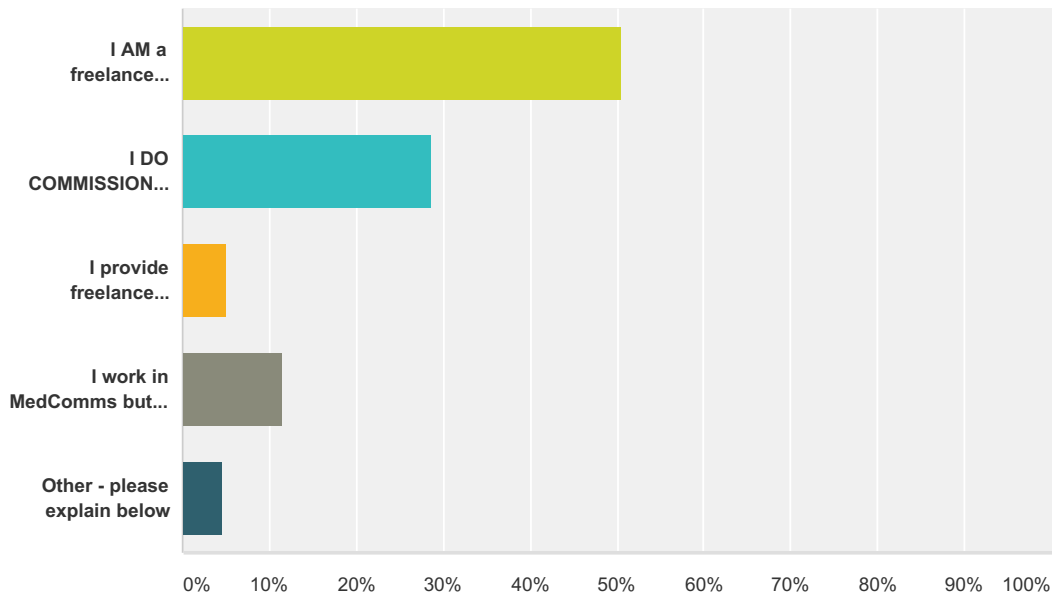


Q1 Please choose the category that suits you best.

Answered: 200 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
I AM a freelance MedComms medical writer	50.50% 101
I DO COMMISSION freelance MedComms medical writers	28.50% 57
I provide freelance MedComms services, BUT NOT WRITING	5.00% 10
I work in MedComms but I DON'T directly commission medical writing	11.50% 23
Other - please explain below	4.50% 9
Total	200

#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	Mainly regulatory CRO/pharma	8/14/2014 10:08 AM
2	I am a marketing medical writer and do a fair amount of writing as well as project management and account direction, though do not have a PhD or life science degree - just years and years of experience in med comms.	8/14/2014 1:15 AM
3	Editing, proof-reading, error checking	8/13/2014 2:45 PM
4	With a CV that shows that I have extensive experience in medical writing, I am always a bit offended to have to complete a writing test. Can see the place of writing tests for inexperienced writers.	8/13/2014 2:28 PM
5	Mix of freelance writing and client service	8/12/2014 3:36 PM
6	I have been a freelance MedComms writer and will be again soon (currently in a permanent position with an agency)	8/12/2014 3:01 PM
7	I am a freelance med comms consultant who from time to time, needs to subcontract medical writers, or recommend them to clients for a project that we will both work on	8/12/2014 2:42 PM
8	I am a medical writier	8/12/2014 11:16 AM
9	I used to be a medical writer	8/12/2014 5:49 AM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

10	I work as a consultant in both MedComms and Regulatory Documentation (CSRs, IBs, etc.). I've also been Senior Manager Medical Writing and I do not give tests to my new hires. I trust their resumes and references (I call each one). I have 25 years experience, a Masters in biochemistry, and a Master of Fine Art in Writing. The latter degree is a teaching credential that qualifies me to teach writing at the university level. Thus, when a company asks me to take a "writing test", I usually will move on to the next client. I have a portfolio of sample articles, I wrote for a national science trade publication for 18 years and have by-lined list of articles. You don't ask a doctor if she can "doctor", or ask a surgeon to do an operation for free to see how it works out. An agency would not do a project for free.	8/11/2014 9:29 PM
11	I'm a freelance editor - same applies as regards being asked to do editing tests	8/11/2014 7:33 PM
12	I also commission.	8/11/2014 5:12 PM
13	I do agree with some kind of writing tests for freelancers as while we all have a lot of examples of our work, it's important for a business to see how you work for their specific needs. I think there's a big difference though with giving someone a writing test that they would give a full-time job applicant for a medical writer position (very acceptable) and asking someone to do a piece of work for them for free (not acceptable). I've mostly had to do writing tests where I'm going to be taken on for a long-term contract or be on an agency's freelance database with hope of a long-term relationship. In these cases I've always had to do their standard writing test and been happy to do it. In other cases, as I've had recently, I've negotiated a paid 'test' whereby I do a little bit of paid work for a company that only takes a couple of hours or so and they see if they like what I've done. Importantly, I've also been at the other end where I was a full time medical writer in an agency setting having to work with a freelancer who the company had not given a test to and turned out to be very incompetent for the role.	8/11/2014 5:07 PM
14	I work primarily with a regular set of clients, on a 6-mo contract renewal basis (and it evolves over time), and do additional editing on the side. My work entails a combination of editing, writing, report writing, data analysis, minimal graphics work, and liaison with publishers.	8/11/2014 4:09 PM
15	Recruitment - so I handle multiple writing tests daily.	8/11/2014 3:55 PM
16	Work in a publications dept. at a pharma company	8/11/2014 2:31 PM
17	I work in Pharma and commission agencies (and occasional freelancers)	8/11/2014 12:48 PM
18	I manage resourcing, including sourcing freelance support when appropriate, for our small/mid-size med comms agency. We're increasingly reliant on freelance support as writers are just not staying full time anywhere and are very hard to recruit.	8/11/2014 12:44 PM
19	I provide freelance MedComms services, including writing, but as writing is still a relatively small part of my overall work, I feel I fall somewhere between answers 1 and 3.	8/11/2014 12:37 PM
20	I make writing tests a must. Too many freelancers give you work that is 1. not referenced using a referencing software. 2. referenced incorrectly 3. don't know how to reference 4. have a poor grasp of the English language. I have a standardised writing test (including using powerpoint) for medical writers. It is their choice to take it or leave it. Some freelancers who borderline pass the writing test are given very intense heavy feedback, so that for their first project with me they have a very clear expectation of my standards. Projects where people do my writing test before hand work well. There is no standardised writing test I am aware of in the industry. There is no test for attitude but freelancers with a positive can do, solution, team based approach is someone I will always use over another with better writing skills but non responsive.	8/11/2014 12:31 PM
21	I am a freelance MedComms writer now, but previously have commissioned freelance writers when I was working in the Medical Affairs division of a pharma company. I have also been employed as a MedComms writer while working at a MedComm Agency.	8/11/2014 11:16 AM
22	I also do healthcare advertising copy	8/11/2014 11:07 AM

Q2 Which country are you currently based in? e.g. UK, USA, etc

Answered: 95 Skipped: 105

#	Responses	Date
1	UK	8/17/2014 9:35 PM
2	UK	8/17/2014 9:25 PM
3	UK	8/16/2014 7:18 AM
4	UK	8/14/2014 5:51 PM
5	Germany	8/14/2014 4:05 PM
6	Uk	8/14/2014 3:05 PM
7	UK	8/14/2014 2:53 PM
8	UK	8/14/2014 10:15 AM
9	UK	8/14/2014 10:02 AM
10	UK	8/13/2014 9:49 PM
11	UK	8/13/2014 9:20 PM
12	USA	8/13/2014 3:35 PM
13	UK	8/13/2014 3:30 PM
14	Working with companies in the UK, Netherlands, USA.	8/13/2014 2:33 PM
15	Uk	8/13/2014 2:06 PM
16	UK	8/13/2014 12:57 PM
17	UK	8/13/2014 7:18 AM
18	USA	8/13/2014 5:45 AM
19	USA	8/13/2014 1:34 AM
20	UK	8/12/2014 8:39 PM
21	UK	8/12/2014 2:45 PM
22	USA	8/12/2014 2:25 PM
23	Italy	8/12/2014 1:54 PM
24	USA	8/12/2014 1:51 PM
25	UK	8/12/2014 1:51 PM
26	UK	8/12/2014 1:01 PM
27	US	8/12/2014 12:37 PM
28	UK	8/12/2014 12:11 PM
29	UK	8/12/2014 11:49 AM
30	UK	8/12/2014 11:41 AM
31	UK	8/12/2014 11:19 AM
32	India	8/12/2014 11:18 AM
33	UK	8/12/2014 10:52 AM
34	UK	8/12/2014 10:49 AM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

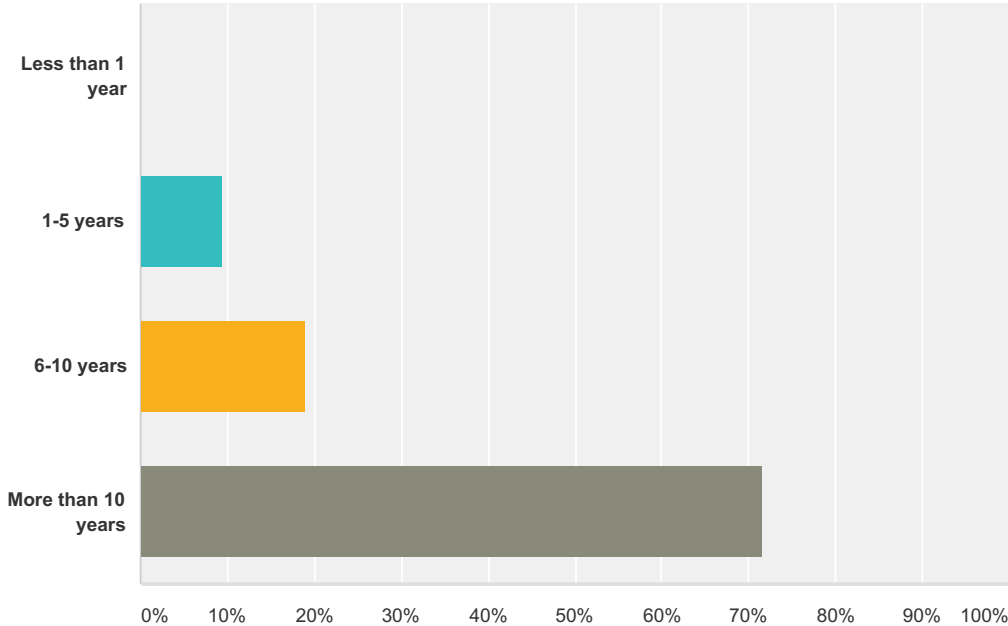
35	New Zealand	8/12/2014 8:52 AM
36	UK	8/12/2014 8:21 AM
37	India	8/12/2014 7:02 AM
38	UK	8/12/2014 6:17 AM
39	USA	8/11/2014 9:33 PM
40	NZ	8/11/2014 8:45 PM
41	UK	8/11/2014 8:44 PM
42	New Zealand	8/11/2014 8:38 PM
43	USA	8/11/2014 6:39 PM
44	USA	8/11/2014 5:52 PM
45	UK	8/11/2014 5:15 PM
46	UK	8/11/2014 5:11 PM
47	UK	8/11/2014 4:56 PM
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49	Uk	8/11/2014 3:36 PM
50	USA	8/11/2014 3:33 PM
51	UK	8/11/2014 3:24 PM
52	UK	8/11/2014 3:15 PM
53	UK	8/11/2014 3:07 PM
54	USA	8/11/2014 2:38 PM
55	uk	8/11/2014 2:36 PM
56	US	8/11/2014 2:12 PM
57	USA	8/11/2014 2:09 PM
58	France	8/11/2014 1:59 PM
59	UK	8/11/2014 1:59 PM
60	UK	8/11/2014 1:55 PM
61	Uk	8/11/2014 1:50 PM
62	Uk	8/11/2014 1:41 PM
63	Uk	8/11/2014 1:29 PM
64	UK	8/11/2014 1:12 PM
65	UK	8/11/2014 1:05 PM
66	Italy/France	8/11/2014 1:03 PM
67	UK	8/11/2014 12:58 PM
68	UK	8/11/2014 12:48 PM
69	UK	8/11/2014 12:47 PM
70	Uk	8/11/2014 12:47 PM
71	UK	8/11/2014 12:44 PM
72	UK	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
73	USA	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
74	UK	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
75	UK	8/11/2014 12:32 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

76	USA	8/11/2014 12:25 PM
77	UK	8/11/2014 11:55 AM
78	NZ	8/11/2014 11:46 AM
79	UK	8/11/2014 11:36 AM
80	USA	8/11/2014 11:35 AM
81	UK	8/11/2014 11:31 AM
82	UK	8/11/2014 11:29 AM
83	UK	8/11/2014 11:20 AM
84	uk	8/11/2014 11:18 AM
85	UK	8/11/2014 11:11 AM
86	UK	8/11/2014 11:10 AM
87	UK	8/11/2014 11:04 AM
88	UK	8/11/2014 10:54 AM
89	UK	8/11/2014 10:48 AM
90	UK	8/11/2014 10:39 AM
91	UK	8/11/2014 10:37 AM
92	NZ	8/11/2014 10:35 AM
93	UK	8/11/2014 10:34 AM
94	UK	8/11/2014 10:29 AM
95	UK	8/11/2014 10:23 AM

Q3 How long have you been a medical writer overall?

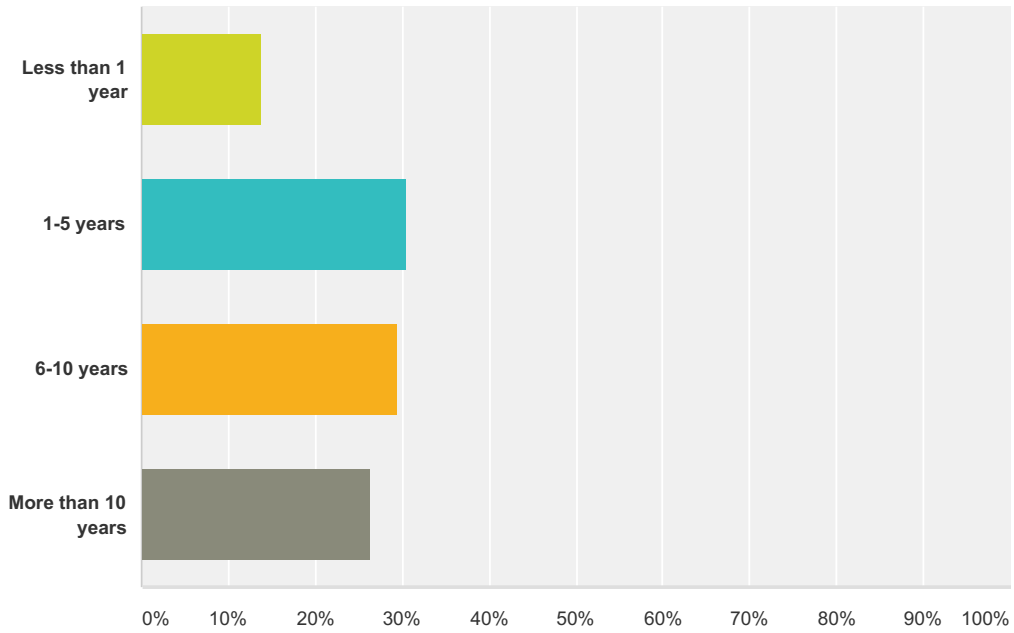
Answered: 95 Skipped: 105



Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 1 year	0.00% 0
1-5 years	9.47% 9
6-10 years	18.95% 18
More than 10 years	71.58% 68
Total	95

Q4 How long have you been a freelance?

