# Open Online Course in Research Writing

For early career researchers in developing countries

18 October to 28 November 2016 (6 weeks)

Deadline to enrol: 16 October 2016

Expected effort: 4 to 5 hours per week

## Introduction

Since 2011, the INASP AuthorAID programme has offered numerous free online courses in research writing. This research writing course has been developed specifically for developing country researchers. More than 2000 researchers from over 70 developing countries have completed this course so far. For a report of our previous course, please see http://www.authoraid.info/en/news/details/1102/

We are going to offer this course again starting 18 October 2016. There is no cost to apply or participate in the course. At the end of the course, certificates and digital badges will be issued free of cost to everyone who meets the course completion criteria.

This will be an open course and is targeted at developing country researchers, although any researcher in the world is welcome to join the course. We may introduce an enrolment limit if the enrolment far exceeds our server capacity, so we suggest that you enrol in the course as soon as possible if you are interested. **The deadline to enrol is 16 October 2016.** The section in this document called "how to join the course" has complete information on how to enrol.

The content in the course is not specific to any subject area, although there is a slant towards the health and life sciences. Many researchers from several subject areas in the sciences and social sciences have completed this course and found it useful.

You should plan to spend about 4 to 5 hours per week on the course to complete the lessons and activities. You can study in your own time. There will be no live online sessions or face-to-face meetings. There will however be some deadlines in the course. You should have regular access to the Internet during the period of the course, but a high-bandwidth connection is not necessary. The course lessons and activities are largely text-based.

As this course is meant for early career researchers, we suggest you sign up for this course only if you consider yourself to be an early career researcher. An early career researcher is someone who has limited experience in publishing papers in reputable peer-reviewed journals.

The course will be facilitated by Ravi Murugesan, an AuthorAID trainer, and moderated by Andy Nobes, Programme Officer, Research Development and Support at INASP. We may also have some guest facilitators from the AuthorAID network on the course.

# Outline of the 6-week course

**Course induction**
- Introduction to the course and learning platform
- Background information form
- Pre assessment quiz

**Week 1: Doing a literature review**
- Lesson: Accessing published research
- Lesson: Arriving at your research question
- Multiple choice quiz
- Discussion on the topics covered this week

**Week 2: Research ethics**
- Lesson: Ethics for researchers
- Lesson: Writing ethically
- Lesson: Ethics for journals
- Multiple choice quiz
- Writing activity: Reflection on ethics
- Discussion on the topics covered this week

**Week 3: Preparing to write a research paper**
- Peer assessment of the previous week's writing activity
- Lesson: Targeting relevant journals for your paper
- Lesson: Preparing to write your paper
- Multiple choice quiz
- Discussion on the topics covered this week

**Week 4: Writing a research paper**
- Lesson: Citations, tables, figures
- Lesson: Writing the sections of a research paper
- Multiple choice quiz
- Writing activity: Write a research abstract or summary
- Discussion on the topics covered this week

**Week 5: Publishing a paper in a journal**
- Peer assessment of the previous week's writing activity
- Lesson: Checking your paper before submission to a journal
- Lesson: Submitting your paper to a journal
- Lesson: Dealing with peer review

- Multiple choice quiz
- Discussion on the topics covered this week

**Week 6: Wrap up**
- Complete any pending lessons and quizzes
- Read peer assessments
- Post assessment quiz
- Course feedback form
- General discussion

This outline mentions only the key lessons and activities – there may be some additional optional or minor activities on the course.

# Course completion criteria

**Pass grade**

Participants who do the following will receive a course completion certificate with a "Pass" grade:

- pass the weekly multiple choice quizzes by scoring at least 80% (unlimited attempts are allowed on each quiz)
- complete the pre and post assessment quizzes
- complete the course feedback form

**Merit grade**

Participants who do the above and complete at least one of the two peer assessment activities will receive a course completion certificate with a "Merit" grade.

**About the certificate**

The certificate will mention the name of the course, your name, the course duration, and average study time. The AuthorAID and INASP logos will be included on the certificate, but the course is not accredited by any organisation.

The certificate will be given as a PDF file. It will not be given in hardcopy or sent by post. A unique verification code will be present on each certificate issued.

**Digital badge**

Participants who complete the course will also receive an open digital badge which they can display online using an Open Badges portfolio, and share it on LinkedIn and elsewhere.

# Important information about the course

1. At the start of the course, you'll be asked to complete a detailed background information form, in which you'll have to give a link to your ORCID profile (you can easily create an ORCID profile if you don't have one). In the first week of the course, you'll also be asked to complete a pre assessment quiz. You can access the course material only after you complete these tasks.

2. As we expect a large number of participants on the course, the course facilitators might not be able to answer individual questions, but will provide overall feedback and responses to the topics of discussion. You should prepare to be a self-reliant learner, and we recommend you engage with the

other course participants on the discussion forums as much as you can. There will be many opportunities to learn from your course colleagues and even to make new professional connections.

3. There will be two recommended peer assessment activities in the course. In these activities, you should submit your work and assess some of your course colleagues' submissions. At the end of these activities, you can expect to see feedback on your work from your course colleagues. Please note that you will not get feedback on your work from the course facilitator.

4. Instructions will be given at various points in the course for the different course activities. You should read all instructions carefully and meet the deadlines if you are interested in completing the course. No deadline extensions will be given.

5. We recommend you join the course only if you plan to complete it, but you may join even if you think you may only be able to participate to a limited extent. However, we will not be awarding certificates just for participation. Only those who meet the course completion criteria will receive a completion certificate and digital badge.

6. No technical support is available prior to the course. Please carefully follow the instructions given in the next section if you want to join the course. When the course begins, limited technical support will be available on the "technical support" forum in the course. Unfortunately we will not be able to respond to individual email requests for support before or during the course.

# How to join the course

Please carefully follow ALL the steps given below to join the course.

1. Create an account on INASP Moodle if you don't have one already. Visit http://moodle.inasp.info/login/index.php to get started.

   a. You may need to wait for some time to get the account confirmation email. Please check your junk/spam email folder for the account confirmation email if you don't see it in your inbox.

   b. When creating an account please put in an email address that you regularly use and check. Otherwise you may miss out on important course announcements which will reach you by email.

2. Login to INASP Moodle with your account: http://moodle.inasp.info/

3. Visit the course enrolment page: http://moodle.inasp.info/course/view.php?id=109

4. Click the blue button called "Enrol me" to enrol in the course.

That's it! Once you have enrolled in the course you need to wait for the course start date (18th October) for the course material to become available. The course administrator will also make an announcement in the course on the start date with further information. This post will reach you by email as well.

Thank you for your interest in the course, and all the best!