

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MEDICAL WRITER

A typical day might be:

- 9:00 am Coffee and a chat with some of the writers. Yesterday I returned from running a symposium in Barcelona with our oncology team; everyone wants to know how it went. We had a couple of late nights preparing slides and workshop materials but, by working together, we delivered a successful meeting.
- 9:15 am Catch up on emails. There's one from an author telling us a manuscript we worked on has been accepted for publication. Good news for everyone involved!
- 9:45 am We're preparing a poster on a diabetes clinical trial, which will be presented at an international conference in less than 3 weeks. I spend some time incorporating the investigator's feedback on the text and pass it to our team of editors who check it for grammar and consistency. Then our design team will lay out the text and figures into poster format.
- 11:15 am An unexpected and urgent request comes in from a client for a literature search in his therapy area. I know I won't have time to do this but one of the other writers has some free time and we agree that he will take care of it.
- 11:30 am An author has asked us to suggest suitable journals for a paper on an observational clinical trial. I spend some time researching the possibilities and find two that are appropriate.
- 12:15 pm Lunch
- 1:00 pm I start writing a post-meeting report summarising the symposium we ran in Barcelona. The client wants this finished while the meeting is fresh in everyone's minds. We must move quickly so it can be reviewed and edited before going to the client tomorrow.
- 4:15 pm I have a meeting with an account manager to discuss the finances on a long-running project. The client has asked for additional work which will make the project more expensive; we'll need her approval before continuing with the work.
- 4:30 pm We have a teleconference with another client to discuss ideas for a symposium on rheumatoid arthritis to be held later in the year in Prague. He would like an innovative way of communicating the new clinical data. We agree to come up with some ideas by the end of the week; we'll need to be creative to do something new and exciting but scientific and appropriate.
- 5:30 pm Home time

WHAT SKILLS DO YOU NEED TO BE A MEDICAL WRITER?

- A life-sciences background and, ideally, a PhD
- An interest in all aspects of science and medicine
- Team working
- Creativity
- Verbal communication skills
- Written communication skills
 - When you apply for a medical writing position you will usually be asked to complete a writing test. The test is important! You will not be invited to interview without passing the test
- Occasional international travel may be required

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEDICAL WRITER?

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