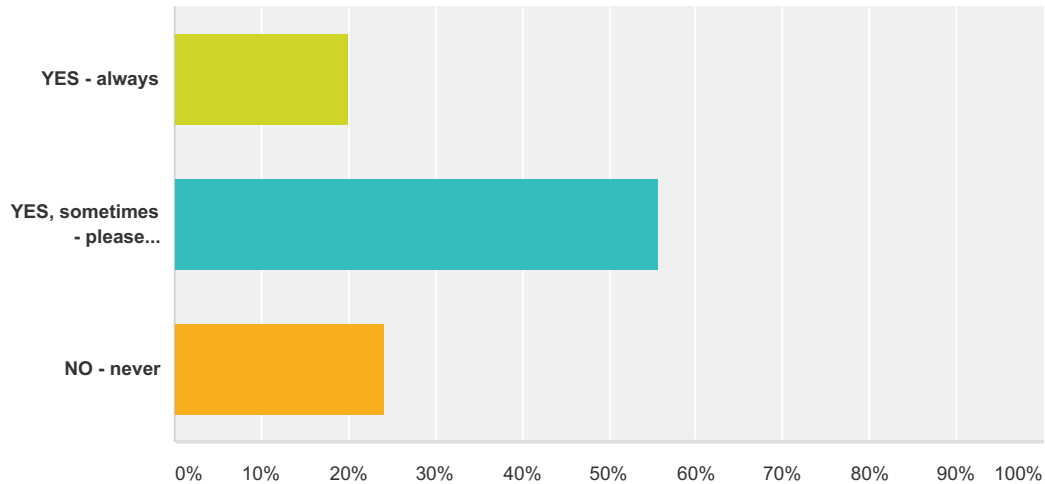
Answered: 95 Skipped: 105



Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 1 year	13.68%	13
1-5 years	30.53%	29
6-10 years	29.47%	28
More than 10 years	26.32%	25
Total		95

Q5 If requested by a potential new client THIS WEEK, with your current level of experience, are you prepared to undertake a writing test?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 105



Answer Choices	Responses
YES - always	20.00% 19
YES, sometimes - please explain the circumstances below	55.79% 53
NO - never	24.21% 23
Total	95

#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	Occasionally, if I am seeking to establish a long-term relationship with a new client that will involve fairly frequent work.	8/14/2014 5:51 PM
2	If I didn't think I could fill my time with other work (very unlikely)	8/14/2014 3:05 PM
3	If a client that I have not previously worked for and would like to develop a working relationship with requested a writing test, I would be willing to do a short test this week depending on workload with other projects.	8/14/2014 2:53 PM
4	if the test was around 1 hour then yes - brief measure of literacy and analytical ability	8/14/2014 10:15 AM
5	I would undertake an editing test, but not a writing test.	8/13/2014 9:49 PM
6	My track record and ability to provide oral and verbal references from clients and KOLs should suffice	8/13/2014 3:30 PM
7	Depends on how busy I am. While most of the time I think that writing tests provide limited insight into the breadth of my experience (a basic writing test is a blunt tool for assessing writing skills for more complex projects), it is worth spending the time doing the test for a new client if it will lead to new business.	8/13/2014 2:33 PM
8	Yes, where the test itself is clear, is not live work and doesn't require more than an hour's work. This could include medical editing, sub-editing, proofreading of an abstract. Or writing a short summary of basic study findings or marketing data.	8/13/2014 7:18 AM
9	As long as assignment is relevant to job and limited in time requirement.	8/13/2014 5:45 AM
10	I have more work than I can handle. Why would I be interested in a job for which I have to jump through hoops?	8/13/2014 1:34 AM
11	This week, as in the question, it would have to be a no. However, if things were quieter and I had time during my working days then I would have no problem with this providing it didn't take more than 2-3 hours.	8/12/2014 8:39 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

12	Not this week as I don't have time available	8/12/2014 2:45 PM
13	At this point in my career I rarely have downtime so I have little incentive to complete a writing test to get a new project. I have to decline projects from repeat clients as it is because of schedule limitations. I would not typically be willing to invest time above and beyond normal business development processes to take a writing test. I will say that if I REALLY wanted a project and thought the client would be fantastic and had time on my hands . . . I MIGHT take a writing test. But I haven't been in that exact situation yet.	8/12/2014 2:25 PM
14	Depends on length of test and how long would take to complete. Would also depend on client or if for permanent position	8/12/2014 1:54 PM
15	1. Is the test a "live" sample that is actually unpaid work. If Yes, then I ask to be paid. 2. May I have an evaluation of my results within 2 weeks of submission? If No, I will not take the test.	8/12/2014 1:51 PM
16	Don't have time - and frankly thinks 20 yrs experience speaks volumes	8/12/2014 1:51 PM
17	Most of the time, I am very busy, and I would rather concentrate on billable work. This week, I probably wouldn't do a writing test, however if I wasn't so busy, I would consider a writing test to attract a new client. I would more likely be persuaded if the client definitely had ongoing work rather than a discrete project.	8/12/2014 1:01 PM
18	I understand that clients want to see if a potential contractor can write, but I'm busy enough that I don't have to spend my time unpaid. In my experience, those clients are trying to get a bargain and, as such, can only afford less experienced writers, who should be willing to take a test.	8/12/2014 12:37 PM
19	I have an extensive portfolio and good references. But if these do not establish that I have the skills needed for a particular project, I would have no problem doing a writing test. From the agency's point of view, this is just good recruitment practice and due diligence. They have a responsibility to check out the people they are hiring. My only issue is that it should not take up too much of my time. More than half an hour and I would say no, and move on to another opportunity.	8/12/2014 11:49 AM
20	If I was actively searching for new clients, I would be prepared to do a test.	8/12/2014 11:19 AM
21	How much time the test will take - can I justify spending that amount of time on unpaid work when I have other projects to do? Will passing the test lead to an amount of work in the future that will justify taking the test?	8/12/2014 10:49 AM
22	Would depend on current workload	8/12/2014 8:21 AM
23	I am always ready to send in samples of my work. This itself seems enough for a client to decide if I were the right fit for a given project.	8/12/2014 7:02 AM
24	Just don't have the time	8/12/2014 6:17 AM
25	I would need to weigh the nuisance of having to take a writing test against the likelihood of resulting work, the desirability of that work, and the amount of time available to me this week and in the near term.	8/11/2014 9:33 PM
26	New type of work or extent of work to be provided/size of project by potential new client	8/11/2014 8:45 PM
27	If a new client had doubts about my writing ability, I would probably have doubts about their suitability as a client! However, if I really wanted the work, I may suggest that they verify my expertise with one of my other satisfied clients.	8/11/2014 8:44 PM
28	I would if it was not too arduous (would take no more than a couple of hours) and I had the time available.	8/11/2014 8:38 PM
29	It's difficult to adhere to a hard-and-fast rule about this. It depends on the time needed for the test, especially if undertaking the test may affect my ability to meet timelines for projects for existing clients. It also depends on my perception of the likelihood of the client or potential employer actually offering me work, presuming my test is satisfactory. Some organizations are simply trolling for candidates they may or may not call upon for some future piece of business. When companies post jobs with the same titles week, month after month, I may infer that they have no more immediate interest in engaging freelancers than they do in hiring employees.	8/11/2014 6:39 PM
30	I will only do one if I have time. I cannot waste time on anything that does not directly generate money unless I have a gap (which is never). With my level of experience I find it faintly insulting to be able to prove the results of a successful 15-year track record.	8/11/2014 5:15 PM
31	It really depends on what my relationship with the client is going to be. If it's just a one off job than that should be the test as to whether they would hire me again. If it was a one off and for a few days then maybe a short test would be appropriate.	8/11/2014 5:11 PM
32	Yes, but this would depend on deadline and number of projects I've lined up already for this week - it's a busy period at the moment, and I'd prefer to prioritize chargeable work.	8/11/2014 4:18 PM
33	I would do so providing the test is short - eg an hours worth of time. I'm not prepared to spend any longer than this on unpaid work.	8/11/2014 3:36 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

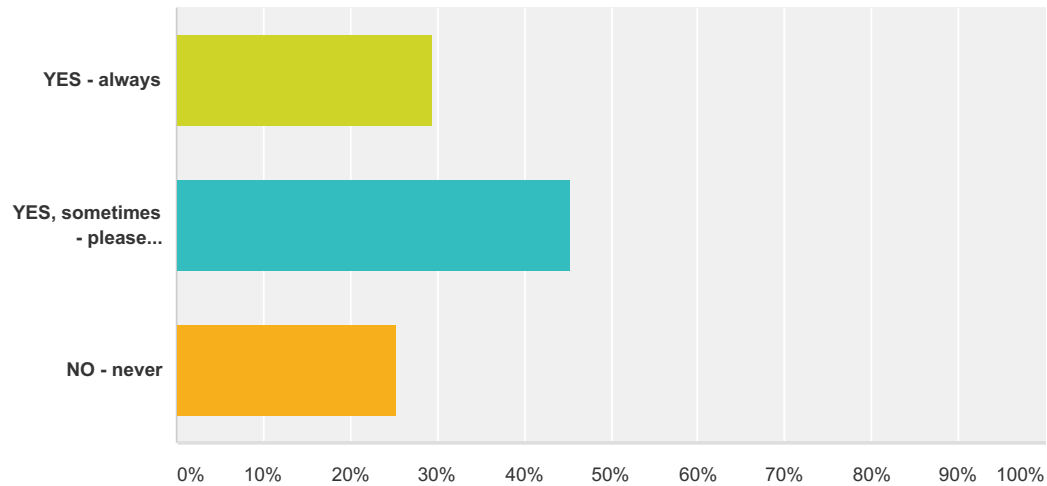
34	I believe my CV adequately documents my expertise. I'm also past the age when I'm willing to prove myself to a client by taking a grammar test. I'm willing to provide writing samples, but not much more. The work I get at this point is usually more advanced than a writing test would call for.	8/11/2014 3:33 PM
35	If I have the time (often don't); if the test is not too long; and if the potential client seems genuine and seems someone I'd like to work with; but NOT if I suspect they are testing loads of people at once just to add to a database - I have enough work not to need to bother with that. I will not do a test that takes more than two hours.	8/11/2014 3:24 PM
36	I have so much experience and so many contacts that a potential new client can speak to somebody who knows me for feedback. If in any doubt, they could give me a small (paid) project to do.	8/11/2014 3:15 PM
37	I would prefer to take a writing test than asked to be provide a writing sample, because of confidentiality and not wanting to inform the new company of my previous or current clients, can be tricky. I would be happy to take a writing test for someone who wants to use me for repeat business, less so for a "one-of" job, simply because of time spent. I have offered to do a few-hours assignment for free instead of something that will never be used for anything, but never had a client take me up on that (yet). The client needs to have a way to evaluate my quality and if my writing style suits their needs, and I don't advertise, so most of my clients come through medical writer friends or word-of-mouth, so I am not being asked to write writing tests every time I turn around, so that may contribute to my willingness to do them.	8/11/2014 2:38 PM
38	I have samples of my work and references that attest to the quality of work that I produce. I have learned over the years that in many cases, the freelance 'test' is actually used by clients that request testing.	8/11/2014 2:12 PM
39	It should be brief (no more than an hour or two to complete) and something that is clearly not providing the client with real benefit. Given my experience, reference, and writing samples already available, my preference would be to simply have the first project done for the client a real (paid) but smaller job. I get real (paid) work, they get a real product they need, but the stakes aren't so high that if something goes awry it is a crisis for anyone. The caveat is that if I am very busy when they need the writing test done, I might just pass on the job.	8/11/2014 2:09 PM
40	Have EMWA certification And experience	8/11/2014 1:55 PM
41	It will depend on the amount of potential business.	8/11/2014 1:50 PM
42	No problem doing writing tests, but with a full workload I often don't have time to fit them in.	8/11/2014 1:41 PM
43	It depends on other commitments and whether I have time to complete a writing test at extremely short notice.	8/11/2014 1:05 PM
44	Context It could be commissioning policy I would not do anything that could be commercially used by the client (i.e., I may do a 'test', I would not do unpaid 'trial' work]	8/11/2014 1:03 PM
45	If I was extremely interested in taking on specific new work for a new client and there were no examples of my work available to send them, I would possibly consider undertaking a writing test.	8/11/2014 12:58 PM
46	It would depend on the size of the project, i.e., the amount of trust needed by the client for an extensive, high-level project; and the earnings it would bring in for me.	8/11/2014 12:48 PM
47	It depends on how attracted I am to the potential work/client and whether I have time to commit to a test THAT week. Last year when I first started out as a freelancer I quite happily completed tests for people I contacted on spec- after all they don't know me and a test is a good way for them to assess me against their needs and standards. I actually quite enjoyed doing the tests and found it informative to see how different agencies tested writers. In my experience its not just about writing skills but about have something extra- what I call 'radar'!	8/11/2014 12:47 PM
48	Don't need to - most work comes in from ex colleagues, long standing clients or recommendation. Wouldn't be interested in undertaking a writing test unless new client was guaranteeing large amounts of long term work.	8/11/2014 12:47 PM
49	I would be prepared to take a writing test, but depending on other work commitments, I would work with potential new client on securing a deadline that I felt to be achievable (i.e. so that I could potentially work on writing test out of working hours).	8/11/2014 12:44 PM
50	Depends how long it might take!	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
51	if I didn't have an appropriate writing sample, the test was short and didn't look like the client would be using it without paying me, and the project was large, long-term, and well paying, but I am very experienced and at this point don't see the need	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
52	OK if short e.g. an abstract.	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
53	If paid - perhaps. Unpaid - no. Am happy to provide samples, references etc. I also always refer potential clients to my LinkedIn profile which shows a number of recommendations from past clients. Would be suspicious if asked to undertake an unpaid test in these circumstances.	8/11/2014 12:32 PM
54	I have recently adopted the policy of sending results back in PDF watermarked documents. I am not in the business of providing free writing services so this protects my interests and allows potential client to review my work. If their intentions are pure this should not be a deal breaker (in my opinion).	8/11/2014 12:25 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

55	Very reluctantly though - I have a huge portfolio of writing samples and testimonials and references, so I find it somewhat insulting to be asked to do a writing test.	8/11/2014 11:55 AM
56	If there is a potential further pool of work I am happy to complete writing tests. Not for a one time job.	8/11/2014 11:36 AM
57	I would provide feedback to the prospective client if I had any relevant comments about the text or the context in which it was presented (or completed).	8/11/2014 11:35 AM
58	Depends on the request. If I have a sample of writing in my portfolio that corresponds with the test then no. If the test would take longer than an hour to do then probably not unless there was a definite chance of work if the test was completed.	8/11/2014 11:31 AM
59	With >20 years experience as a medical writer/editor and a proven track record, I am always surprised to be asked to undertake a writing test. I don't refuse if asked, but it can be quite annoying to spend this time on something that would otherwise be charged for.	8/11/2014 11:29 AM
60	I have been a medical writer for more than 25 years, and freelance for 20. I work with a broad client base, but I would estimate that at least 75% of my work is repeat business - so my clients seem to be generally satisfied with my work! I can provide a number of recent examples of my work, in diverse formats and therapeutic areas, and would be happy to provide references from some of my regular clients if asked. For these reasons, I am not prepared to take a writing test under any circumstances. I would also add that some of the writing tests that have been sent to me gave a strong impression of having been live projects that the potential client was trying to get done for free under the guise of a test.	8/11/2014 11:20 AM
61	Only if they were a particularly premium client that I really wanted to work for (e.g. a Pharma company)	8/11/2014 11:18 AM
62	If I consider it appropriate and not a way to get free work from me	8/11/2014 11:11 AM
63	If I've the opportunity to work with someone who doesn't personally know my work I would feel that the request to complete a writing test was reasonable. Particularly given that a lot of my example work is 3-4 years old now because my recent work has been on manuscripts that are not yet published	8/11/2014 11:10 AM
64	Yes if I have the time available and the writing test is of an appropriate length	8/11/2014 10:54 AM
65	I will only do a writing test for a company that I or one of my colleagues already know. I am suspicious of companies with which I am not familiar as they may be asking me to do work for free.	8/11/2014 10:48 AM
66	It would depend on how busy I was, both short and long term and how much I wanted the potential work. I wouldn't refuse outright.	8/11/2014 10:39 AM
67	I assume that not doing the writing test would mean that their boxes are not ticked and they will not employ me despite 20 years of writing experience. However, I seriously resent having to do it, not least because it is time consuming and there's always the sneaking suspicion that they are just filling up their database without any real intention of reading the test or acting on it.	8/11/2014 10:37 AM
68	Don't have the time, esp. as it may affect my ability to take on new work.	8/11/2014 10:35 AM
69	When I expected it may yield significant work. The actual work I might get would need to be x3 the amount of time the writing test would take.	8/11/2014 10:29 AM
70	If I have time - need to increase client base.	8/11/2014 10:23 AM

Q6 HAVE YOU EVER previously been prepared to undertake a writing test if requested by a potential new client?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 105



Answer Choices	Responses
YES - always	29.47% 28
YES, sometimes - please explain the circumstances below	45.26% 43
NO - never	25.26% 24
Total	95

