

<b>Fiscal Unit/Academic Org</b>	Writing, Ctr for Study & Teach - D0536
<b>Administering College/Academic Group</b>	Arts and Sciences
<b>Co-administering College/Academic Group</b>	Arts and Sciences
<b>Semester Conversion Designation</b>	New Program/Plan
<b>Proposed Program/Plan Name</b>	Technical Communication Foundations
<b>Type of Program/Plan</b>	Undergraduate certificate program
<b>Program/Plan Code Abbreviation</b>	TCCERT
<b>Proposed Degree Title</b>	

## Credit Hour Explanation

Program credit hour requirements		A) Number of credit hours in current program (Quarter credit hours)	B) Calculated result for 2/3rds of current (Semester credit hours)	C) Number of credit hours required for proposed program (Semester credit hours)	D) Change in credit hours
Total minimum credit hours required for completion of program				12	
Required credit hours offered by the unit	Minimum			6	
	Maximum				
Required credit hours offered outside of the unit	Minimum			6	
	Maximum				
Required prerequisite credit hours not included above	Minimum				
	Maximum				

## Program Learning Goals

Note: these are required for all undergraduate degree programs and majors now, and will be required for all graduate and professional degree programs in 2012. Nonetheless, all programs are encouraged to complete these now.

- Program Learning Goals**
- demonstrate understanding of the theories, concepts, models, genres, and approaches outlined in the STC's nine core competencies<sup>2</sup> for technical communicators
  - apply that understanding to the production of technical documents in a variety of genres and media

## Assessment

Assessment plan includes student learning goals, how those goals are evaluated, and how the information collected is used to improve student learning. An assessment plan is required for undergraduate majors and degrees. Graduate and professional degree programs are encouraged to complete this now, but will not be required to do so until 2012.

**Is this a degree program (undergraduate, graduate, or professional) or major proposal?** No

## Program Specializations/Sub-Plans

If you do not specify a program specialization/sub-plan it will be assumed you are submitting this program for all program specializations/sub-plans.

## Pre-Major

Does this Program have a Pre-Major? No

Attachments

- TechCommCertProposal\_12-17-25.docx  
*(Program Proposal. Owner: Lang,Susan Michelle)*

Comments

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Lang,Susan Michelle	12/18/2025 04:38 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Lang,Susan Michelle	12/18/2025 04:40 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	12/18/2025 07:23 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Neff,Jennifer Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal Steele,Rachel Lea	12/18/2025 07:23 PM	ASCCAO Approval



**UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN**

# **Technical Communication**



**Developing and Communicating Technical Information**



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Placeholder for College Letter

## Technical Communication Foundations Certificate Proposal

### Required Information

- Name of proposed certificate: Technical Communication Foundations
- Certificate type: Post-secondary Undergraduate Academic Certificate program; Categories 1a and 1b; Undergraduate Academic Certificate, Category 2.
- Delivery: Online
- Proposed implementation date: No later than Autumn 2026
- Academic units responsible for administering the certificate program: Primary: Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing (ASC); Supporting: Department of English
- Permitted overlap between these courses and courses in a major, minor, other certificate, or GE: 100%

### I. Brief overview

We are proposing a 12-credit hour, undergraduate *Technical Communication Foundations (TCF) Certificate* with a start date of AU 2026. The over-arching goal of this certificate is to provide students with skills required in the technical communication field and prepare them to act as informed members of a technical writing/communication team in an organization as well as communicate more effectively in the workplace. A certificate in Technical Communication at the undergraduate level at Ohio State University (OSU) would provide students with valuable, practical skills that are increasingly demanded by the workforce. The benefits of establishing such a certificate program align with OSU's mission and goals outlined in its next strategic plan, *Education for Citizenship*, which will foster innovation, enhance academic excellence, and prepare students for successful careers in an ever-evolving global economy.

