

TU/e SkillsLab Assessment: Academic Writing Skills

1. Introduction Academic Writing Skills

Do you enjoy writing a piece of academic text?	do not enjoy it.	enjoy it.
When writing a text, do you consider why and for whom you are writing?	Yes.	No.
The topic of the last piece of academic writing I did was:		
The intended readership for the last piece of academic writing I did was:		
I found these aspects of writing the text fairly easy:		
I found these aspects of writing the text challenging:		
The positive feedback I received on my text concerned the following aspects:		
The suggested improvements I received on my text concerned the following aspects:		
Who is your role model for this skill? Think of someone who writes extremely well, inside or outside of the university.		
What does this person do that makes them a role model?		
Let's say this person scores a 10 on academic writing skills. Compared to this person, how would you rate your academic writing skills?		

2. Language accuracy

Language accuracy is the ability to produce simple, compound and complex sentences that are grammatically correct.

Question	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
My text is	hard to read and understand because it has frequent grammatical errors even with simple grammar structures.	often hard to read and understand because it has quite a few grammatical errors especially with complex grammar structures.	mostly easy to read and understand because it only has occasional grammatical errors when using complex grammar structures.	easy to read and understand because it is almost error free and contains a wide range of simple and complex grammatical structures that are used with flexibility and ease.

3. Mechanical accuracy

When you use the correct spelling, the appropriate punctuation marks, and you capitalize the right words, your text is considered mechanically accurate.

Question	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
My text has	frequent errors in spelling, punctuation and capitalization, which distract a reader from understanding my text.	some errors in spelling, punctuation and capitalization, which sometimes distract a reader from understanding my text.	few errors in spelling, punctuation and capitalization, which do not distract a reader from understanding my text.	usually no errors in spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

4. Use of academic vocabulary

Academic Vocabulary are the words required to demonstrate a scholarly level in a written academic text. The broader your range of academic vocabulary, the easier it is for you to understand the content you may read or hear about an academic topic and the easier it would be for you to demonstrate your knowledge orally or written.

Question	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
My text is	not at all academic because it contains mostly informal vocabulary and hardly any academic words.	only slightly academic because it contains a good range of everyday vocabulary but only a limited number of academic words.	mostly academic because it contains a wide range of formal and academic vocabulary used with only some inconsistencies.	academic because it contains a wide range of formal and academic vocabulary consistently used with ease and flexibility.

5. Organization at sentence level

A sentence should be well-structured so that the relation to the preceding sentence as well as the following sentence is clear to the reader. It is your responsibility as a writer to ensure that the reader can follow your ideas without having to reread your sentences. Sentences should not be too short and choppy, but neither should they be too long and stringy.

Question	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
The flow of my text is	sometimes abrupt because the text has no or only basic linking words.	not always smooth because although the text has enough linking words, they are often repeated and sometimes incorrectly used.	mostly smooth because I use a variety of linking words although I possibly overuse certain linking words.	completely smooth because I use a wide range of linking words with ease and flexibility.
My text is	hard to read because the relationship between my sentences and ideas are unclear.	sometimes hard to read because the relationship between my sentences and ideas are not always clear.	easy to read because the relationship between my sentences and ideas are mostly clear. Only occasionally is there not enough clarity.	very easy to read because the relationship between my sentences and ideas are explicitly clear.
My paragraphs are	a set of sentences which show little connection.	a set of sentences with some connection but it's hard to tell if they fit into one paragraph or if they should be part of a new paragraph.	a set of closely related sentences with a clear connection between ideas. Only occasionally are the links between ideas not explicit.	always a set of closely related sentences with an explicit connection between ideas.

6. Organization at paragraph level

A paragraph is a collection of related sentences dealing with a single topic. Good paragraphing also greatly assists your readers in following a piece of writing. You can have fantastic ideas, but if those ideas aren't presented in an organized fashion, you will lose your readers and fail to achieve your goals in writing.