#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	See Q5.	8/14/2014 5:51 PM
2	If needed the work eg when first went freelance	8/14/2014 3:05 PM
3	As above, and if I was confident that it would lead to work in the future and help establish a collaborative relationship with a new client.	8/14/2014 2:53 PM
4	1. As above one test was short, but general literacy and analytical ability was assessed. I was offered the post 2. An additional 2 tests were longer - requiring a written newsletter and powerpoint presentation - I would not do this again, as it was laborious, time-consuming and in both cases no style guide was provided and it was unclear exactly what the client wanted. I got offered a job for one and not the other one (I suspect for a number of reasons)	8/14/2014 10:15 AM
5	Yes, if I wanted new business and was interested in taking on the specific project.	8/13/2014 7:18 AM
6	In one very specific situation, in which the client wanted me to be a mentor/instructor to inexperienced manuscript authors. I did an editing "test" which was more about author's editing than copy editing. They wanted to see what kind of guidance I would give inexperienced authors. I got the work and it has been ongoing for 2+ years.	8/13/2014 1:34 AM
7	Not sure I fully understand the question. I have never done a test as a freelancer, but I would do one if work was quiet.	8/12/2014 8:39 PM
8	So far, I have not been asked to do this for a freelance contract but if it was standard practice for the company I think I might consider it if I had spare capacity.	8/12/2014 2:45 PM
9	I have never been asked to take a writing test.	8/12/2014 2:25 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

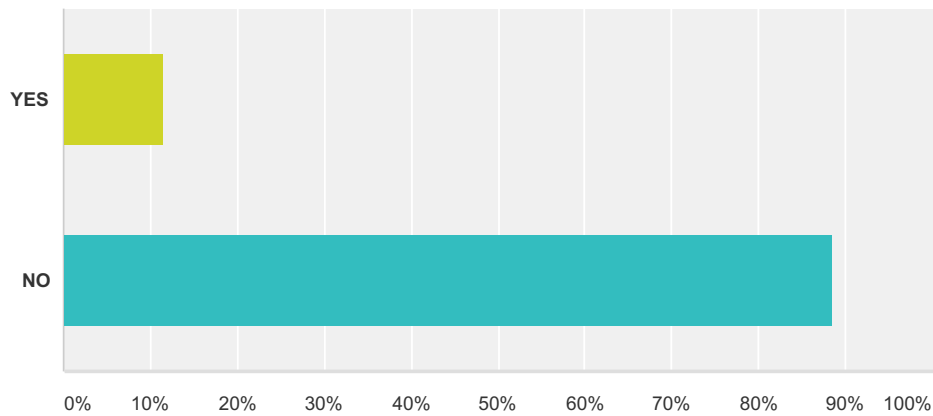
10	I was asked to take a test as a prerequisite to being offered a full-time job. The sample was actual "live" work that the company needed done. I explained that I would do the work as long as I would be paid. I was paid and was offered the job.	8/12/2014 1:51 PM
11	I have never been asked, but when I was starting out (before I had a regular client base), I would definitely have done one.	8/12/2014 1:01 PM
12	Yes, when I was less experienced.	8/12/2014 12:37 PM
13	As described above	8/12/2014 11:49 AM
14	I have been prepared to do the test on the two occasions that I have been asked, when I was a new freelancer.	8/12/2014 11:19 AM
15	As above	8/12/2014 10:49 AM
16	Since I was working before I started freelancing, this wasnt necessary.	8/12/2014 7:02 AM
17	I have been approached by potential clients about taking a writing test, which they have indicated is "standard procedure," though it's been several years since I've received such a request. While I've occasionally agreed to take the test, more often I've told them, "No thanks."	8/11/2014 9:33 PM
18	I have never been asked to take a writing test by a potential client.	8/11/2014 8:38 PM
19	Please see above. When I had less experience in dealing with potential clients, I was more willing to do tests.	8/11/2014 6:39 PM
20	Cannot remember who it was, but I was asked.	8/11/2014 5:15 PM
21	Mostly for people who do not know me or for agencies that have a policy of requiring tests to be completed	8/11/2014 4:56 PM
22	I've only had to undertake a writing test once for a new client - my other clients have not required that I complete a test.	8/11/2014 4:18 PM
23	I think you could make the case that a test makes sense for proofreading and copyediting, which are different skills than writing and all that it requires.	8/11/2014 3:33 PM
24	Yes, when I was new to freelancing I did a couple of writing tests. No work came out of them and I received no feedback, so with hindsight I would not have undertaken them. At the time I thought it was necessary, but now I know it is not. With 17 years' experience, it would now be a little insulting to expect me to undertake a writing test.	8/11/2014 3:15 PM
25	In the 'early' days, I thought it was acceptable. Until I learned what is noted above, and until I gained sufficient credibility.	8/11/2014 2:12 PM
26	As above: It should be brief (no more than an hour or two to complete) and something that is clearly not providing the client with real benefit. Given my experience, reference, and writing samples already available, my preference would be to simply have the first project done for the client a real (paid) but smaller job. I get paid work, they get a real product they need, but the stakes aren't so high that if something goes awry it is a crisis for anyone. The caveat is that if I am very busy when they need the writing test done, I might just pass on the job.	8/11/2014 2:09 PM
27	One passed fine One not - this was an agency in India - I did not agree with feedback, cross checked points with other very experienced colleagues who agreed with me. Suspect comments came from non native English speaker. Suspect rates of pay very low. Not impressed.	8/11/2014 1:55 PM
28	I have never been asked to take one.	8/11/2014 1:50 PM
29	As above (I sometimes have to decline due to being fully booked with paying work)	8/11/2014 1:41 PM
30	I have done this once, spent a long time on it to ensure it was right, and then never got any feedback from the client at all which was extremely frustrating and felt like a complete waste of time. I never heard anything further from that client despite attempts to contact them.	8/11/2014 1:05 PM
31	Prepared to dependent on context	8/11/2014 1:03 PM
32	As a freelancer, I think I have been asked once to undertake a standard writing test for one potential new client (they apparently asked all freelancer writers to do this). They accepted me onto their list of freelancers but I have never had the opportunity to work for them (I've been too busy to take on additional work).	8/11/2014 12:58 PM
33	It would have to be an obvious test rather than a taster piece of work. I was once persuaded to do a 'test', only to realise that I had done a day's work for free.	8/11/2014 12:48 PM
34	I am happy to complete a test if I have the time to do so.	8/11/2014 12:47 PM
35	See above	8/11/2014 12:47 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

36	As I am always looking to expand my client base, I am happy to undertake writing tests. In my 2 years of freelancing, I have been asked to perform a writing test twice, one of which did not result in any work and was taken at the beginning of my freelance career. The other test was a consequence of responding to a MedComms Workbook request last year, and while I was approached to undertake paid work after review of the writing test, I was unable to take up the offer due to workload at that time.	8/11/2014 12:44 PM
37	Relatively infrequently.	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
38	when just starting out to demonstrate I could handle the client's content and style needs	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
39	Can only remember being asked to do a test once - the test provided would have taken me at least a couple of days to complete and I decided it wasn't worth it as I had plenty of other work. And I did wonder if it was actual work rather than a test.	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
40	Was flown to another country (all expenses paid) as part of a virtual team pitching for a new account. The pitch was successful but no work came my way. Having used me in their shop window to help obtain the account, I suspect the client gave the writing work to a less experienced, cheaper writer - either in-house or freelance. This is one reason for my distrust of any unpaid writing tests.	8/11/2014 12:32 PM
41	If the scope of the test requires more than 3 to 5 hours of work I professional decline the opportunity.	8/11/2014 12:25 PM
42	I was recently asked to do this by a potential client - i was very shocked as it seemed so inappropriate. I offered to do them a real (but very small) bit of work which they would pay me for- which they could use to judge whether I was any good. They agreed at the time but never emailed me and that was the last I heard. They seemed rather amateur to be asking.	8/11/2014 11:55 AM
43	As above	8/11/2014 11:36 AM
44	Most of my clients have relied on my CV, publications, and writing samples when assigning work, but have asked me to undertake a writing test if they had a specific audience in mind.	8/11/2014 11:35 AM
45	When I first went freelance. I have been sent tests in the past that would have taken a long time to do and as they were just to get your name on a list felt they were not of value to do when I had actual clients asking me to do things for them! I didn't need to do the tests or work for the client asking for the tests as many others would look at my experience and give me work based on that!	8/11/2014 11:31 AM
46	I have been asked several times; please see my comment above.	8/11/2014 11:29 AM
47	See above	8/11/2014 11:20 AM
48	If I have wanted to work for the client.	8/11/2014 11:18 AM
49	I have never been asked to do one but would have considered it if appropriate (see previous answer)	8/11/2014 11:11 AM
50	I have always been open to completing a test if required. However, I have not been asked by any of my clients, either because I have worked as a permanent employee for the company previously, or a former colleague has recommended me.	8/11/2014 10:54 AM
51	I did a few for some of the larger med comms agencies that required a test, but that was when I first started as a freelancer. The practice doesn't seem so common today.	8/11/2014 10:48 AM
52	I have only been asked to once and completed the test and passed - I am just getting started as a freelancer and don't think I can afford to put potential clients off immediately. I see it as business development.	8/11/2014 10:39 AM

Q7 Have you ever been paid for undertaking a writing test?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 105



Answer Choices	Responses
YES	11.58% 11
NO	88.42% 84
Total	95

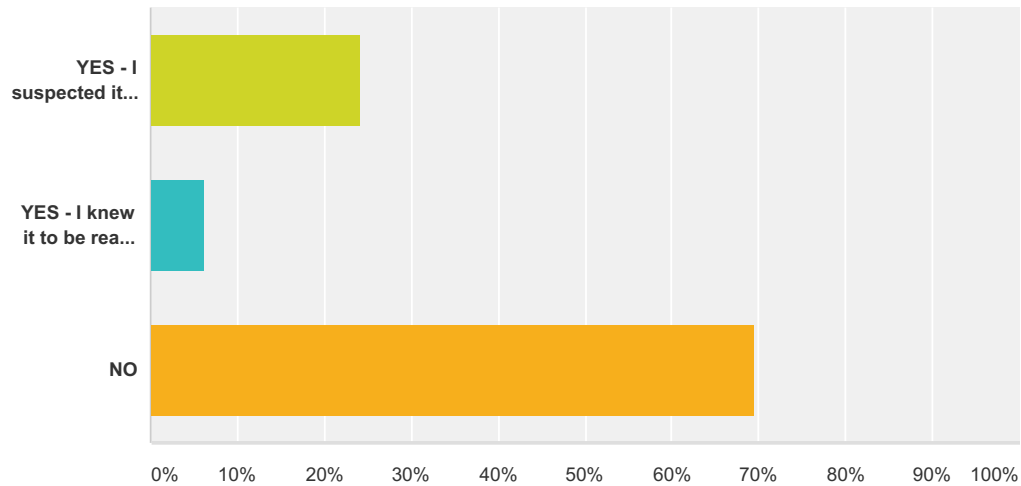
#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	Payment is something that needs to be considered by clients. I have offered to do actual project work as part of a writing test, so that both writer and client aren't wasting their time going over old and often completely out of date writing tests.	8/17/2014 9:35 PM
2	No, but I have undertaken small "sample" projects for clients (e.g. a short article, a blog post etc.), as a trial for ongoing work or a larger project. I am usually happy to do this as I think it is a valid way of checking whether you and the client are a good fit.	8/13/2014 9:49 PM
3	I have never been asked to take a writing test.	8/12/2014 2:25 PM
4	The situation was as I explained in answer to question 6.	8/12/2014 1:51 PM
5	I have not been asked to take a writing test as a freelancer. If it was a lengthy or involved test, I would be reluctant to take it on without payment unless I had no other work in the pipeline.	8/12/2014 11:41 AM
6	This is the worst part... A writing test is never considered a paid project.	8/12/2014 7:02 AM
7	I once persuaded a prospect to pay me for an hour's worth of my time to take the test. Another prospect offered to pay me a nominal fee to take the test. Both instances happened many years ago and I don't remember the details.	8/11/2014 9:33 PM
8	I accepted a fee that was much lower than the work called for. I submitted a piece of work I knew was of high quality, but was never contacted again by the client and was paid only after following up with the company. This seemed to be a case of getting work not for free, but for cheap,	8/11/2014 6:39 PM
9	I would not expect to be paid for that.	8/11/2014 5:15 PM
10	I'm currently under consideration to be a long-term freelancer for a small pharmaceutical company. We've negotiated me doing a few hours paid work on a paper with a view to seeing if I'm what they want and if I like what they do, which suits us both fine.	8/11/2014 5:11 PM
11	n a minority of cases	8/11/2014 4:56 PM
12	This would be great, but I haven't yet found a client that would agree to it! I view writing tests as part of business development, so don't really expect payment.	8/11/2014 4:18 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

13	I have (reluctantly) completed one test, took a day to complete without pay or any subsequent feedback. After this experience I will not complete any more tests unless they are less than an hour long. I've not been asked by any other agency since this.	8/11/2014 3:36 PM
14	Years ago, I was paid to complete a project as part of being hired for full-time job. It was essentially a freelance job, not a "test" in a formal sense. But I was paid and the assignment was used in the hiring decision. I just never considered it to be a writing test.	8/11/2014 3:33 PM
15	It would make more sense for a company to give a freelancer a small real project.	8/11/2014 3:15 PM
16	I have never done a writing test as a freelancer	8/11/2014 3:07 PM
17	Payment would alter my opinion.	8/11/2014 2:12 PM
18	But I've always been given the job!	8/11/2014 1:59 PM
19	It would be nice if clients did offer to pay for undertaking a writing test, particularly if you are able to provide evidence of examples of your work. The one writing test I did took a huge amount of time, during which I could not take on other work (and hence was not earning any income during that period) and I never got any feedback from the client, or heard anything from them afterwards.	8/11/2014 1:05 PM
20	Never done one!	8/11/2014 1:03 PM
21	Never very much, but it's a nice gesture if it's going to be the start of a good business relationship.	8/11/2014 12:48 PM
22	I would not expect to be paid to perform a writing test since this is the potential client's way of assessing suitability.	8/11/2014 12:44 PM
23	In situations where the content preparation is a small-scale project intended to measure appropriateness for future collaboration.	8/11/2014 12:25 PM
24	I have been paid for performing writing/editing tests when being considered for jobs to "polish" manuscripts written by authors/investigators whose first language was not English	8/11/2014 11:35 AM
25	It wasn't really a test, more doing a small sample of work - it was creating an abstract from a paper - that was actually going to be used.	8/11/2014 11:31 AM
26	Good point!	8/11/2014 11:29 AM
27	N/A as I've never undertaken a writing test as a freelancer (only when applying for permanent roles). However, one of the agencies I worked for previously tests all freelancers (writers and editors take separate tests) and do not pay them to take the test.	8/11/2014 10:54 AM

Q8 Have you ever been asked by a potential client to take a writing test that you suspect or know to be real, live work?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 105



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
YES - I suspected it to be real work	24.21%	23
YES - I knew it to be real work	6.32%	6
NO	69.47%	66
Total		95

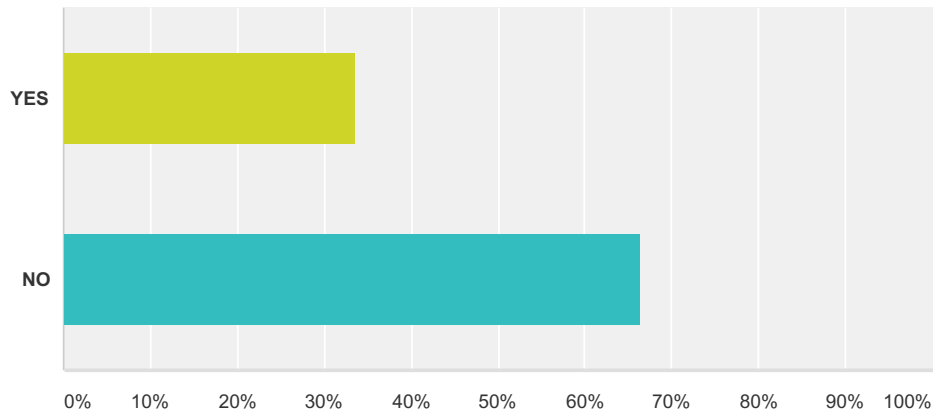
#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	Recently I was asked to undertake a writing test that involved developing a structured abstract, short article and suggest criteria for selecting a suitable journal along with six key words. It could be a standard test they give everyone, but potentially could be something for use.	8/14/2014 2:53 PM
2	One example: I was asked by a medcomms agency to come up with key headlines, subheads and detailed text for a one-page ad as a medical copywriting test. However, the deadline was very tight (EOD the next day). The brief itself also lacked sufficient detail. I suspected this was just a rush job from a desperate account manager who had no idea how to properly brief a writer, so I opted out.	8/13/2014 7:18 AM
3	I have never been asked to take a writing test.	8/12/2014 2:25 PM
4	I explained the situation in answer to previous questions. I would ask if the writing test is real live work.	8/12/2014 1:51 PM
5	I politely declined the test.	8/12/2014 10:49 AM
6	Cant be so sure as options provided above. Because one never knows these days..	8/12/2014 7:02 AM
7	Yes, not counting the case described above. I also recall at least once occasion of being asked for a recent sample of a specific type of project in a specific therapeutic area. After I sent the sample, I never heard from the client, and I suspect my work was copied or plagiarized for a project or proposal the client had.	8/11/2014 6:39 PM
8	No. I would spot that nonsense a mile off.	8/11/2014 5:15 PM
9	It was a press release - originally I was going to do a dummy run but the agency had a pressing need for the real thing. I was paid for this test	8/11/2014 4:56 PM
10	The source material was so badly written that I'd be worried for the client's business if this was real, live work!	8/11/2014 4:18 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

