5 years of the UK EQUATOR Centre’s Publication School
Evolution of training in academic writing and publication skills

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Publication School
The UK EQUATOR Centre offers practical writing and publication skills training embedded with research integrity principles. Publication School is our flagship course for health researchers. First offered over 5 days, the current 2-day version is more accessible to early-career researchers and students. Here we share our course ethos and content, focusing on interactive, practical elements. We show participants’ views of the course and how well it meets its aims.

Feedback 2015-2019
Immediate
We collect detailed feedback after each course.

Long-term
In January 2020, we asked participants about their confidence in academic writing and writing practice.

Survey response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Survey response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2019</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 2019</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2019</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Not surveyed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Courses for 2017
- 5 days
- 2 days

1 Step-by-step process for writing & publishing a journal article
2 Embrace reproducibility, research integrity & transparency principles

Content

“Very useful to go through authorship vs acknowledgements” [Apr 2019 ⭐]

“Thinking about the key message before I start writing has also really helped, along with who I want the audience for my publication to be” [2017 ▶]

“Really useful tips on how to structure a paper... and how to use the reporting guidelines” [2018 ▶]

“I find that my writing is far more succinct and direct. This has helped refine my ideas, which subsequently improves further” [Apr 2019 ⭐]

“Finally being taught about [copyright] has been incredibly useful” [Nov 2019 ⭐]

“Really like the format of visual slide plus basic notes” [Nov 2019 ⭐]

Course program

Practical – Interactive – Real-world

Day 1                   Day 2
The blank page          Abstract
Authorship              Title
Message & audience      Language &
Choosing a journal      style
Reporting guidelines    Copyright &
Methods                 open access
Results                 Submission
Discussion              Peer review
Introduction

Feedback suggests we’re meeting our aims

“The approach that was outlined in the training [has] given me a structure and process that I can apply and follow” [Jun 2019 ⭐]

“I learned to check my writing for bias, and accuracy in reporting my study” [2017 ▶]

“Have been using your website with my trainees and colleagues” [2015 ▶]

70%  Finished a piece of academic writing (e.g., abstract, journal article, thesis)

91%  Somewhat or greatly increased confidence in academic writing

97%  Recommend UK Publication School

Practical elements

- Share experiences
- Apply concepts to own research
- Apply concepts in simulated scenarios
- Improve provided published & simulated passages

“The course broke down the sections of publications which were immediately followed by a relevant exercise. This method enabled me to use the taught theory and apply it to articles that were good and some that were poor” [Apr 2019 ⭐]

“It was helpful to see and work with real [peer reviewer] comments” [Jun 2019 ⭐]

“Love the practical session with our individual titles [from own research]” [Nov 2019 ⭐]

Plans for the future
Guided by accumulated feedback

- Where possible, reintroduce valued content from 5-day course. E.g., Q&A with a journal editor during the ‘Submission’ session
- Focus more exercises on participants’ own projects. E.g., plan the message and audience for your next article
- Develop PubCamp, a follow-on 2-day ‘boot camp’ workshop, during which participants draft their own article

Thank you Alumni for your enthusiastic participation and feedback ⬤ Faculty, internal and external, who have shaped this course