Comprehensive Resource Guide for Getting Started in Medical Writing

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Goals of document: This guide is for PhDs, healthcare professionals, and others looking to make a transition into medical writing or other related careers.

Note: This guide is curated, not exhaustive. Listing is for informational purposes only, not endorsements. Always evaluate what fits your goals and budget.

Roadmap: How to Get Started

View the Five Key Steps in My Training Resource Center

☐ **Step 1: Learn the Landscape**

- Read overviews of medical writing types and career paths
- Join free communities to expand knowledge and make early connections

☐ **Step 2: Build Your Skills**

- Consider coaching services to expand skills and knowledge
- Consider entry-level courses or certifications
- Practice writing through self-guided work or formal training

☐**Step 3: Create Your Portfolio**

- Consider writing for volunteer-based blogs to gain exposure and experience
- Compile writing samples in a shareable format
- Tailor your samples to the type of writing you want to pursue

☐ **Step 4: Find Opportunities**

- Search job boards like AMWA, EMWA, and LinkedIn
- Try freelance platforms such as Kolabtree and Upwork
- Network with professionals in the field

☐ **Step 5: Keep Learning and Networking**

- Join professional groups and attend webinars or events
- Consider advanced training as you progress in your career

Curious how to put all these steps into action?

A more detailed roadmap can be found on the Med Writing Guidance page of my website with free resources and optional coaching at each step.

Additional Step-by-Step Guides from other Sources

- American Medical Writers Association: Ultimate Guide to Becoming a Medical Writer
- European Medical Writers Association: Career Guide to New Medical Writers
- Health Writer Hub: Essential Skills and Readiness Checklist (run by coach Michelle Guillemard)
- Indeed: How to Become a Medical Writer in 8 Steps
- Medwriter Bootcamp: Medical Writer Roadmap (run by coach Lindsay Urlich)
- Medical Writing Skills for Beginners (run by coach Virginia Chachati)

1 - Learn the Landscape

Medical Writing Types

Explore the major branches of medical writing, including regulatory, promotional, educational, and scientific content. These resources provide a foundational overview plus detailed guides on specific subfields.

Overviews of different branches of medical writing:

- https://blog.amwa.org/what-types-of-medical-writing-are-there
- (https://emwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/emwa-writing-guide-2023-high-res-1.pdf https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3149406/
- https://www.medscicommsnet.org/what-is-medcomms

Focused on specific branches:

- Continuing medical education (CME): https://www.alexhowson.com/starthere (created by coach Alex Howson)
- CME vs promotional medical education: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zfbgib1LgVt9mYicNLW2ClL7mTSapsR3/ **(my supplement)**

Free Communities to Join

Medical Writers group on Reddit

- r/MedicalWriters: https://www.reddit.com/r/MedicalWriters/
- They also have a strong list of references to help beginners:
    - https://www.reddit.com/r/MedicalWriters/comments/saf53e/resources_for_medical_writers/
    - https://www.reddit.com/r/MedicalWriters/comments/15agkyy/how_do_i_start_out_in_medical_writing_and_what_do/

Medical Writers groups on LinkedIn (public only)

- Medical writing for beginners and beyond (free resources and friendly advice) on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9110350/ (run by coach Virginia Chachati)
- Medical Writer Network - Writing, Editorial, Jobs & Career Development on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2104990/
- MedComms Networking: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1865105/ (run by medcommsnetworking.com)
- Beyond The Clinic: Exploring Non-Clinical Careers for Healthcare Professionals: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/14777451/

Periodicals

- The Clinician's Guide to Regulatory Writing: https://cliniciansguide.substack.com/
- Make Sense Health: https://rachelpascal.substack.com/ (run by coach Rachel Pascal)
- Medical Freelance Writer: https://medicalfreelancewriter.substack.com/ (run by coach Queen Buyalos)
- Medical Writer Magazine: https://medicalwritermagazine.com/ (run by coach Virginia Chachati)
- The Med Writer's Notebook: https://support4medwriters.substack.com/ (run by me with content provided by volunteers)

Video Series and Podcasts

- Manoj, Pharmacist®, Medical Writer | Gyan Matters: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNV_q4xHGnAcYTfLCXh8big (run by coach Manoj Kumar Yadava)
- MedicalWritersSpeak's podcast: https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/medicalwritersspeaks-podcast/id985866761 (run by coach Emma Hitt Nichols)
- Medical Writing Uncut: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6cxYmS1697dlAIvyrzn9qIVrelj0mHeq (run by coach Virginia Chachati)
- Trilo Talk: https://trilogywriting.com/trilotalk/
- Write Medicine – Health Podcast Network: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJdeYRMDh9IVWIS5WqAnoDA (run by coach Alexandra Howson)

- NetworkPharma.tv: Hosts a variety of channels, including Biomed Badass, MedComms Networking, TriloTalk, and Write Medicine.

