Carnegie Mellon University
English

Master of Arts in

Professional Writing

Why Choose Professional Writing?

The short answer is that we can offer you one of the best, most flexible educations in professional writing available. You'll work with distinguished faculty in small classes, develop both foundational and specialized skills relevant to your career goals, and have the advantage of tapping into our almost 30 years of experience educating professional and technical writers. We firmly believe that you, like our current students and close to 400 alumni, will find the program to be a strong launching platform for an interesting, varied, and rewarding communications career. Our particular strengths include the following:

Flexible Curriculum

Professional Development

Emphasis on Writing as a Foundational Skill

Faculty Expertise in Document and Web Design

Distinguished and Diverse Faculty

Strong Grounding in Rhetoric

Excellent Student Faculty Ratio

Focus on Applying Theory and Research to Practice

As a CMU undergrad or alum, you do NOT have to submit GRE scores or pay the application fee.

What are the Advantages of an MAPW over a B.A. or B.S. Degree?

M.A. degrees in general and the MAPW in particular tend to provide the following advantages over a B.A. or B.S. degree:

- You complete your M.A. in only 2 semesters.
- You benefit from the potential for higher starting salaries and annual and lifetime earnings.
- You have the opportunity to deepen your knowledge and career preparation via further study, the required internship, and advanced elective courses that didn't fit your undergraduate schedule.
- You gain professional polish and poise.
- You enhance your qualifications for promotion and advancement, particularly in the many larger organizations, including the federal government and technology corporations such as IBM, that have well-established pay schedules and ranks in which upper levels are generally restricted to employees with advanced degrees.
- You have the opportunity to pursue a generalized set of communication skills applicable to a range of careers or to focus on a specific career path. The six most common areas of specialization selected by MAPW students are these:
  - Writing for New Media, including web design and information design
  - Writing for Print Media, including journalism
  - Editing & Publishing
  - Science, Technology, and Healthcare Writing
  - Public & Media Relations / Corporate Communications
  - Non-profit and & Policy Communication

How Does the 4+1 Program Work?

The MAPW usually requires 3 semesters of coursework for a total of 12 courses plus a required internship. Students who major in professional writing or technical writing at Carnegie Mellon, or who have taken appropriate writing and rhetoric courses as part of their undergraduate studies, can, upon admittance to the program and approval of the program director, be granted credit for up to 4 courses toward the M.A. The required internship can be done in the summer between the student's senior and M.A. year, the following summer, or in some instance, during the M.A. academic year.

Who is Eligible to Apply?

Juniors and Seniors who major in Professional Writing, Technical Writing, or have taken 4 relevant courses. Relevant courses are generally those courses designated as either "writing" or "rhetoric" courses by the English Department. Typical examples would be 76-390 Style, 76-373 Argument, 76-391 Document and Information Design, 76-487 Web Design, or 76-389 Rhetorical Grammar.

All students interested in the program are encouraged to consult with the MAPW director as they plan their junior and senior years to be sure they meet the qualifications. Students who have not taken 4 eligible courses are encouraged to apply to the program but may need to take up to the full 3 semesters of coursework.

Alumni of the English Department are also welcome and invited to apply.

What Happens if I have More than 4 Qualifying Courses?

For qualifying courses beyond the 4 that can be used to reduce requirements for the M.A., you may be granted exemption for specific course requirements already met through these prior courses. You would still needs to complete 8 courses for the M.A. but may have elective choices in place of requirements.

How Can I Find out What Requirements and Electives I Might Have?

Make an appointment to talk with the MAPW program director, who will be happy to go over your record and suggest the various ways in which your courses can be charted onto MAPW requirements.

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If you are a current CMU student the first step should be to schedule a meeting with the MAPW director to express your interest. Then, go to the "Application" section of the website, complete the application form, and submit it along with all of the following documents:

- A current resume
- A statement of Intent
- 3 Letters of Recommendation
- Transcripts from all undergraduate institutions you've attended
- 3-5 writing samples.

The application includes specific instruction on these.

english.cmu.edu

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