

Academic Writing Needs of International Psychology PhDs in a South African University

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ABSTRACT. The paper examines the academic writing experience amongst international psychology PhD students at a South African public university. The paper also discusses the challenges of academic writing and the support structures of academic writing. Sixteen (16) international students studying at PhD level in psychology were selected by purposive sampling from a public South African university in KwaZulu-Natal. Drawing from generated by iproposalss, findings suggest that participants experienced academic writing challenges in drafting PhD proposal, supervisor's feedback and plagiarism. Academic writing challenges were aggravated for international PhD students from non-native English-speaking countries. Findings also suggest that university support structures such as academic writing retreats improved the academic writing of participants and exposed them to the rigors of academic writing.

Keywords: academic writings, PhD doctoral program, analytical, research, and communication skills

Introduction

South Africa hosts many international PhD students involved with academic writing as part of their PhD program (Oyewo, 2022). Academic writing plays a significant role in university graduate students' assignments, theses, and dissertations (Liang et al., 2022; Almarwan, 2020). Academic writing comprises a formal tone, research problem, and precise word choice (Arianingtyas, 2018). Academic writing is a crucial component of a PhD doctoral program, which requires

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graduate students to write using a scholarly technique for their thesis and scholarly publications (Arianingtyas, 2018). However, PhD students sometimes need more specialized training in academic writing. Lea and Street (1998) describe three models of student writing to highlight student writing and literacy in academic contexts: study skills, socialization, and academic literacies. The study skills model presupposes proficiency in academic writing based on the language's surface elements, such as grammar, syntax, punctuation, and spelling. The academic socialization model implies that learning the ground norms of a given academic discourse is necessary for academic writers to be successful (Delport, 2018; Lea & Street, 1998). Academic writing intersects academic literacies and links to meaning-making identity and considers student writing as epistemology rather than competence (Rooji, Bruinsma & Jansen, 2019; Lynch, Salikhova & Salikhova, 2018; Oumarou & Uddin, 2017; Lea & Street, 2006). Academic writing is regulated by norms and practices that convey a distinct, imaginative, and expert picture of a specific subject without compromising academic standards (Delport, 2018; Wilkes, Godwin & Gurney, 2015). Writing for academic purposes calls for knowledge of disciplinary rhetoric and the ability to produce coherent, grammatically correct phrases (Delport, 2018). Academic writing also uses a particular "structural code" and adheres to a consistent stylistic approach, such as the Chicago Manual of Style, MLA, American Psychological Association (APA), or Harvard Method of Referencing (Delport, 2018, p.2)

PhD involves students writing a dissertation, which forms the bulk of research work that expands the boundaries of knowledge (Mckenna & Kyser, 2021; Odena & Burgess, 2017; Gumbo, 2017). Academic writing is important for PhD candidates, and it requires effective academic writing to convey their ideas clearly and concisely (Lipson, 2004). It aids in developing critical communication skills necessary for working with colleagues in the academic community, attending conferences, and presenting research findings (Gupta et al., 2022). Consequently, PhD candidates should be proficient in academic genres, such as thesis, journal articles, conference proposals, and presentations during their doctoral studies (Gupta et al., 2022; Schulze & Lemmer, 2017). Many studies documented the difficulties of academic writing among postgraduate students because of the high demand for analytical, research, and communication skills (Inouye & McAlpine, 2023; Rooji, Bruinsma & Jansen, 2019; Delport, 2018; Schulze & Lemmer, 2017). Studies indicate that the process of writing is closely linked to the identity development of PhD students and should not be viewed as merely a skill that needs to be learned but also a sociocultural tool (Gupta et al. 2022; Inouye and McAlpine, 2019; Lonka et al., 2019). Academic writing is also a socially situated process that occurs in social discourses and is predicated on close engagement with the text and scientific communities in many cases. Graduate

students eventually develop an academic identity because of this process, which defines how they articulate scientific arguments, epistemologies, methodologies, and theoretical approaches that they support and embrace as they advance in their careers as scientists (Gupta et al. 2022; Inouye & McAlpine, 2019; Lonka et al., 2019). Academic writing is core aspect of students who study by PhD by Publication.

