



## Technical Writing

The Technical Writing (TW) major offers the study of writing and other modes of communication in a variety of technical environments. It differs from the Human Centered Design and Engineering (HCDE) major offered in the College of Engineering largely in that the Technical Writing major allows for more flexibility in the technical area (i.e., the subject matter that your writing is about).

Technical Writing students take many of the same classes as, and in fact are treated as part of the same cohort with, Human Centered Design and Engineering students. For this reason, Technical Writing proposals must be approved by both Individualized Studies and the Department of Human Centered Design and Engineering.

### How to Apply

Technical Writing is a competitive admission major, accepting applications in winter and summer quarters. To apply, you must have completed 13 credits of oral and written communication, including 5 credits of English composition and HCDE 231, with at least a 3.0 grade in each course. For more information, and an application form, visit: [depts.washington.edu/istudies/tw](https://depts.washington.edu/istudies/tw).

### Eligibility Requirements

- 2.50 UW gpa
- Sophomore standing
- Currently attending the UW

### Degree Requirements (B.S. & B.A)

Note: Students must also complete the General Education Requirements for the College of Arts and Sciences, *including foreign language through 103 or equivalent*.

**Total credits for a B.S: 98-100. Total credits for a B.A: 78-80.**

#### A. TW Core Courses (33-35 credits)

HCDE 310 (5): Introduction to Communication Design  
HCDE 400 (5): Scientific and Technical Communication  
HCDE 401 (5): Style in Scientific And Technical Writing  
HCDE 402 (5): Scientific and Technical Editing  
HCDE 411 (5): Visual Media in Technical Communication  
HCDE 412 (5): Print Production or TC 437 (5): Web Design and Web Publishing  
One from: HCDE 403 (3), 407 (5), 412 (5)(if not taken above), or 437 (5)(if not taken above)

#### B. Related Electives (10 credits)

Related electives include Human Centered Design and Engineering courses not listed in the core, approved 300- or 400-level COM or composition courses, or other upper-division courses related to some aspect of communication.

#### C. Technical Area (depends on degree option; see other side for details)

#### D. INDIV 493: Senior Study (5 credits)

A final independent study project/paper on a topic of interest to you within the field of technical writing. This represents the culmination of your studies in technical writing. (This course will also count as 5 credits toward your "Additional Writing" requirement.)

## For a Bachelor of Science degree:

### C. Technical Area (B.S.) (50 credits)

These approved science and technical courses must include at least 30 credits from the following list, with at least 10 credits in Category 1 and 10 credits in Category 2. It is recommended that the remaining 20 credits be concentrated in an area related to your career interests.

#### *Category 1: Physical Sciences*

- CHEM all courses
- PHYS 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 121/131, 122/132, 123/133, all courses numbered 224 or above

#### *Category 2: Math/Statistics/Computer Science*

- MATH 112, 124, 125, 126 (or 127, 128, 129 or 144, 145, 146), all courses numbered 200 or above;  
Q SCI 291, 292
- STAT 220, 311 or above; PSYCH 213, 217, 218; QMETH 201; Q SCI 381; other approved statistics courses
- ENGR/CSE 142, CSE 143, other approved computer courses

#### *Category 3: Biological Sciences*

- BIOL 161, 162, 180, 200, 220, all 300- or 400-level courses
- BOTANY all courses except 110
- ZOOL, MICROM, and B STR all courses

## For a Bachelor of Arts degree:

### C. Technical Area (B.A.) (30 credits)

These approved science and technical courses constitute your specialization within Technical Writing. These courses should be concentrated in an area related to your disciplinary interests. That is: to what topic(s) do you wish to apply your technical writing skills? This will mean a session with the Course Descriptions and your transcript.

First, go through your transcript and make a list of any courses already completed that relate to your theme. Then search for courses in the Course Descriptions. Start at the beginning of the course descriptions and search all the way through to the end, looking for departments and course descriptions that relate to your theme. You might be surprised by what some departments offer. Another approach is to use the Search box to locate keywords in the Course Descriptions. As you go along try not to edit too much. Add the courses you find, with their credits, titles, and any prerequisites, to the list you started from your transcript.

Organize the list of courses. Group related courses. Cross off some that are less central to your theme.

There must be some balance among the departments you include in your technical area, particularly among the upper-division courses. For example, a technical area that consisted of 25 credits of sociology and 5 credits of communication would not be approved; it would be too similar to the existing sociology major. A major that included 10 credits of sociology, 10 credits of communication, and 10 credits of anthropology would be in better balance.

You may build some flexibility into your program by grouping courses and including a statement such as "four of these six courses." This is often a good idea if you are including courses offered infrequently, and/or courses with restricted access.

Remember to include courses which emphasize the theory, research methods, and history of the field as well as, if you wish, its practical applications.



For further help and information, call (206) 543-2550 to make an appointment with one of the Individualized Studies academic advisers in the Gateway Center, 171 Mary Gates Hall. You should bring to your first meeting ideas for your technical area and at least a first draft of the list of courses you are proposing.