Syllabi of Courses: Academic Skills and Academic Writing

**Institution:** Faculty of Business and Economics, Mendel University in Brno ([www.pef.mendelu.cz/en](http://www.pef.mendelu.cz/en))

# **Academic Skills**

**Type of the course:** mandatory

**Level of study:** bachelor studies

**Recommended semester:** 1st semester

**Study programmes:** Economics and Management, Open informatics

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| **Course objective and study outcomes:** |
| The aim of this course is to introduce the basics of academic work to students. They will get an idea of how science works and why publications play a central role in it. They will learn how to study effectively and how to distinguish the relevant sources from the irrelevant ones and gain the ability to recognize different professional genres. The focus will be also put on the work with the text itself – how to read it, what to notice and how to effectively create notes. All of this will allow the students to abstract the main ideas of the text, which they will then learn to present orally. The course is supposed to serve as a basis for further studies at the faculty and will help students acquire the competencies that are necessary to complete the follow-up course “Academic Writing”. |
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| **Course content**  **Lectures** (the number in brackets is the number of hours for the given topic): |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **1.** | **The relationship between academic skills and quality scientific research** (2 hours) | |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | a. | Characteristics of science and research | | b. | The difference between natural and social sciences | | c. | Interdisciplinarity | | d. | Writing of professional texts | | e. | Tips and tricks on how to study effectively | | | **2.** | **Professional text and its specifics** (3 hours) | |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | a. | Differences between professional and non-professional text | | b. | Main principles of scientific texts | | c. | Genres of professional text | | d. | Different forms of professional texts depending on the discipline | | e. | Examples of high-quality and low-quality professional texts | | f. | Types of students’ works (seminar work, position paper, summary, report…) | | | **3.** | **Searching for sources** (2 hours) | |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | a. | Working with links when reading text | | b. | Paid access databases, freely accessible databases | | c. | Recognition of relevant text | | d. | Working with abstracts | | e. | Working with abstracts. Primary and secondary sources | | | **4.** | **How to read a professional text** (3 hours) | |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | a. | Steps how to read | | b. | Creating notes | | | **5.** | **Presentation skills and teamwork** (2 hours) | |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | a. | How to create a presentation | | b. | Software tools for creating presentations | | c. | Principles of teamwork | | | **6.** | **Research ethics** (allowance 0/2) | |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | a. | Principles of ethics in research | | b. | Examples of ethically controversial research | | |
| **Completion requirements:** |
| Activity in classes: 20 points Group presentation: 20 points Partial tests/tasks: 60 points  Max. number of points is 100, min. number of points for a successfully passed exam is 60, of which at least 36 must be obtained from partial tests/tasks. |
| **Study literature and resources:** |
| |  | | --- | | **Mandatory:** | | |  | | --- | | * ŠANDEROVÁ, J. *Jak číst a psát odborný text ve společenských vědách: několik zásad pro začátečníky.* 1. vyd. Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství, 2005. 209 s. Studijní texty ;. ISBN 80-86429-40-7. | | * VON MUELLEN, R. -- HARBOE, T. *Study Skills for International Students.* Copenhagen: The Teaching and Learning Unit of Social Sciences of University of Copenhagen, 2007. 53 s. | | * MURPHY, M. -- MOORE, S. -- NEVILLE, C. *The Ultimate Study Skills Handbook.* Glasgow: Open University Press, 2010. 241 s. | | |

# **Academic writing**

**Type of the course:** mandatory

**Level of study:** bachelor studies

**Recommended semester:** 1st semester

**Study programmes:** Economics and Management, Open informatics

**Course objective and study outcomes:**

The course introduces students to the rules and practices of academic writing and provides them with a basis for future studies.

Students will learn to work with professional texts from their field. Course objectives:

* The student understands the meaning of the original text in the academic sphere;
* The student is able to search for and recognize quality resources;
* The student works effectively with resources and uses tools for their management;
* The student correctly uses various sources in their own texts and refers to them correctly;
* The student is able to extract a key idea from a given text and thinks critically about the text;
* The student is able to summarize the text in their own words and paraphrase correctly;
* The student is able to justify and defend their own ideas.

**Course content:**

**Lectures (1 hour every week):**

1. Motivation and copyright law
   1. Justification of the need for the subject (example of cases of unintentional plagiarism and possible problems)
   2. Copyright law
2. Searching for resources
3. Paid access databases
4. Searching for resources
   1. Freely accessible databases, pitfalls
5. Management of literary resources
6. Examples of good practice
7. Resource management tools
8. Reference to resources
9. How to link directly taken text, images, tables
10. General knowledge that does not need to be referred to
11. Reference to resources
12. How to reference altered and significantly modified objects, use of other people's data, etc.
13. Copyright and modification of third-party objects
14. Critical reading
15. Assessing the credibility of the resource
16. Extraction of the key idea
17. Summary
18. How to create a summary of the read text
19. Paraphrasing
20. How to formulate someone else’s idea in your own words
21. Use and citation of non-text information
22. Graphic materials, source codes
23. Argumentation
24. Justification of own ideas, defense of conclusions
25. Processing of opponents’ comments
26. Structure of the academic text
27. Distinction of individual parts and their content
28. Related problems and how to face them
29. Review

**Seminars (2 hours every two weeks):**

1. Working with databases, searching
2. Resource management tools
3. Citation – practicing specific cases
4. Summary
5. Paraphrasing
6. Use and citation of non-text information
7. Consultation of the final seminar work

**Form of verification of study results and other requirements for the student:**

Seminar work – literary research on a selected (and approved by the teacher) topic related to the currently studied professional subject. In the seminar work, the student demonstrates the ability to apply the acquired knowledge (finding suitable sources, citation, summarization and paraphrasing, argumentation).

**Mandatory literature:**

* BAILEY, S. Academic writing: a handbook for international students. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2017. ISBN 978-1138048744.
* BIERNÁTOVÁ, O., SKŮPA, J. Bibliografické odkazy a citace dokumentů: dle ČSN ISO 690 (01 0197) platné od 1. dubna 2011. Vytvořte si citace [online]. 2011. Dostupné z: http://www.citace.com/CSN-ISO-690.
* KRATOCHVÍL, J. Jak citovat. Vydání první. Brno: Masarykova univerzita. Knihovna univerzitního kampusu, © 2014. Dostupné z: https://kuk.muni.cz/vyuka/materialy/citace.php

**Recommended literature:**

* WILLIAMS, K. Referencing & understanding plagiarism. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. ISBN 978-1-137-53071-4.
* Harvard Guide to Using Sources: A Publication of the Harvard College Writing Program. Available online: http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu