



SCIENTIFIC MEDICAL WRITER CAREER in BC

OVERVIEW

Scientific medical writers use scientific knowledge and writing skills to effectively and clearly communicate technical medical science information in writing. Medical Writers generally focus on either scientific medical writing, which includes medical studies, drug trials and regulatory documents, or marketing medical writing, which includes news releases and advertising copy for a wider audience.

Scientific medical writers compile, write, and edit medical writing deliverables covering all phases of clinical research for submission to regulatory agencies, for provincial submissions. Writers also write scientific copy for a broader audience, including scientific liaisons, healthcare professionals, and pharmaceutical representatives. They prepare abstracts, scientific exhibits, posters and verbal presentations. They also develop and write pharmaceutical training materials, eLearning content, video scripts, magazine articles, and presentations to be used by a variety of audiences.

The primary employers of medical writers are hospitals, academic institutions and pharmaceutical companies. Some writers freelance. Writing for an academic institution usually pays less than writing in the biotechnology or pharmaceutical fields which typically pay highest.

EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Characteristics of scientific medical writers are:

- a strong communicator with meticulous attention to detail
- solid writing and organizational skills.
- curious and motivated,
- work well independently or as part of a team in high-pressure situations
- extensive knowledge of English grammar
- ability to communicate scientific or medical information in a clear and concise manner
- proficiency in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, email, and the Internet
- familiarity with the principles of clinical research
- ability to interpret and present clinical data and other complex information
- familiar with the American Medical Association Style



Medical and pharmaceutical fields typically look for someone with a PhD and 2 to 3 years prior experience. Being able to provide proof of publications is beneficial when seeking employment.

Most medical writers are on **PubMed** every day, as the site includes 21 million citations for biomedical literature from MEDLINE, or Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online, a database of life science journals and books online. It is an essential tool for medical writers.

ASSOCIATIONS

It may be worth joining several organizations in Canada and the US as a means of networking and obtaining access to job boards.

Life Sciences British Columbia maintains a very comprehensive list of corporate members by section including academic and research institutions, associations, bioinformatics/biopharmaceuticals, media etc. who may have employment opportunities for scientific medical writers. (See <https://lifesciencesbc.ca/>)

BioTalent Canada is the HR partner of Canada's bio-economy, a national non-profit organization that focuses on building partnerships and skills for Canada's bio-economy to ensure the industry has access to job-ready people. Through projects, research and product development BioTalent Canada connects employers with job seekers, delivers human resource information and skills development tools.

American Medical Writers Association offers an educational certificate that can give credibility as a medical writer. For those with experience in the science/editing field, the BELS exam is good to take. Successful completion will give the "ELS," or "Editor in the Life Sciences," designation indicating successful completion of a stringent editing test. The association now has a Canadian chapter.

Council of Science Editors (CSE) is the premier industry organization for medical editors.

The Medical Writing and Medical Communication Network on **LinkedIn** can be joined for free (personal LinkedIn account required) The network often posts job opportunities. (See resources)



JOB OPPORTUNITIES

There are opportunities with pharmaceutical companies in the US that encourage 'remote' employment (work from home or at a satellite office). Others seek freelance writers who work from home. (E.g., [MediaBistro](#), [Indeed \(US\)](#)).

In BC, employment is most likely found at hospitals, academic institutions and pharmaceutical companies. Head offices for pharmaceutical companies are typically based in Montreal and Toronto.

RESOURCES

American Medical Writers Association - <https://www.amwa.org/>

American Medical Writers Association (Canadian Chapter) - <https://www.amwa-canada.ca/>

American Medical Association Manual of Style (11th ed) - <https://www.amamanualofstyle.com/>

BioTalent Canada - <https://www.biotalent.ca/>

Council of Science Editors (CSE) - <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/>

Life Sciences British Columbia - <https://lifesciencesbc.ca/>

Life Sciences of British Columbia membership - <https://lifesciencesbc.ca/membership/>

Medical Writing and Medical Communication Network (LinkedIn) - <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/739297/>

Medical and Scientific Writing Tips and Advice (LinkedIn) - <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4545470/>

National Association of Science Writers (US) - <https://www.nasw.org/>

PubMed - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>

Science Writers and Communicators of Canada - <https://sciencewriters.ca/>

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JOBS/JOB BOARDS

American Medical Writers Association (Member access only) - https://www.amwa.org/page/Jobs_Online

BioTalent Canada (Job board) - <https://www.biotalent.ca/the-petridish/>

Glassdoor (BC) - https://www.glassdoor.ca/Job/british-columbia-medical-writer-jobs-SRCH_IL.0,16_IS4075_KO17,31.htm

Life Sciences British Columbia (Job Board) - <https://lifesciencesbc.ca/jobs/job-board/>

LinkedIn (Medical Writer jobs) - <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/medical-writer-jobs/?originalSubdomain=ca>

MediaBistro (US) - <https://www.mediabistro.com/jobs/search?keyword=Science+Medical+Writer>

Workopolis - https://www.workopolis.com/jobsearch/find-jobs?ak=medical+writing&l=British+Columbia&job=QsVcxjyKea7Xprc8Y_DF24A-IKRcvTMP4qAQsVSiDsD2RSn2yDfVFQ