

The Write Stuff

Foundation and advanced levels for the EMWA Professional Development Programme

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for the EMWA Professional Development Committee**

New training and certificate opportunities for medical writers

It may come as a surprise to new EMWA members to learn that the EMWA Professional Development Programme (EPDP), such a backbone of our annual spring and autumn conferences, was introduced as recently as 2000, at the ninth annual EMWA meeting in Dublin. With the aim of providing training for medical writers by medical writers through workshops and homework assignments, it provides one of the few opportunities of attaining a formal certificate in Medical Writing.

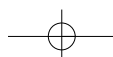
Since its inception, the EPDP has grown rapidly, from 18 workshops in 2000 to around 40 workshops at the spring conferences in 2003 and 2004. Various workshop types and formats have been introduced to keep pace with the growth of the EPDP, including short workshops, double workshops, "soft skills" and special interest workshops. EMWA's own steady growth means that experienced writers increasingly number amongst our membership. The EMWA Professional Development Committee (EPDC) has responded to our changing membership needs by developing the advanced level curriculum programme, with corresponding certification, that will be launched at the forthcoming spring conference 2005 in Malta.

The "new look" EMWA professional development programme

When the EPDP was initially introduced, workshops were assigned to one of four options, namely Foundation, Editing and Writing, Pharmaceutical, and Public Relations and Marketing (later renamed Communication). All of the options included workshops of mixed levels; some were intended for new medical writers while others were aimed at people with some experience. To attain an EPDP certificate, members were required to obtain credit in four foundation option workshops and any other four workshops. If these four workshops were all selected from the same option, a specialised certificate in that option was awarded; otherwise a multidisciplinary certificate was awarded. Additional specialised certificates could be obtained by obtaining credit in four more workshops from a different option.

The present EPDP structure has outlived its usefulness because of the growth and diversification in the workshops now offered at EMWA conferences. The balance of workshops assigned to each option has become increasingly uneven, and some workshops do not easily fit into any option. A thorough review of all workshops revealed that a couple of workshops that had even been assigned to the foundation option were actually more suited to experienced writers.

The EPDC has therefore decided to redesign the entire programme so that it provides a robust framework now and in the future for both the foundation level and the new advanced level curricula.





The Write Stuff

Foundation and advanced levels for EPDP

All credit workshops have been re-assigned to one of five options, each of which is offered at two levels – foundation and advanced. The five new options are:

- Language and Writing
- Professional Techniques
- Medical Science
- Drug Development
- Medical Communication

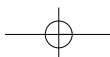
All of the workshops that were previously in the foundation option have been assigned to one of the above five options, and the word "foundation" now applies to the certificate that is aimed at new or relatively inexperienced writers.

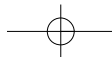
As in the past, EMWA conferences will offer short workshops, "soft skills" and other special interest workshops that are not for credit, as well as events such as discussion forums that are not part of the EPDP.

The diagram below summarizes the training opportunities now offered by EMWA:

EMWA MEDICAL WRITER TRAINING					
FORUMS SOFT SKILLS & SPECIAL INTEREST WORKSHOPS	EPDP WORKSHOPS				
	Language and Writing	Professional Techniques	Medical Science	Drug Development	Medical Communication
	Advanced Level Workshops				
	Full-length	Full-length	Full-length	Full-length	Full-length
	Short	Short	Short	Short	Short
	Foundation Level Workshops				
	Full-length	Full-length	Full-length	Full-length	Full-length
	Short	Short	Short	Short	Short

Full-length	Full-length workshops (8 required to complete a foundation or advanced certificate)
Short	Short workshops (not for credit towards a certificate)
Soft skills and special interest	Full-length or short workshops (not for credit towards a certificate)
Forums	Open discussion groups on forum-specific topics





The Write Stuff

Foundation and advanced levels for EPDP

Content and format of the foundation and advanced level workshops

The content of the foundation level workshops will be aimed at new or relatively inexperienced writers. The format of the foundation level workshops remains the same as under the old scheme: each workshop will be three or three-and-a-half hours long, with a maximum of 28 participants, with pre- and post-workshop assignments that should generally take on average no more than five hours in total.

Advanced level workshops will cover topics that are likely to be of greater interest and benefit to more experienced writers, or will take foundation level subject matter and deal with it at greater depth. The advanced level workshops will also be three or three-and-a-half hours long, but with a maximum of 15 participants. Pre- and post-workshop assignments will be required, and should take experienced medical writers on average no more than five hours in total to complete. The lower number of participants will enable workshop leaders to develop a more intense and interactive training session, and provide more detailed feedback on the workshop assignments.