The PhD model offered in South Africa universities is the traditional PhD, a PhD by publication, a taught PhD and Professional PhD (Lewis & Zaid, 2021; Mckenna, 2019; Peacock, 2017; Diogo & Carvalho, 2019; Gumbo, 2017). A PhD by publication is a PhD based on a supervised research project and is determined by the number of peer-reviewed academic papers that the student has either published or been accepted for publication (Lewis & Zaid, 2021; Gumbo, 2017; Peacock, 2017; Louw & Muller, 2014). Practitioners in their field and research-active students without a high formal academic qualification benefit from the PhDP (Shannon, 2018; Peacock, 2017; Cloete et al., 2015). The purpose of the PhDP was to provide the opportunity for professionals with publications still engaged in research, such as creative writers and health and business professionals, to achieve the highest level of academic recognition (Peacock, 2017, p. 124). Students pursuing the PhDP must submit three to five original papers in which they are the primary author across all submitted journals (Pham, 2021; Lewis & Zaid, 2021; Gumbo, 2017).

PhD is becoming increasingly popular in South African universities because of the increase in peer-reviewed articles published in prestigious journals associated with the government grant provided by the DHET (Department of Higher Education & Training). PHDP also has high scholarly productivity and generates more PhD graduates at a faster pace (Gumbo, 2017).

The taught PhD is also referred to as 'course work' and structured on the North American PhD model (Gumbo, 2017). The taught PhD model was first introduced as the new route PhD in the UK in 2001 (Park, 2007; Scott, Lunt, & Thorne, 2004). According to Gumbo (2017) and Louw & Muller (2014), the taught PhD is an apprenticeship that combines supervision under a supervisor with research training. Even though coursework may be required to help students prepare for a PhD or enhance their thesis, it is not considered creditable in South African universities (Cloete et al., 2015, p.102). Cloete et al. (2015, p. 136) note that PhD degrees are awarded by coursework and thesis at South African universities such as the Department of Economics at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The taught PhD program at UCT is designed to be completed in four years, full time. Cloete et al. (2015, p.136) note that South African universities like the Department of Economics, University of Cape Town [UCT] offer a PhD degree by coursework and thesis. The taught PhD program at UCT is designed to be

completed in four years, full-time. The four-year program is divided into two parts: the first two years cover prerequisite courses, and the second part covers thesis writing. McKenna (2019) notes that taught PhD programs benefit PhD candidates by providing them with the academic tools necessary for a PhD. McKenna argues that few universities offer coursework as part of their PhD program because it is not recognized as credit in South Africa. Previous studies highlight that PhD students encounter challenges in academic writing and lack an understanding of academic writing requirements, especially students from non-English speaking countries (Gupta et al., 2022; Almarwan, 2020; Boyle, Ramsay, & Struan, 2019; Jusslin & Widlin, 2021). Postgraduates experience stress in writing because they need more writing proficiency and academic writing skills (Liang et al., 2022). Studies suggest that other critical factors, such as the supervisor's receptiveness, availability, flexibility and timely feedback, also influence academic writing (Almarwan, 2020; Boyle, Ramsay, & Struan, 2019; Jusslin & Widlin, 2021; Oumarou & Uddin, 2017). Previous research by Delpont (2018) and Lategan (2017) suggests one of the challenges of academic writing is aggravated for PhD students from non-English speaking countries with limited language proficiency. PhD students complete a significant amount of writing, with their PhD thesis being the most extensive writing assignment of their training because they must exhibit the capacity to generate substantial work that is autonomous, comprehensive, publishable, and fits the standards of scholarly readers in the intended audience (Delpont, 2018).

While extensive scholarly attention has been given to the challenges of PhD studies, research directed toward understanding the challenges of academic writing from the perspectives of international psychology PhD students at South Africa University is scarce. To achieve our research goal, the study had two main objectives. To examine the academic writing experience amongst international psychology PhD students at a South African public university. To discuss the challenges of academic writing and the support structures of academic writing. Sixteen (16) international students studying at PhD level in psychology were selected by purposive sampling from a public South African university in KwaZulu-Natal.

Research Design

A phenomenological qualitative research method was employed in this study. According to Patton (2014), the phenomenological approach is a methodical, exacting, and comprehensive explanation of how individuals encounter specific phenomena (Neubauer et al., 2019). Phenomenological approach seeks answers to the question "What are the perspectives/experiences related to this phenomenon?"

and "What are the environments and conditions in which experiences of this phenomenon occur?" (Creswell, 2018). Consequently, sixteen participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique and referrals from a South African university in KwaZulu-Natal [KZN].