11	I completed a test for a freelance writer role that took approx a day to complete. Very complex and no feedback ever given despite requests.	8/11/2014 3:36 PM
12	See above response	8/11/2014 3:33 PM
13	See answer to Q7	8/11/2014 3:07 PM
14	I would prefer it, and offer to do a few hour assignment for free; otherwise it's kind of a waste of my time/energy. That said, I would likely feel angry if I thought they were trying to be untruthful/sneaky/underhanded about it though.	8/11/2014 2:38 PM
15	Refused	8/11/2014 1:03 PM
16	See above. I only realized too late. (I was green.)	8/11/2014 12:48 PM
17	If I ever suspected I ws being tested with real liv work I would have to bring that up- in my experiewnce its been very obvious that the tests have been devised specifically for testing MW skills.	8/11/2014 12:47 PM
18	there were potential writers lined up out the door and I later suspected we were each given part of his large project so he didn't have to pay for any of it	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
19	I decline these opportunities although in full awareness that there are hordes of writers willing to take tests and accept wages lower than the industry should support.	8/11/2014 12:25 PM
20	This is a real problem. I refused to complete the test unless paid	8/11/2014 11:36 AM
21	Most of the time, the test was not real work. When it was real work, I was told that it was and was paid.	8/11/2014 11:35 AM
22	Most of the tests are long and rather pointless. They are probably set by someone a long time ago and reviewed by people who don't actually write themselves in many cases!	8/11/2014 11:31 AM
23	If I suspected that it was real live work, then I would not take the test.	8/11/2014 11:29 AM
24	An agency sent me a request for a 1500-2000 word review on prostate cancer, which I would have to research from scratch: no background material was provided. At about the same time, the same request was sent to another freelance, who posted it on LinkedIn.	8/11/2014 11:20 AM
25	I told them I was busy. They wanted me to write a 1500 word review on prostate cancer. Sorry, that's got to be proper work for a client, and I'd want 3 days pay (at least) to do that. Politely made my excuses and have never had any dealings with that company again.	8/11/2014 11:18 AM
26	I wouldn't do it if I suspected it was real work.	8/11/2014 10:48 AM
27	Just a feeling...	8/11/2014 10:37 AM

Q9 Is it ever appropriate to be asked by a potential client to undertake real, live work as a writing test?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 105



Answer Choices	Responses
YES	33.68% 32
NO	66.32% 63
Total	95

#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	As a writer this is a suggestion I've made.	8/17/2014 9:35 PM
2	Only if it is clear upfront, and paid and handled as a real work project.	8/14/2014 5:51 PM
3	Again, if it is a client I have not previously worked with, and in order to gauge suitability for the job, I can see where a SHORT writing test may be appropriate. However my time is not free so I am wary of writing tests that involve a substantial amount of work. I would also hope that more than 12 years of experience in med comms and the ability to provide recommendations or references would provide more weight than a writing test.	8/14/2014 2:53 PM
4	If paid (part-fee) for it	8/14/2014 10:15 AM
5	This would be appropriate if it was a paid 'test project', and I have offered this as a service to a potential new client, at a discounted hourly rate	8/14/2014 10:02 AM
6	I think it's ok to begin a working relationship with a small paid project, so long as the potential for further work is genuine.	8/13/2014 9:49 PM
7	Not at my stage of the game--over 35 years. If I have to take a test, I'll pass.	8/13/2014 3:35 PM
8	Only if they were prepared to pay you the going rate for it!	8/13/2014 3:30 PM
9	Because they are getting work done for free. That is simply not on.	8/13/2014 2:06 PM
10	Not unless it is paid for. Time is money and that includes freelance medical writing/editing time.	8/13/2014 7:18 AM
11	If you are being paid for it, I think it is reasonable for clients to do something like this, similar to a probationary hiring. The only other situation is with an inexperienced writer who is trying to break into the field.	8/13/2014 1:34 AM
12	Only if paid. I suspect the first piece of work undertaken for a new client is generally going to be viewed as a sort of paid "test" anyway.	8/12/2014 2:45 PM
13	That is an exploitive strategy.	8/12/2014 2:25 PM
14	Yes, as long as the freelancer is being paid.	8/12/2014 1:51 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

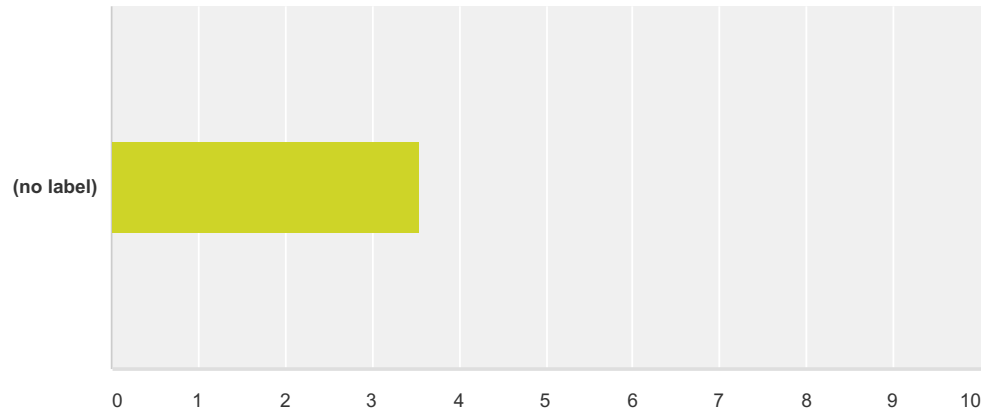
15	Absolutely not. To protect their interests, work shouldn't be done without a confidentiality agreement in place. To protect mine, the shouldn't be reaping the profits of work they are asking me to do for free.	8/12/2014 1:01 PM
16	I would not expect to do live work as a writing test, particularly if there was no payment involved.	8/12/2014 11:41 AM
17	Only if paid for the work - perhaps at a reduced rate for the one-off test.	8/12/2014 11:19 AM
18	If YES, then it has to be paid, and then it can be a writing test !!!!	8/12/2014 7:02 AM
19	Do you mean - provide a real service on a live project but not get paid? No, never appropriate!	8/12/2014 6:17 AM
20	It's OK as long as the client is completely transparent about it. Otherwise, it's inappropriate and unethical.	8/11/2014 9:33 PM
21	Absolutely not. It's underhand.	8/11/2014 8:44 PM
22	Yes, if you are being paid to do it. I don't think it's OK for an agency to get real writing work for free from a freelancer under the guise of it being a writing test.	8/11/2014 8:38 PM
23	I can understand how a client could rightly request this of a writer who is being considered for assignments in a project type or therapeutic area for which he or she has no demonstrable experience. In other circumstances, it is often the case that the test isn't necessary or appropriate but simply an extra requirement clients can impose in a buyers' market and even an opportunity to obtain free content. Requiring tests isn't without risk, however: More capable (and busier) writers may decline to do tests, and a test requirement may engender suspicion and distrust of the client.	8/11/2014 6:39 PM
24	Possibly for less experienced writers. But if you have a strong portfolio of relevant, unedited samples it should ne a non-issue.	8/11/2014 5:52 PM
25	I would flat refuse that if it was not paid. It's pure cheek and highly unprofessional.	8/11/2014 5:15 PM
26	Only if paid	8/11/2014 5:11 PM
27	As long as it is apparent that this is what is happening and if the writer is paid to do the test	8/11/2014 4:56 PM
28	I think this would be inappropriate. If a client wants live work to be completed, then they should be transparent about the whole situation, commission a medical writer to help and pay them at fair market rate.	8/11/2014 4:18 PM
29	Yes provided this is short then it's fine to be asked to contribute I a live project which will allow agencies to see how well you respond to pressure and how well you work with others. But this should be made very clear to the writer at the onset.	8/11/2014 3:36 PM
30	Only if paid for the work as a freelance.	8/11/2014 3:33 PM
31	Unless it's paid, in which case it's not really a test in the conventional sense.	8/11/2014 3:24 PM
32	Absolutely not!	8/11/2014 3:15 PM
33	Yes if the circumstances are explained and the time is paid for. Why wouldn't a client want to test somebody's ability first before giving them further work? You either give them a few real jobs for which you pay the going rate and see if they are up to scratch, or you invite the freelancer to do a test. If you pay for the time taken on the test, it's just another job for the freelancer, with the prospect of some more work for them if the test results are good. If you don't offer to pay, it's up to the freelancer to decide if they want to proceed.	8/11/2014 3:07 PM
34	If they estimate it to take 10-20 hours, that is not appropriate, but less than 5 hours? Sure, as I said before, I would prefer it, otherwise I feel like a waste of my talents and time. I have also offered to have a first-time client only pay me if they are happy with the work or do the work at a significantly discounted rate, but no one has ever taken me up on it.	8/11/2014 2:38 PM
35	If it is associated with compensation.	8/11/2014 2:12 PM
36	But only if you subsequently get paid for it	8/11/2014 1:59 PM
37	Only if paid	8/11/2014 1:55 PM
38	But only if they are prepared to pay you the going rate for it.	8/11/2014 1:05 PM
39	Seems ethically unsound Imagine how such work would be acknowledged (or not!!!)	8/11/2014 1:03 PM
40	I think this is a sneaky way for them to get work done for free.	8/11/2014 12:58 PM
41	It is a form of exploitation. If a client asks you to do real work then they obviously realize you don't need a test.	8/11/2014 12:48 PM
42	They want work done that they will charge a client for....the pay for it!!	8/11/2014 12:47 PM
43	Perhaps a small chunk of the project would be suitable, as long as that test piece is not then forwarded to their paying client.	8/11/2014 12:44 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

44	OK so long as they pay up!	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
45	you should have had a maybe--there might be circumstances where it could be appropriate, but in general clients do this and never pay	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
46	If they are honest about it, they can ask what they like! It's up to the freelancer to decide whether to do it. Personally, I might consider it if it wasn't too long.	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
47	Assuming you have provided evidence (see 5 above) or your competence.	8/11/2014 12:32 PM
48	This is the preferred scenario. Otherwise they just cast wide nets and waste everyone's time...	8/11/2014 12:25 PM
49	If the freelancer is paid at full rate and if the client is honest about it.	8/11/2014 11:36 AM
50	In that case, the writer should be paid.	8/11/2014 11:35 AM
51	If paid for - or if do an hour for free to see how it goes, then to be paid to complete if work is satisfactory. But not entirely for free.	8/11/2014 11:31 AM
52	If a potential client wants some work done, they should be prepared to pay for it, not disguise it as a writing test.	8/11/2014 11:20 AM
53	If they're not sure they want to work with you they shouldn't give you live work. How would their client feel if they knew that was how they were operating?	8/11/2014 11:18 AM
54	No, I feel this is exploitation. However, more importantly, a writing test should be carefully designed with objectives to test specific skills. A standardized test also allows for comparison between candidates and setting a bench mark for an acceptable test score.	8/11/2014 10:54 AM
55	Absolutely not - if it's work, then you should be paid for it, as they will be.	8/11/2014 10:48 AM
56	A test should be uniform so that your work can be compared against others and 'scored'. Getting people to do real work under the guise of a test is misleading and unfair.	8/11/2014 10:29 AM

Q10 Please rate how important you think specific therapy area experience is to your client when considering whether to put yourself forwards for a potential new project (1 is not all important and 5 is very important).

Answered: 95 Skipped: 105



	1 = not all important	2	3	4	5 = very important	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	5.26%	10.53%	25.26%	42.11%	16.84%	95	3.55
	5	10	24	40	16		

#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	Specific therapy area experience seems a constant priority to clients (and their clients), however good medical writers have the ability to switch into new therapy areas quickly and easily. When working with new clients they seem reluctant to try this out for one reason or another.	8/16/2014 7:18 AM
2	Good question! I personally do not tend to respond to Workbook queries unless I have experience in the therapy area, and know that there will be several others within the network that are likely to have more experience. However, while working with a client long term, I do not hesitate to take on a new therapy area because I have developed a working relationship and can invest the time to get the background and learn about the therapy area.	8/14/2014 2:53 PM
3	I can readily pick up new therapeutic areas - previous experience not important at all	8/14/2014 10:15 AM
4	Clients are often looking for freelance support because they don't have in-house experience in that therapy area	8/13/2014 3:30 PM
5	If I've worked in the therapy area before I'll put myself forward, even if that experience was not in the past 2 years. Once I've worked in an area, I find it's relatively easy to catch up with its current status once I know what the client specifically needs.	8/13/2014 7:18 AM
6	Depends on the job; if it's very involved (like a manuscript for publication from data) then yes therapy area experience is important to grasp the topic and efficiently deliver a finished piece of work.	8/13/2014 5:45 AM
7	I often tell clients that I routinely take on new therapeutic areas, and this often satisfies them. Most commonly, it is the ability to interpret data and construct logical, complete arguments that is of prime importance, even though most clients don't recognize this fact.	8/13/2014 1:34 AM
8	I think clients generally attach too much importance to this, although I accept that there are cases in which previous experience of a particular therapy is helpful. A good medical writer should be able to pick up work in new therapy areas. I see it as part of the job.	8/12/2014 8:39 PM
9	I think it is more important for some areas than others	8/12/2014 2:45 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

10	Some projects and new client acquisitions depend heavily on therapeutic area expertise. But I do have 2 repeat clients who will hire me for almost any therapeutic area--they rely on me to let them know that I don't think I have the requisite background to do a satisfactory job. I am always honest, so they trust me.	8/12/2014 2:25 PM
11	It depends. Sometimes a client wants such specialized experience that it seems to me that few freelancers would have. I am disinclined to exaggerate my therapy experience.	8/12/2014 1:51 PM
12	Clients are often risk-averse and want someone with direct experience. Whether that is actually necessary or not is a different question!	8/12/2014 1:01 PM
13	If there is little/no experience in the in-house team then I think it is important.	8/12/2014 11:41 AM
14	It depends. For meeting reports, I have been asked to cover all kinds of topics that I had no prior experience in. For other types of project, some clients have asked for specific experience, some have not. I expect new clients to require at least some related experience for most projects. Existing clients may prefer to use the freelancer they know, regardless of specific therapy area experience.	8/12/2014 11:19 AM
15	Given my clinical background I am lucky to be able to write on various therapeutic areas with ease.	8/12/2014 7:02 AM
16	Only ever not important if it is a project in a very unusual therapy area (or more of a broad medical area, such as therapeutic substitution) or if I have very significant experience in a specific type of complicated project type rather than the therapy area.	8/12/2014 6:17 AM
17	It's a factor, but not the most important one, I think. You can always immerse in a therapy area, and experience you gained in the past may no longer be current or even relevant when you come to take on a new client (product).	8/11/2014 8:44 PM
18	Budgeted hours are often based on a writer knowing the topic or product. Clients are probably not willing to pay for a freelancer to get "up to speed" by doing research and education, unless they know they can use them on an ongoing basis.	8/11/2014 8:38 PM
19	Therapeutic area experience is an overrated criterion for selecting writers, but one many clients, particularly account or client service people, value highly because it is easy to understand and evaluate	8/11/2014 6:39 PM
20	It is important to be frank and upfront with clients regarding your level of therapeutic experience and the learning curve they can expect if your experience is not high.	8/11/2014 5:52 PM
21	Good people can adapt quickly. Look at pitches for instance.	8/11/2014 5:15 PM
22	It depends on what they are going to want you to do. If it's a quick bit of work that needs direct experience/expertise then I wouldn't put myself forward, if it's more long term work where I can get to know the subject better then I would do and have (successfully) done so.	8/11/2014 5:11 PM
23	It would depend on the project. Experience of a variety of project types is equally important when judging suitability for specific work. I think that while therapy area knowledge is helpful, it's usually possible to pick up new therapy areas with some background reading (sometimes the client is willing to include a few extra hours for this; if not, I'm usually happy to invest time in this without payment, if it means I can produce a good first draft).	8/11/2014 4:18 PM
24	A good writer can pick up new therapy areas quickly. Therapy specific experience is not always a significant importance - more important to be able to understand info and pick up knowledge quickly.	8/11/2014 3:36 PM
25	In fact, I have no idea. Probably varies by client.	8/11/2014 3:33 PM
26	They SHOULD think it's really important, because it is. But some clients just think medical writing is a commodity and don't appreciate the value of therapy area knowledge. Sometimes I do jobs where my specialist knowledge (which happens to match the therapy area) is vital - yet the client hadn't even asked if I knew anything about it.	8/11/2014 3:24 PM
27	It depends on the project. Ideally it's better to have therapy area experience, but my clients know I can get up to speed quickly with an area for most project types. However, I wouldn't take on certain projects without experience in the therapy area, e.g. an advisory board report, which really does require prior knowledge.	8/11/2014 3:15 PM
28	It's important but might not be essential. Other things are equally important, like experience of the type of writing (publication, training, regulatory, etc.).	8/11/2014 3:07 PM
29	Depends. I don't think prostate cancer experience is important, but oncology experience may definitely be key. Any area has norms and jargon, so if you're being asked to write an oncology manuscript, you better be able to tell whether PFS, DFS, or TtR would be the most appropriate.	8/11/2014 2:38 PM
30	Clients look for this.	8/11/2014 2:12 PM
31	I think it is sometimes more important to the client than is warranted. I have seen requests for very specific expertise or combinations of expertise, but IMO, in most cases the writer should not be expected to be the subject matter expert. A good writer can come up to speed on most topics that are within their general range and will, at any rate, need to learn the specifics of the client's product and project.	8/11/2014 2:09 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

