Communicating in Science: Functional Academic English

Instructors:
Dr. María Constanza Marchesi (CESIMAR CCT CONICET-CENPAT)
Dr. Tomás Marina (CADIC – CONICET)

The instructors are young professionals with a high level of scientific output in international journals and have also served as peer reviewers for such journals. Both have undertaken training residencies of varying duration in English-speaking countries and have participated in numerous courses and conferences conducted in English. Additionally, they have experience working as guides on Antarctic tourist cruises, where they give lectures and interact in English. They also have university-level teaching experience.

Dr. Tomás I. Marina is an Assistant Researcher at CONICET, based at the Austral Center for Scientific Research (CADIC). Alongside extensive teaching experience, he has conducted research residencies in the United States, Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands, as part of various international projects—all conducted in English.

Dr. Marchesi has both teaching experience and experience in training human resources, having supervised interns at the Acatushún Museum over four field seasons, during which she also offered guided tours in English. She holds a Cambridge Proficiency in English Certificate (C2) and has completed internationally recognized training courses in English teaching. She has had substantial exposure to and use of the language during multiple stays in the United States. In addition to being a CONICET Assistant Researcher, she is actively involved in a global professional network co-organized with six other English-speaking researchers, which includes virtual meetings and document writing in English. She also participates actively in virtual seminars for English language educators offered by Cambridge University and the British Council.

Course Objectives

Non-native English-speaking scientists face multiple disadvantages in their careers compared to native speakers—not only do they need more time to read, write, and prepare presentations, but limited English proficiency can also hinder participation in conferences, grant applications, and collaborations. These barriers are especially critical at the beginning of a scientific career, affecting both development and retention in the field. Improved English proficiency helps reduce these gaps (Amano et al., 2023).

In this context, the course *"Communicating in Science: Functional Academic English"* aims to equip students with the ability to communicate effectively, efficiently, and appropriately in academic and scientific settings in English. With a holistic approach, it covers both productive skills (writing, speaking) and receptive skills (reading, listening), through exercises related to manuscript writing, oral presentations, posters, and scientific project proposals.

The course is divided into two complementary modules:

1. **Grammar Component (Virtual, 5 days, 25 hours):** Offers basic tools to understand common grammatical structures in academic English, including practical exercises and a final self-assessment. It is designed for intermediate-level students (B1–B2) and is content- and vocabulary-intensive.
2. **Functional Component (In-person, 6 days, 48 hours):** Focuses on the sections of a scientific manuscript and their link with specific grammar structures. Instructors use their own articles as case studies to foster understanding of real linguistic patterns. The module encourages creativity through content production exercises, vocabulary expansion, and oral activities such as role-playing, audio work, and presentations.

During this module, each student group will work on their own research to prepare an oral presentation and write a short manuscript following editorial standards. Both outputs will be evaluated from a linguistic and stylistic perspective, and their average will form the final course grade.

A key aspect of the course is intensive immersion in English (L2), recognizing that students are learning in a Spanish-dominant (L1) environment. In-person classes will be bilingual, prioritizing English use but allowing Spanish when needed for clarity. This methodology maximizes L2 exposure without compromising pedagogical support.

The course also responds to a real need: the gap between traditional English teaching methods and the actual demands scientists face in their professional lives. Many Argentine-trained scientists can read English fluently but struggle with writing, speaking, and listening. This course aims to bridge that gap through a practical, functional approach integrating linguistic content with real academic contexts.

In summary, this intensive immersive course aims to provide specific linguistic tools for scientific communication, promoting the development of creative and functional English skills aligned with the professional challenges faced by non-native researchers.

Dates and Schedule

Grammar Component (Virtual): September 29 – October 3, 2025

- 2 hours of synchronous theoretical classes per day (8 - 10 am)
- 3 hours of asynchronous practical work per day

Functional Component (In-person): November 17–22, 2025

- Monday to Friday: 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM and 1:30 PM – 6:00 PM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Total: 73 hs

Enrollment Capacity

- Minimum: 16 students
- Maximum: 28 students

Prerequisites

The course is intended for advanced undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and early-career scientists.