Currently, OSU offers no certificate or degrees in Technical Communication; the proposed certificate would provide a way to raise interest in this career path and support students who need focused training in writing for technical occupations. It will also enhance the marketability of OSU graduates wishing to enter or advance in such industries as semiconductor production. The certificate helps to fill the gap left behind by the Society for Technical Communication's (STC) recent dissolution. These newly developed courses, which will be developed and offered by OSU's Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing (CSTW), will incorporate theory and practice of technical communication.

### II. Definition and Impact of Technical Communication & Rationale for Certificate

The field of Technical Communication involves communicating essential information about technical subjects in an accessible and useful way to a variety of audiences. Most discussions of the field acknowledge its breadth but note that communication categorized as technical may do one or more of the following things. Technical communication 1) communicates about technical or specialized topics; 2) communicates by using digital and analog technologies; and/or 3) provides instruction as to how to do something. The STC notes that "[t]he value that technical communicators deliver is twofold: They make information more useable and accessible to those who need that information, and in doing so, they advance the goals of the companies or

organizations that employ them.”<sup>1</sup> Despite the STC’s recent dissolution, technical communicators remain in high demand in such industries as software development, engineering, manufacturing, information technology, publishing, healthcare, among others.

This certificate program will help support those students interested in pursuing jobs in the rapidly expanding semiconductor production workforce along with careers in telecommunications, biotechnology, manufacturing and engineering, and other areas of information technology. The growing use of AI and machine learning in Ohio/Columbus industries (Nationwide, Chase, etc.) also demonstrates that technical communicators will be vital to those organizations. Students will learn about types of genres and styles typical of those used in these workplaces by technical writers and editors. In the certificate coursework, students will explore all aspects of technical communication, from research strategies and approaches to drafting components of genres for particular audiences to designing and implementing advanced editing strategies, including single sourcing of texts. The current and future roles of AI in technical communication will also be discussed and applied, as appropriate.

### III. Similar certificates at other institutions

The following list includes those Ohio, Big 10, and other universities that have undergraduate certificates with ‘technical communication’ or ‘technical writing’ in their certificate title, along with universities that are offering such certificates online. Institutions listed on the Ohio Chapter of the STC are also included. Each list item includes the institution, title of certificate, corresponding URL, and a note about key similarities or distinctions from the proposed certificate.

Information for this section was in part gathered from <http://tek-ritr.com/techcomm-programmatic-central/maps-of-tpc-programs/> and [Educational Opportunities – OHIO STC](#).

#### Ohio Universities

- Bowling Green State University: Scientific and Technical Communication minor: (<https://www.bgsu.edu/arts-and-sciences/english/scientific-technical-communication/undergraduate-programs.html>)

Core courses include Introductory Technical Writing, Professional Editing, and Writing for the Web. Remaining courses are electives in other departments. No mention of any online offerings at the undergraduate level, although BGSU does offer a non-degree four course graduate certificate online.

- Cedarville University: Professional Writing and Information Design major: (<https://publications.cedarville.edu/academiccatalogs/2024-2025/136/>)

While technical communication is not listed in any course title, the major does list courses in instructional design, document design, and writing for the web. This is a resident major.

- Cleveland State University: Online Technical Writing offered through Continuing Education (no credit hours specified): <https://www.csuohio.edu/continuing-education/techwriter->

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.stc.org/about-stc/defining-technical-communication/>



[certification](#) and <https://techwritercert.wixsite.com/clevelandstateuniv>

CSU offers a “Basic Certificate in Technical Writing” comprised of three online, asynchronous courses: Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced Technical Writing. Course content would likely overlap with the OSU certificate, given the course outlines. The courses seem to lead only to a certificate—no mention of these counting toward coursework at CSU.

- John Carroll University: Resident major and minor in Professional Writing: (<https://www.jcu.edu/academics/english/undergraduate/programs/bachelor-of-arts-in-professional-writing>). Course listing was unavailable.
- Kent State University: Graduate online master’s degree in User Experience (UX): (<https://onlinedegrees.kent.edu/ischool/user-experience/overview>).
- Miami University: Resident undergraduate major in Professional Writing with a Digital and Technical Communication track. (<https://miamioh.edu/cas/departments/english/professional-writing/index.html>).