32	It is also much easier for the writer as you come from a position of expertise and can have confidence that your opinion is correct.	8/11/2014 1:59 PM
33	Would mention specialist area if job was in that area Otherwise could pick up most areas - skills transferable	8/11/2014 1:55 PM
34	Obviously it helps, but there have been times when I've undertaken a number of pieces of work having no experience in that specific therapy area and have been able to produce high quality work which the client was very pleased with. If you have the right skills, and are able to digest new information quickly and efficiently, therapy area experience is not necessarily that important.	8/11/2014 1:05 PM
35	It can get the ball rolling quickly if you have specific experience, but all good freelancers can get up to speed quickly in a new therapy area. Also, even if a freelancer has specific experience his or her knowledge may not be up to date unless the experience is very recent.	8/11/2014 12:48 PM
36	I think they feel it is important- whereas I'd rate it around 2-3 on this scale, as I am always willing and interested to take on work that is outwith my specific therapy area experience.	8/11/2014 12:47 PM
37	A good writer, provided s/he is supplied with appropriate background material, can get up to speed fairly quickly.	8/11/2014 12:32 PM
38	If you are a seasoned writer the research process, strategic development, and persuasive (if promo or marketing) ability should dictate that the content can be focused on any disease state. For example, I write on dozens of topics a year. The likelihood that my most recent piece is in the desired topic area of a client is minimal...	8/11/2014 12:25 PM
39	Being able to quickly understand new topics is a core skill of my job - I don't think prior therapy experience is particularly helpful - what matters are the marketing and strategic objectives specific to that particular drug -	8/11/2014 11:55 AM
40	Most clients will state how important it is upfront. If they do not then I will apply.	8/11/2014 11:36 AM
41	It was quite important to me when I was the client assigning work to freelancers. When I worked in MedComm agencies, I know it was quite important to the client.	8/11/2014 11:35 AM
42	Too often experience is requested in niche areas that you'd be crazy to think someone actually only or recently worked in them exclusively - unless they are straight out of a PhD in which case their writing and other skill are probably not as good as a writer who has a broad range of therapy area coverage over many years' experience. Of course people will say they are expert to get the work, when they may not be....	8/11/2014 11:31 AM
43	I think experience in therapy area helps everyone involved in a project, but is not strictly necessary. With a grounding in medicine, it is fairly quick and easy to pick up a new area, and I have done this many times.	8/11/2014 11:29 AM
44	Although it's obviously good to have a writer with specific experience, I tend to think that a competent writer with many years' experience should be able to familiarize themselves with a new therapy area without any difficulty.	8/11/2014 11:20 AM
45	It helps having background knowledge - you can get up to speed quicker; however, a good writer should not need to have specific experience in order to do a good job (provided a good brief is given)	8/11/2014 11:18 AM
46	I know that this was very important to a previous agency that I worked for when selecting freelancers and based on the emails that go out from the Medcomms workbook this seems to be common, which often puts me off responding to the requests. However, I don't think experienced writers necessarily need therapy area experience. My existing clients are happy to give me work on therapy areas I have not worked on previously. As an experienced writer I feel able to pick up projects on new therapy areas and when working within agencies I was often expected to pick up work on new therapy areas, so why is it different for freelancers?	8/11/2014 10:54 AM
47	A lot of clients understand that medical writers can pick up new therapy areas quickly. When involved in pitches, it seems to be the pharmaceutical companies that require writers with previous experience of the therapy areas.	8/11/2014 10:48 AM
48	Therapy area experience appears to be important to agencies, however, I would argue that a good writer should be able to turn themselves to most therapy areas/projects without necessarily being an expert in that area.	8/11/2014 10:39 AM
49	This one really bugs me. As someone who has worked over nearly every therapeutic area you can mention, they cannot see that freelancers can pick things up really fast (otherwise we would be bankrupt). They appear to be only interested if you were working on their disease area/drug last week.	8/11/2014 10:37 AM
50	Sometimes urgency to have the job completed is more important than therapy area experience. Especially if the client has confidence that the writer can quickly adapt to an area they have little/no experience with.	8/11/2014 10:35 AM
51	Specific therapy experience can be useful but I find that projects in the same therapy area often require different communication angles. Therefore, it might be better to not have too many preconceived ideas gained from previous projects. Also, any good writer should be able to pick up a new therapy area relatively quickly.	8/11/2014 10:34 AM
52	Most clients see this as very important	8/11/2014 10:29 AM

Q11 Please add any additional relevant thoughts or insights you have, if you have them. This question is optional.

Answered: 20 Skipped: 180

#	Responses	Date
1	When I first started freelancing around 8 years ago, I was initially asked to complete a one-page medical writing/editing test from a mid-sized medcomms agency, which I passed. A few years later, after the agency had merged with another, they sent me the same writing test before I took on further work. I just sent them my previous response and 'passed'. I was surprised they still used the same test!	8/13/2014 7:18 AM
2	A freelance relationship is a matter of trust between the client and freelancer. Having suspicions or doubts only harms the relationship.	8/12/2014 1:51 PM
3	I think clients have to be realistic and understanding about what it's like for a freelancer - if you don't work, you don't get paid. So to ask for them to do work for nothing (whether this is a writing test or research/education on a topic) may be preventing them from doing paid work for another client. Both sides have to be fair to one another about what can be reasonably expected, and have to communicate openly. Any business practices where one side feels like they are being "screwed" by the other is not going to develop the kind of collegial relationship which results in the best possible writing product.	8/11/2014 8:38 PM
4	To clients: Does your plumber offer free trial work on your pipes? Will your auto mechanic provide a free tune-up to show he can do the work? Will your attorney do your will for free to show he's capable of meeting your other legal needs? I didn't think so. To writers: Remember, your completed tests are often usable in the the future as samples of your work or as templates for future projects.	8/11/2014 6:39 PM
5	You ought to be able to work out good freelancers from their CV. Tests are a waste of everyone's time.	8/11/2014 5:15 PM
6	It's all about being reasonable. I don't object to doing short tests on my own terms, but I'd only test someone I was hiring myself if they were fairly inexperienced.	8/11/2014 3:24 PM
7	I consider a writing test appropriate for new medical writers, especially if applying for an in-house position. They are useful for assessing potential to become a good medical writer. A freelancer should have several years' experience and contacts who can act as referees. Also, there is more to being a useful freelance medical writer than being able to write. Obviously that part is essential, but I think part of the reason I'm always busy is that my clients like working with me, e.g. I'm reliable, friendly, fair re what I charge, responsive, keep them aware of how a project is going, etc. These things cannot be assessed in a writing test. A final thought: Companies that insist on freelancers undertaking tests might find that the busy (and therefore good) ones say no, and the ones with time on their hands (and therefore not good or inexperienced) say yes.	8/11/2014 3:15 PM
8	I don't think a writer should be too proud to take a writing test.	8/11/2014 1:50 PM
9	The two writing tests I have been offered (I only actually did one of them in the end) have both been somewhat odd. I've been asked to write information e.g. letter to BMJ, summary of information etc as though I'd gone back in time. I had to pretend I was writing the piece 10 years ago and could therefore only use references that were 10 years old or older. That really did my head in, particularly when it was really easy to find current relevant information, but very difficult to find relevant information that was at least 10 years old - bizarre!	8/11/2014 1:05 PM
10	It's not always about the therapy area experience. I've often taken on new work with the client knowing that I don't have specific experience in the area. However, they know me and are confident that I can get to grips with a new area quickly. Also, some of my work encompasses writing for more of a lay audience. I think being able to meet the client's expectations for the appropriate writing styles is also important.	8/11/2014 12:58 PM
11	I think it is reasonable to be expected to complete a writing test - ideally it shouldn't require more than around 3-4 hours work and it can be accommodated around booked and paid work.	8/11/2014 12:47 PM
12	I've done a few writing tests, and the only one that really bothered me took 2 days. That's a lot of time to invest, but I got quite a lot of work from it. You pays yer money...	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
13	When commissioning freelancers myself in a previous life, I tried to send short projects to anyone new or not recommended by someone I trusted. That way, not much was lost if it wasn't any good. But I mainly sent work to people I knew or who had been recommended so it didn't come up that often.	8/11/2014 12:38 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

14	This is a difficult one, because there will be always someone who is desperate for the work and will do the tests. The same argument applies to freelancers who pitch their rates low enough to undercut others. They may well get the work, but will probably deliver a much lower quality product.	8/11/2014 12:32 PM
15	I think that it is important to remember that negotiation (and being relatively good at it) plays an important part in client-contractor relationships.	8/11/2014 11:35 AM
16	I personally would not do a writing test unless i had the time, there was a good chance I would get work if I did this, or there was a nominal payment to do a test by helping on a real piece of work. It is rather pointless to do a lot of work on a test that is going to be filed somewhere and you name goes on a list for "future" work. This is particularly true when there are lots of people out there that will look at your resume/portfolio or talk with you about your experience and then commission based on that. Which	8/11/2014 11:31 AM
17	Whilst I can understand why a freelance test can be useful, it is not always a good idea. Experience should count for more than a one-off test, and the text should only be requested for less experienced applicants, or when there may be doubt about a person's abilities.	8/11/2014 11:29 AM
18	My opinion: You are never too senior, and should never be too proud to do a writing test if you need the work. However, this should be no more than a couple of hours work (an abstract or a couple of slides), and should never be live work.	8/11/2014 11:18 AM
19	I haven't been asked to do a writing test for about 8 years. I have a wide network of clients, so probably wouldn't have the need to do one now as I'm always busy, but I never say never!	8/11/2014 10:48 AM
20	It seems hard to get to see a blank contract before doing a test sometimes. I don't want to take the time to do a test, only to find the potential new client's terms of work are not acceptable. Would really appreciate clients being open here.	8/11/2014 10:29 AM

Q12 Which country are you currently based in? e.g. UK, USA, etc

Answered: 52 Skipped: 148

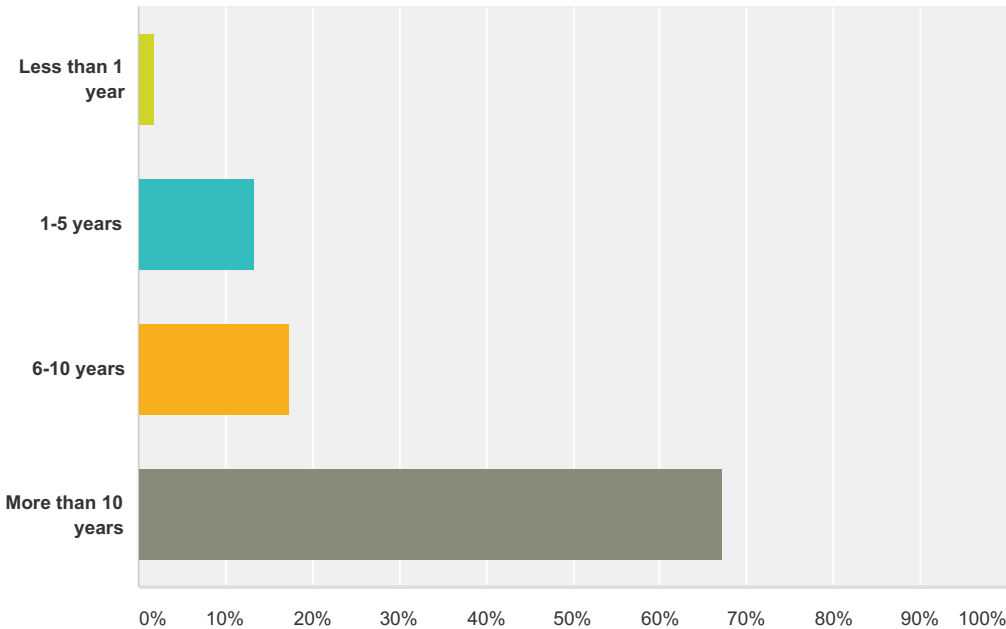
#	Responses	Date
1	UK	8/14/2014 3:13 PM
2	UK	8/14/2014 3:03 PM
3	Uk	8/13/2014 10:46 PM
4	UK	8/13/2014 9:57 PM
5	UK	8/13/2014 12:04 PM
6	UK	8/13/2014 9:40 AM
7	UK	8/12/2014 4:03 PM
8	UK	8/12/2014 2:58 PM
9	UK	8/12/2014 12:49 PM
10	UK	8/12/2014 12:44 PM
11	UK	8/12/2014 12:20 PM
12	UK	8/12/2014 12:12 PM
13	UK	8/12/2014 11:47 AM
14	UK	8/12/2014 11:09 AM
15	UK	8/12/2014 11:00 AM
16	UK	8/12/2014 10:59 AM
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18	UK	8/12/2014 10:01 AM
19	UK	8/12/2014 8:59 AM
20	Singapore and Australia	8/12/2014 12:23 AM
21	UK	8/11/2014 7:57 PM
22	UK	8/11/2014 7:37 PM
23	UK	8/11/2014 5:47 PM
24	UK	8/11/2014 4:12 PM
25	UK	8/11/2014 3:58 PM
26	UK	8/11/2014 3:41 PM
27	Singapore	8/11/2014 3:26 PM
28	USA	8/11/2014 3:21 PM
29	UK	8/11/2014 2:59 PM
30	UK	8/11/2014 2:48 PM
31	USA	8/11/2014 2:46 PM
32	USA	8/11/2014 2:26 PM
33	uk	8/11/2014 2:04 PM
34	UK	8/11/2014 2:00 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

35	USA	8/11/2014 1:59 PM
36	UK	8/11/2014 1:38 PM
37	UK	8/11/2014 1:03 PM
38	UK	8/11/2014 12:58 PM
39	UK	8/11/2014 12:55 PM
40	UK	8/11/2014 12:52 PM
41	UK	8/11/2014 12:50 PM
42	UK	8/11/2014 12:44 PM
43	UK	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
44	UK	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
45	UK, but also commission writers in USA and EU	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
46	UK	8/11/2014 12:37 PM
47	UK	8/11/2014 12:31 PM
48	USA	8/11/2014 12:28 PM
49	UK	8/11/2014 12:27 PM
50	UK	8/11/2014 12:27 PM
51	UK	8/11/2014 12:24 PM
52	UK	8/11/2014 12:22 PM

Q13 How long have you worked in MedComms overall?

