline-specific contexts. (the rationale for the course can be found in Appendix A)

Target Group: All postgraduate research students in regular and other modes are expected to take the course. A research postgraduate student at the University of Cape Coast who takes the course and passes it does not need to re-take it at the PhD level.

Semester: The course is to be taken by postgraduate research students in either the first or second semester in the first year. As in general university-wide courses at the undergraduate level, students are to take and pass this course. In other words, this course is a requirement for graduation.

Sample set of topics: Faculties and schools are to be guided by, and not necessarily be limited to, the suggested topics found in Appendix B.

Mode of Teaching and Composition of Team: Teaching **is** to be done by a combined team of three faculty (two discipline-specific lecturers and a Language/Writing specialist), with one of them being the Facilitator of the Course. It is expected that one of the two members from the school/faculty will be the Facilitator, ensuring that, first, the team come out with a course outline, agree on topics to be taught in line with the discipline-specific needs of the students, and discuss other curricular issues. (See Appendix C for the list of faculty in the Department of English or a language-related department who may be contacted to be members of the team to teach the course.)

Material Development: Selection of faculty's own authentic materials such as theses, research proposals and grant proposals, and research articles in their disciplines is essential. Materials from the reading list may be helpful.

Course Policy: The course policy should make definitive statements about attendance, participation, and plagiarism.

Activities: Activities may include sample writing analysis, guided instructions on the structural language features in discipline-specific writings, in-class group discussions, writing consultations, and writing

Assessment Strategies: Portfolio, teacher observation, and conferencing may be adopted in checking student progress; apply an ABC grade.

Writing Pedagogies

A combination of writing pedagogies such as product-based, process-based, genre-based, technology-based, and critical-based pedagogies are to be explored in the teaching of the course,

Readings: The reading list may consist of both required and suggested texts. As much as possible, texts should include local texts. (See suggested list in Appendix D.)

Administration

Housing of Course: In the initial stage, this course is expected to be housed in a faculty or school. This has the advantage of ensuring direct supervision of the course by the Research Coordinator and Vice-Deans in the respective faculties and houses.

Class: Not more than twenty students from faculty/school will constitute a class. Where the students are more than twenty, we could have two or more streams in either the first or second semester. By the end of first year, students should have completed the course. The exception will be students who are unable to pass the course in the first year.

Course Meetings: To ensure the success of the teaching of the course, there is the need for the team teaching the course to have meetings at semester beginnings, during the semesters, and end of semester.

Supervision: The School of Graduate Studies is to ultimately supervise the teaching of the course, obtaining direct feedback from the Facilitator of the course, Faculty Research Coordinator, Vice-Deans, the Writing Unit, and the Library.

Training Sessions/Workshops/Seminars to be organised by stakeholders. This may be initiated by the Vice-Dean with support from the Facilitator(s) of the course. Resource persons could come from the Library, Writing Unit, the Department of English, etc. Training sessions (both inter and intra faculty/schools) are encouraged among instructors for the sharing of experiences related to the teaching of the writing course.

Administrative Support is to be given by, at least, one Administrative Assistant. This person will be in charge of the records on both faculty and students involved in the teaching and learning of the course, provision of teaching and learning materials, and venue. Other tasks for the Administrator involve liaising with the team members and course representative, keeping of results, etc. Other tasks may be assigned by the Research Coordinator together with the Course Facilitator.

Tuition and Remuneration. Faculty involved may be paid for teaching this course as extra teaching if they go beyond the number of course load of 12 credits.

Conclusion

As in all new courses, challenges are expected. However, it is expected that all stakeholders (Deans, Vice-Deans, Research Coordinator, Course Facilitators, Writing Unit, Library, and students) will demonstrate commitment, dedication, and hard work in order to ensure the success of teaching this course.

