

AREA: Technical Writing Certificate

LENGTH: Two semesters (one-year) program

PURPOSE: The technical writing certificate responds to the current and projected high demand for technical writers in business services or engineering and management services; government; and printing and publishing. Nationwide the employment of technical writers is expected to increase faster than average (i.e. 21 percent to 35 percent) for all occupations through 2010, and in Northern Virginia the growth rate is even higher. Technical writers rank number 24 in the Virginia Employment Commission's list of occupations with the largest increase in employment growth between 1998 and 2008 (74 percent).

OCCUPATIONAL OBJECTIVES: technical writer, technical writer/editor, writer, writer/editor and all specialized fields requiring the support of a technical writer/editor

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS: The curriculum integrates courses in technical writing/editing, desktop publishing and Web page design – the three special skills areas needed to give participants an edge in technical writing and to help them become effective technical writers. It is geared toward those already working in a technical field who wish to develop their technical writing expertise; those who have an educational background already in English and who wish to develop a specialization in technical writing; or those who want to explore a technical writing career. This program provides students the specific skills and knowledge needed for technical communication, prepares them for the challenges facing today's technical communicator and takes them through formal course work designed to enhance career opportunities in the technical writing field. The program includes, as its final component, an internship that may consist of 1) on-the-job training in approved businesses, industrial and service firms or government agencies; 2) career orientation and training in selected businesses, industrial and service firms or government agencies; or 3) a special project/research study relevant to the field.

Course#	Title	Credits
First Semester		
AST 253	Advanced Desktop Publishing I ¹	3
ENG 115	Technical Writing ²	3
ENG 205	Technical Editing	3
ITD 110	Web Page Design I ³	3
SDV 100	College Success Skills	1
	Approved social science elective ⁴	3
	Total	16
Second Semester		
AST 254	Advanced Desktop Publishing II ⁵	3
CST 110	Intro to Speech Communication	3
ENG 280	Writing User Manuals	3
ENG 295	Special Studies in Technical Writing (e.g. grant proposals, standard operating procedures, government documents)	3
ITD 210	Web Page Design II ⁶	3
	Total	15
Summer Session		
ENG 297	Internship in Technical Writing ⁷	3
	Total	3
	Program Total	34

¹ Students must have keyboarding skills. Bridge courses of AST 101 or AST 102 may be required to gain keyboarding skill levels.

² Students are required to complete ENG 111 or to demonstrate equivalent skills before entering this program.

³ Students must have computer competency skills. A bridge course of ITE 115 may be required to gain those skills.

⁴ Students may select social science electives from the approved list on page 51.

⁵ Prerequisite: AST 253

⁶ Prerequisite: ITD 110

⁷ Students may substitute ENG 296 (On-Site Training in Technical Writing) or ENG 298 (Seminar and Project in Technical Writing).