



Technical Writing

While scientists, engineers, manufacturers, and software coders produce stuff, make observations, and gather data, they also need to generate documents and presentations that require skilled writers who can transform information into reader-friendly reports, manuals, grants, letters, etc.

Recommended Emphasis:

Suggested Faculty Contacts:

Dr. Tiffany Kinney

Dr. Bill Wright

Dr. Kristen Hague

- ✓ Writing makes sense, but a literary focus can also work.

Recommended Specialized Courses:

- ✓ English 219: Introduction to Professional Writing
- ✓ English 320: Report and Proposal Writing
- ✓ English 325: Writing for Engineers
- ✓ English 385: Technical and Professional Writing
- ✓ English 425: Scientific Writing
- ✓ English 427: Writing for Industry
- ✓ English 497: Internship in Business, Technical, and Professional Communication

Tech Skills

If you plan to work in technical communications, you should also learn key software. One site suggests the following:

Adobe FrameMaker
MS Word
MadCap Flare
RoboHelp
Photoshop
Illustrator
InDesign
Acrobat (not just the Reader)
Camtasia
SnagIt

Comprehensive Software List:

<http://www.ditawriter.com/which-tech-writing-tools-are-the-most-used/>

Coding Skills:

HTML
C++,
Python

Background

Demonstrating background knowledge in the field will set you apart. Minoring in the sciences, computer science, health and wellness, and engineering fields will help you communicate better with SMEs (subject matter experts).

Apply What You Learn:

- ✓ Intern at a local business or firm. Consider your area of interest: medical, education, business, science, manufacturing and engineering, computers, government, oil and gas, etc.
- ✓ Although it's not technical writing, write for *The Critic* and *Horizon Magazine*. It's important to apply your writing skills and get into print.

Useful Resources:

- <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/technical-writers.htm>
- <https://www.stc.org/about-stc/defining-technical-communication/>
- <http://www.theiet.org/index.cfm>
- <http://conservationwritingpro.com/2015/01/14/professional-organizations-for-technical-writers/>
- <http://www.writingassist.com/resources/links/>
- <https://www.tcbok.org/wiki/about-tc/professional-organizations/>
- <https://www.writerswrite.com/cgi-bin/twlinks.pl?search=org>
- <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/4/16/>

Develop Your Expertise. Consider graduate and certificate programs by searching these sites:

- <https://www.gradschools.com/programs/literature-writing/technical-communication>
- <https://ferswriteshoe.wordpress.com/2012/07/17/choosing-a-technical-communication-graduate-program/>

Observations and Advice:

Even entry level positions in Technical Writing require 2-3 years of relevant work experience, but that may take the form of relevant course work, a relevant internships, or freelance work. As a technical writer, you will enter a job market that has steady growth, as most companies need a writer to develop instructional manuals and safety documents. This field also has lucrative pay, as salaried Tech Writers make on average \$50,000-\$70,000 per year, while freelance Tech Writers make \$400-\$2,500 per project.