Participants were PhD students or recent graduates [less than a year] from the Discipline of Psychology. Participants were assigned pseudonyms P1-P16 to protect their identity. The data was analyzed by thematic analysis because it provides patterns and meanings and classifies data into themes and sub-themes (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020; Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018). By illustrating various facets of a phenomenon, thematic analysis highlight themes of contextual meaning from the data (Creswell, 2018; Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis provides a comprehensive but intricate explanation of the findings that can be obtained through the flexible approach (Nowell et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis also provides an explicit understanding of the aspects of a phenomenon that participants frequently discuss through thematic analysis (Creswell, 2018). A thematic analysis was performed on the generated data. Finding patterns in interview meanings and classifying data into themes and sub-themes are two aspects of thematic analysis (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020; Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018). By illustrating various facets of a phenomenon, thematic analysis highlights the themes of contextual meaning from the data (Nowell et al., 2017). The researcher must become familiar with the data and code every piece of information as part of the thematic analysis analytical process (Nowell et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study was carried out at a South African University with a strong research focus. Thus, thematic content analysis was done by familiarizing the data and coding all the data generated from the interviews. After coding all the data, the codes were arranged based on similarities in themes and sub-themes.

Results and Discussion

The demography of the participants indicates country of origin for the participants was Nigeria [6], Zimbabwe [4] and the Democratic Republic of Congo [6]. The summation of the theme that emerged from the findings is a) challenges drafting a PhD proposal because of English language proficiency among non-English speakers PhD students and previous Master's program training., b) supervisors' comments and feedback, c) plagiarism, d) Academic Writing Support and Retreat.

Theme 1: Challenges Drafting PhD Proposal

56.1% (n=9) of participants stated that writing a PhD proposal in the first year was difficult and, in a sense, increased the number of years needed to complete the program on time. This alludes to the limited English language proficiency among non-English speakers PhD students and previous Master's program training. Participants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC] stated that writing a PhD proposal and thesis is an enormous undertaking for international students from French-speaking countries because English is not their first language.

'There are differences between writing and speaking French and English. I occasionally write in French first, then translate it to English'(P6).

P3 expressed that,'

'Your brain is empty in the first year, so it was difficult to write a PhD proposal... You are a PhD candidate in the first year and are unsure of how to write. I wasted time and energy for the first six months since I had no idea how to write the PhD proposal because you never know what is expected of you'.

P7 holds a different perspective:

'As a student who finished my Master's from this school and is pursuing a PhD, I am accustomed to the school environment. Despite being accustomed to the system, I encountered difficulties with the research proposal during my first year because I decided to conduct research in my home country, Zimbabwe. I had to redo it, and I wasted six months doing it(proposal)'.

P14 opines:

'In the process of finding a potential supervisor before I was accepted for the PhD program, the first supervisor requested that I write a research proposal. I wrote the research proposal twice since the topic did not fall under one of her research areas. Later, my supervisor informed me that she could not supervise me again due to plagiarism in my work. It was annoying because I had to spend six months looking for a new supervisor before I was finally assigned another supervisor after submitting a second proposal.

Writing in French and translating it into English is common among French students. Findings also suggest that being a non-English speaker affects drafting a PhD proposal. Participants' perspectives suggest that poor English

language could affect writing a PhD proposal and dissertation in the first year PhD. Writing a proposal during the first-year PhD could be challenging for international PhD students because of insufficient English language proficiency, research topic and previous research training. Specifically, participants from the DRC mentioned that the French language, their home country's native language, affected their writing skills. According to participant perspectives, inadequate English language proficiency may impact writing a PhD proposal and dissertation during the first year of PhD. Due to their lack of experience with research, research topics, and English language skills, international PhD students may find it challenging to write a proposal in their first year of study. Particularly, participants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo highlighted how their native French language impacted their academic writing.

P12 remarked that French communication is distinct from English because he writes in French and translates to English. P7 stated that he had challenges because of the topic he chose for his PhD. P3 asserted that the first-year PhD was difficult because he needed clarification on what he was supposed to do as a PhD student. He wasted six months of his PhD first year because of his inability to write a proposal. Similarly, international PhD students' capacity to write a PhD proposal in their first year of study was influenced by the prior research training they had received during their Master's program.