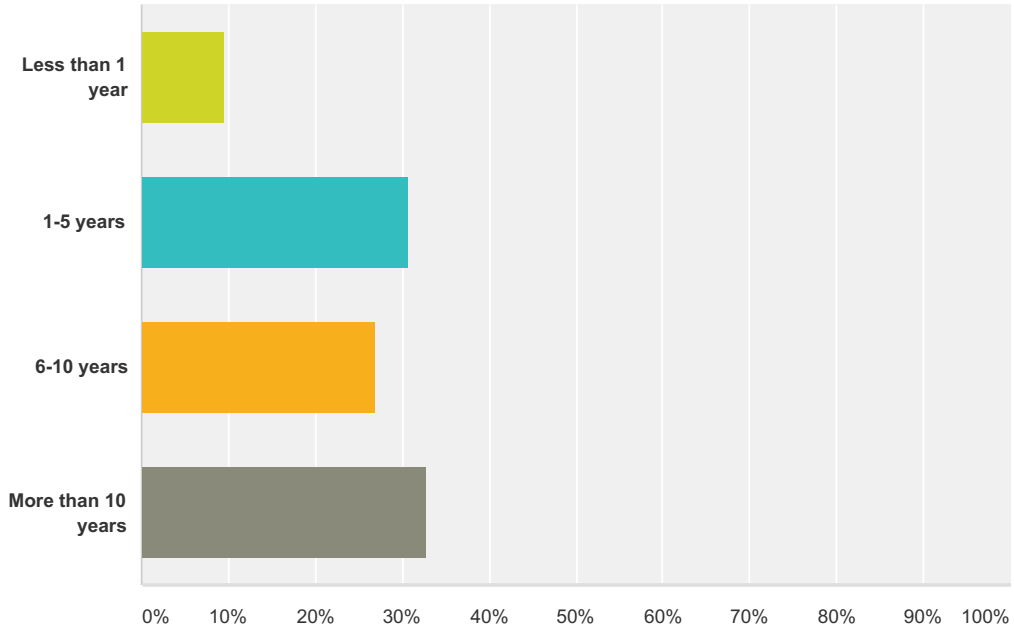
Answered: 52 Skipped: 148



Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 1 year	1.92% 1
1-5 years	13.46% 7
6-10 years	17.31% 9
More than 10 years	67.31% 35
Total	52

Q14 How long have you been in a position to commission freelance medical writers directly?

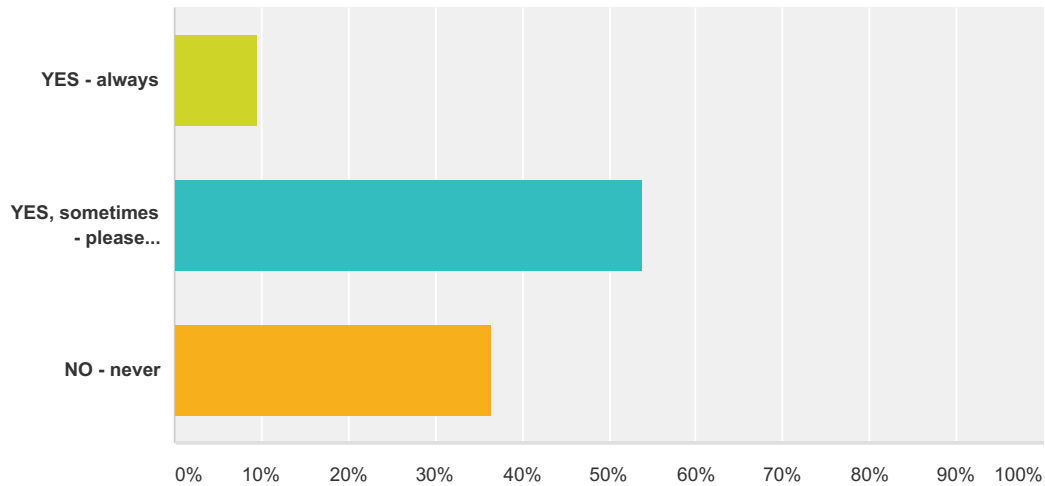
Answered: 52 Skipped: 148



Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 1 year	9.62% 5
1-5 years	30.77% 16
6-10 years	26.92% 14
More than 10 years	32.69% 17
Total	52

Q15 If you need to commission a new freelance writer THIS WEEK, would you require a writing test?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 148



Answer Choices	Responses
YES - always	9.62% 5
YES, sometimes - please explain the circumstances below	53.85% 28
NO - never	36.54% 19
Total	52

#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	If there was a gap between the work required and the writer's CV then we might put together a test. It is rare though. We have a 1week notice period for freelancers and so if there is a huge issue the exposure to our business/clients is limited.	8/14/2014 3:13 PM
2	If referred by a trusted colleague I would waive the test	8/14/2014 3:03 PM
3	Would check experience and use initial short piece as a test...but this would be a real brief for a real piece of work. If the first draft was crap, and I went back to them with comments that they didn't address satisfactorily, I wouldn't use them again.	8/13/2014 10:46 PM
4	Maintain roster of trusted regular freelancers for longer term contracts so generally testing not required, but if there was a need to bring in a new freelancer for an ad hoc job then might consider it	8/13/2014 9:57 PM
5	Clients are now more demanding - what they want is someone who understands the tone of the company, although they do not stipulate a writing test they want to see examples of their work.	8/13/2014 12:04 PM
6	If we are looking for a new freelancer for a long-term contract, then we ask them to complete the same writing test that we use for recruiting permanent staff members. For ad hoc projects or tried and trusted freelancers, a writing test is not required. However, we have been stung by this more than once in the past when a new freelancer has done an appalling job on an ad hoc project and we've ended up having to rewrite it ourselves.	8/13/2014 9:40 AM
7	All of our permanent writers must perform a writing test during the recruitment process and therefore the same standards must apply to our freelance writers. Our reputation is at stake.	8/12/2014 4:03 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

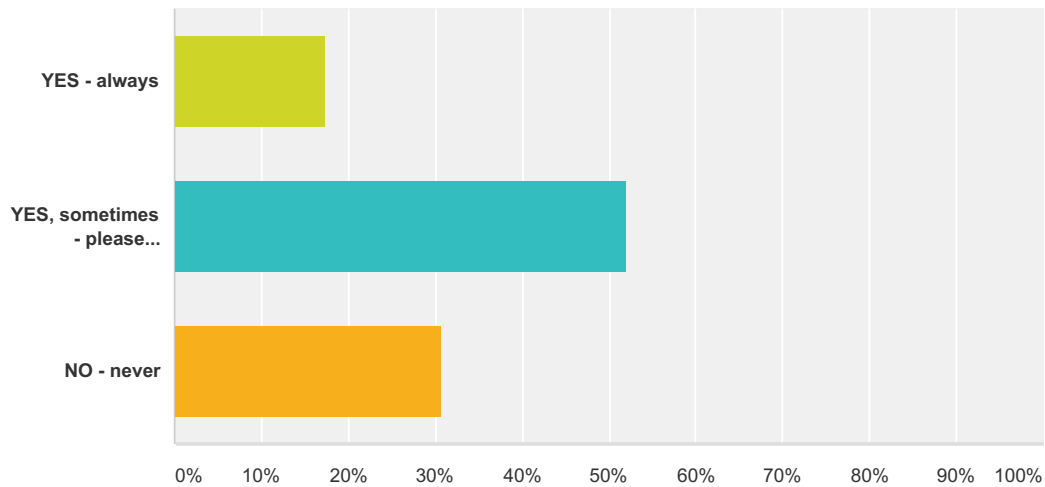
8	I would be embarrassed to ask! I would only ask to see previous published work of relevance to the project or therapy area to get a feel for their expertise in the therapy area or on the type of project. Of equal importance to me, is how many rounds it took to achieve the finished pieces, how accessible and collaborative they are, how willing they are take comments on board and their attitude towards working with other med comms specialists (i.e. me - without a PhD!), their ability to ask the right questions to extract author direction and then their ability to interpret these accurately, their familiarity with regulations and codes of practice, their attitude when we/they come up against problems (i.e. are they solutions focused or will they wait for me to take the lead). A person can be experienced and technically very good in their field, but actually be very difficult to work with or communicate with - this cannot be evaluated by a writing test.	8/12/2014 2:58 PM
9	Although we don't use untested freelancers that often, I recently went through a process of hiring two. We made our decision of who to hire based on experience and a phone call, but did not require a writing test. In retrospect, a writing test would have been extremely useful, and it's something we may implement in the future.	8/12/2014 12:49 PM
10	Mostly I would work with people I know or people who are recommended. Very occasionally I have to find someone completely new and under those circumstances I might ask for a test.	8/12/2014 12:20 PM
11	We have only used known and recommended freelancers. Would not rule it out if we were to approach a previously unused freelancer.	8/12/2014 11:47 AM
12	If unknown and required specific knowledge then I would ask them to do a writing test. Have been bitterly disappointed in the past when someone has come highly recommended and then failed to deliver the quality required. If I need something done urgently, then I would always use a known freelancer if I couldn't handle in-house	8/12/2014 11:09 AM
13	If someone was needed THIS WEEK, I doubt we would have time to have someone do the writing test and then asses it before the work needed to be started	8/12/2014 11:00 AM
14	It is fair to expect a freelancer to regard this as being part of their own business development responsibilities.	8/12/2014 10:59 AM
15	I wish we had for a couple of the writers though!	8/12/2014 10:53 AM
16	If they are untried by my agency, then it is only prudent to check that they can actually write. However, if my colleagues have used them before and have been happy with their work, I would not ask them to complete a writing test.	8/12/2014 10:01 AM
17	I would prefer to see examples of work. We don't allow our clients to get "free" work from us, so it should be the same for the writer.	8/12/2014 8:59 AM
18	If the writer were someone who had NOT worked extensively for a med comms agency (in a senior writing role) then I would certainly expect to see a completed test	8/12/2014 12:23 AM
19	It would depend on whether I already knew the person and their capabilities.	8/11/2014 7:57 PM
20	Although, doing this survey, I wonder why we don't. But I suppose we just trust their CV.	8/11/2014 7:37 PM
21	Depends on whether known to me or not. If not writing test then evidence of competency e.g. portfolio of work and evidence of satisfaction/testimonials	8/11/2014 5:47 PM
22	For a simple piece of writing, for which a portfolio example was available (or was not being done in English) I would consider not going that route, also for projects with urgent delivery where I could still use internal editorial to ensure quality.	8/11/2014 4:12 PM
23	I generally work with freelancers who I already know or used to work with, or who comes recommended from a colleague, so I have another mechanism for trusting their writing ability.	8/11/2014 3:58 PM
24	Depends on any recommendations from my network for the person	8/11/2014 3:41 PM
25	For commissioning a writer this week, it would be based on recommendation or previous experience. For consideration of a writer for future work, examples of writing and a writing test would be preferred before engagement.	8/11/2014 3:26 PM
26	It would depend on what other data I did or didn't have about the writer's capabilities for the writing need I would have.	8/11/2014 3:21 PM
27	All our communications comply with the highest medical journal and industry standards and regulations. They also meet our own rigorous quality standards, which our clients and journal contacts say are second to none. To this end, our clients expect all our employees and subcontractors to have undergone a rigorous selection process, which includes completing a writing test.	8/11/2014 2:59 PM
28	Depending on route of recommendation, prior PROVEN examples will suffice.	8/11/2014 2:46 PM
29	Only work with freelancers who I have worked with in the past. Most of these I have worked with as colleagues so I am fully aware of their capabilities.	8/11/2014 2:26 PM
30	Would leave out the writing test if I have a recommendation from somebody I trust	8/11/2014 2:00 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

31	I would not give a project to a new freelance writer who I had never worked with (or who did not come with a recommendation from someone whose judgment I trust AND who had actually worked with the writer on either a freelance or in-house basis) without a writing test. Too many bad experiences in the past.	8/11/2014 1:59 PM
32	We tend never to have used them but depending on the nature of the freelance engagement I don't see why we would never use one as we use them for other staff.	8/11/2014 1:38 PM
33	If it is a new freelancer that I have not worked with before.	8/11/2014 1:03 PM
34	If I've never worked with the writer before or if there is not enough time because of the pressure of the deliverable.	8/11/2014 12:55 PM
35	Depends on the job. We don't normally but if they're an unknown quantity - someone we or nobody we know has ever worked with - and it's a content heavy job (e.g. a manuscript) then, yeah, I can totally see us asking for one.	8/11/2014 12:52 PM
36	If the freelancer was not recommended to me by someone I know the writing test would be compulsory. Without the writing test I would rather do the work myself, even if it means staying up till 3am. Using untested freelancers means staying up till 3am to fix their work anyway.	8/11/2014 12:50 PM
37	Depends on whether they come with a good recommendation from someone I know and trust. If the person was completely new to me, I would want to have some evidence that they were competent. Unfortunately, it is difficult to judge whether someone has the experience they claim and how extensive it is. For example, many freelancers list every therapeutic area they have ever worked in and you then find that for some of them they have only ever drafted the odd abstract or poster.	8/11/2014 12:44 PM
38	If it is a writer I have not worked with before or do not have recommendation for, or if it is a type of work that is non-standard	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
39	Not keen on general use of freelancers, but I would never commission anyone unless I know them to be good from sight of their previous work/a test/personal knowledge.	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
40	Yes, if the writer was unknown to me or to a trusted colleague	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
41	If they were new to me and if I did not receive a personal recommendation for a current/previous coworker on their ability	8/11/2014 12:28 PM
42	It would depend partly on how well I know and respect the opinion of the person who recommended the freelancer; it would probably depend also on the size and urgency of the work to be commissioned.	8/11/2014 12:27 PM
43	Dependent on the project deadlines and how much additional review of the content and internal person would be responsible for.	8/11/2014 12:24 PM
44	If we had no prior experience of working with the freelancer I would consider getting them to do a writing test.	8/11/2014 12:22 PM

Q16 HAVE YOU EVER previously required new freelancers to undertake a writing test?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 148



Answer Choices	Responses
YES - always	17.31% 9
YES, sometimes - please explain the circumstances below	51.92% 27
NO - never	30.77% 16
Total	52

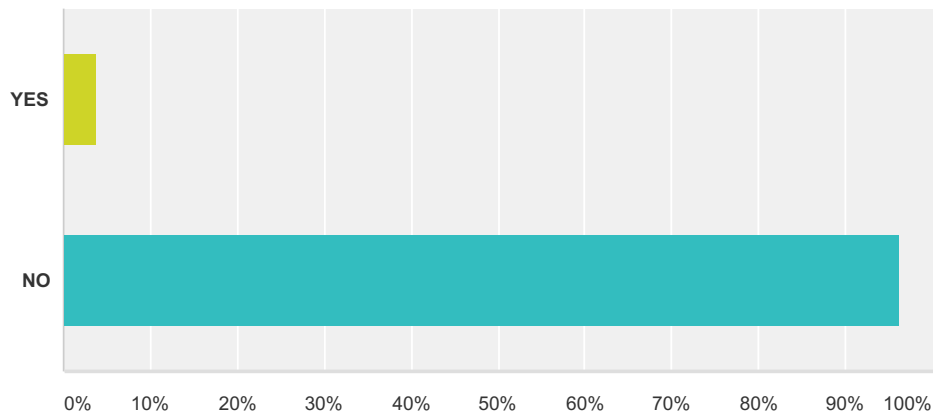
#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	As per the above; the writer was going to produce x material, they hadnt previously so we sent them a past example to check a) they wanted to do it and b) they could do it.	8/14/2014 3:13 PM
2	Time permitting I prefer a test, but in practice I usually use freelancers who have been referred by a trusted colleague, and in these cases I do not test (especially if time is tight). The first projects might be considered a trial.	8/14/2014 3:03 PM
3	Potentially, as part of decision about whether to add a new freelancer to roster	8/13/2014 9:57 PM
4	But I wished I had	8/13/2014 12:04 PM
5	as above	8/13/2014 9:40 AM
6	When working for an agency, we devised writing tests for interview stages for permanent writing roles, but never for freelancers.	8/12/2014 2:58 PM
7	see previous comment	8/12/2014 12:20 PM
8	As above	8/12/2014 11:47 AM
9	As above when unknown	8/12/2014 11:09 AM
10	I have a large enough network to know enough freelancers or to get recommendations. We have not have the need to take on a complete unknown.	8/12/2014 11:00 AM
11	I wish we had for a couple of the writers though!	8/12/2014 10:53 AM
12	answer as above - entirely depends on the previous experience and whether med comms agency experience is extensive	8/12/2014 12:23 AM
13	It was early on in my career, when I did not have a network of freelance colleagues.	8/11/2014 7:57 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