Question	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
My paragraphs	have a topic sentence but too many of the sentences in my paragraph do not support the topic sentence and links between paragraphs are missing.	have a topic sentence but some of the sentences do not support the topic sentence and the link to the next paragraph is often inconsistent.	all have a clear topic sentence and the sentences in my paragraphs mostly support the topic sentence and mostly link to the next paragraph.	all have a clear topic sentence and the sentences in my paragraphs all support the topic sentence and link to the next paragraph.

7. Argumentation

In academic writing, an argument is usually a main idea, often called a “claim” or “thesis statement,” backed up with evidence that supports the idea. In the majority of academic papers, you will need to make some sort of claim and use evidence to support it, and your ability to do this well will separate your papers from those of students who see assignments as mere accumulations of fact and detail.

Question	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
My text has	very little argumentation to support my ideas.	some argumentation to support my ideas.	sufficient argumentation to support my ideas.	excellent argumentation to support my ideas.
How well are your arguments supported?	The few arguments I have are not supported. There are no details and or descriptions, examples, and explanations.	Only some of the arguments are supported with some details and or descriptions, examples, and explanations.	My arguments are mostly well supported with details and or descriptions, examples, and explanations.	My arguments are all supported with details and or descriptions, examples, and explanations.

8. Organization and structure at section level

A text consists of different sections. These sections should be organized in a logical order and be well-structured to enhance the flow and readability of your text. People who read your writing will find it clear and logical if it is easy to see the structure of your writing, and how it all fits together.

Question	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
My text is	frequently difficult to understand because it is poorly organized or the sections are not properly divided or are missing.	sometimes difficult to understand because it is inconsistently organized and not always properly divided.	fairly easy to understand because it is mostly well organized and the sections are almost always properly divided.	easy to understand because it is well organized and the sections are properly divided.
My text	often seems jumbled and frequently does not form a clear whole. There may be an adequate introduction and an adequate conclusion but the link of these two sections to the body of my text is often weak or even missing.	does not always form a clear whole. There may be an adequate introduction and an adequate conclusion but the link of these two sections to the body of my text is often weak.	adds up to an integrated whole. The introduction and conclusion are usually well-linked to the body of my text. Only occasionally are transitions between sections not smooth or occasionally information appears in unexpected places.	adds up to a completely integrated whole. The introduction and conclusion are thoroughly linked to the body of my text. Transitions between sections are smooth and all information appears in expected places.

9. Figures and tables

Figures and tables can help make dense information available to your reader in an accessible way. They can be particularly useful for presenting detailed information of a statistical nature. Tables and figures can be especially helpful when discussing the results of a data analysis.

Question	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Tables and figures in my text are	not clearly presented and formatted because of a lack of required knowledge of standard formatting.	not clearly presented and formatted because of incomplete knowledge of standard formatting.	clearly presented and formatted with occasional inconsistencies.	clearly presented and formatted.

Tables and figures are	incorrectly labeled and described.	inconsistently labeled and described.	correctly labeled and described and can usually be read as stand-alone text.	correctly labeled and described and can be read as stand-alone text.
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10. Use of source material

Referring to other sources and referencing is important in order to distinguish your own ideas from those of someone else. It is also important in order to validate what you are writing, by referring to documented evidence. Published work, for instance, can be used to support your argument and add credibility to your writing.

Question	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
The in-text citations in my text	are not found in my reference list and vice versa.	are not always found in my reference list and vice versa.	can usually be found in my reference list and vice versa with only occasional discrepancies.	can always be found in my reference list and vice versa.
My text	does not use and incorporate source material in a standard citation format.	inconsistently uses and incorporates source material in a standard citation format.	mostly uses and incorporates source material in a standard citation format.	uses and incorporates source material in a standard citation format.
The reference list of my text	may be missing or incomplete.	has several errors that do not comply with standard citation conventions in my field.	has only minor inconsistencies when considering standard conventions in my field.	is complete and accurate according to standard conventions in my field of study.

