

# The Art and Science of Technical Writing

## Course details and booking form

### Duration

Two consecutive days

### Topics covered

- 1. Fundamental characteristics of good technical writing**  
The principle of communicative efficacy; the five characteristics of sound factual writing; audience-centric writing and how to write for mixed audiences; techniques for controlling vocabulary; what is *correct* writing?  
Exercise 1: correcting flaws in sample texts
- 2. Planning a technical writing project**  
Typical documentation development cycle; estimating; planning; reviewing (and tips on securing reviews); pagination tricks; overcoming writer's block
- 3. Writing technical reports and proposals**  
Types; section-by-section description; overcoming writers block; common problems (of logic, topic hierarchy, citations, etc.)
- 4. Writing operating and maintenance procedures**  
Techniques; tips and tricks; branching, looping, minimising steps  
Exercise 2: correcting flaws in sample procedures
- 5. The language of language**  
Parts of speech; the building blocks of language; writing effective paragraphs; things your teachers got wrong
- 6. Document design and usability**  
Templates; font choice and its effect on comprehension; the three pillars of usability
- 7. Aspects of grammar**  
Old rules best forgotten; subject-verb agreement; the *that* or *which* dilemma; comparatives and superlatives  
Exercise 3: correcting grammatical faults in sample texts
- 8. Troublesome words**  
Words easily confused; transition words; homonyms, etc.

### 9. Obstacles to readability

Sentence complexity; conceptual density; misplaced jargon; nominalisation; noun clustering; poor use of voice; impersonal tone; are readability formulas useful?

Exercise 4: improving the readability of texts

### 10. Punctuation refresher

Senseless fads; hyphens and dashes; commas; parenthetical markers; brackets; colons; semicolons; apostrophes; etc.

Exercise 5: correcting punctuation flaws in sample texts

### 11. Breaking into the profession of technical writing

How to network; writing a good CV; necessary software skills, remuneration, pros and cons of freelancing

Note that for in-house courses, the topics covered will be tailored to the client's needs. One- or two-day courses can be offered.

### Presenters

The course was designed by Dr Geoffrey Marnell and is presented by Dr Marnell or Dr Annabel O'Connor. Dr Marnell lectured in *Technical Writing and Editing* in the English Department at the University of Melbourne. Dr O'Connor has many years experience as a technical and scientific writer. [Click here](#) for details.

### Cost

**Public courses: Special: \$495<sup>†</sup>; Regular: \$695**

The cost includes a 375-page [comprehensive reference book](#), lunch and refreshments, a certificate, and 30-days free email support.

**In-house courses:** A flag fall fee + \$30 per participant, Call 1800 601 116 for information.

### Queries

Telephone 1800 601 116 (a free call) or send an email to [courses@abelard.com.au](mailto:courses@abelard.com.au)

### Make a booking

Attendee's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation:\* \_\_\_\_\_

Billing address: \_\_\_\_\_

City and postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment method:  Pay on receipt of a tax invoice<sup>†</sup>, or  
 Pay now by credit card

Card type:  Visa  MasterCard  AMEX

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of card: \_\_\_\_\_

Select the course below. (All courses are held in or close to the CBD.)

- Perth:**  December 11–12, 2017  March 19–20, 2017  
**Canberra:**  March 6–7, 2018  June 25–26, 2018  
**Melbourne:**  February 12–13, 2018  May 14–15, 2018  
**Sydney:**  November 8–9, 2017  February 26–27, 2018  
**Brisbane:**  November 21–22, 2017  March 13–14, 2018  
**Adelaide:**  October 30–31, 2017  February 19–20, 2018

**In-house course:** We'll contact you to discuss dates and charges.

Fee (including GST):  Special (495)<sup>‡</sup>  Regular (\$695)

Comments, questions and dietary requirements:

\* Specify the organisation only if it will be paying for your attendance at the course.

<sup>†</sup> To secure your place in the course, your tax invoice must be paid no later than 7 calendar days before the course start date. The tax invoice will be made out in your name, or in the name of the organisation paying the invoice, and sent to the postal address specified above. Payments can be made by EFT, credit card or cheque.

<sup>‡</sup> The **Special** rate is offered to concession-card holders and full-time students.

**CANCELLATIONS:** Full refund if cancelled with at least 7 days notice; otherwise a cancellation fee of \$100 will apply.

### Send this form by...

... fax to (03) 9596 3625 or by email to [bookings@abelard.com.au](mailto:bookings@abelard.com.au). You can also book over the telephone by calling 1800 601 116 (a free call).