



UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY
A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

ACADEMIC WRITING IN THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Aaron Mushengyezi, PhD

**CHUSS CERTL INAUGURAL WORKSHOP
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Outline

- 1. Elements of good academic writing**

- 2. Publishing your academic work**

Key elements



**Elements of good
academic writing**

Have you got the basics right?

- **Title:** Is the title for your work clear and precise? Does it tell the reader at a glance what your work is about? Key terms and variables should be evident and well explained

- **Clarity first!** (Old adage in research). Is your work understandable to a general (scholarly) reader or is it very technical?

The basics...

- **What do you mean...??** The goal to communicate meaning should precede other considerations as you write

- **Edit it:** A poorly written piece of work puts off reviewers, editors and publishers. If you do not have skills in editing, get a language or literature expert to check your work

The thesis

- **Thesis:** A *thesis* refers to the *main argument* you are advancing in your work, or the major view you want to put across. The thesis is the “engine” that drives your study.
- It should be spelt out early in your introduction
- The thesis statement should be visible in the introductory section, or preferably in the first paragraph. Your thesis statement should reflect the information/knowledge gap that your study seeks to fill.

Content: Is it adequate and valid?

- **Content:** refers to the main points in your work, which are organized in paragraphs
- The content of your research is the **evidence** that you did your research and you have something new to show for it
- Is your content valid? Can it be substantiated?

Where is your “support”?

- ❑ Support: This is the arsenal of authorities you use to substantiate or back up your claims. It's not *generalization*. It's about *scholarly evidence*.
- ❑ Scholars are like soldiers in a regiment; they rely on each other in their work. In academic writing, we build on previous studies done by other scholars. Is there evidence that you have *referred to* other authorities?

Support...?

- Citation: It can be *verbatim* or *paraphrased*. When do you indent? What are “hanging” quotes?
- A formal writing style
- Organic unity (Aristotle). A piece of writing is like a human body; every part should relate to the other *logically*. Ask yourself: how did we move from paragraph 1 to 6? Is there any logical flow?

Support...?

- **Transition (discourse) markers:** Useful in connecting ideas in paragraphs
- **A writer as a craftsman (Horace):** A good writer is like a crafts maker weaving a basket - just as one basket line builds onto another, your sentence and paragraph should build onto the previous one.
- Revise, revise, revise!

Take Note

A good article flows like a drizzle:
slowly and steadily, and it goes
deep into the roots of the subject.



Publishing your academic work

Steps to publish your work

- Getting your work published is a long, tedious and demanding process. It requires commitment.

- The following are some of the steps you can take to publish your work

Steps to publish...

- Talk about your work** - let people know about it; blow your own trumpet.
- Present your work** at conferences. Do not let that great research report or dissertation gather dust

Steps to publish...

- **Research Projects:** Include funds for publishing monographs as part of the outputs

- **Peer Review:** Do not be discouraged by comments from peer reviewers and editors. Focus on the useful comments

Steps to publish...

- Follow the editorial guide:** Each publisher has an editorial guide to follow when you are contributing an article.
- Funded or co-funded monographs:** A publisher may like your manuscript and publish it at no cost to you, or may ask you to co-fund it.

Steps to publish...

- **Self-Publishing.** This is where an author publishes his/her own work and markets it. There are online resources to help you self-publish

- The challenge with self-publishing is its credibility: academic institutions may not respect such publications.



Thank You