2 - Build Your Skills

Consider reading an article that discusses global options for medical writing training and coaching. The article also offers guidance to help writers select the best training opportunities: https://journal.emwa.org/medical-writing-around-the-world-in-2024/training-and-development-opportunities-for-medical-writers-from-different-regions-across-the-world/

Disclosures and Notes: coaches Alexandra Howson and Michelle Guillemard are coauthors of the article. Inclusion of this article does not imply agreement with the contents of the article or preferential support for specific coaches or programs.

Coaching

This list includes publicly available coaching resources. These programs vary in focus, ranging from freelance business development to career transitions and writing fundamentals. Inclusion does not imply endorsement, and I encourage everyone to evaluate what's right for their own needs, goals, and budget.

Note: Hyperlinks to LinkedIn profiles on names

Transitioning after academia or clinic into medical writing or other related careers:

- Alexandra Reid (Canada) – Mind Art Wellness: https://mindartwellness.com/
- David Mendes da Silva (Canada) – Papa PhD: https://papaphd.com/
- Gertrude Nonterah (US) – PhD Skills Translator / The Bold PhD: https://phdskillstranslator.com/ and https://theboldphd.com/
- Lauren Celano (US) – Propel Careers: https://www.propelcareers.com/

Editing:

- Paulina Cossette (US) – Acadia Editing Services: https://acadiaediting.com/BecomeAnEditor/

Medical writing:

- Alexandra Howson (US) – CME and Freelance Medical Writing Training: https://www.alexhowson.com/
- Ayesha Irfan (Pakistan) – Ali marketing: contact via LinkedIn
- Crystal Herron (US) – RedwoodInk: https://www.redwoodink.com/free-scientific-writing-training

- Eleanor Steele (UK) – MedComms Workbook: https://medcommsmentor.com/
- Emma Hitt Nichols (UK) – 6-Week Course in Freelance Medical Writing: https://6weekcourse.com/
- Holly Hagan (Canada) – Medical Copywriting Training: https://www.topmedicalwriter.com/course
- Isaiah Hankel (US) – Cheeky Scientist Medical Writing Organization: https://cheekyscientist.com/career-programs/medical-writing-organization/
- Lindsay Urlich (Canada) – Med Writer Bootcamp: https://www.medwriterbootcamp.com/
- Lori De Milto (US) – The Mighty Marketer: https://themightymarketer.com/
- Michelle Guillemard (Australia) – Health Writer Hub: https://www.healthwriterhub.com/
- Manoj Kumar Yadava (India) – contact via LinkedIn
- Natasha Das (India) – natashamedicalwriting.weebly.com
- Nicole Bowens (US) – ASAP Medical Writing Coaching: https://www.asapmw.com/med-writing-guidance (my own program)
- Prachi Patil (US) – Precision MedReviewed: https://precisionmedreviewed.com/
- Rachel Pascal (UK) – https://www.rachelpascal-healthcarewriter.com/downloads/
- Sarah Nelson (UK) – Green Pen: https://greenpensolutions.com/
- Shelja Chauhan (India) – HealthOdysseyHub: https://healthodysseyhub.com/medical-writing-course-health-communication-program-healthodysseyhub/
- Tom Davies (UK) – MedComms Go!: https://medcomms.jobs/what-is-medcomms
- Queen Buyalos (US) – ZLA Medical Writing: contact via LinkedIn
- Valérie Leroux (Spain) – SEO health blog mentoring: https://www.biotyhealthcare.com/seo-mentoring-for-health-writers
- Vicky Sherwood (UK) – Biomed Badass: https://www.youtube.com/@biomedbadass4064
- Virginia Chachati (Singapore) – The Write Clinic: https://writeclinic.thinkific.com/

Scientific Communication:

- Virginia Schutte (US) – Science Communication Trainers Network: https://www.virginiaschutte.com/services

Note: I've tried to keep fair balance here by including a variety of coaching options without endorsing any one in particular, similar to the fair balance approach used in CME.To keep this guide manageable and ensure it remains useful for readers, I'm no longer adding additional coaching services at this time.

Professional Training

If you're new to the field, these certificate programs and essential skills courses offer formal instruction to build core competencies in writing, editing, and document development.

- AMWA Essential Skills Certificate Program (workbooks can be purchased individually as well): https://www.amwa.org/page/ES_Certificate

- EMWA EPDP (European Medical Writers Association – Education Programme & Professional Development): https://emwa.org/education/the-emwa-professional-development-programme/
- International Society for Medical Publications Professionals : https://www.pathlms.com/ismpp
- UC San Diego Extension – Medical Writing Certificate: https://extendedstudies.ucsd.edu/news-events/extended-studies-blog/how-to-become-a-medical-writer
- University of Chicago – Medical Writing and Editing Certificate: https://professional.uchicago.edu/find-your-fit/certificates/medical-writing-and-editing?language_content_entity=en

Note: I've also tried to apply fair balance here by including the training courses and certifications I'm currently aware of, without endorsing any particular one.