14	We have where we have been offering a (short) contract.	8/11/2014 7:37 PM
15	When commissioning freelance not known to company	8/11/2014 5:47 PM
16	Apart from kind of scope mentioned above	8/11/2014 4:12 PM
17	As above, depends on recommendations from my network	8/11/2014 3:41 PM
18	When they have not come with a trusted recommendation from a peer in the industry, then a writing test would be requested.	8/11/2014 3:26 PM
19	As above, it has depended on what other data I had about the freelancer's capabilities for the need at hand.	8/11/2014 3:21 PM
20	Previously (in current or previous agency), we have used untested freelancers but have had issues with poor quality that have almost led to us losing the account. This includes freelancers that we chose not to test because they were recommended to us. The only freelancers who are not tested are those who have previously worked on staff with the Editorial Director, who has therefore tested them (whether in current or previous agency).	8/11/2014 2:59 PM
21	If time allows, yes. If up against deadlines, will sometimes not bother.	8/11/2014 2:48 PM
22	Writing test is standard, but can be omitted as above	8/11/2014 2:00 PM
23	We ask freelancers who are unfamiliar to our senior staff (global, not just US) to take a writing test. It's the same one we ask candidates for in-house positions to take.	8/11/2014 1:59 PM
24	I can't remember having required one but would under the right circumstances e.g. if the freelancer was going to be semi-permanent and there was a need to ensure their writing was of a standard.	8/11/2014 1:38 PM
25	See question 5.	8/11/2014 12:52 PM
26	If they do not come recommended by someone I know.	8/11/2014 12:50 PM
27	See answer above - if it is someone I do not know at all, I would request a test	8/11/2014 12:44 PM
28	When I had not worked with the writer before - they had approached me rather than being recommended.	8/11/2014 12:40 PM
29	If unknown to me.	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
30	Yes, if the writer was unknown to me or to a trusted colleague	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
31	Again, if their work was not known to me or a colleague	8/11/2014 12:28 PM
32	Particularly in the case of a freelancer approaching us, rather than being approached by us. In this situation there is no recommendation and no history, and if a person is looking for work it suggests they may not be in as great demand as some other freelancers. The reasons for this could be various.	8/11/2014 12:27 PM
33	If I never had any work experience with them or did not have a recommendation from a trusted colleague.	8/11/2014 12:24 PM
34	Primarily as they have been recommended by people who have worked with them directly so I am confident in the writing ability.	8/11/2014 12:22 PM

Q17 Have YOU ever paid a freelancer for undertaking a writing test?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 148



Answer Choices	Responses	
YES	3.85%	2
NO	96.15%	50
Total		52

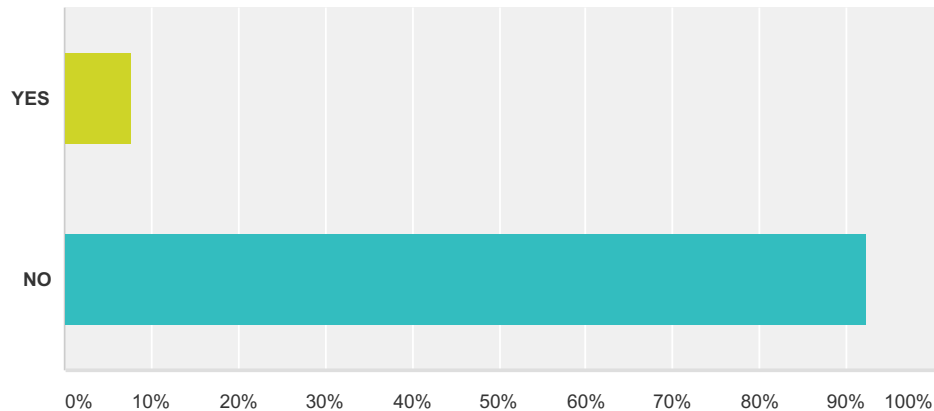
#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	I don't get paid for job applications and there are no expenses for an online/email test.	8/14/2014 3:03 PM
2	If they want to work with me they should be happy to invest some time in the process. We invest time in taking a new freelance writer on and cannot charge that to our clients.	8/12/2014 12:20 PM
3	This would be like paying candidates for an in-house job for their time to attend an interview.	8/12/2014 11:47 AM
4	If they want the work, they should be prepared to do a test	8/12/2014 11:09 AM
5	In the same way our pharma clients do NOT pay us for pitch/proposal time, I would consider this cost of doing business. We do not pay potential employees for doing a writing test - it's the same scenario for freelancers IMO .	8/12/2014 11:00 AM
6	No and I would be strongly opposed to this. Freelancers must regard this as their own business development costs for what might be a fruitful working relationship that spans many years.	8/12/2014 10:59 AM
7	Doing the test is a measure of how much the person wants the job.	8/11/2014 7:57 PM
8	We wouldn't expect to pay someone to do a test to see if they were suitable for working with us.	8/11/2014 7:37 PM
9	I see this as business development for the freelancer - similar to that done by agencies. If they do not need the work I would be fine with them declining doing a test at that point.	8/11/2014 3:41 PM
10	The writing test should not be so onerous or time-consuming that it would entail needing to pay the freelancer for taking the test, and the test would not be for work that we as an agency would get paid for from a client.	8/11/2014 3:21 PM
11	We have hundreds of freelancers on our books and the agency is very small. We cannot afford to pay freelancers to undertake a test, even if it were only those who passed (approx 30%).	8/11/2014 2:59 PM
12	This is price of entry I would say. You have to do writing tests at interview for a full time job, why not for a contract? Obviously you can only ask for so much though - nothing that would take more than a couple of hours - and I have heard of agencies practically asking for actual paying work to be done as a 'test', which is pretty underhand.	8/11/2014 12:52 PM
13	Writers who undertake a writing test and pass are given a minimum amount of work. I will interview writers, then wait to give them the test until a suitable piece of work is available for them. Freelancers should consider the writing tests part of their business development strategy.	8/11/2014 12:50 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

14	we treated the first piece of work as a test - if the quality was judged to be good, the freelancer would be paid, if not they would not. The quality was good, so I believe this is a fair approach. If the freelancer is confident in their ability, they should not have any issues with this.	8/11/2014 12:44 PM
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Q18 Have YOU ever given a piece of real, live work to a freelancer as part of their writing test?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 148



Answer Choices	Responses
YES	7.69% 4
NO	92.31% 48
Total	52

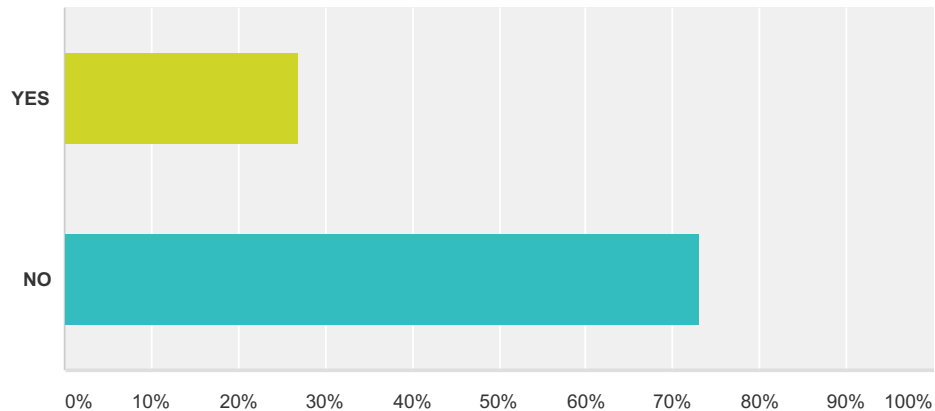
#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	I'd consider it dishonest. Plus I think they'd likely be able to tell.	8/14/2014 3:03 PM
2	See above	8/13/2014 10:46 PM
3	I have occasionally given a writer a piece of live work because I haven't had time to test first. If the writer does a good job then this approach is fine but occasionally it has gone badly wrong.	8/12/2014 12:20 PM
4	We use the same writing test as for potential employees	8/12/2014 12:12 PM
5	This is unethical	8/12/2014 10:59 AM
6	I have always used a standard piece of work so that I can compare between freelancers.	8/11/2014 7:57 PM
7	Wouldn't seem right - and wouldn't execute an NDA prior to taking a freelancer on board anyway so would be impossible to do that.	8/11/2014 4:12 PM
8	Our test is short (2-3 hours maximum) and the same for every freelancer. It is designed to be able to compare against our current pool and therefore consistency in what we ask them to do is required.	8/11/2014 3:41 PM
9	I haven't by choice but I know people who do. I disagree with this freeloadng concept.	8/11/2014 3:26 PM
10	The writing test could include material from a real, live past project, but not from a current one.	8/11/2014 3:21 PM
11	Our writing test was a real piece of work, but we would never give them live work. Aside from being free labour (unfair), you are not assessing the same piece of work between freelancers and it is then harder to keep to a standard assessment of skills.	8/11/2014 2:59 PM
12	No way. That's sneaky. Plus it would take an inordinate amount of management to complete work that way, as well as being a pretty big gamble on the quality of the end product.	8/11/2014 12:52 PM
13	I have never given a potential employee or freelancer a live piece of work. That would be disrespectful to both my client and to the freelancer.	8/11/2014 12:50 PM
14	See above	8/11/2014 12:44 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

15	But I have been accused of it... by a freelancer who failed the writing test and demanded payment afterwards	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
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Q19 Is it ever appropriate to give a piece of real, live work to a freelancer as part of their writing test?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 148



Answer Choices	Responses
YES	26.92% 14
NO	73.08% 38
Total	52

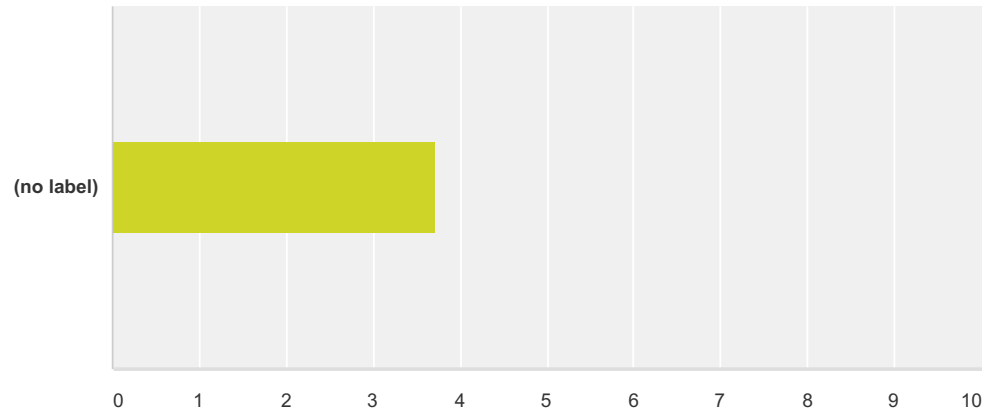
#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	If they were paid and (somehow) didnt breach confidentiality then sure. But unsure how that would be distinct from just using them as a freelancer with the promise of more work if they do a good job...	8/14/2014 3:13 PM
2	I can't think of a time this would be ok	8/14/2014 3:03 PM
3	We just don't call it a test, but the first piece is always a test	8/13/2014 10:46 PM
4	If you want to use a test to verify the writer's skills then I do not believe it would be appropriate to ask them to undertake client work as part of that process	8/13/2014 9:57 PM
5	But only part - it is unfair for them to do the whole thing - but I might for example ask them to write a blog on the topic	8/13/2014 12:04 PM
6	We use a standard writing test so it's easy to compare different candidates. We often treat ad hoc projects as 'test' projects, but that just means that if it's rubbish we don't work with them again (and if it's really rubbish we don't pay full price)	8/13/2014 9:40 AM
7	If you pay them for it and are upfront about the fact that it's real work	8/12/2014 2:58 PM
8	I might be being pedantic but if you give a writer a piece of live work you are giving them a job and you should pay them for it -- assuming they complete the work satisfactorily.	8/12/2014 12:20 PM
9	We need to ensure quality before we send real work to be done	8/12/2014 12:12 PM
10	No on the assumption that they would not be paid for this work (but could be yes if they were)	8/12/2014 11:47 AM
11	If I wanted to test specific knowledge and there was a piece of work that could demonstrate that knowledge, then it wouldn't matter to me whether it's a real project or not. However, I would never rely on being able to use the output and would ensure that a. the work wasn't urgent and b. I had a backup plan. If the work was usable, I would consider paying the freelancer.	8/12/2014 11:09 AM
12	Difficult to say on this; my concern would be that the work would not be at an adequate standard or within the timelines and we would be jeopardising client work/relationships.	8/12/2014 11:00 AM
13	As long as you are willing to accept you may not get back what you were expecting	8/12/2014 10:53 AM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

14	This just adds complications - if it is a real piece of work then the person should be paid.	8/11/2014 7:57 PM
15	Not without paying them. Although, thinking about it, we do work with designers who will give their time for free to work on a pitch with us, on the understanding that, should we win, they would get the design work. But we haven't adopted that approach for writers.	8/11/2014 7:37 PM
16	I guess if it the freelancer was someone who I had no prior knowledge of, then it might be potentially a good idea, as long as everyone was completely aware of the process and also if there was an intention to pay for the time spent if I felt that the quality was good enough.	8/11/2014 3:58 PM
17	I have not done this, but there is an argument for agreeing transparently with a freelancer a reduced fee for an initial "test piece" that would be live. It would not be acceptable to give them real work as an unpaid test	8/11/2014 3:41 PM
18	I disagree with this freeloading concept.	8/11/2014 3:26 PM
19	Not unless (a) that is disclosed upfront and (b) there is the opportunity for the freelancer to be paid if their work is used as part of work for which the agency will get paid.	8/11/2014 3:21 PM
20	I can see that time constraints may force some agencies to do this, but I don't see the point - as noted in the previous answer, you are then not assessing the same thing between freelancers. More importantly, if the freelancer is not good enough, you then have a piece of work that is of poor quality, which can potentially do more harm than good and ultimately cause you to spend more time on it than save time.	8/11/2014 2:59 PM
21	Not to secure FREE services, but to garner a better understanding of their knowledge in the therapeutic area.	8/11/2014 2:46 PM
22	If you are going to give the freelancer an actual live project as part or all of a writing test then you should pay for the work.	8/11/2014 1:59 PM
23	The work that our clients give us is confidential and it would be inappropriate for someone without a confidentiality agreement in place to see the information.	8/11/2014 1:03 PM
24	If there is I can't think of it.	8/11/2014 12:52 PM
25	Again that would be both disrespectful to the client and freelancer.	8/11/2014 12:50 PM
26	See above	8/11/2014 12:44 PM
27	Absolutely not - if you don't know how good they are, then what's the point of risking missing deadlines due to a poor piece of work. Complete waste of time for everyone	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
28	Not formally anyway. You have to imagine a first piece of work with a freelancer will be testing their ability, whether billed as a test or not.	8/11/2014 12:31 PM
29	I might decide to use a small piece of work as a way of assessing a new freelancer. This would of course be paid for. The disadvantage of this is that there is no yardstick against which to measure the outcome.	8/11/2014 12:27 PM
30	I think if it is fee paying work it would be unethical to not pay the freelancer; however if the work was below standard I think the freelancer should consider putting the work right at no additional time.	8/11/2014 12:22 PM

Q20 Please rate how important you think specific therapy area experience is when considering whether to commission a new freelance medical writer for a new project (1 is not all important and 5 is very important).

