

Updated: December 2018



PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND COMMUNICATIONS

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

TECHNICAL WRITER

PUBLIC RELATIONS

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

ADVERTISING COPYWRITER

NEW MEDIA DEVELOPER

WEBMASTER

WHO EMPLOYS PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND COMMUNICATION GRADUATES

PROGRAM RELATED SKILLS

POSSIBLE CAREER PATHS

HOW TO GET EXPERIENCE

Portfolios

Volunteer

Internships

Part-Time Positions

Additional Related Student Organizations

Create LinkedIn profile

Join Professional Associations

SAMPLE JOB LISTINGS FOR GRADUATING STUDENTS/RECENT GRADUATES

HOW CAN THE CAREER CENTRE HELP

Library Resources

Appointments

Career Planning by year

Updated: December 2018

[The National Occupational Code Binders](#)

[Tip Sheets](#)

[Event](#)

[Extern Job Shadowing Program](#)

[Career Counselling](#)

[Job postings](#)

ALUMIN PROFILE

Additional Web Resources

Overview

A Bachelor of Arts (BA) program in professional writing combines liberal arts studies with rhetorical studies, writing courses and language skills. Students can also develop computer and design skills through electives. They are often required to build a professional portfolio, which documents their writing progress throughout the program. Students may also have the opportunity to publish work both in and outside of their schools. Some programs offer students the opportunity to participate in internships related to professional writing.

Technical Writer

From the user guide for your DVD player, to a magazine article on the latest cancer study, the job of a technical writer is to make complicated information easy to understand. As science and technology advances, so does the need for writers to communicate that information. In general, technical writers can write for two different audiences: they can simplify scientific or technical information for the average reader, or write literature for other industry professionals.

Technical writers write for various industries and produce materials such as directions, installation guides, books, training programs, contracts, policies, terminology explanations, procedural manuals, medical literature reviews, and scientific articles, in both print and web-based formats. Many work in computer, software, and electronics companies, but can also work for aerospace, automotive, manufacturing, and pharmaceutical industries, book, magazine, and newspaper publishers, or in government, financial services, and insurance companies. Technical writers often have an area of specialization but not always. They can be excellent writers with technical aptitude, or technicians with excellent writing skills.

Public Relations

Public Relations Specialists and Consultants use the media to create and maintain a positive image for a company, product, or service in the eyes of the public. PR specialists can work in government, universities, PR agencies, for-profit, or non-profit organizations. Their work is often tied with marketing and advertising activities. They may write press releases, plan special events, organize publicity campaigns, inform company shareholders, hold press conferences, and raise funds. People working in public relations often specialize in a certain area such as **Community Relations, Media Relations, Investor Relations, Alumni Relations, or Crisis Management**. Crisis management is one of the most challenging Public Relations area because it involves mediating the public's perception through situations like SARS, the Tylenol capsule scare and Enron.

Corporate Communications

Corporate communications can involve public relations, marketing, and advertising, but **Communications Specialists** are also needed for internal communications in large organizations. This can include writing a weekly company newsletter, preparing business reports or presentations, or maintaining an organization's Intranet. For example, during the SARS crisis in Toronto, **Media Relations Specialists** provided information to the public through the media, whereas **Internal Communications Specialists** provided information to staff and hospital patients.

Advertising Copywriter

The line: "You've always got time for Tim Horton's" is the creation of an advertising copywriter. An ad copywriter discusses a product or service with a company to understand the message the company wants to send and the audience it wants to target. They may write jingles, slogans, scripts for commercials or radio spots, and often work closely with graphic designers, photographers, musicians and directors. Advertising copywriters may work for advertising agencies, newspapers, television and radio stations, government agencies, or non-profit associations.

New Media Developer

New Media Developers create new ways to deliver and present information, often as interactive blends of video, audio, text, animation, photography and graphics. The terms New Media, Digital Media, Interactive Media, and Multimedia are generally interchangeable, and are not to be confused with IT, the computer infrastructure in place to allow the digital delivery. New Media includes the creation of: CD-ROMs, DVDs, ecommerce, E-zines (online magazines), distance education, electronic publishing, video games, digital encyclopedias, Web casts, chat rooms, interactive kiosks, etc. Most New Media companies are very young entrepreneurial ventures developing new ideas and designing new products for entertainment and education.