P13 voiced:

'The Masters program in Nigeria does not sufficiently prepare students for conducting research at the PhD level. During my first year of the program, I encountered difficulties locating relevant literature, references, and paraphrasing without resorting to plagiarism. My ability to address these issues was significantly improved by the PhD Cohort training provided by my university'.

Theme 2: Supervisors' Comments and Feedback

Another theme from the study is supervisor's input scaffolding student academic writing. Supervisors also improve the academic writing of PhD students by writing and publishing two peer-reviewed journals together before their PhD graduation. P15 mentioned how her supervisor complains about her grammar, punctuation and writing in her PhD draft, discouraging her supervisor from reading and correcting (editing) her work. P15 mentioned further that late feedback from the supervisor lengthens the PhD duration, which is disadvantageous for students on scholarship. Nonetheless, it was difficult to publish with supervisors when the PhD proposal was not progressing as planned because many journal editors rejected the manuscript because of grammatical blunders and disconnected articulations of ideas.

In the words of P1:

'PhD students funded by the Nigerian Government scholarship, which the Nigerian Government sponsors, must finish their program on time. Even though other factors affect the completion rate, such as the supervisory relationship... In some situations, that results in eight years'. The supervisor does little to guide you and asks which university you study at Master's levels'... Sometimes your supervisor throws away you PhD draft because he is angry.'

P13 highlighted the disadvantage of being supervised by a professor.

'Sarcastically, P13 said, "I don't like having a professor oversee me." When supervisors first bag their PhD, they are excited to mentor students because they want to get to the top AS professors. However, once they are professors, they find it difficult to help you and constantly complain about your work. There is limited interaction, and you are unable to report them to the school administration because they will always find a way to justify their lack of feedback'.

On the contrary, P12's situation is different, as described:

'My PhD supervisor was the same person who supervised me during both my Master's program and my PhD level...Because my supervisor lacked expertise, we did not have a good working relationship. He refused to acknowledge his lack of knowledge and eventually told me to find another supervisor'.

Another participant had this to say:

'Due to his heavy workload as the acting Head of Department and academic research chair, my supervisor does not have time for me and frequently forgets to return my work by the deadline' (P10).

As stated by P15,

'I enrolled full-time in my PhD program in 2013...In 2016, I conducted my field study collected and analyzed data, but my supervisor did not provide timely feedback. She was either unwell or overworked, and it was difficult to see her after leaving school and moving back to her home country. I was angry and unsure of what to do.I asked the academic leader for advice, but she persisted in using political posturing to claim that my work was subpar'.
'At a particular time, the school threatened to deregister as a student because I stayed too long as a PhD student'(P14).

Co-authoring multiple papers with supervisors constituted rigorous research training as a step towards academic writing. PhD students were very dependent on supervisors' advice in the early PhD phase. As P3 noted,

'When we first started assembling our papers, it was a very time-consuming process involving numerous meetings and review rounds. Despite being challenging, the process prepared us to build on the experience as the PhD went on. The next papers were comparatively easier to put together'.

Theme 3: Plagiarism

Plagiarism was another theme that emerged from the findings. The majority of the participants identified causes of plagiarism as the inability to paraphrase, insufficient writing skills and ignorance. The participants also indicated that paraphrasing was the major challenge they encountered. Some participants also expressed they do not consider paraphrasing plagiarism because they cited the authors in their work. The participants need help to create original work while relying on other researchers' study results. Writing a research paper necessitates combing a large amount of data to substantiate their argument. Thus, in academic writing, students rely on already established concepts and ideas in other author's work. Other authors' research underpins academic writing; even the most well-intentioned student can mistakenly plagiarize. Plagiarism is a complex subject for students to understand, particularly when they are expected to expand on the work of other experts in their field. This suggests that participants were inadequately prepared for academic writing at the Master's level which made them unintentionally commit plagiarism due to their incapacity to paraphrase and cite.

