

ACADEMIC EXCHANGE – REQUEST FOR SUPERVISION AT AN ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

WRITING TASK

Study the following example of an academic email exchange between a PhD candidate searching for a placement with a university of his/her choice and a faculty staff at the questioned university. After having done the following sub-task, check your answers with a key and produce your of own piece of text at the length of 300-350 words.

Language sub-task: fill in the gaps using the most appropriate expression.

_____ (1) Professor Collins,

Excuse me for approaching you and asking you for your help in the following _____ (2): I am _____ (2) a PhD. candidate at Masaryk University, School of Humanities, Department of English and American Studies. I work _____ (3) a tutor of English for Specific Purposes at the Language Center, Brno, Czech Republic. I _____ (4) to apply for a Fulbright Scholarship, which would enable me to work on my dissertation at an American university. The award of the scholarship, _____ (5), is subject to a preliminary consent of an establishment that would be willing to _____ (6) me. And this is where my request comes in. Is there any chance _____ (6) being offered a _____ (7) at the Gervitz Graduate School of Education? I would be enormously grateful if you could _____ (8) me as a candidate for _____ (9) research student under your _____ (10). The fellowship (up to 10 months) would be covered by the scholarship in question. The _____ (11) is unfortunately December 1, 2007 for the academic year beginning in the fall 2008 - I would need a written confirmation from an American scholar that they would be _____ (12) to supervise me.

In my PhD _____ (13), I am trying to analyze the structure and language of written medical case reports as a style belonging to the genre of research articles. The text analysis of such reports involves a corpus-based research, _____ (14) primarily from the stylistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic viewpoints. The corpus, which I _____ (15) currently developing, will be approached both from the synchronic and diachronic _____ (16) . In the former, my focus will be on characterization of the genre as it is currently produced by the discourse community of medical professionals. In the latter, an emphasis will be placed on the comparison of differences between medical case reports written 1900 - 1906 and those produced nowadays. In the dissertation I will _____ (17) on developments of both the Slavonic (especially the Prague School - Mathesius, Vachek, Firbas, Danes; among others Tarnyikova, Bakhtin) and Anglo-American (Crystal, Davy, Leech, Fowler, Halliday, Hasan, Swales, Hoey, Bazerman) traditions in the study of language.

Please find _____ (18) my Curriculum Vitae. If you _____ (19) any additional _____ (20), I will be happy to supply them.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

_____ (21),

John Smith

personal page of the student: <http://www.john-smith.muni.cz>

Attachment: curriculum vitae

A sample answer to the academic exchange above:

Dear Professor Collins,

Excuse me for approaching you and asking you for your help in the following **matter**: I am **currently** a PhD. candidate at Masaryk University, School of Humanities, Department of English and American Studies. I work **as** a tutor of English for Specific Purposes at the Language Center, Brno, Czech Republic. I **intend** to apply for a Fulbright Scholarship, which would enable me to work on my dissertation at an American university. The award of the scholarship, **however**, is subject to a preliminary consent of an establishment that would be willing to **admit** me. And this is where my request comes in. Is there any chance **of** being offered a **fellowship** at the Gervitz Graduate School of Education? I would be enormously grateful if you could **consider** me as a candidate for **visiting** research student under your **supervision**. The fellowship (up to 10 months) would be covered by the scholarship in question. The **deadline** is unfortunately December 1, 2007 for the academic year beginning in the fall 2008 - I would need a written confirmation from an American scholar that they would be **willing** to supervise me.

In my PhD **dissertation**, I am trying to analyze the structure and language of written medical case reports as a style belonging to the genre of research articles. The text analysis of such reports involves a corpus-based research, **undertaken** primarily from the stylistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic viewpoints. The corpus, which I **am** currently developing, will be approached both from the synchronic and diachronic **angles**. In the **former**, my focus will be on characterization of the genre as it is currently produced by the discourse community of medical professionals. In the **latter**, an emphasis will be placed on the comparison of differences between medical case reports written 1900 - 1906 and those produced nowadays. In the dissertation I will **draw** on developments of both the Slavonic (especially the Prague School - Mathesius, Vachek, Firbas, Danes; among others Tarnyikova, Bakhtin) and Anglo-American (Crystal, Davy, Leech, Fowler, Halliday, Hasan, Swales, Hoey, Bazerman) traditions in the study of language.

Please find **attached** my Curriculum Vitae. If you **require** any additional **materials**, I will be happy to supply them.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Smith

personal page of the student: <http://www.john-smith.muni.cz>

Attachment: curriculum vitae

A sample email answer to the PhD candidate:

Dear Mr. Smith,

I would be happy to work with you and we would be able to arrange a visiting scholar status for you which will provide you with library space. We will also try to locate desk space for you in a shared office. we will not be able to provide any financial support, but with a Fulbright you should not need that. You do understand that Santa Barbara rents can be high.

I have worked with a number of Fulbright scholars, and currently am working with one from China. I have always found it a rewarding experience.

If you have read my work you are aware my approach is quite distinct from that of the other scholars you cite, focusing more on the social, historical, and activity contexts within genres are used and recognized, with form being a rhetorical response to the situation. So an historical comparison would have both a textual component but also a socio-historical-institutional one, to consider the contexts within which the linguistic forms are deployed.

Is this email sufficient indication of my willingness to work with you or do you need another kind of document? I will be travelling and on holidays for the next two weeks, so I probably cannot do much more than this until near the end of the month.

Yours,
John Collins

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