Webmaster

Any service, organization, or department with a website needs someone to design and maintain it. A **Web Designer** is responsible for creating the overall look of a website. They must have excellent graphic design skills to create the right mood to fit the website's purpose. After the designer creates the website, a **Webmaster** continuously manages its content, making sure that it maintains high quality and updated style. A Web Designer can also be a Webmaster, but often the person who designs the site is not the same person who writes and maintains the content.

Who Employs Professional Writing & Communication Graduates

Wondering where to jump start your career? Below is a list of employers who typically hire Professional Writing & Communication graduates.

- Public Relations/Communication Firms
- Science Related Companies
- Consumer Organizations
- Multimedia Firms
- Professional Organizations
- Not-For-Profit Organizations
- Newspapers/Magazines
- Advertising/Marketing Agencies
- Banks/Financial Institutions
- Publishing Companies
- Television/Radio Stations

Program Related Skills

As a Professional Writing & Communication student, you develop the following skills:

- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively to a broad range of audiences
- Ability to communicate for a broad range of purposes including e-mail communications, technical copy, business writing, marketing copy, speeches, proposals and presentations
- Resourceful and skilled at conducting intense primary and secondary research
- Ability to approach projects independently without supervision beyond the initial contact
- Deadline oriented, time management skills
- Ability to gather and evaluate information, sources, ideas and research
- Ability to listen, clarify, question, and respond comprehensively
- Ability to conduct and clearly explain research results
- Skills in organizing ideas, information, materials, and people
- Ability to present persuasive arguments
- Skills in textual analysis and interpretation
- Editing Skills

POSSIBLE CAREER PATHS

Magazines, press releases, books, ad slogans, e-zines, song lyrics, newspapers, business reports, instruction manuals, websites, brochures, journal articles, speeches... Anywhere you find the written word, there had to be someone there to write it, edit it, publish it, and in some cases, sell it. These endless written materials mean endless career opportunities. Writing and communication skills are an asset regardless of field. Below is a list of different career options available for those interested in a career in writing and communication.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list of all the career paths available. Many positions below require additional education or experience. Occupations marked with an asterisk have career profiles which can be viewed using Career Cruising.*

Communications Specialist*	Public Information Officer
Marketing Specialist*	Sales Representative*
Print Journalist*	Professor*
Editor*	Speech Writer
Technical Writer*	Script Writer
Advertising Copywriter*	Foreign Service Officer*
Public Relations Specialist*	Teacher*
Webmaster/Content Developer*	Sports Editor
Publisher*	Publicity Manager
Researcher*	Promotion Specialist
Public Affairs Officer	Screenwriter
Editorial Assistant	Productions Assistant
Public Opinion Researcher	Corporate Trainer
Customer Service Representative*	Reporter*
Community Relations Coordinator	Program Coordinator
Fundraiser*	Reviewer (e.g., Book Reviewer)
Librarian*	Media Relations Officer
Copy Editor	Student Affairs Professional
News Editor	Freelance Writer
Science Writer	Library Technician*
Internal/External Publications	Proofreader*
Sports Marketer*	Writer*
Announcer*	Agent*
Mediator*	

HOW TO GET EXPERIENCE

Portfolios

For journalism and other writing careers, employers typically want to see samples of your writing. Start preparing a portfolio or e-portfolio of samples now. To market your skills and knowledge gained as a Professional Writing student, select a few short stories, interviews and other writing pieces to show the variety of your writing skills. You can make mention of the relevance of your portfolio in your cover letter and consider sharing a significant project you have worked on.