Inevitably, there can be no sharp dividing line between foundation and advanced topics and we know from experience that new medical writers sometimes find themselves performing "advanced" assignments (e.g., preparing clinical submission documents). The EPDC will therefore decide on a case-by-case basis whether a new workshop is more suited to the advanced level rather than the foundation level curriculum.

Certification at foundation and advanced levels

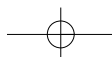
An EPDP specialised or multidisciplinary certificate at foundation level may be awarded to candidates enrolled in the EPDP at foundation level who have obtained credit in eight approved foundation workshops as follows:

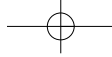
- At least five workshops in a single option to qualify for a specialised certificate in that option.
- Workshops in at least two options but no more than four workshops per option for a multidisciplinary certificate.

As in the past, candidates may obtain a multidisciplinary foundation certificate and more than one specialised foundation certificate. The type of foundation certificate is not registered in advance, but can be chosen when the required credits have been attained. However, each new foundation certificate will require eight new credits. This is a change from the past arrangements, when only four new credits from a different option were sufficient for a further specialised certificate.

An EPDP certificate at advanced level may be awarded to candidates enrolled in the EPDP at advanced level who have obtained credit in any eight approved advanced workshops. Advanced certificates (which do not come in different varieties) will be limited to one per candidate.

There are no formal prerequisites to enrol at advanced level. However, in order to obtain maximum benefit from the workshop and minimize the risk of failing a workshop, participants are strongly advised to select each workshop according to their educational needs and experience in that particular area. Workshop leaders of advanced workshops will keep the focus of the workshop at an advanced level and will not spend time responding to the needs of inexperienced participants – not least because this would be unfair to experienced participants.





The Write Stuff

Foundation and advanced levels for EPDP

Questions and answers

Q: May I be enrolled at both the foundation level and advanced level at the same time?

A: Yes. Members may be new to some areas of medical writing, such as pharmaceutical writing, but be more experienced in others, such as editing. Because there are no formal prerequisites for enrolment, it would even be possible for members to enrol first at the advanced level and later at the foundation level. The responsibility for making best use of EMWA's training opportunities lies with the individual member. As in the past, members may attend workshops without being enrolled in the EPDP at all, but in such cases, no credit will be awarded.

Q: How do I know if I am experienced enough to benefit from the advanced level curriculum?

A: Each workshop is advertised with a "participant profile" as a guide to the required level of experience. As a rule of thumb, completion of an EPDP foundation certificate (or similar), or about four years of on-the-job experience in a particular area should be sufficient.

Q: What about enrolment and workshops fees?

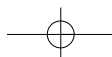
A: As in the past, fees are due both for enrolment in the EPDP (good for five years) in order to attain credit, and for participation in individual workshops. Enrolment in the EPDP at foundation level and at advanced level will each incur a separate fee. Individual registration fees for advanced workshops will be somewhat higher than for foundation workshops due to the lower number of participants. Details of the fees will be provided on the registration form for the Malta conference.

Q: When does enrolment under the "new look" EPDP begin?

A: Members can enrol for the foundation and advanced level programmes when they register for the spring 2005 meeting in Malta. Credit workshops at each level will be available during the Malta conference.

Q: I am already enrolled into the "old" EPDP and have acquired some credits. What happens now?

A: All members will have their enrolment fee and credits transferred towards a foundation level certificate. Members intending to complete a multidisciplinary certificate, or specialised certificate under the new scheme, can continue to accumulate credits from the new foundation level workshops as described above. **Anyone who was intending to complete a specialised certificate under one of the old options must contact the Education Officer or EMWA Head Office before the Malta conference and register their intention.** For these members, the old arrangements and old workshop option allocations will be applicable up to and including the spring conference 2006. After that time, only certification under the new scheme will be possible. Members should also be aware that any new workshops added to the EPDP from 2005 onwards will not be allocated to the old options and hence will not count towards a specialised certificate under the old scheme.



The Write Stuff

Foundation and advanced levels for EPDP

Q: Where can I see the new workshop allocations?

A: A complete list of workshops in the programme showing their old and new allocations is given in the following section. This list also includes short workshops, which were not previously assigned to an option. The EPDC feels that this will provide a useful guide to members interested in taking a short workshop. If the short workshop is developed into a full-length credit workshop, the option allocation will remain the same. The Malta conference brochure will give details of 22 foundation level workshops and five advanced level workshops that will be held during the conference.

Q: I have credit for a workshop that has now been assigned to the advanced level curriculum. Will this count towards an advanced level certificate if I now enrol in the advanced level curriculum?

