

PRESS RELEASE

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The Academic Writing Center marks its first year of service to the academic community of Université Paris-Saclay

Since its launch a year ago, the Academic Writing Center (AWC) at Université Paris-Saclay has supported PhD candidates, researchers and academic staff to improve the linguistic quality of their work in English, i.e. scientific papers, lectures, conferences and other professional events, helping them to give greater impact to their scientific communication. Almost one of a kind in France, the AWC was originally coordinated by CentraleSupélec before rapidly expanding its services to reach the entire University.

The prevalence of the English language in the world of scientific publishing is a clear advantage for Anglophones. While English is typically the working language in a research-intensive university like Université Paris-Saclay, where multiple nationalities work side by side, writing and expressing oneself as clearly as possible requires specific skills.

The Academic Writing Center at Université Paris-Saclay is a unique service in France which tackles this challenge, providing the University's community of academics and researchers with an in-house proofreading and coaching service for academic publishing and scientific communication in English.

The team at AWC is made up of four experienced proofreaders who support scientific staff individually according to their needs. In addition to obvious linguistic objectives, the team also aims to help researchers develop their spoken and written scientific communication skills in their field of expertise.

The AWC provides an array of personalised services: article reviews, consultations on course development (design and preparation of lessons in English – English Medium Instruction), and support in the creation of professional portfolios (CVs, LinkedIn profiles, grant writing).

AWC also offers a wide range of PhD training services, from scientific English to public speaking and Three Minute Thesis pitches.

“Our goal is to guide academic staff from the University’s community at all stages of their careers towards a global improvement in their spoken and written communication skills, rather than simply producing better papers,” says Divya Madhavan, founder and director of the AWC. *“By working with PhD candidates in the earliest stages of their PhDs, we hope to rid them of their insecurities about English as they compare themselves with their peers who are native English speakers. We also hope to develop their scientific writing skills in English, which will continue to serve them throughout their career. Being able to write well is not an innate skill, it is learnt,”* she concludes.

Thanks to this approach, the AWC has been able to switch scale and widen its scope within the University. Established at the end of 2019 by CentraleSupélec, the Academic Writing Center expanded the scope of its service to reach the entire community at Université Paris-Saclay in Autumn 2021, working with all of the University's 17 Graduate Schools and the Institute for the

Sciences of Light. Less than a year later, the centre's success is evident: approximately 500 hours of individual proofreading, over 100 hours of courses given, more than 2,300 proofreading software licences activated, and, in addition, an excellent acceptance rate of scientific papers.

“This is a good first example of the principle of inter-institutional subsidiarity which we had included in the University's target model. One of the University's constituent institutions has led a new initiative which has demonstrated its potential, and so we expand it to the entire University by providing it with the additional resources it needs, so that it can serve the entire community. It is a positive experience and operational model which can be applied to other fields,” says Valérie Ferreboeuf, Deputy Vice-President for Strategy and Planning.

ABOUT UNIVERSITÉ PARIS-SACLAY

Université Paris-Saclay brings together ten constituent faculties and institutes, four Grandes Écoles, the Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques, two associate institutions and shared laboratories with six national research organisations.

With 48,000 students, 8,100 lecturers and 8,500 administrative and technical staff members, Université Paris-Saclay offers a comprehensive and varied range of undergraduate to doctorate level programmes and engineering degrees, renowned for their quality thanks to the reputation and commitment of the University's academic staff.

Located in the south of Paris on vast sites that stretch across Paris, Orsay, Évry and Versailles, Université Paris-Saclay benefits from a strategic geographical and socio-economic position that is strengthened by its international visibility. A leading university, Université Paris-Saclay is recognised for its excellent Mathematics and Physics programmes but also for Biological and Medical Sciences, Agriculture, Engineering, and its extensive Humanities and Social Sciences courses. Close to Paris, Université Paris-Saclay is nested in a protected natural area, at the heart of a dynamic economic hub.



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