Theme 4: Academic Writing Support and Retreat

Findings indicate that most participants were not adequately prepared for academic writing during their Master's program. Students' academic writing practices are significantly impacted by prior academic writing during their master's level. The participants echoed that they attended academic writing retreats in the form of writing seminars, conferences and research boot camps organized by their university, which aided them in writing their PhD proposals, analyzing data and avoiding plagiarism. The training is viewed positively by the participants. Writing retreats such as PhD workshops/seminars benefit international students in several ways. P10 mentioned that he learned data

analysis at PhD workshop. For P12, the PhD workshop/seminar equipped her to cite references properly and paraphrase to avoid plagiarism. P13 stated that PhD Cohort training prepared her to conduct a literature search, references and address plagiarism. Such PhD academic retreat is significant for the participants because the Master's training program in their home country's university did not prepare them for the rigors of research at PhD level. Thus, higher education institutions employ measures to assist students in avoiding plagiarism in academic writing. The participant noted that during PhD Cohort and academic writing retreats, they were taught academic writing conventions and the relevance of publishing in peer-reviewed journals. In addition, they have been aware of Turnitin software and the negative impact of plagiarism on their PhD trajectory. The participants also stated that they were not familiar with Turnitin software when they were enrolled in their master's program, in contrast to international students who attended undergraduate institutions in South Africa. Although systems, policies, and procedures are devised in South Africa, universities are in place to identify, respond, and minimize instances of plagiarism. This includes awareness and education and informing the appropriate academic managers and university authorities about any accusations of plagiarism. Also, the whistleblowers' policy allows for anonymous reports. Coupled with forensic investigators for thoroughly examining purported plagiarism and additional recommendations. Any other pertinent external authorities, such as professional associations or the South African Police Services, may also investigate plagiarism.

Discussion

The results of this study provide insights into the academic writing challenges of international psychology PhD students in a South African university in KwaZulu-Natal. These challenges include drafting a PhD proposal because of English language proficiency among non-English speaking PhD students and previous master's program training. Research by Inouye and McAlpine (2019) reveals that PhD students are expected to have a thorough understanding of their field, mastery of relevant research techniques, and the ability to explain complex concepts to their peers, the larger scholarly community and society at large. Even native English speakers may find the academic writing process difficult. As a result, non-native language speakers may experience difficulties beyond simple grammar or idea expression, which can negatively impact doctorate students' self-esteem. This is especially true for those who have English as a second language, as it impedes the development of their researcher identity. Previous studies found that postgraduate students in South African universities struggle to cope with academic writing demands, such as dissertations

and journal publications (Schulze & Lemmer, 2017). The proficiency of ESL (English as a Second Language) students in writing theses and dissertations has become a particular concern at the postgraduate level (Arianingtyas, 2018; Delpont, 2018; Schulze & Lemmer, 2017). This is especially true in the social sciences, where academic writing conventions are less explicit than in the natural sciences (Delpont, 2018; Schulze & Lemmer, 2017). Moreover, some universities require publication in English-language journals as an additional requirement before PhD students can graduate (Gupta et al., 2022; Schulze & Lemmer, 2017).

Studies such as Schulze and Lemmer (2017) argue that the growing number of English Second Language (ESL) students globally at the postgraduate level, who choose to study and publish in English, face challenges in meeting the standards of quality academic writing. The participant's view suggests that PhD candidates who are not native English speakers find it challenging to write a proposal. A study by Oumarou and Uddin (2017) of forty African international PhD students in Middle Eastern universities found that many African PhD students struggled with selecting a topic for their research and writing their doctoral proposals. PhD students can modify their research proposal by following the steps outlined by Oumarou and Uddin (2017, p. 83) in their description of the research proposal writing process. Writing occurs in five stages: planning, revision, structure, control, and voice, according to Sverdlik et al. (2018, p. 364). In light of the participant perspectives, Oyewo(2022) echoes that PhDs are independent researchers in training who may initially struggle and be frustrated during the dissertation writing because of difficulties they encounter, such as defining a research problem and the rigors involved in carrying out research.

The participants' narratives from the DRC indicate why countries like Canada, the UK, Australia, and the USA require international students to take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language Exam) for admission to gauge their English language proficiency. In the South African context, this also underscores why prospective international PhD students who intend to study at South African Universities evaluate their previous qualifications by the South African Qualification Authority [SAQA] to place them on the National Qualification Framework [NQF] educational band in South Africa.