Volunteer

- Marketing Coordinator- Volunteer, After Breast Cancer TO
- Gender-Based Violence Awareness Advisor - Volunteer in Peru, Cuso International
- Resource Mobilization Advisor - Volunteer in Peru, Cuso International
- Marketing and Public Relations Coordinator – Technovation Academy of Science and Technology, TO
- United Nations on line volunteer

Internships

On campus

- WRI410H: Professional Writing & Communication Internship I
- WRI411H5: Professional Writing and Communication Internship II

Off-Campus

- Social Media and Marketing Intern, AiHello ON, Canada
- Paid Social Media Marketing Internship, GenM ON, Canada
- Customer Service Associate, Zip International Inc., ON Canada
- Content Copywriter Intern, iMediaDesigns Technologies Inc., ON Canada

Part Time Positions

- Grant-writer, Reform Reality, ON Canada
- Technical writer, Loyalty one, ON Canada
- Court reporter, Victory Verbatim Reporting, ON Canada
- Business Plan Writer, A.S Business Center
- Junior Underwriter, Global Payments Canada

Updated: December 2018

[Additional Related Social Organizations](#)

Join a student club or an academic society at UTM to meet like-minded people, explore your interests, and make valuable connections. To view a list of current clubs and societies, visit the Centre for Student Engagement's website. Some organizations you may consider are:

- ICCIT Council: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/iccit/institute-communication-culture-information-and-technology>
- UTM Scribes: <https://www.facebook.com/utmscribes/>
- The Medium: <https://www.facebook.com/TheMediumUTM>
- CFRE Radio: <https://www.facebook.com/cfreradio>
- Debating Club at UTM: <https://www.facebook.com/utmdbc>

[Create a LinkedIn Profile](#)

Create a [LinkedIn](#) profile to connect with professionals in various fields, explore the career paths of UTM alumni, research employers, apply for specific positions, and more. Need help? Come to the Career Centre to book a LinkedIn profile critique.

[Join a Professional Associations](#)

There are many benefits of becoming a member of association(s), such as developing a network of contacts, learning about industry trends, accessing industry-related job postings, and stating your affiliation on your resume. Some associations related to this major are:

[Canadian Communication Association \(CCA\)](#)

[Canadian Media Producers Association \(CMPA\)](#)

[Canadian Association of Journalists \(CAJ\)](#)

[SAMPLE JOB POSTINGS FRO GRADUATING STUDENTS/RECENT GRADUATES](#)

Below is a sample of delisted positions that have been posted on UofT's Career Learning Network (CLN). To access current listings, login to [CLN](#) and click on *Jobs*.

Content Contributor, Peeps Magazine

Volunteer Staff Writer, The Medium, UTM

Digital Marketing Coordinator, World Vision Canada

Communications Internship Program, Ontario Public Service

Editorial Intern, Toronto Life

Updated: December 2018

Communications Specialist, Manulife Financial

Technical/Science Writer, Baylis Medical

Social Media Assistant, Athletics & Recreation, UTM

Transcriber, Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Advertising Assistant, Harbourfront Centre

Public Relations & Communication Manager, Textile Museum of Canada

Outreach & Program Assistant, Equity and Diversity Office, UTM

Magazine/Web Reporter, Media Matters Inc.

Instructional Designer, Investment Funds Institute of Canada

Grant Writer, Habitat For Humanity

HOW CAN THE CAREER CENTRE HELP

The Career Centre has a wealth of information, resources and services to help you along your career path. The Career Centre website (www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers) also offers some very helpful resources to help you explore careers. Sign up for the e-newsletter to keep you updated about the latest events and resources. Sign up for resume critiques online, or cruise through the CLN for posted jobs. Take a look at our events calendar to find out what's coming up in the next couple of weeks and sign up for workshops, employer events and more. Cruise through the careers that interest you the most by accessing Career Cruising on one of our computers. Look through Careers by Major – Professional Writing and Communications to view a sample of types of positions that marketing graduates may obtain

Career Resource Library

The [Career Resource Library](#) contains information about a wide range of occupations in all industries, resume and cover letter resources, effective work search methods, graduate/professional school preparation guides, and more.

You can also visit our on-line library collection by going to the Career Centre website:

<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/> Click on the Career Planning icon and then scroll down to Library Resources. Once you register, you can download a book for up to 14 days.

Updated: December 2018

Appointments

Attend a one-on-one appointment with a [career counsellor or an employment strategist](#) to discuss what career options might work for you and determine a job search plan.

Meet with an [academic or departmental advisor](#), who can guide you in achieving academic success. Contact the Office of the Registrar or your department for more information.

Career Planning by Year

Visit our [Career Planning by Year](#) page for ideas of important career related activities for each year. You can visit us in the Career Centre to find out more about career areas that interest you.