Courses include Technical Writing, Rhetoric of Data Visualization, Usability and User Experience, and Interaction Design, offered from across the university.

- Stark State College: Career enhancement certificates in Professional Writing and Grant Writing, along with an AAS in Technical Communications: (<https://www.starkstate.edu/academics/programs/technical-communications/>). These appear to be resident programs.
- University of Cincinnati: Resident Undergraduate Professional Writing certificate, major in Rhetoric and Professional Writing, and a master’s degree and graduate certificate in Professional Writing: (<https://www.artsci.uc.edu/departments/english/professional-writing.html>).
- Wright State University: Certificate in English, Technical and Professional Writing (15 credits): <https://liberal-arts.wright.edu/humanities-and-cultural-studies/english-technical-and-professional-writing-undergraduate-certificate>

Certificate is open to students enrolled at WSU and can supplement English concentrations or any other major. All courses appear to be taught on the WSU campus in face-to-face modality so the market is limited to the local university community.

- Youngstown State University: Resident BA in Public and Professional Writing and graduate certificate in Professional and Technical Writing: (<https://catalog.ysu.edu/undergraduate/colleges-programs/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences-education/departments-english/>).

## Big 10 Universities

- University of Wisconsin, Madison: Technical Communication Certificate (minimum of 24 credits, with a minimum of 9 credits in technical proficiency courses and a minimum of 15

credits in communication courses.): <https://tc.engr.wisc.edu/certificate/>

This certificate is limited to undergraduate students enrolled in a degree program at the university, primarily in engineering. Courses are onsite.

- Rutgers University: (18 credits, with 12 in writing courses, 3 – 4 in computer science, and a 3-hour internship): <https://wp.rutgers.edu/academics/undergraduate/business-technical-writing-minor/certificates>

Certificate only available to students enrolled in the Business & Technical Writing minor at Rutgers.

### Other Universities

- Oregon State University: Online Technical Writing (6 courses)
  - <https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/scientific-technical-and-professional-communication-certificate>
  - <https://workspace.oregonstate.edu/certificate/technical-writing-certificate>

The first certificate is limited to onsite students at Oregon State. The second certificate is online and open to anyone. The first course is free and self-paced, the other five courses are listed at one month each to complete. Content appears similar to the proposed certificate; no transferable credit is available.

- Minnesota State University, Mankato: (24 credit hours—online or f2f) <https://hss.mnsu.edu/academic-programs/english/English-degree-programs/technical-communication-program/undergraduate/technical-communication-certificate/>

Appears limited to students who are enrolled at Minnesota State. Certificate is online, although general education courses may not be.

None of the programs listed above would be a direct competitor to the proposed certificate. Cleveland State’s certificate courses provide no college credit; students are paying solely for the micro credential. Those that do provide credit are not open to special admission students.

### Other Ohio State Programs

OSU has no degree or credential program focused on or carrying the label “Technical Communication.” Several units have coursework in related areas, outlined briefly below.

#### Department of English: Professional Writing Minor (PWM)

The English Department’s minor lists both 3305, Technical Writing, and 3405, Special Topics in Professional Communication (taught most often as Technical Editing) as options for the PWM, but neither is required. The range of Group B electives offered (39 courses from Agricultural Communication to Theater) enables the focus of the minor as workplace, broadly defined, rather than a specific focus on core competencies of technical communication that enable the clear presentation of complex technical information. The PWM coordinator has agreed that it may be possible for students to complete both the PW minor and the TC Foundations certificate.



### **Department of Design: Visual Communication Design**

Students who have an interest in visual communication (one aspect of technical communication) might choose to pursue a major or minor in the Department of Design. The treatment of visual communication design in the proposed certificate introduces students to principles of design common to technical communication genres as well as how to collaborate with designers on their project teams.

