

Idioma Moderno Científico (Inglés) or “Scientific English”

- ✓ **Optional** subject. (elective)
 - ✓ Number of **credits: 6**
 - ✓ Teaching period: **1st Semester** (September-February) 4 hours / week (Mo-Th)
 - ✓ Teaching Staff:
 - Prof. Micaela Muñoz
 - Prof. Ramón Plo
 - ✓ Reference numbers for enrolment:
 - 20547 (Chemistry), 20748 (Physics), 20266 (Mathematics), 21447 (Geology)
- Students from other Degrees with an interest in Science are also welcome-**

Technicalities: There are **6 different groups** taught from **8a.m. to 15p.m.** in the **Physics/Chemistry (D) & Mathematics (B)** buildings of the Faculty of Science. **You can choose ANY group taught by either of the two lecturers according to your timetable preferences.** Once enrolled in the subject, you only need to attend your chosen group and you will be given a Student Card and further information (assessment criteria, type and dates of exams, assignments, etc).

What is “Scientific English”?

You are probably in a situation in which you have taken English classes in High School, academies, or even visited an English-speaking country for a period of time or obtained a certificate from a well-known university. This is all very well but what you learnt in all these places is what specialists define as “General English.”

As you know, English has become the *lingua franca* -or language of communication- in many different fields (e.g. business, aviation, music, technology, etc.) so your present knowledge of General English places you in an advantageous situation in this competitive multicultural society. **CONGRATULATIONS!**



However, sometimes you feel that –no matter how high your level of English is– it is **NOT ENOUGH**. Why?

Because the kind of language, the conventions, the organization of information, the way of addressing an audience of specialists or even the survival strategies adopted by **SCIENTISTS** are different from those used by other “discourse communities” (e.g. doctors, lawyers, politicians, etc.)

Therefore, back in the 90s, members of the English Department thought it would be a good idea:

- 1) to move from the Faculty of Arts into the Faculty of Science so that we could discuss with our colleagues their concerns and see the way they worked.
- 2) to analyse the main “characteristics” and “genres” of their highly specialized discourse
- 3) and, finally, to create a course where the General Aims and the Syllabus (i.e. contents) would try to meet these specific needs.

This is basically why the Subject is called “**Scientific English**”



Why study “Scientific English”?

There are a number of reasons for this. We already mentioned that English is nowadays the language of communication in SCIENCE both in the ACADEMIC and the PROFESSIONAL world: top journals, international conferences, oral presentations use English as a vehicle for sharing complex ideas. As a result, the existing social demand for General English is becoming more and more specialized. For example:

- ✓ The bibliography recommended by most lecturers in the Faculty of Science is written mainly in English.
- ✓ There are several content subjects entirely taught in that language: a challenge we strongly recommend.
- ✓ Sometimes our classes are the first theoretical contact with the strategies and conventions you will have to follow in order to be considered a proper scientist.
- ✓ The University of Zaragoza, and the Faculty of Science in particular, is attracting an increasing number of international students (Erasmus, Lingua, etc.).
- ✓ According to our own Erasmus students, there are lots of benefits in spending a period abroad and these go far beyond practising the foreign language or learning different approaches and ways of working.

To sum up, our aim is to lay the foundations of what we call “Communicative Intercultural Competence” with a strong emphasis on the main characteristics and genres of the type of language –English in this case– used in Academic and Professional contexts.

Related Programs at the University of Zaragoza.

With the unaccountable exception of the Faculty of Law, you can find courses of English, French and German “for Specific Purposes” being taught in most Faculties and Schools as optional subjects. Find out more about them.

Also, if you are interested in improving your “general knowledge” of other foreign languages there are excellent courses (e.g. autoaprendizaje, conversación) being taught at the Instituto de Idiomas de la Universidad de Zaragoza (Interfacultades).

“Let language be a link not a barrier”