



Module Specification

Writing Science

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Writing Science

Module code: USSJC8-30-M

Level: Level 7

For implementation from: 2024-25

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

College: College of Health, Science & Society

School: CHSS School of Applied Sciences

Partner institutions: None

Field: Applied Sciences

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: This module provides students with guidance on key forms of written science communication including news articles, features (long-form articles), blog posts and opinion articles. It equips students considering careers in science journalism and other fields of science communication with essential transferrable skills.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: The module aims to provide students with the transferable skills in written science communication and relevant communication theory, which enables them to understand and reflect upon the contexts in which they will work.

Outline syllabus: This module explores science communication through written formats and will specifically examine magazine, newspaper and internet media. The emphasis in this module is on communication with lay publics.

Topics covered may include:

Rhetoric in science communication - including framing, argument structure, storytelling and use of metaphor.

Science journalism - concepts such as the role of the media in public opinion formation, agenda setting and newsgates, as well as practical issues such as news gathering, including sourcing expert scientific information, and writing and interviewing styles.

Science in public relations and affairs- including role of public relations in organisations, stakeholder theory, theory of publics as well as practical issues, such as writing for public relations and selling science as news.

Students will explore the purposes of various writing genres and their strengths and weaknesses as vehicles for science communication. Editorial constraints and news values will also be examined.

Students will also critically analyse current/recent media coverage of scientific topics, referring to relevant theories.

As part of this module, students will be expected to develop their written communication skills. This will include writing for a variety of different audiences and purposes.

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: The module will be taught in block teaching sessions. During the intensive teaching sessions, material will be delivered using a mixture of problem-based learning, seminar and workshop sessions.

Considerable emphasis will be placed on developing practical writing, interpretive and story researching skills. Sessions will be designed to simulate both newsroom and public affairs environments. Students will be expected to take an active role in developing and running workshop and seminar sessions. The intensive teaching periods will be supplemented by guided and independent reading to provide suitable background on the subject and examine theoretical concepts in detail.

In the case of small student numbers the teaching and learning methods will be adapted appropriately to support a stronger element of independent learning. This self-directed study will be supported by tutor-led workshops combined with case studies and site visits as appropriate.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Demonstrate breadth and flexibility in writing styles required for different forms of written science communication.

MO2 Interpret scientific information intended for a specialist audience and present this information at a level and in a style suitable for a variety of lay audiences.

MO3 Apply relevant theory to analyse the nature and impact of written science communication and the context in which this takes place.

MO4 Synthesise information from a variety of sources in developing a coherent piece of written communication.

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Face-to-face learning = 72 hours

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/ussjc8-30-m.html) via the following link <https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/ussjc8-30-m.html>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: Assessment 1; Written Assignment (1500 words)

Assessment 1 is the completion of a news piece and analysis of media coverage of a current scientific issue.

This assessment will develop foundational writing skills applicable to a broad range of science communication contexts and encourage students to apply science communication theories to understand the nature of written science communication and the context in which it takes place.

Assessment 2: Portfolio (2500 words)

Assessment 2 is a portfolio of written tasks; a controversial scientific topic of the students choosing will be written up as a feature and students will also write an opinion piece and a press release about the same topic.

This assessment requires students to demonstrate their ability to communicate scientific research clearly for different lay audiences and also to demonstrate their flexibility in adapting their writing styles to different genres of writing.

Students are supported to succeed in these assessments through interactive sessions on writing structures and through the provision of formative feedback opportunities on their own writing. Students also critique published writing in class to inform their own writing. Guidance is given on how to apply theory to the analysis of written and other communication materials.

Assessment tasks:

Written Assignment (First Sit)

Description: News article and analysis of media coverage of a current scientific issue (1500 words).

Weighting: 40 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Portfolio (First Sit)

Description: Portfolio of science writing (2500 words).

Weighting: 60 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO4

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: News article and analysis of media coverage of a current scientific issue (1500 words).

Weighting: 40 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Portfolio (Resit)

Description: Portfolio of science writing (2500 words).

Weighting: 60 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO4

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Science Communication [Frenchay] MSc 2023-24

Science Communication [Frenchay] MSc 2024-25