APPENDIX A

SOME ASPECTS OF PROPOSAL SENT TO ACADEMIC BOARD

1.0   **Proposed Graduate Academic Writing Course**

2.0   **Course Title: Academic Writing for Graduate Students**

3.0   **Rationale of the Course**

Effective postgraduate research reporting requires not only knowledge of research methodology, but also support services related to language/translation, information literacy, and statistics. A key means of disseminating research findings is through writing. While several universities in Anglo-American, European, and Asia-Pacific settings have recognized the need to include Graduate Writing Programmes (GWPs) and Graduate Writing Courses (GWCs) in their curriculum, this is yet to garner similar attention in universities in Ghana. The proposed GWC, thus, responds to the internationalization of graduate research reporting and publishing. Further, the traditional undergraduate writing courses variously known as Communicative Skills (CS), General Composition (GC), and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in English-medium universities are generally known to be insufficient preparation for graduate-level writing tasks. Yet, while institutions in English-medium universities in Ghana have long seen these writing courses as integral to undergraduate studies, the same cannot be said for students studying at the graduate level.

There are concerns about the shifting demographics in graduate student population which has led to institution-wide failures where time-to-degree and completion rates are concerned. The proposed GWC seeks to not only avoid these failures, but also add value to degrees for our postgraduate students and making their final research reports as strong as possible. A further reason for the institutionalization of the GWC for students is the increased demands on faculty time. Overburdened faculty have less interest in adding individualized teaching of academic and professional writing to the other demands on their time.

APPENDIX B

COURSE CONTENT

WEEK	TOPIC
1	• Research and knowledge • Features of academic writing
2	• Theories in academic writing (genre, socio-constructionism, argumentation, metadiscourse, etc)
3	• Rhetorical concepts (audience, purpose, organization, style, flow, presentation, etc)
4	• Written academic whole genres (research articles, thesis, dissertations, research proposal, grant proposal, seminar paper, conference paper, book review, article review, lab reports, annotated bibliography, etc.)
5	• Written academic part-genres (abstract, acknowledgment, table of content, introduction, literature review, methodology, analysis and discussion, conclusion, reference list, etc)
6	• Written texts in support of the research process (requests, reminders and responses, submission letters, correspondence with editors, manuscript reviews, responses to reviewer comments, bio-statements
7	• Written texts in support of a research career (curriculum vitae, fellowship applications, job and position applications, letters of recommendation, etc)
8	• Incorporating visuals and other semiotic devices in academic writing
9	• Lexical and grammatical choices and their discourse functions in academic writing
10	• Understanding and using written feedback by faculty in academic writing tasks
11	• Citation practices and plagiarism
12	• Proofreading and editing in academic writing
13	• Social and political processes involved in writing for your discipline and publishing

APPENDIX C

STAFF LIST OF FACULTY FROM DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND ALLIED
DEPARTMENTS FOR THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WRITING FOR GRADUATE
STUDENTS

Name of Staff	Full Time	Highest Qualification	Area/s of Specialization	Rank
Prof. L.K. Owusu-Ansah	Full-Time	PhD	World Englishes	Professor
Prof. J. B. A. Afful	Full Time	PhD	Academic Writing, Rhetoric in Academic & Professional Communication, Postgraduate Pedagogy	Associate Professor
Prof. Dora F. Edu-Buandoh	Full Time	PhD	Ideology and Power in Institutional Discourses, Discourse Analysis, Multiliteracies	Associate Professor
Dr. K. Sarfo Kantanka	Full Time	PhD	Discourse Analysis	Senior Lecturer
Dr. Edem Bakah	Full Time	PhD	Discourse Analysis	Senior Lecturer
Dr. J. Arko	Full Time	PhD	Literacy Practices, Grammar, & Semantics	Lecturer
Dr R.S. Ngula	Full Time	PhD	Academic Writing, Corpus Linguistics, Ghanaian English,	Lecturer
Dr. I.N. Mwinlaaru	Full Time	PhD	Academic Writing Systemic Functional Grammar	Lecturer
Dr. Wincharles Coker	Full-Time	PhD	Technical & Professional Communication, Visual Rhetoric	Lecturer

APPENDIX D
SOME SUGGESTED LIST OF REFERENCES

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