Also, the study found plagiarism to be a significant impediment to student academic writing. It is well documented that PhD students unintentionally plagiarize. As Carmela, Dixon and Yeo (2020) noted that student plagiarism remains a source of worry in higher education institutions, especially in developing countries. This alludes to plagiarism being academic misconduct among university students. Carmela, Dixon, and Yeo (2020) also highlighted that university academic staff address cases of student plagiarism in various ways that are not necessarily consistent with their institutions' academic integrity policies and procedures. Because rhetorical writing styles vary from language

to language due to cultural differences, international students may need help meeting academic writing expectations (Grabe & Kaplan, 2014). This is because success in a PhD thesis requires the ability to write by the forms and conventions of disciplinary academic writing. Academic writing in PhD programs is also an academic task students find difficult to finish because it presents a challenge to the lecturers who supervise them. Students often face difficulties related to their insufficient research and writing skills. Their current research experience with dissertation writing has been impacted by their lack of exposure to academic writing during their previous Master's studies. Academic writing also poses many challenges to PhD candidates during their program (Delport, 2018, p.2). A study by Lategan (2017, P. 5) suggests that several PhD students are unable to complete a publication as a requirement for graduation, the study defense (viva), or presenting the research findings to a larger research community (Lategan, 2017, P. 5).

The current study also uncovered the importance of supervisors in the academic writing of international PhD students. Co-authoring multiple papers with supervisors constituted rigorous research training as a step towards academic writing. PhD students were very dependent on supervisors' advice in the early PhD phase. Sverdlik et al. (2018, p. 369) highlight that supervisors are vital in providing guidance, redirecting, and guaranteeing that the dissertation is finished on time, given the challenges associated with academic writing. Delport (2018, p.2) asserts that supervisors' advice to PhD students' often polishes the complexities of writing and locates the problem in the writer. Schulze and Lemmer (2017) found that a major barrier to postgraduate students completing their dissertations successfully has been identified as their lack of academic writing skills and one of the issues that supervisors and students during the supervision process. Mckenna and Christine (2021) reiterated that academic writing workshops benefit international PhD students with improved writing skills. Existing research by Schulze and Lemmer (2017) stressed that language conventions in dissertation texts require advanced knowledge of the disciplinary norms governing the conceptualization, production, and reporting of knowledge in various fields; a structured argument and the application of coherence techniques; adherence to standard conventions for citing, acknowledging, and making judgments about prior research; and the appropriate use of the technical language of the field in aspects like variations in the requirements for academic writing across disciplines and correct grammar and accurate spelling. South African universities are also providing their students with institutional assistance in tackling these issues. Researchers have found several strategies that help PhD candidates improve their academic writing. According to Delport (2018, p.5), encouraging international students to integrate into departmental communities may help them develop their academic writing abilities. Academic and social

integration (workshops and meetings) can help achieve this by collaborating with other students. PhD students can improve their academic writing skills by attending conferences and developing networks, according to Wisker (2015:70), a researcher with a wealth of experience in PhD-level academic writing (Delpont, 2018, p.2). Writing a dissertation is one of the most challenging types of academic writing and a significant obstacle while pursuing a PhD degree. Several initiatives by their universities are put in place to support the academic writing skills of PhDs in the study.

Conclusion

Academic writing is prevalent among international PhD students who are required to write a thesis as part of PhD training and publish in peer-review journals. However, academic writing continues to be a skill that is difficult to master for international PhD students because academic writing needs to meet literary writing conventions. Such problems can lengthen PhD duration. This also manifests in journal editors rejecting papers from PhD students, partly due to a lack of idea about academic writing and disconnected articulations of ideas. The study reveals that students' academic writing abilities have revealed the linguistic difficulties that international students have writing their dissertations in English with academic language and learning support strategies being offered to overcome these obstacles. The study demonstrates that academic writing presents considerable difficulties for international PhD students because of inadequate command of grammar and academic writing skills. To address these challenges, the paper suggests sufficient creation of resources like the Writing Center, one-on-one writing coaching in this area can help international PhD students succeed, address common writing mistakes, and lighten the workload of supervisors. To offer a supportive and encouraging environment and resources to help students succeed in their PhD journey and successfully complete their thesis on time, a multifaceted approach is required at different levels.

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