GHENT UNIVERSITY

# Course Specifications

Valid in the academic year 2023-2024

## Technical Writing (A704029)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 5.0** **Study time 150 h**

**Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2023-2024**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A (semester 1) | English | Gent | independent work | 0.0h |
| | | | seminar | 0.0h |
| | | | lecture | 0.0h |

**Lecturers in academic year 2023-2024**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Daems, Joke | LW22 | lecturer-in-charge |
| Van Liefferinge, Joeri | LW22 | co-lecturer |

| **Offered in the following programmes in 2023-2024** | **crdts** | **offering** |
|---|---|---|
| Master of Arts in Technology for Translation and Interpreting | 5 | A |
| Postgraduate Certificate Computer-Assisted Language Mediation | 5 | A |

**Teaching languages**

English

**Keywords**

Structured writing, information models, DITA, technical documentation

**Position of the course**

How can we efficiently transfer knowledge? This course covers the base principles of technical writing and teaches students how to go from complex ideas and information to clear instructions. Through a live demonstration and hands-on sessions, students learn how to write technical documentation and which tools and informationmodels can support this writing process.

**Contents**

- The course starts with a general introduction on **the basic principles of technical writing**, during which students gain insight into the work of a technical writer and the **importance of clear documentation** in function of the target audience.
- We dive deeper into **XML and DITA**, the information model used by most companies to develop technical documentation. Based on a **live demonstration** of a specific procedure (for example: repairing a bicycle tire, replacing a CPU's thermal paste, cleaning a horse bridle,...), students learn **how to write structured documentation** themselves.
- Throughout the course, we work with s**oftware that is also used by professional technical writers** (Oxygen XML) and students gradually learn more complex ways of managing documentation and adding structure (different forms of reuse, making variants for different types of users or models).
- Where possible, **technical writing experts** are invited for one or more **guest lecture(s)**.

**Initial competences**

No subject-specific prior knowledge is required. Students must have a good command of English and must be computer-literate.

**Final competences**

1 Convert complex processes and information into easy-to-understand descriptions and instructions, taking target audience into account.
2 Apply the basic principles of technical writing to improve existing documentation.
3 Justify choices made when creating or improving technical documentation.
4 Correctly implement the DITA information model.

5 Use software to handle XML files more efficiently.
6 Independently solve problems via existing documentation.

**Conditions for credit contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via a credit contract

**Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

**Teaching methods**

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

**Learning materials and price**

All materials can be found in the online learning environment (slides + exercises + references to external resources)

**References**

- https://www.oxygenxml.com/dita/styleguide/index.html
- https://www.oasis-open.org/committees/dita/faq.php

**Course content-related study coaching**

Support via Discussion forum on the online learning environment. Individual feedback on assignments + group feedback summarising and clarifying the main problems from the assignments.

**Assessment moments**

continuous assessment

**Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period**

**Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period**

**Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

Skills test, Assignment

**Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

examination during the second examination period is possible

**Extra information on the examination methods**

Throughout the semester, students have to make some practical assignments. At the end of the course, they complete a technical writing project from start to finish (improving a bad manual) and critically reflect on the different stages.

**Calculation of the examination mark**

- skills test (assignments during the semester): 40%
- assignment (final project): 60%

In order to pass, students must participate in at least 80% of all evaluations and obligatory activities such as guest lectures. If a student is absent due to a legitimate reason, an individual alternative assignment can be given.
Deadlines for assignment and skills tests must be respected. In case of a late submission without notifying the lecturer beforehand, the score for that assignment will be reduced to 9/20 (if the student would otherwise have received a passing grade).
During the second examination period, students must (re)submit their final assignment. If the student received a passing grade for their skills tests during the semester, they keep that partial score, which will make up 40% of the final grade. If a student did not receive a passing grade for their skills tests, their final assignment will make up 100% of the final grade.

**Facilities for Working Students**

Class attendance is strongly recommended.
Limited possibility of feedback via e-mail, restricted to answering specific questions.