3 - Create Your Portfolio

Volunteer-Based Blogs

Contributing to a blog is a great way to gain writing experience, explore topics you're passionate about, and build visibility. These platforms are open to contributors and span neuroscience, oncology, and science communication.

Neuroscience

- BrainPost : https://brainpost.substack.com/
- Knowing Neurons: https://knowingneurons.com

Oncology

- The Cancer Researcher (EACR): https://magazine.eacr.org
- OncoBites: https://oncobites.blog/

Science Communication

- Addgene Blog: https://blog.addgene.org
- Club SciWri: https://www.sciwri.club
- The Health and Healing Narrative: https://thehealthandhealingnarrative.com
- Health Tablets: https://healthtablets.blogspot.com/ (run by coach Natasha Das)
- The Node: https://thenode.biologists.com
- The Nursing Lens: https://www.thenursinglens.org/ (for people with nursing backgrounds)

Medical Writing Career Advice (the majority of this is NOT health or medicine topics)

The Med Writer's Notebook: https://support4medwriters.substack.com/ (I run this blog with the goal of providing a platform for medical writers to help and learn from their peers. If you are interested in contributing, apply via the Google form https://forms.gle/5Wna8P4XQYpXtNjk9.

Note: These blogs appear open to contributors based on available information, but I recommend double-checking their current submission guidelines and contributor policies before reaching out. This list reflects what I found through my research

4 - Find Opportunities

Freelancing

Understand what it's like to work independently in medical writing. This article outlines the pros and cons of freelance, agency, and in-house roles so you can decide what fits your goals.

Article discussing freelance vs agency vs inhouse:
https://www.ismpp-newsletter.com/2025/06/16/finding-your-fit-a-guide-to-industry-agency-and-freelance-roles-in-medical-communications/

Job Searching

These job boards and freelance platforms specialize in or support medical writing roles.

AMWA Job Board: Sign up to be part of a freelance directory
https://www.amwa.org/page/Career

EMWA Job Listings: Primarily focused on opportunities in Europe, this board includes regulatory, medical communications, and freelance medical writing jobs.
https://emwa.org/career/

Indeed: A broad job search site where you can filter listings by keywords such as medical writing and junior roles.
https://www.indeed.com

Kolabtree: A freelance platform geared toward professionals with scientific or medical expertise, connecting clients with specialized writers.
https://www.kolabtree.com

LinkedIn Jobs: A general job board where searching for terms like “medical writer” or “freelance medical writing” can reveal relevant listings. Setting up alerts can help track new postings.
https://www.linkedin.com/jobs

Upwork: A general freelancing site where creating a targeted profile using relevant keywords can help find medical writing projects.
https://www.upwork.com

Note: These listings are informational only and do not constitute endorsement of any specific platform. While this list isn’t exhaustive, these sites are among those I’ve found most relevant to medical writing opportunities.

5 - Keep Learning and Networking

Professional Communities to Join

Note: Membership may require payment

- ABSW – Association of British Science Writers: https://www.absw.org.uk/
- AMWA – American Medical Writers Association: https://www.amwa.org/
- AMWA-Canada: https://www.amwa-canada.ca/
- Australasian Medical Writers Association (AMWA-AUS/NZ): https://www.medicalwriters.org/
- BELS – Board of Editors in the Life Sciences: https://www.bels.org/
- EASE – European Association of Science Editors: https://ease.org.uk/
- EMWA – European Medical Writers Association: https://www.emwa.org/
- Guild of Health Writers: https://www.healthwriters.com/
- IMWA – International Medical Writers Association: https://imwa.online/ (run by coach Virginia Chachati)
- ISMPP – International Society for Medical Publication Professionals: https://www.ismpp.org/
- ISPOR – The Professional Society for Health Economics and Outcomes Research: https://www.ispor.org/
- NASW – National Association of Science Writers: https://www.nasw.org/
- SWCC – Science Writers and Communicators of Canada: https://sciencewriters.ca/

Advanced Professional Training

These credentials are best for experienced professionals looking to deepen specialization or signal advanced expertise and often requiring prior work experience or knowledge. It's something to keep in mind for the future.

- BELS Certification – Board of Editors in the Life Sciences: https://www.bels.org/
- Certified Healthcare CPD Professional (CHCP) Credential: https://www.acehp.org/Get-Certified/CHCP
- ISMPP Certified Medical Publication Professional: https://www.ismpp.org/certification
- Regulatory Affairs Certification (RAC) – Regulatory Affairs Professionals Society (RAPS): https://www.raps.org/rac-credential

Note: These listings are informational and not endorsements. As always, consider your own background, goals, and readiness before pursuing any credential.

Conclusion

Rather than repeating the same info in an article that adds nothing new, I decided to compile a comprehensive guide using material from coaches and writers who have already done it better. My role here is simply to help you navigate the medical writing field efficiently. I hope you find it helpful and that it speeds up your path into medical writing by connecting you with the best tools and communities available.

— Nicole Bowens, PhD
Founder, ASAP Medical Writing LLC

Now that you've reviewed this document, you may want to return to the Training Resource Center.