Pre-registration is required and is targeted at independent users of English (B1–B2, CEFR). Official certification (PET, FIRST, IELTS) is not mandatory, but if applicants have one, they are exempt from completing the placement questionnaire and can instead upload the certificate into this application form.

Applicants without certification must complete an assessment form that includes a 48-question test (48 points total). Scores will be interpreted using the CEFR (https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/cefr/). A minimum of B1 level is required to benefit from course content. Applicants scoring between 12–24 (A2) may still be considered based on their long-form answer in the questionnaire.

If applications exceed available spots, priority will be given to UNPSJB graduate students and CONICET doctoral and postdoctoral fellows at CENPAT. If vacancies remain, advanced undergraduate students from UNPSJB will be considered, followed by external graduate students.

Students who have been accepted will be notified during the second week of July (July 7th to 11th), and should make the final registration and payment before August 15th.

Course Syllabus

Grammar Component (Virtual)

- Unit 1: Tense structures: Past, Present, Future. Aspects: Simple, Continuous, Perfect. Modals and Past Modals. Conditionals
- Unit 2: Passive Voice. Question types: Yes/No, adverbial, indirect
- Unit 3: Word Types 1: Nouns, Articles and Quantifiers, Pronouns
- Unit 4: Word Types 2: Verbs, Adjectives (Comparative and Superlative), Adverbs, Prepositions, Prefixes and Suffixes
- Unit 5: Phrases, Clauses, and Sentences

Functional Component (In-person)

- Unit 1: Digital tools to improve English. Different communication styles in science: manuscripts, posters, proposals, emails. Outreach
- Unit 2: Common tenses in scientific English: Present and Past Simple, Present Perfect, *Would* and other useful modals. Use of future in proposals. Active vs. Passive voice
- Unit 3: Recognizing patterns in scientific English: structural patterns, sentence structure
- Unit 4: Creating Sentences: Compound nouns, noun phrases, nominalization, “dummy” subjects (*It*, *There*), gerunds vs. infinitives
- Unit 5: Organizing Sentences: Phrases and Clauses, relative clauses, conjunctions and connectors
- Unit 6: Describing processes: question flow diagrams and statistical analyses. Participial structures. Use of passive in methods
- Unit 7: Describing results: Table and Figure captions. Describing visual results

- Unit 8: Organizing text: coherence and cohesion, punctuation, parallel structure, abstract writing
- Unit 9: Conveying messages and polite requests: indirect speech, indirect questions, writing emails to colleagues or editors
- Unit 10: Submitting the manuscript: cover letters, fee waiver requests, responding to reviewers

Evaluation System

To pass the course, students must:

- Submit the Grammar Component questionnaire
- Attend at least 80% of both virtual and in-person classes
- Participate in the final oral presentation
- Score at least 7 (out of 10) on the final project

The final grade will be a weighted average of the grammar questionnaire, oral presentation, and written final project.

The final project will consist of a group presentation (4 students) of a short manuscript, to be submitted within four months of the course end date. It must be based on one group member's work (e.g., a draft paper or poster) or provided by the instructors. Guidelines will be given at the start of the Functional Component and will follow international standards. Manuscripts will be evaluated by both instructors, who will provide written feedback and a grade within two months of submission.

Course Fee

The course registration fee is equivalent to 120 USD in Argentine pesos. The ARS amount will be determined at the time of course registration and will follow the official "Banco Nación seller" USD exchange rate. Although the course is offered through an Argentine university, due to the country's economic context, the fee is set in USD. We acknowledge this is a significant sum, but it reflects the intensive nature of the course, which includes over 55 hours of instruction (not counting asynchronous hours), and the international standard pricing for language training—often exceeding 300 USD for 24-hour virtual courses.