Answered: 52 Skipped: 148



	1 = not all important	2	3	4	5 = very important	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.92% 1	9.62% 5	26.92% 14	38.46% 20	23.08% 12	52	3.71

#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	Very important with the proviso that most of our work is pretty heavy scientifically grounded and so naturally requires more subject matter knowledge.	8/14/2014 3:13 PM
2	But this depends on the type of project and the client.	8/14/2014 3:03 PM
3	The exception is someone you have worked with for ages, but I wouldn't want to spend time getting someone up to speed on a therapy area and learning how to work with them	8/13/2014 10:46 PM
4	Therapy area experience enables the freelancer to hit the ground running and provide the highest quality work	8/13/2014 9:57 PM
5	Depends on the work. For basic medical writing, we're not that bothered. For more strategic pieces, therapy area knowledge may be crucial	8/13/2014 9:40 AM
6	I trust experienced writers to be able to gather enough knowledge to be able to competently complete most work, even if they have no direct therapy area experience. However, if they are already familiar with the therapy area, it saves time which is often very tight.	8/12/2014 2:58 PM
7	It is very helpful but not necessarily	8/12/2014 12:12 PM
8	It really depends on the freelancer and the piece of work. I know some freelancers who can work across multiple therapy areas. However, if the work is at higher scientific end, then I would always use a writer with specific experience. Also specific expertise required for certain types of work is an absolute must e.g. a pharmacokinetic or pharmacoeconomic manuscript	8/12/2014 11:09 AM
9	It's easier to learn a new TA than it is to learn how to write well, so the most important would be writing quality, adherence to timelines and added value (good communication/updates/request for clarification - rather than the freelancer working in a vacuum and delivering a piece of work that could have been better)	8/12/2014 11:00 AM
10	Most experienced medical writers can pick up any therapy area quite quickly. However, all freelance writers need a clear brief before starting work.	8/11/2014 7:57 PM
11	We have been burnt badly using freelance writers who don't have the therapy area experience but say "it will be fine".	8/11/2014 7:37 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

12	For more technical areas, certainly. For patient targeted work, not so much.	8/11/2014 4:12 PM
13	It depends! I firmly believe that the skill of a medical writer lies in being able to pick up new therapy areas very quickly and so I don't always think that previous experience in a specific area is necessary as long as we have plenty of material for the freelancer to read, a good brief and a reasonable timeframe for delivery. If we are looking for a freelancer to present to a client, however, perhaps as part of a pitch team, then relevant therapy area experience always seems to go down well!	8/11/2014 3:58 PM
14	It is a bonus, but a good writer can get into any TA. The only time it becomes more important is if there are very tight timelines	8/11/2014 3:41 PM
15	It is demanded from clients. If it is a new freelancer, appropriate TA experience is necessary. If it is a trusted writer with whom you have had a good experience, then Prior TA knowledge is less essential. However it often comes down to the client's demands.	8/11/2014 3:26 PM
16	A writer with sufficient experience across multiple therapy areas will often have developed the skills to be effective in a new therapy area without undue trouble.	8/11/2014 3:21 PM
17	It partly depends on the complexity of the therapy area and project - for something quite complex that needs a lot of prior knowledge to put information into context or something specific and unusual then we would choose someone with experience in the field. For something a little more straight forward, such as summarizing information or perhaps writing a clinical trial manuscript, we don't mind using someone with no experience in the field, especially if our in-house reviewer has experience. A good freelancer should be able to pick up a therapy area very quickly and depending on the piece we may prefer to use a trusted freelancer with no knowledge than someone we don't know who has experience. However, having said that, the freelancer work group is brilliant for finding people quickly who have relevant experience. Nevertheless, one issue we come across fairly often is that freelancers may have experience from a few years back (of no use in something very fast moving, like HCV therapies) or they have a current conflict of interest!	8/11/2014 2:59 PM
18	For staff, no, because they have time to get up to speed over multiple projects.	8/11/2014 2:26 PM
19	Therapy areas are so wide they may have no relevance to the specific piece of work, e.g. oncology - but which cancers? I expect a good writer to be able to tackle a new therapy area after a couple of hours reading around the subject	8/11/2014 2:00 PM
20	It depends on the project and the timelines. I think the more experienced the freelancer, the easier it is for him/her to pick up new therapeutic areas. However, there are projects where therapy area experience is critical in order to get a reasonable first draft.	8/11/2014 1:59 PM
21	Therapy area knowledge and/or comfort writing in specific therapy areas are very important in medcomms.	8/11/2014 1:38 PM
22	It is very dependent on the type of work. But, if a freelance writer is needed, then you probably need someone with therapy area knowledge.	8/11/2014 1:03 PM
23	9 times out of 10 you want someone who knows the therapy area. We all know that any competent med comms person can skill up pretty quickly on a new area, but if I'm paying for a freelancer I expect that they are the right person for the job already. We'll gladly invest in staff with training time etc, but not freelancers. Having said that, there are occasions when experience with the format or technicalities might be more important than TA experience so I haven't given it a 5.	8/11/2014 12:52 PM
24	It can be beneficial, it most certainly not essential.	8/11/2014 12:50 PM
25	It depends on the area, but lack of therapy area experience is a problem. This applies to freelancers and in-house staff. I often use a freelancer because I need specific knowledge, eg HEOR, oncology, etc that I perhaps don't have and therefore am relying on the freelancer to provide the expertise.	8/11/2014 12:44 PM
26	Sometimes the work requires therapy area-specific knowledge, sometimes it requires knowledge of how to assimilate and use information. When choosing who will work on projects I try to match up experience and requirements, though this is not always possible!	8/11/2014 12:40 PM

Q21 Please add any additional relevant thoughts or insights you have, if you have them. This question is optional.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 185

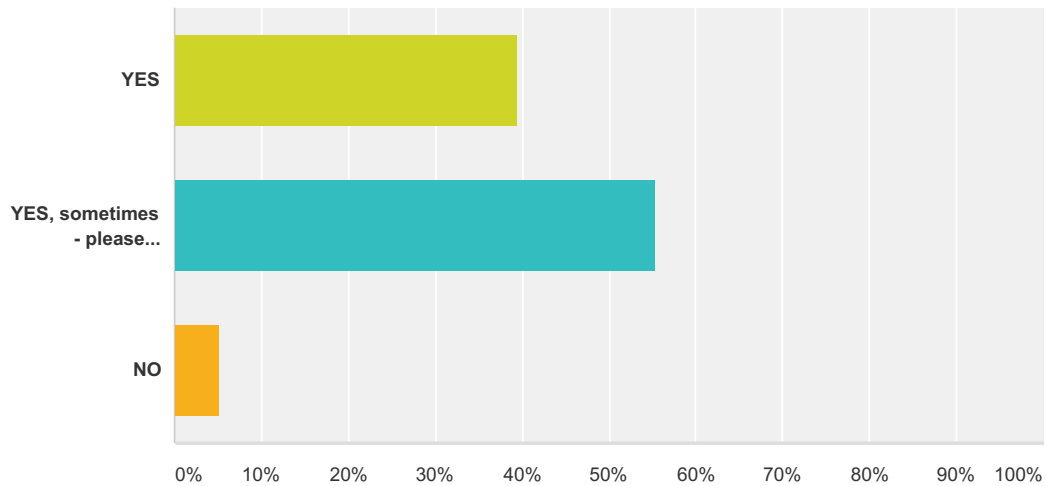
#	Responses	Date
1	As someone who hires writers I would be wary of a writer who didnt want to do a test. From my perspective a CV and portfolio is what gets my attention; after that as each project, client and brief is different I wouldnt be doing my job if I didnt do everything to ensure we got the right person.	8/14/2014 3:13 PM
2	Work is changing to that of a few years ago, we need dynamic copy, not heavy medical stuff. I think the standard of medical writing is very high so the base-line for quality writing is set within the industry for that sort of stuff. Where the challenge lies is with all the different types of copy a pharma company wants now.	8/13/2014 12:04 PM
3	It's a fact that some freelancers are better than others, so for a 'new' freelancer to be taken by an agency that has never used them before, a writing test could be a good option, and presumably an acceptable loss for the freelancer based on generation of future work. In practice, many freelancers are known by the team who contract them, often as ex-employees of that or of previous agencies.	8/12/2014 11:47 AM
4	Having been in the business a long time, I know a lot of freelancers with the specific skills and knowledge that I usually require. I would never use an unknown freelancer without first giving a writing test. I am also hesitant to use freelancers who have a lot of time on their hands - the good ones never do. I also like to use people who have worked in the agency environment for a considerable period of time so they understand the business and the need to meet deadlines. I have used people in the past who claim to have specific skills and the work produced has been appalling. I have always paid to date and just never used that person again. We do usually feed back to the freelancer but probably not as honestly as we should do since we would just not use that person(s) again. I'd like to hear from other people as to whether they pay a freelancer when the work is not up to scratch - or reduce the payment if considerable rework is necessary. I don't like paying for poor work - wouldn't pay a workman around the house if the work wasn't up to scratch. However, I always feel a bit of a moral obligation to pay a freelancer if we have used their time. We always provide detailed briefs and we do tell freelancers to ask if unsure of anything, so I feel we're doing everything right on our side to ensure we get a quality piece of work in return - but hasn't always happened.	8/12/2014 11:09 AM
5	Good topic, Peter :)	8/12/2014 11:00 AM
6	What makes me most willing to use a freelancer is their willingness to help make my job easier. For some freelancers, their number 1 priority is themselves and this is hugely offputting	8/12/2014 10:59 AM
7	Freelancers have to understand that they are not in a special position. Med comms agencies often have to pitch for work with a new client, or at the very least provide detailed responses to RFIs/RFPs. A writing test is a minor inconvenience by comparison.	8/12/2014 10:01 AM
8	What I object to is being asked to do a writing test if there is no actual project. It is a waste of time to do the test only to have it put on file so that the company has a large list of freelancers at their disposal. I have never been employed or employed anyone based on information on file.	8/11/2014 7:57 PM
9	Thanks for this survey on this topic of interest.	8/11/2014 3:21 PM
10	In 99% of cases we have found freelancers very amenable to taking a writing test free of charge. Those who do not want to do it are often based in the USA or are very busy, in which case they would not be able to help us! Our only gripe is we have a lot of freelancers who have said they will do the test and then never respond, even after chasing. That does not look good. There are a whole host of other issues we could discuss, such as whether projects should be a fixed price for a fixed specification, what happens when timelines drift, the most appropriate way for freelancers to communicate with agencies - their clients (freelancers forget this and we are sometimes amazed at the communications we get - we would never communicate with our clients in that way)... but maybe that is left for another day (or your freelancer days)!	8/11/2014 2:59 PM
11	I spent several years freelancing so have seen this from both sides. I think freelancers should be willing to invest their time in gaining new clients (think of it as marketing) but the clients must be careful not to abuse this - getting a freelancer to work on live business is not only risky for the client, it is completely immoral and akin to stealing from the freelancer.	8/11/2014 2:00 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

12	We sell our medical writing expertise based on scientific knowledge and writing talent. All people who are paid to write on our client deliverables - in house or not - must satisfy our standards to ensure we deliver on our promise. I have engaged with freelance writers in my time who, like many in house writers, actually aren't very good at writing anything other than dry, heavy science. If I am to pay someone to write engaging copy in the name of my business, you bet I'm going to make sure that they are talented enough to do so. Why ever would I not?	8/11/2014 12:55 PM
13	Freelancers should be solution based. Tell me the issue and potential solutions. Don't moan. Be reliable. Freelancers who work from home all day and might get isolated get busy social lives. Get your invoices in on time.	8/11/2014 12:50 PM
14	Even initially good freelancers tend to go off with time, as they usually lack to intensive feedback possible in house. That is why we prefer our own in-house people.	8/11/2014 12:38 PM
15	In my view freelancers may lose contact with client requirements if they have been working on their own for a long time. This means that they can become less aware of the standards and certain requirements. So, someone who is great 8 years ago may not be so now. Freelancers should be keen to request feedback, if it is offered. It is also valuable if they are able to come inhouse occasionally, as a way of keepin in touch with the industry.	8/11/2014 12:27 PM

Q22 This short survey has been designed specifically for individuals who are freelance medical writers or who commission medical writing services. We would still be interested in other relevant views from other individuals in the community, around the central question which is as follows: Is it reasonable to require freelance medical writers to undertake a writing test when being considered for a new project?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 162



Answer Choices	Responses
YES	39.47% 15
YES, sometimes - please explain the circumstances below	55.26% 21
NO	5.26% 2
Total	38

#	Please add additional insights here	Date
1	I undertake editing projects and would say that it is essential that an editing test is completed to prove that I can do the job, unless I have been recommended by someone who can vouch for my ability/standard. However, the test needs to be of a reasonable length; I have been sent editing tests that would take me many hours to complete (e.g. edit an entire journal article), which is unreasonable. The person sending me the test should be able to tell if I am any good from a couple of pages of text and the test can be prepared to be as 'horrible' as possible!	8/13/2014 2:51 PM
2	If no experience with them or don't know anyone who can vouch for the quality of their work - been burned many times by poor freelance writers	8/12/2014 10:15 PM
3	Usually we would give a writing test prior to an expected need in the near future in order to become familiar with a writer, however that is not always possible and sometimes happens right before the project. Other times if the recommendation is good we try them out on a project.	8/12/2014 8:37 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

4	Perhaps if they are new to an agency and are unable to provide relevant testimonials/references or examples of work (though confidentiality issues usually prevent that). But I would hesitate to use them as I feel that tests rarely produce the same work as an actual job - different feel. And there's an issue about how much time a freelancer should be expected to spend on a test without remuneration.	8/12/2014 3:52 PM
5	It's entirely reasonable for clients to want an idea of the skill level of the writer before hiring them. There are far too many people in the industry trying to pass themselves off as a medical writer without adequate skills, qualification or experience and this is painfully obvious in the quality of the work they produce.	8/12/2014 3:37 PM
6	I see arguments for both. YES: Agencies are expected to pitch for new work (demonstrating how they have the skills and resources to meet a brief, and usually put a lot of effort into this and often give away ideas). It is not that different to ask a freelancer to do a SHORT test to confirm that they are suitable for the job. At the end of the day they will get paid very nicely should they get the job. I have had the unfortunate experience of taking on a freelance who wasn't up to scratch, and that put me in a very awkward position. NO: There should be an element of trust. and anyone trading as a freelance medical writer should be up to the job and not taking on projects that they do not have the right experience or skills for. However, this is not always the case.	8/12/2014 3:08 PM
7	If you have not worked with them before, there CV is limited or it is a piece of work in a therapy area that they have not worked in before I would personally want to see a writing test completed. You could potentially be resting your business reputation on one writer I think it is fair to ask them to complete a test in the same way that some one who would be full time employed would be expected to pass an interview or in most cases a two interview process including a presentation.	8/12/2014 1:44 PM
8	If the project is outside 'standard' med comms materials such as abstracts, manuscripts, posters I think a writing test is reasonable.	8/12/2014 1:43 PM
9	If the writers are ex-employees or come highly regarded with a referral from a member of staff, we would probably not seek a writing test. However, if the person was unknown to us we would seek a test. Remember, our clients expect us to have rigorous standards in outsourcing and have a robust process to ensure quality, confidentiality and data security.	8/12/2014 10:52 AM
10	If a medical writer has over 15-20 years experience, a writing test is not needed. If the medical writer has a website, LinkedIn listing, a list of by-lined publications, and 2-3 professional references, a writing test is not needed.	8/11/2014 9:30 PM
11	If they are inexperienced/completely unknown to the commissioner, either directly or via intermediate 'referee'. A busy, experienced, high-quality writer is unlikely to have to need to work for a commissioner who demands a writing test; conversely (or in consequence) a commissioner may find they don't attract the best freelancers if they insist on an unpaid test.	8/11/2014 7:38 PM
12	It seems reasonable to request someone new to the client to complete some sort of test, but it should be limited to a maximum of about 1-1.5 hours, not include an entire manuscript for sure! In addition, as someone on the site suggested, ideally if we are talking about a professional organization, it would be standardized to facilitate easy comparisons between candidates.	8/11/2014 4:10 PM
13	If you haven't worked directly with them before	8/11/2014 2:44 PM
14	Assuming you have never had this freelancer work for you before, it's reasonable to have them take a *brief* test to demonstrate writing ability and basic understanding of publications guidelines.	8/11/2014 2:32 PM
15	It's helpful if writers are not "known" quantities or have relatively little experience in the field or therapeutic area.	8/11/2014 2:14 PM
16	Depending on qualifications, experience	8/11/2014 2:09 PM
17	For writers who are new to the organization (ie, nobody can vouch for them)... unless - dreaming here - the writers are independently and robustly certified. As we are yet to have certification for WRITING (we have one for knowledge of ethical and effective publication practices - CMPP), certification is still a dream. Writing test alone not sufficient...results from AMWA and EMWA surveys and, more recently, the Global Publication Survey indicate that compliance risks may be higher with freelance writers.	8/11/2014 12:53 PM
18	In case of no demonstrable or substantial portfolio in the indication of interest	8/11/2014 12:49 PM
19	Not if it's a way of getting different parts of the same project done for nothing (personal experience of this). In addition, some clients seem to forget that a writer's time is money; it should be possible to gauge a freelancer's ability from a relatively short test, but some can require hours of work.	8/11/2014 12:43 PM
20	If the freelance writer has not been recommended by somebody or has not worked with the agency before then a request for examples of previous work from their portfolio would be more appropriate, obviously some of this information might be considered sensitive so an agreement would need to be in place to ensure that this did not compromise the freelancer. If this was not a possibility then the freelance writer could request to do a test to demonstrate their skill set.	8/11/2014 12:28 PM

Flash survey - freelance MedComms medical writers and the place of writing tests

21	If unknown or with limited experience	8/11/2014 12:24 PM
22	As a medical writer working at a company, if I was looking for freelance work I would happily perform a writing text for any new company in order for them to see my style and level of work. When we use freelancers it is really helpful to know what their style is like to get an idea of what to expect from their work and how much instruction to give them for a job.	8/11/2014 12:23 PM
23	If we haven't worked with them before, or not on any relevant type of work	8/11/2014 12:18 PM
24	I think reasonable but I know from speaking to writers that these tests are often extremely time consuming, running into several hours of time. Writers should be able to demonstrate their ability through pre-existing work (although the commercial nature of this obviously has to be taken into account) Writers should be able to supply references that substantiate their experience	8/11/2014 11:31 AM
25	I think it would depend on the particular person and project.	8/11/2014 11:11 AM
26	Known writer but assignment is not one for which the writer is known to the commissioning agency. Completely unknown writer (less common scenario)	8/11/2014 11:00 AM