Background & description of the program

Successful regulatory medical writers need a broad range of knowledge and skills, some of which can be acquired through degree programs, but most of which have to be acquired through specialized trainings, on-the-job experience, and careful mentoring and feedback. So how do new regulatory medical writers develop this knowledge and skills?

The Medical Writing team at Merck is proud to have developed an Associate Medical Writer training program. This program is designed for those new to regulatory medical writing and incorporates recent industry-level recommendations on the competencies and training needed to be a successful regulatory medical writer (2018 DIA Medical Writing Competency Model and the 2020 AMWA Recommended Training Outline for Regulatory Writers). Associate medical writers gain experience with different documents and concepts by rotating through different specialty areas throughout the department, while receiving a combination of online, lecture-based, and hands-on training and mentoring. With this program in place, the next generation of regulatory medical writers at Merck will have a solid, consistent foundation on which to grow their medical writing skill set.

Quotes from first cohort of associate medical writers

"The Associate Medical Writer program at Merck has provided me with a comprehensive introduction to medical writing. After a few short months, I have already been fully immersed in narrative writing. Through the mentor program with our wonderful colleagues, I feel confident in my ability to extract relevant information and utilize my experience as a pharmacist to connect clinical findings with participant disposition to provide a detailed account of events related to study treatment exposure. I have also had the opportunity to engage in professional development activities through the AMWA Essential Skills program, networking with our senior leadership team, and countless self-directed learning opportunities provided by the company. I look forward to the coming months, where I will learn the anatomy of documents and gain hands-on document training through clinical technical editing, informed consent, clinical content standards, and clinical study reports. I believe the Associate Medical Writer program at Merck will provide me with the tools to be a successful document leader, while growing in my soft skills along the way!"

— Savannah Mageau, PharmD, Associate Medical Writer

"I could not imagine a more exciting opportunity to enter the field of regulatory writing than the Associate Medical Writer program at Merck. When looking to change careers to regulatory writing, I found few opportunities at the entry level. The Associate Medical Writer program at Merck has provided me with a unique opportunity to receive comprehensive training in collaborative authorship across a range of regulatory documents, structured content management, and regulatory requirements. The program’s focus on cohort-based experiential training has connected me with a collaborative team of fellow learners, and my participation in rotations through different functional areas has allowed me to easily make contacts throughout the Medical Writing department. I have felt welcomed and supported by the entire Medical Writing community at Merck and feel incredibly fortunate to begin my career knowing that Merck is invested in my success. In addition, I am particularly excited to have become part of Merck at a moment when it is vocally renewing its commitment to public health and diversity and inclusion; these values motivate my own work while also underscoring our shared responsibility as medical writers to serve patients and the broader community.”

— Amber Carr, PhD, Associate Medical Writer

"Merck’s MW training program allows me to translate my scientific research skills, learned from academic lab bench, to a fulfilling, exciting career that supports regulatory approval of breakthrough medicines. The program, designed in line with the AMWA training outline, provides me structured education and resources that trains me on various regulatory documents. In addition, the MW department also opens my eyes to different efficient ways of document authoring processes, which encourages me to always have an entrepreneurial spirit, think critically, and innovate where needed."

— Shengjie Xu, PhD, Associate Medical Writer

Contact: Tara Dutton, Talent Acquisition Advisor
tara.dutton@merck.com, +1 (215) 993-4466

Copyright © 2020 Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp., a subsidiary of Merck & Co., Inc. All rights reserved.