

Written Communication Learning Program

The Written Communication Learning Program helps you target your writing to any audience, whether drafting basic communications or preparing complex reports for decision makers. You'll also learn to apply plain language principles in accordance with the Federal Plain Language Guidelines and the Plain Writing Act of 2010. By improving your writing, you'll ensure VA's messages are clearly communicated across all audiences.

Competency description: Demonstrates effective written communication skills

The graphic below shows the courses that make up the Written Communication Learning Program, along with the proficiency level, format, and duration. Mouse over the icon to see the course description and behavioral indicators for each course. Select the course title to register in TMS. To review the courses in the Writing Using Plain Language Virtual Series, mouse over the icon in the lower left corner.


Mouse over the icons to view course descriptions

Building Writing Skills

Proficiency Level:
Foundational
Format: Virtual Instructor-led Training
Duration: 13 hours 25 minutes

Writing and Editing for Accuracy

Proficiency Level:
Intermediate
Format: Blended (Web-based Training and Virtual Instructor-led Training)
Duration: 12 hours 30 minutes



Written Communication Learning Program

Formal Writing Using Plain Language Virtual Series

***Prerequisite Course: Plain Language**
Proficiency Level:
Advanced
Format: Web-based Training
Duration: 2 hours

Communicating Complex Issues Clearly

Proficiency Level:
Intermediate
Format: Blended (Web-based Training and Virtual Instructor-led Training)
Duration: TBD



Written Communication Learning Program

The Written Communication Learning Program is sponsored by VALU's Career and Employee Development (CED) Directorate. The courses in this learning program focus on essential knowledge and skills that are important for all VA employees, regardless of your occupation or career field. With most courses now available in engaging virtual formats, it's easier than ever to get the training you need. Courses are offered at the foundational, intermediate and advanced levels to help you improve job performance at every stage of your career. The courses in the Written Communication Learning Program align with VA's All Employee Competencies.

Written Communication Overview

Written communication is an essential skill at every career level. The ability to successfully communicate to any audience is an ongoing journey of practice and skill development. It requires a thorough understanding of how people read and receive written communications. The Written Communication Learning Program helps you target your writing to any audience, whether drafting basic communications or preparing complex reports for decision makers. You'll also learn to apply plain language principles in accordance with the Federal Plain Language Guidelines and the Plain Writing Act of 2010. By improving your writing, you'll ensure VA's messages are clearly communicated to all audiences.

Courses Available in FY 2014

Writing Journey: Building Writing Skills

Effective writing skills are developed through practice, attention to detail and a personal commitment to excellence. This course focuses on selecting the appropriate format for written communications and presenting information clearly and concisely using VA style and formatting guidelines. You'll learn how to prepare accurate, concise and well-organized summaries, and apply proofreading methods to ensure that grammar, punctuation and spelling are consistently accurate.

Level: Foundational. **Format:** Virtual Instructor-led Training.
Duration: 13 hours 25 minutes. **TMS Course ID:** NFED 3126007.

Writing Journey: Writing and Editing for Accuracy

As you build your writing skills, it's important to focus on ensuring that word choice and tone are accurate and effective for your intended audience and purpose. This course consists of a brief review of the mechanics of writing and extensive

practice in constructing messages and increasing writing quality through peer and self-editing.

Level: Intermediate. **Format:** Virtual Instructor-led Training.
Duration: 12 hours 30 minutes. **TMS Course ID:** NFED 3126008.

Writing Journey: Communicating Complex Issues Clearly

The ability to tailor written communications to an intended audience, clearly convey complex information and pay attention to detail are key skills. Effective writers also understand that the editing process is a critical part of creating written communications. Using VA-specific scenarios, you'll improve your writing skills, apply critical thinking to the writing process, and employ editing techniques to improve your final product.

Level: Intermediate. **Format:** Instructor-led Training.
Duration: TBD. **TMS Course ID:** NFED 3126009.

Formal Writing Using Plain Language Virtual Series

Plain language is an essential tool for communicating effectively with your target audience. The Formal Writing Using Plain Language Virtual Series includes an online prerequisite* that must be completed first and ten virtual courses on how to write specific types of VA documents. The ten virtual courses can be completed independently based on your job duties and development needs. All of the courses use VA-specific scenarios and follow VA writing standards and Federal Plain Language Guidelines. Courses last approximately three hours, spread over a series of sessions so that you can practice the writing techniques and receive an evaluation of your practice exercises.

*Prerequisite Course: Plain Language

This course introduces key plain language techniques and demonstrates how to use them to write more effectively.

Level: Advanced. **Format:** Web-based Training. **Duration:** 2 hours. **TMS Course ID:** NFED 3124204.

Virtual Courses

Addressing Data Calls: The ability to respond to data calls in an accurate, compelling and diplomatic way is important for VA's mission. This course teaches strategies for addressing the various types of data calls. It also offers job aids to help you identify Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and select the appropriate format to respond to data calls.

TMS Course ID: NFED 3703969.

Drafting Memorandums: Memorandums serve as official internal communications at VA. In this course, you'll practice hands-on writing strategies to draft clear and concise memorandums that successfully convey complex information, establish policy guidance or request action.

TMS Course ID: NFED 3703970.

Writing Issue Briefs: Issue briefs provide concise, factual summaries about an issue, situation or event. Although they are short, they provide senior leaders with specific information that might affect the agency or Administration. In this course, you'll learn strategies for thoroughly summarizing information and writing clear, effective issue briefs.

TMS Course ID: NFED 3703971.

Responding to Congressional Inquiries: Congressional inquiries address a variety of topics and are used to obtain information from VA administrations. This course focuses on how to tailor your responses to these inquiries, so that they address critical issues in a compelling, positive and diplomatic way.

TMS Course ID: NFED 3703973.

Evaluating Data and Summarizing Findings: Analyzing data and clearly summarizing findings are essential skills. This course covers the Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion (IMRAD) format. It also addresses the differences between quantitative and qualitative data, and teaches strategies for writing accurate evaluations and conclusions.

TMS Course ID: NFED 3703974.

Writing for Procurement: The procurement process is a vital function for VA. In this course, you'll learn how to write clear, accurate and effective procurement documents such as Requests for Proposals (RFPs), Statements of Work (SOWs), Proposals for Initiatives and Sole Source Justifications.

TMS Course ID: NFED 3703975.

Writing Strategic Plans: Strategic plans enable organizations to look toward the future in an orderly, systematic manner. In this course, you'll review the definition, purpose and major components of a strategic plan. Then you'll practice strategies for writing clear and coherent vision and mission statements, values, goals and objectives.

TMS Course ID: NFED 3703976.

Writing Grants: Grants provide an opportunity to apply for funding to support projects and initiatives. This course focuses on the types of grants available at VA, and the process and protocol for responding. You'll learn how to write grant responses that are clear, concise and compelling.

TMS Course ID: NFED 3703977.

Writing Business Cases: Decision makers rely on business cases when deciding how to prioritize initiatives and allocate resources. In this course, you'll learn how to organize information to justify a recommended course of action in an accurate and convincing business case.

TMS Course ID: NFED 3631074.

Writing Position Papers: Position papers generate awareness or support for an issue. In this course, you'll discover how to accurately summarize an issue, present supporting facts and propose solutions with the goal of writing succinct and compelling position papers.

TMS Course ID: NFED 3703978.

Level: Advanced. **Format:** Blended (Web-based Training and Virtual Instructor-Led Training).

Duration: Each course is approximately 3 hours over a series of sessions.