A: No. Credits towards an advanced level certificate can only be attained after enrolment into the advanced level curriculum. As in the past, retrospective allocation of workshop credits is not possible. Furthermore, as described above, the format of the advanced workshops has changed, and in some cases, the workshop leader will adjust the content to suit the advanced participant profile. So if a member wishes to attain an advanced credit for a workshop they have already taken under the "old" scheme, they must enrol in the advanced level curriculum and take the workshop once more. The credit they have previously attained will of course count towards a foundation certificate.

Re-allocation of EPDP workshops

In the lists below, each option is divided into foundation level workshops and advanced level workshops, each sorted alphabetically by workshop title. The previous EPDP option assignments are given next to the workshop name and are denoted as follows:

- EW, Editing and Writing
- F, Foundation
- P, Pharmaceutical
- C, Communication

Note the following:

- An asterisk (*) denotes workshops currently under assessment.
- The short workshops (not for credit) were not previously assigned to an option but now appear in the new categories.

Language and writing option

Foundation Level

Developing Patient Education Handouts	EW
Essentials of Editing and Proofreading	EW
Grammar Flaws: Taxonomy and Revision	EW
Improving Comprehension: Theories and Research Findings	F
Medical and Pharmaceutical English for Non-Native Speakers	F
Paragraphing	F
Punctuation	F
Syntax flaws: Taxonomy and Revision	EW
Syntax, Meaning and Word Order	F
Word Usage Flaws: Taxonomy and Revision	EW

Advanced Level

Medical Writing for the Multilingual Audience: How to Enhance
Cross-Cultural Comprehensibility and Translatability (short workshop)

The Write Stuff

Foundation and advanced levels for EPDP

Professional Techniques Option

Foundation Level

Advanced Word Processing	F
Data Presentation I	F
Ethics for Biomedical Writers and Editors	EW
Information Sources for Medical Writers	F
Introduction to Macros in Microsoft Word	F
Maximising Presentation Performance	F
Medical Writing and Quality Control	F
Using Statistics in Medical Writing	F
Web Page Design*	F
Cross-Cultural Communication	

Advanced Level

Association, Correlation and Regression Analyses	F
Data Presentation II	F
Do More With Less Faster: Project Management for Biomedical Communications	P
Managing Medical Writers (short workshop)	
Recruitment and Selection (short workshop)	
Statistical Thinking for Medical Writers	F
Strategies for Improving Document Quality	EW

Medical Science Option

Foundation Level

Pharmacology for Medical Writers Part 1: The Basics	P
Pharmacology for Medical Writers Part 2: Drugs acting on Peripheral body systems - Cardiovascular, Hormones, Inflammation, Gastrointestinal	P
Basics of Epidemiology for Medical Communicators	P
Understanding Homeopathy (short workshop)	

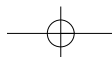
Advanced Level

No workshops presently available in this option

Drug Development Option

Foundation Level

Drug Safety for Medical Writers	P
European Regulatory Procedures for Medical Writers	P
From Protocol to Study Report: What's In Between?	P
Introduction to Health Economics	P
Introduction to Pharmacokinetics	P
Introduction to Quality of Life	P
Plain English: The Clinical Trial Patient Information Leaflet	EW
The Clinical Study Protocol	P
The Investigator's Brochure	P
The Package Leaflet	P
Understanding Research Ethics Committees	P
Writing Clinical Study Reports Using ICH E3	P



The Write Stuff

Foundation and advanced levels for EPDP

Drug Development Option (continued)

Advanced Level

Clinical Study Design	P
Medical Writing Between Dossier Submission and Drug Approval	P
Serving Two Masters: Comparing and Contrasting US and EU Regulatory Submissions and Processes	P
The Clinical Development Plan and its Relevance to Medical Writers (short workshop)	
The CTD Clinical Overview*	P
Writing Global Clinical Submission Dossiers Using the Common Technical Document	P

Medical Communication Option

Foundation Level

Crafting a Press Release: The Principles of Writing for the Press	C
Marketing Your Manuscripts and Dealing with Biomedical Journals	EW
Publication Planning (formerly Publication Strategy and Planning)	EW
So You Want to Write Promotional Pharmaceutical Copy	C
Targeting Your Audience	F
The Biomedical Paper	EW
Writing a Manuscript for Publication	EW

Advanced Level

Publication Strategy (formerly Publication Strategy and Planning)	EW
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Soft Skills and Special Interest (not for credit)

- Good Publication Practice for Pharmaceutical Companies
- Interpersonal Skills for Medical Writers
- Literature and Medicine
- Speaking in Public (double workshop)
- Starting up and Running a Freelance Company (short workshop)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and Third, by experience, which is the bitterest."

Confucius, philosopher and teacher (c. 551-478 BCE)