### **School of Communication: Health Communication Certificate/Science and Environmental Communication Certificate**

These certificates focus on other specialized communication areas. Two courses in each certificate focus on communication while the range of electives for each allow students to explore topical issues in these types of communication.

### **College of Engineering**

While the CoE has a 3000-level course in Technical Communication (ECE 3090) and a WIL course (ENGR 1300) that introduces students to college writing about STEM fields, these courses are not preparing students to become professional technical communicators.

While OSU provides students with experience in other specialized communication areas, it has never offered a certificate, let alone minor or major, that exclusively focuses on Technical Communication. Given the influx of hi-tech companies in the central Ohio area, now seems an appropriate time to develop and expand our offerings in this specialization.

## **IV. Expected learning outcomes of the *Technical Communication Foundations Certificate***

Upon completing the certificate program, students will be able to

- demonstrate understanding of the theories, concepts, models, genres, and approaches outlined in the STC's nine core competencies<sup>2</sup> for technical communicators
- apply that understanding to the production of technical documents in a variety of genres and media

## **V. Proposed Curriculum Requirements**

The courses for this certificate are new and developed for the certificate. Since no formal training in technical communication is required to begin the certificate, course 1 establishes parameters of the field and reviews essential writing skills. The next three courses deal with parts of the technical communication workflow.

Courses:

- Course 1 [English 3305]: Technical Writing: Introduction to the field of technical communication. Overview of nine technical communication core competencies with focus on practice in written communication strategies for technical communicators. Technical communicators' processes, practices, credentials, key theories, and major constructs will be introduced.

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<sup>2</sup> The STC core competencies are as follows:

**Project Planning**  
**Project Analysis**

Processes, teams, and strategic planning  
Users, purposes, and contexts of use for projects

**Content Development**  
**Organizational Design**  
**Written Communication**  
**Visual Communication**  
**Reviewing and Editing**  
**Content Management**  
**Production and Delivery**

Researching and developing content for technical genres  
Organizational patterns and techniques for technical genres  
General writing style, tone, and readability  
Visual principles, practices, and information graphic development  
Revising, substantive edits, copy-editing, proofreading, and usability  
Managing and developing electronic content, media, and teams  
Project deliverables, outcomes, and publishing techniques

- Course 2 [CSTW 3002]: Project Planning and Analysis for Technical Projects: Principles of user and audience analysis; assessing internal and external resources for projects, including creating budgets and schedules; determining scope via task analysis. How to create, plan, and manage projects. Practices and conventions associated with common technical communication genres
- Course 3 [CSTW 3003]: Developing and Managing Technical Content: Theories, strategies, and practices related to content development and management, including single-sourcing, developing metadata, and information modeling. The role of visual information in content management strategies, including treatment of visual communication design conventions, accessibility, information graphics, and visual identities.
- Course 4 [English 3306]: Reviewing, Editing, and Testing Technical Documents: Practice with comprehensive editing, copyediting, and proofreading by using a wide range of digital editing tools and practices. Design and report on usability testing of technical documents, which may also function as writing samples for a student's writing portfolio.

## VII. Enrollment

The proposed certificate is both a Type 1 and Type 2. This opens the certificate to both undergraduate students currently enrolled in a degree program and community members not enrolled in another program at OSU. We plan to offer the TCF Certificate as an online program to create maximum flexibility for students and others who wish to enroll. After piloting the first few TCF Certificate cohorts of 25-50 students, we anticipate 100-150 students per year by 2028. We expect that this certificate will be most popular among enrolled students in STEM majors in ASC, as well as the College of Engineering. Emerging partnerships with the College of Public Health and the Fisher School of Business may also yield interest from that student population. We also envision a demand from corporate entities who wish to have employees improve their writing skills, as well as those working professionals who want to hone their communication skills or gain additional credentialing.

## VIII. Completion process (Sample schedule)

The TCF certificate is highly focused; students will only have these four courses available to them to complete the certificate. These courses will be offered online and in seven week increments so that students may complete the certificate in as little as two semesters, although they could also choose to extend the time to a full calendar year. Importantly, students are not required to complete the four courses in a particular sequence. The option to enroll, therefore, remains agile depending on the course offering schedule.

