

AMWA Medical Writing Certification Commission

Activities That Constitute 2 Years of Paid Medical Writing Experience

To qualify for the MWC[®] medical writing certification examination, an applicant must have at least 2 years of full-time, paid work experience in medical writing, or the equivalent (eg, 4 years of documented part-time work at 20 hours/week) within the past 5 years. This eligibility criterion selects people whose core focus of their paid professional activity is medical writing. This criterion excludes individuals from other professions who want to transition to medical writing and also excludes physicians, clinical researchers, project managers, regulatory scientists, and other research and medical professionals for whom medical writing is not the core focus of their job. However, applicants may qualify even if their job title is not Medical Writer. For example, someone at a small company who has mixed responsibilities but is performing medical writing tasks at least part time in some substantial capacity may qualify as long as they meet the requirements for part-time work.

An applicant's cover letter, letters of recommendation, and curriculum vitae must show that the individual meets this professional paid medical writing requirement. If the medical writing activities are performed less than full time or are not the focus of the applicant's job title, then it is important to specifically describe how the applicant meets this requirement. The essence of the professional medical writing experience needs to be in clearly conveying medical/scientific information (data, knowledge, scientific advancements, etc) to patients, health care professionals, researchers, regulators, payers, and/or relevant others. Activities must fall within the medical communication umbrella defined as follows: Medical communicators write, edit, or develop materials about medicine and health for target audiences. Professional medical writers also have communication expertise, awareness of ethical standards in the profession, and health care knowledge. Materials prepared by medical communicators, collaborating with others or working independently, include the following:

- patient education brochures, news articles, web content, and books for the general public.
- journal articles for health care professionals and biomedical researchers.
- continuing education monographs for health care professionals.
- regulatory documents for government agencies.
- grant proposals for research scientists and institutions.
- sales training and marketing materials for the pharmaceutical industry.

One example of how to think about job role and certification qualification is by analogy with certification outside the medical writing field. Medical writers may extensively use project management in their roles, may co-author clinical trial protocols, and may communicate statistical concepts, but they would not thereby qualify by default for project management, clinical research, or statistics certification. Similarly, just because some individuals have writing as an element of their jobs, they do not by default qualify to apply for medical writing certification. Again, to qualify for the MWC medical writing certification exam, an applicant must have a minimum of 2 years' full-time work experience or the equivalent within the past 5 years wherein medical writing was the core focus of their paid professional activity.

Table 1 lists work activities that do and do not qualify as medical writing experience.

Table 1: Medical Writing Experience: Examples*

Qualifies Toward 2-Year Experience **	Does Not Qualify Toward 2-Year Experience
Pharmaceutical, clinical research organization, or freelance medical writer who writes drug development publications (eg, abstracts, posters, and manuscripts), regulatory documents (eg, clinical study reports, and Common Technical Document clinical summaries and overviews), medical information documents (eg, medical letters), or continuing medical education materials (eg, medical education slide decks)	Physician who writes patient notes or insurance claim reports
Medical writer who writes clinical research manuscripts at a medical communication company	Physician, pharmacist, pharmaceutical clinical researcher, or university faculty member who writes research publications as only a part of his or her role
Medical education content developer who writes continuing medical education content for a medical communications company or agency	Physician who assembles lecture materials to teach a medical course
Medical writer who writes journal articles for a research institution	Physician, scientist, or statistician who writes articles as a product of his or her scientific or medical research
Medical editor who contributes substantive, macro-level reworking of journal articles, clinical research grant proposals, or protocol text to aid authors in document refinement	Researcher who helps colleagues or students refine manuscripts or other clinical research documents as part of his or her research role
Medical journalist, public health information writer, medical marketing content developer / writer, or freelance writer who prepares medical information documents to inform lay audiences about medical topics	Health professional whose clinical work includes preparing materials informing patients about medical topics
Writer of online medical content for a medical information company providing comprehensive clinical information to physicians and other health professionals	Educator who, as part of his or her teaching role, prepares materials for students about medical topics
Health outcomes writer who prepares clinical content for health economic/outcome journal articles or health technology assessments	Physician or medical consultant who works for a payer organization (eg, insurance or government) and as part of his or her role writes claimant medical record case reports

*This table is not all-inclusive.

** Qualified experience must be core to the individual’s job description and daily tasks.