11. Calculate your total score

Calculate your own skill level by counting how many times you selected a certain level and multiply this by its value, and sum the total:

Level 1: * 1 =

Level 2: * 2 =

Level 3: * 3 =

Level 4: * 4 =

TOTAL SCORE =

12. Score Interpretation

Score	Comment
16-27	<p>Your general level of English seems to be quite weak and your range of vocabulary is limited. You may be making mistakes in spelling or word form that could cause your reader some difficulty in following your text. The sentences that you use are mostly simple ones and when you attempt to write a complex sentence, the number of grammatical or punctuation errors are frequent, which again causes problems for your reader.</p> <p>Although you have some information and clear ideas, they are not always organized well. Your paragraphs may lack focus on one central idea, and in general, the links between your sentences and your ideas are not explicitly clear to the reader. You may even be using the same linking words repeatedly, or using very few linking devices at all.</p> <p>You are able to present some main ideas but they are limited and also not sufficiently developed nor well supported. Your position on your topic may be unclear. Your figures and tables are incorrectly formatted or are incomplete. Your text does not use standard citation conventions or is missing reference information.</p> <p>Use TU/e SkillsLab for tips and tools to improve your level of academic English as well as academic writing. There are some suggestions on what to look for on TU/e SkillsLab below.</p>
28-39	<p>Your general level of English seems quite sound, but you still lack the academic level required in your Master's program. You are able to use an adequate range of general vocabulary, but you still use a limited range of academic vocabulary. Although you make spelling mistakes and word formation errors, you are able to get your message across to the reader quite successfully. You use a mixture of simple and complex sentences with some grammatical and punctuation errors, especially in the complex sentences.</p> <p>You are able to organize and structure your information and ideas quite well. Occasionally the links between your sentences and ideas are not clear to the reader; although you use linking words, your choice of linking device may not always be correct.</p> <p>You are able to present a number of arguments but some of them may not be well enough supported with sufficient detail, examples or descriptions. Not all of the tables and figures in your text are clearly presented or they are inconsistently labeled and described. You do not consistently use and incorporate source material in a standard citation format. The reference list has several errors that do not comply with standard citation conventions in your field.</p>

	<p>Use TU/e SkillsLab for tips and tools to improve your level of academic English as well as academic writing. There are some suggestions on what to look for on TU/e SkillsLab below.</p>
40-51	<p>Your general as well as your academic English is quite sound for successful writing in your Master's program. You are able to accurately use an adequate range of precise general and academic vocabulary, with only occasional errors when using less frequent, specialist vocabulary. You use a wide range of sentence structures that are mostly free of errors in grammar and punctuation.</p> <p>You are able to organize and structure your information and ideas consistently well. The links between your sentences and ideas are clear to the reader with only a few places of inaccurate use of linking phrases.</p> <p>You are able to present a number of arguments that are supported with sufficient detail, examples or descriptions, with only some parts needing more, and/or more relevant, information. Most of the tables and figures in your text are clearly presented and formatted, with occasional inconsistencies, and can usually be read as stand-alone text. You use and incorporate source material in a standard citation format. The in-text citations can usually be found in the reference list and vice versa with only occasional discrepancies. The reference list of your text has only minor inconsistencies.</p> <p>Use TU/e SkillsLab for tips and tools to improve your level of academic English as well as academic writing. There are some suggestions on what to look for on TU/e SkillsLab below.</p>
52-64	<p>Your English is proficient for successful academic writing in your Master's program. You are able to accurately use an adequate range of precise academic vocabulary with natural and sophisticated control. You use a wide range of structures with full accuracy. Rare minor errors of word choice or grammar occur only as 'slips'.</p> <p>The links between your sentences and ideas are clear to the reader with no inconsistencies in logic present in the text.</p> <p>Your text fully clarifies your position on your topic through the use of well-supported arguments through the use of relevant, fully extended and well-supported details, examples and descriptions. You present well-formatted tables and figures that can be read as stand-alone text. Source material is cited using standard format. The in-text citations can always be found in the reference list and vice versa. The reference list is complete and accurate.</p> <p>Use TU/e SkillsLab for tips and tools to improve your level of academic English as well as academic writing. There are some suggestions on what to look for on TU/e SkillsLab below.</p>