Sample Certificate Schedule:

Semester One	Semester Two
Course 1 (first session) Course 2 (second session)	Course 3 (first session) Course 4 (second session)

## IX. Program oversight and advising

When the certificate is approved, we will add additional members to the oversight team, below, along with an industry advisory council. This internal team is charged with:

- Modifying shared course rubrics for assessment as necessary;
- Reviewing the assessment results and deciding on revisions to the program if justified by data;
- Adjusting the assessment process should curricular changes suggest modifications;
- Overseeing the curricular requirements as courses and GE categories change over time. The oversight team for this certificate will be Susan M. Lang (CSTW) and Christa Teston (English).

TBD (new hire in CSTW) will serve as the main coordinator and advisor for this certificate. Once students complete the required 4 courses (12 credit hours) with a minimum 2.0 GPA, they will submit a completion form (Appendix A) to TBD who will work with Mary Ellen Jenkins in the advising office. The advising office will work with the University Registrar to generate the certificate.

## **X. Assessment**

The certificate will be assessed via a combination of direct and indirect methods:

- Each course will employ pre/post evaluations of student work and rubric-based evaluations of student work.
- Each course will assess students' opinions or thoughts about their knowledge, skills, attitudes, learning experiences through such measures as student self-evaluations and surveys about what students learned in the course.
- At the halfway and final point in the certificate (following completion of two and four courses), students will be asked to submit a portfolio of work, one assignment per course, which will be evaluated against scoring rubrics to help assess how well students are meeting the certificate's ELOs as reflected in these assignments. The portfolio would include such assignments as a comparative analysis of professional reports (completed at the end of the second course) and the writing samples that they have drafted, revised, and edited throughout the fourth course. At a minimum, students are typically expected to meet Milestone 2 [Benchmark = (1); Milestone (2); Milestone (3); & Capstone (4)]. Providing rubrics for key assignments will help determine students' level of achievement throughout their progress through the certificate.
- The chair of the steering committee will be responsible for the annual assessment of the certificate.

**The Ohio State University**  
**College of Arts and Sciences**  
**Technical Communication Foundations Certificate – Type 1a, 1b; Type 2**

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**Advising Contacts:**

XXXX

Undergraduate Advisor, CSTW, Bricker Hall,

**Faculty Contact:**

Dr. Susan Lang

Professor, Department of English and Director,  
Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing, 108  
Bricker Hall, [lang.543@osu.edu](mailto:lang.543@osu.edu).

The purpose of the certificate is to train students to become technical communicators – practitioners with the skills and knowledge to apply the Society for Technical Communication's nine core competencies to technical communication projects. Students will expand their writing and editing skills as they learn to plan and manage technical projects and work teams while developing user profiles for those projects; determine which technical genres are appropriate for each project and how to construct those genres to best represent the information experience for users; design theoretically informed visuals to enhance the user experience; manage technical content across platforms; and acquire techniques for testing technical artifacts before public dissemination. Throughout this coursework, students will consider the roles, interests, and perspectives of diverse stakeholders and understand how to create ethical technical artifacts.

The Technical Communication certificate requires 12 credits as follows:

**Four core courses (all required):**

ENGLISH 3305: Technical Writing

CSTW 3002: Project Planning and Analysis for  
Technical ProjectsCSTW 3003: Developing and Managing Technical  
ContentENGLISH 3306: Reviewing, Editing, and Testing  
Technical Documents**Technical Communication Foundations  
Certificate Program Guidelines**Credit hours required 12.

Overlap with degree program: A student is permitted to overlap up to 100% of credit hours between other degree programs (major, minor, other certificate, or general education) and the certificate program.

Grades required:

- Minimum C- for a course to be counted on the certificate
- Minimum 2.00 cumulative GPA for all certificate course work.

