

# Medical communications and medical writing

This page outlines opportunities in medical communications and medical writing, including the skills you will need and how to maximise your chances of getting in

## What opportunities are there?

Many medical writers work in medical communications agencies whom provide consultancy services to the pharmaceutical industry.

Agencies may specialise in:

- legal and regulatory documentation
- medical education and publications
- advertising and promotions

Medical writers in medical communications agencies may:

- provide materials to ensure doctors are informed about new medicines, medical technologies (such as implants and prostheses [1]), medical equipment and diagnostic tests and how to use them
- be involved in the development of a new drug. They may write protocols (which describe how each study is to be run), clinical study reports and submissions to regulatory authorities, presenting a case as to why a drug should be approved for use. They may also make appraisals of a drug that has been licensed or a comparison of various treatments for a condition
- produce conference materials or marketing information. You could be involved in reporting on medical conferences, typically for a pharmaceutical company corporate magazine or to produce marketing materials. Medical writers are also used to transcribe conference presentations, first-hand or from sound recordings or video, particularly if the presentation isn't clear or the speaker's first language isn't English

## Other medical writing opportunities

- medical writers may also work directly for pharmaceutical companies or in contract research organisations (CROs), health insurance companies, health authorities, government and quasi-government agencies, doctors' organisations such as the BMA and organisations like the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, which part-publishes the British National Formulary (BNF), a pharmaceutical reference book
- there is also work for specialist organisations that produce systematic reviews of medical literature and other evidence-based medicine material, like Bazian and the Cochrane Library
- the job can also involve writing primary papers, reviews, manuscripts for publication in medical journals, newsletters and content for websites. You could also write patient information leaflets,

information resources for doctors and healthcare staff and promotional materials

- there are also opportunities in medical editing, which involves checking other writers' work for scientific accuracy and grammatical and editorial errors

- What skills and qualities do I need? Expand / collapse

- you would need excellent communication skills, both spoken and written, and to be able to adapt your writing style for different audiences. Meeting and liaising with experts in the field or marketing professionals could be part of the job
- most medical writers have a life-science degree and some a PhD or post-doctoral experience. The scientific and medical knowledge and skills gained as a doctor can also provide a route in

- Getting in Expand / collapse

- make contact with editors of relevant journals, medical publications and websites and submit articles for publication. If you are unsuccessful ask for feedback and use this to improve your submissions
- you could consider writing a blog
- you could also consider the broader field of science writing

- Further information Expand / collapse

- MedComms: Starting out in Medical Communications [2]
- The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI): Medical Writing [3]
- European Medical Writers Association [4] - publish Medical Writing journal and offer a training programme.
- The Association of British Science Writers [5]
- Medical Footprints (alternative careers website) [6]

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/career-opportunities-doctors/alternative-roles-doctors/medical-communications-and-medical-writing>

### Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Prostheses>

[2] <http://www.medcommsnetworking.co.uk/startingout/>

[3] <http://careers.abpi.org.uk/working-in-the-industry/research/Pages/medical-writing.aspx>

[4] <http://www.emwa.org/>

[5] <http://www.absw.org.uk/>

[6] <http://www.medicfootprints.org/medical-writing>