The UTM program plans are also a good resource to learn more about how you can use your degree and to find out how to map out your academic career journey while at UTM. Visit: www.utoronto.ca/program-plans.

The National Occupational Code binders

The National Occupational Code binders in the Career Resource Library provide very detailed, specific and extensive information relating to hundreds of careers. From general overviews of the job, to working conditions, to sample job postings related to the field and related articles, the binders are sure to provide you with in-depth answers to many of your career or job-specific questions.

Tip Sheets

Do you like information in an easy-to-read, easy-to-digest, take-home format? Take a look at our tip sheets on subjects like Effective Interviewing, Networking, and Preparing for Graduate School.

Events

Would you like a chance to interact with prospective employers and expand your networking circle? The Career Centre offers a number of events that help you brush shoulders with professionals and experts from all fields. Attend the Get Experience Fair, Professional Schools Fair, Summer Job Fair. Practice putting those networking skills to use and land yourself a job! Check out the events and workshops section of the Career Learning Network to find out what is happening on campus www.clnx.utoronto.ca/home

Extern Job Shadowing Program

Are you still curious about what career path is best for you? Would you like a chance to experience working in an industry to find out if it's really the path for you? The Extern Job Shadowing Program can help. This job-shadowing program grants you a one- to five- day placement in a career of your choice. Go to the Career Learning Network to register for the workshop that will help you to prepare for your placement. To register go to: www.clnx.utoronto.ca and then go to Workshops and Events to see when the next workshop is happening.

Updated: December 2018

Career Counselling

Are you feeling lost, unsure and overwhelmed with finding out what career path you would like to choose? Or you've decided on a career or the type of job you want, but what are the next steps? Our Career Counsellors are here to help. Book an appointment with one of our professionals who can help you determine what paths you can take after graduation or how your area of study can relate to a career post-grad.

Job Postings

Are you graduating soon or a recent graduate? Sign up for the Graduating Students Employment Service (GSES) or the Recent Graduate Employment Service (RGES). These services allow you to gain access to full-time job postings while you finish your final year of study or access full-time job postings for up to two years after you graduate. To learn more, check out our Career Centre website.

Please feel free to come and visit us in Room 3094, South Building. You can also reach us by phone, 905-828-5451 or email at careers@utm.utoronto.ca.

ALUMNI PROFILE

Name: David Hunter

Degree: BA

Program: Sociology

Title: Writer & Editor

update: David Hunter currently works as a Writer & Editor

David Hunter works as a writer and editor for the United Way of Peel Region. "I am responsible for all written communication, from newsletters and brochures to media releases and speeches. I am also senior writer for Ramm Communications, a full-service creative 'house,'" says David.

He says his work requires perseverance, patience, reliability, good interpersonal skills and an excellent command of the English language.

David has worked as a freelance writer for 20 years and has held writing positions with CBC Television, The Discovery Channel, and Ramm Communications.

"My summer job as a research assistant to a sociology professor at UTM encouraged me to pursue a career that involved research and writing," says David, a participant in UTM's mentoring program, a Director-at-large with the UTM Alumni Association, a member of the Halton-Peel Communications Association, and a former member of the Mississauga Board of Trade.

"A degree of persistence and confidence got me 'in the door.' Then, by emphasizing that I had a degree from one of the world's most distinguished universities helped seal the deal."

Updated: December 2018

David regrets that UTM did not offer writing programs when he was an undergrad.

“I have an enjoyable and rewarding career as a writer for the most part and can't think of anything I would change,” he says. He adds that aside from talent, the most important attribute for a writer is reliability.

“Employers and clients need you to meet deadlines. I established an immediate reputation for reliability that has been perhaps the biggest key to my success,” he says.

“Another key is versatility. Being proficient in a variety of forms of communication, from copywriting to speech writing to journalism, increases your value and boosts your success.

[Additional Web Resources](#)

[UTM Career Centre's Careers in Journalism report](#)

[Creative Skillset - Job Roles in Communications, Publishing, Radio, and more](#)

[CareerProfiles - Media Communications Careers](#)

[Prospects - Career Options in Creative Writing](#)

[Robert Half - 2017 Creative Industry Salary Guide](#)

[Canada's Top 100 Employers for Young People](#)