Certificate approval: The certificate course work must be approved by a College/School advisor.

Consult with advisor for filing deadlines or for changes or exceptions to a certificate plan

College of Arts and Sciences.  
Curriculum and Assessment Services  
306 Dulles Hall, 230 Annie & John Glenn Ave.  
<http://artsandsciences.osu.edu>  
Approved CAA xx/xx/20xx.

## Undergraduate Certificate in Technical Communication (Foundations)

## CERTIFICATE COMPLETION SHEET

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Primary program:</b>	

Course number and name	Course grade	Semester completed
ENGLISH 3305: <b>Introduction to Technical Writing</b>		
CSTW 3002: <b>Project Planning and Analysis for Technical Projects</b>		
CSTW 3003: <b>Developing and Managing Technical Content</b>		
ENGLISH 3306: <b>Reviewing, Editing, and Testing Technical Documents</b>		

Total credits (12): \_\_\_\_\_

Certificate advisor name and signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Concurrences

**From:** Coronel, Jason <coronel.4@osu.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 18, 2025 5:54 PM  
**To:** Lang, Susan <lang.543@osu.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: request for concurrence: technical communication certificate

Hi Susan,

The School of Communication is happy to provide concurrence.

Have a good weekend!

Best,  
 Jason

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**From:** Lang, Susan <[lang.543@osu.edu](mailto:lang.543@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 17, 2025 5:10 PM  
**To:** Coronel, Jason <[coronel.4@osu.edu](mailto:coronel.4@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** request for concurrence: technical communication certificate

Hi Jason,

I'm writing on behalf of the Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing (CSTW), as well as the Department of English, to seek concurrence for a new undergraduate certificate, as well as three courses in that certificate, in Technical Communication. I've attached the certificate proposal, as well as the "grid" document that contains ELOs, list of readings, and learning activities for the four courses that will make up the certificate. Of the four courses, the first is an established course (English 3305), and the other three will go forward from CSTW and English, respectively, through the course approval process.

If you have any questions or need additional information about the certificate or individual courses, feel free to email me. Else, please email your response/concurrence to me by May 8<sup>th</sup>. Do let me know if you require additional time.

Thanks,

Susan



**Susan M. Lang, PhD (she/her)**

Director, Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing

Professor of English

108/109 Bricker Hall, 190 N Oval Mall building 001, Columbus, OH 43210

[lang.543@osu.edu](mailto:lang.543@osu.edu) / [cstw.osu.edu](http://cstw.osu.edu)

**From:** Masel, Dale <masel.2@osu.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 23, 2024 8:11 AM  
**To:** Lang, Susan M. <lang.543@osu.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: Concurrence Request for Undergraduate Certificate in Technical Communication

Susan,

Thanks for sending the list with the additional reading materials for the courses. EED concurs with the need and structure of the new certificate as well as the three new CSTW courses proposed for the certificate.

Dale

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Dale Masel, Ph.D.

**The Ohio State University**

Senior Lecturer & Interim Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies and Learning Infrastructure

Department of Engineering Education (EED)

Smith Lab 3042E · 614-247-5951 · [masel.2@osu.edu](mailto:masel.2@osu.edu)

Pronouns: he/him/his Honorific: Dr.

[Book a meeting on my calendar](#)

[Chat with me on Teams](#)

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**From:** Lang, Susan M. <[lang.543@osu.edu](mailto:lang.543@osu.edu)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 5, 2023 12:48 PM  
**To:** Masel, Dale <[masel.2@osu.edu](mailto:masel.2@osu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Concurrence Request for Undergraduate Certificate in Technical Communication

Dear Dale,

Please find attached a proposal for a new undergraduate certificate from the Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing: "Technical Communication: Foundations."

The center is seeking concurrence for the new certificate. Please email your responses/questions/concurrences to me at [lang.543@osu.edu](mailto:lang.543@osu.edu). **Responses are due within two weeks.** Concurrence will be assumed if no response is received within two weeks (December 19, 2023).

Many thanks,

Susan