

SAASTA/NPEP Science

# Writing Workshop

**Venue:** iThemba LABS, Old Faure Road Faure

**Dates:** 29 – 30 May 2017

**Time:** 08h30 for 09h00 to 16h00

## CONTACT

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**science  
& technology**

Department:  
Science and Technology  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**SAASTA**

South African Agency for Science  
and Technology Advancement



**iThemba  
LABS**

Laboratory for Accelerator  
Based Sciences

**UNISA**



# SAASTA/NPEP Science Writing Workshop

There is a significant gap between scientific progress and the dissemination of this information to the wider public. As a result, the excellent work of researchers often goes unnoticed.

The aim of the SAASTA/NPEP Science Writing Workshop is to help equip members of the science community with the skills to communicate with the general public as well as provide them with a better understanding of how to use popular writing to develop a narrative about their work.

The workshop also aims to encourage scientists to participate in engagement opportunities offered through NPEP. It also provides a platform for the scientific community to submit and highlight on-going nanotechnology work in the newsletter and to the broader media community.

## Broad topics for discussion

- Σ Popular science writing as a means of communication and public engagement, which includes:
  - Σ Simplifying science for public understanding.
  - Σ Academic research and its impact on the country both economically and socially.
  - Σ Research partnerships and cross-sector collaborations.

## Focus areas and topics of awareness:

- ∞ Highlighting the need for scientists to communicate with the media and wider audiences.
- ∞ Writing styles and tools.
- ∞ Communicating research work.
- ∞ Understanding of NPEP.

## WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

The workshop will incorporate and directly focus on the following principles:

### Media theory for scientists

- ✓ What is communication? The basics of communication.
- ✓ The relationship between media and the science community.
- ✓ Why communicate science? The impact of science and understanding/acceptance of science in society from various perspectives as well as how various perspectives impact science.
- ✓ Concepts of communication - Understanding audience, knowing what to communicate (message), and what platforms are appropriate for different purposes.
- ✓ Formulating scientific messages for public consumption.
- ✓ How scientists can get involved in science communication, the platforms available to them, and how can they utilise them.
- ✓ Different forms of storytelling through writing.

### Science writing for the media

- Ω Journalism as one form of storytelling – Five Ws and an H: who, when, what, where, why and how.
- Ω Connecting with the media around science: context, headlines, impact, passion.
- Ω What makes a good media story - Teasers, headers, briefs, releases.
- Ω Tools for creative writing - Using them to explain key concepts of their work.
- Ω Expressing passion in the written word through imagery - Similes, metaphors and personification.

### Practical exercises

- Π Writing headlines, subheads and teasers.
- Π Summarising a report and research.
- Π Writing a 200 word piece prior to workshop, analysing it and then, after the theoretical presentation, one-on-one guidance rewriting during the workshop; and delivering a second written piece for peer evaluation.