Requisitos para realizar el curso:

Graduados de Licenciatura en Ciencias Biológicas y afines

Nivel de Inglés mínimo B1 (Usuarios independientes)

Arancel estudiantes de posgrado: $120 USD

Arancel estudiantes de grado: $120 USD

A valor dólar oficial. El monto en pesos se publicará al momento de la apertura de la inscripción

Preinscripciones: 1 de Junio a 4 de Julio de 2025

Inscripciones: hasta el 15 de Agosto de 2025

Resolución: DFCNyCS N°660/2025

Lugar de Dictado: CENPAT – CONICET (Puerto Madryn)

Informes e inscripciones

Facultad de Ciencias Naturales y Ciencias de la Salud

Sede Puerto Madryn

Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia San Juan Bosco

E-mail consultas:

communicatinginscience@gmail.com

Puerto Madryn

Provincia del Chubut

República Argentina

Con el Apoyo de:

CURSO POSGRADO

Communicating in Science:

Functional Academic English

Componente gramatical:

29 Septiembre – 3 Octubre, 2025

Componente Funcional:

17 - 22 Noviembre , 2025

Objetivos del curso:

Este curso inmersivo del lenguaje Inglés con un enfoque holístico tiene como fin capacitar a los estudiantes para tener una comunicación efectiva, eficiente y correcta utilizando el Inglés en el ambiente científico académico.

Perfil de los asistentes:

Estudiantes avanzados de grado y estudiantes de posgrado, nuevos profesionales de carreras científicas. Dirigido a usuarios independientes del idioma (B1-B2, CEFRL)

Carga horaria: 25 h virtuales + 48 h presenciales. Total 73 h

Docentes:

Dra. María Constanza Marchesi
Dr. Tomás Marina

Coordinador:

Dr. Mariano Coscarella

Modalidad de dictado:

Hibrido: Virtual + Presencial

Modalidad de evaluación y requisitos de aprobación:

Completar el cuestionario del componente gramatical, asistir al 80% de las clases, participar en una presentación oral final y obtener una calificación no menor a siete (7) en el trabajo final.

Programa analítico:

Componente Gramatical (Virtual)

Unidad 1. Estructura de los tiempos: Pasado, Presente Futuro. Aspectos: Simple, Continuo y Perfecto. Modales y Modales del Pasado. Condicionales

Unidad 2. Tipos de preguntas: Sí/No, con adverbios, indirectas. La voz Pasiva

Unidad 3. Frases, Clausulas y Oraciones:

Unidad 4. Tipos de palabras: Sustantivos, Artículos y Cuantificadores, Pronombres, Verbos, Adjetivos: Comparativos y Superlativos, Adverbios, Preposiciones, Prefijos y sufijos

Componente Funcional (Presencial)

Unidad 1. Herramientas digitales para mejorar el Inglés. Diferentes estilos de comunicación en Ciencia: manuscritos, posters, propuestas, emails. Divulgación.

Unidad 2. Tiempos verbales utilizados en Inglés científico: Presente y Pasado Simple, Presente perfecto, Would y otros modales útiles. El uso del futuro en propuestas de investigación. Voz Activa o Voz Pasiva

Unidad 3. Reconociendo patrones del Inglés Científico: Patrones estructurales del Inglés. Estructura de oraciones.

Programa analítico:

Unidad 4. Creando Oraciones: Sustantivos compuestos. Frases sustantivas. Nominalización. Sujetos "falsos": *It* y *There*. Gerundios o infinitivos. Los usos de los gerundios

Unidad 5. Organizando Oraciones: Cláusulas o Frases, Cláusulas relativas. Conjunciones y conectores

Unidad 6. Describiendo procesos: Diagrama de preguntas y análisis estadísticos. Estructuras participias. El uso de voz pasiva en materiales y métodos

Unidad 7. Describiendo resultados: Leyendas de Tablas y Figuras. Describiendo resultados visuales.

Unidad 8. Organizando el texto: Coherencia y Cohesión. Puntuación. Estructura paralela. Estructura del resumen.

Unidad 9. Transmitiendo mensajes y pidiendo educadamente: Discurso indirecto. Preguntas indirectas. Escribiendo emails a colegas o editores

Unidad 10. Enviando el manuscrito: Cartas de presentación, Solicitud de exención de pago de tasas de publicación. Respondiendo a revisores