From 2 to 300 in 20 years

A start-up success story
AMICULUM was designed to be different

In 2001, Richard Allcorn and Jenny Putin, two entrepreneurs working in medical education, created a vision for a global healthcare communications, consulting and learning business, which would blend scientific expertise with creative flair. The business, a self-funded start-up based in a spare room of a rented house, has grown steadily year on year and now comprises a global team of over 300 healthcare professionals who work with global pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in some of the most complex and exciting areas of medicine. In spite of this growth, AMICULUM is proud to remain independent and guided by the very same values it was founded on, two decades ago.

Our family
Each AMICULUM agency offers specific expertise but shares a common heritage, vision and philosophy

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https://careers.amiculum.biz/
Industry-leading learning and development facilities

Continuous learning and professional development is a key feature of life at AMICULUM. The business has developed a comprehensive learning ecosystem named “Curriculum” – which covers a wide range of topics from technical subjects to management skills and leadership. Curriculum promotes professional development for all team members who are invited to get involved both as learners and subject matter experts. It provides a rich and dynamic learning environment for AMICULUM members worldwide.

Learning and development specialist at AMICULUM

I’m part of the dedicated, in-house team at Curriculum, which ensures we offer employees easy access to both insights from colleagues and curated external resources. We are constantly building our content library and are always open to new ideas for creating learning resources and ways to deliver these to help everyone thrive at work. I believe that AMICULUM’s approach to learning and development is world class and a real differentiator for us as a business.

Selected candidates for roles at AMICULUM can now register their interest to access a selection of e-learning content from Curriculum to facilitate their preparations for a future career in healthcare communications and offering a flavour of the quality and extent of support provided to members of the AMICULUM team.

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- News
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Acknowledgements

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Printed copies of this guide are also available if you contact the publishers – support@nextpharmajob.com

Evidence generation and communication: a guide to getting started in HEOR/market access medical writing

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Foreword to 2021 edition

I’ve been running MedComms Networking activities for more than 10 years and along the way collected together a wide range of free resources at www.FirstMedCommsJob.com to provide insights into MedComms and related businesses, and into working life in the agencies. Agencies constantly evolve to deliver more specialist services that match the specific needs of their clients and the marketplace, such as supporting HEOR and market access activities. Whilst some agencies offer a broad range of communications services, others focus in on those individual specialist areas and inevitably they vary in their approaches and in the ways they describe their services. This is the third in a series of careers guides, first published in 2018, that aims to help you navigate your way through to your ideal first job. We’ll update the information on an annual basis, and we welcome your feedback.

Peter Llewellyn
For more information see: www.linkedin.com/in/networkpharma

About the author

Linda is a freelance HEOR/market access consultant and writer providing a wide range of consultancy support to pharmaceutical/medical device companies and HEOR/market access agencies. Linda gained a postgraduate certificate in health economics from Aberdeen University in 2007, and has over 18 years of experience in the HEOR/market access arena. Prior to setting up her freelance business in 2014, she spent 14 years working for a large HEOR/market access agency, latterly as Director of the HTA business unit.

Linda Harrison
For more information see: www.linkedin.com/in/linda-harrison-a5089019

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Introduction

Health economics and outcomes research (HEOR) and market access agencies provide specialist consultancy support to pharmaceutical and medical device companies throughout the lifecycle (early phase, pre-launch, launch and post-launch) of a technology (pharmaceutical drug or medical device).

The types of agencies that offer HEOR and market access consultancy support vary widely. They include medical communications (MedComms) agencies that offer these specialist services, and other companies that are dedicated exclusively to either HEOR or market access work (some provide integrated support across both disciplines).

In any of these agency types, as a medical writer working alongside team members with a wide range of skills, you will be involved in the generation and communication of evidence to demonstrate the added value of a technology, and its potential in clinical practice, to healthcare decision makers.

HEOR and market access agencies provide specialist consultancy support to pharmaceutical and medical device companies throughout the lifecycle of a technology

About this guide

This guide focuses on medical writing roles in the HEOR/market access arenas, but will be of interest to anyone who wants to understand more about the business of ensuring access to new medicines and devices for patients. If you have an interest in the commercial aspects of healthcare delivery and in helping deliver value to patients, a passion for writing and enjoy working in a fast-paced environment, then working in HEOR/market access might be for you. This guide will provide you with an in-depth introduction to this specialist area.

For more information about starting out in MedComms and details of careers events, past and future, visit:

www.FirstMedCommsJob.com
What is HEOR/market access?

As a consequence of global healthcare system cost constraints and the increasing number of new and often expensive technologies coming to market, additional evidence, beyond clinical trial data, is required to demonstrate the value of a technology and its potential in clinical practice. To ensure successful reimbursement (i.e. funding) and subsequent uptake of a technology, it is critical to generate and communicate evidence that demonstrates the added value of a technology compared with available alternatives to relevant stakeholders, such as payers (e.g. government, insurance companies) and healthcare professionals. HEOR and market access, though two separate functions, work in partnership towards this goal.

Examples of evidence generation include health economic evaluations and systematic literature reviews (SLRs); ways in which this evidence can be communicated include global value dossiers (GVDs), health technology assessments (HTAs), reimbursement dossiers and market access tools (all described further on pages 10–11).

HEOR and market access are functions that work in partnership to generate and communicate evidence to demonstrate the value of a technology

HEOR

HEOR is a function that focuses on evidence generation in terms of clinical, economic and humanistic outcomes.

The ‘HE’ element primarily refers to health economic evaluation whilst the ‘OR’ element primarily relates to research and the tools required to evaluate the real-world effectiveness of a technology in terms of clinical and humanistic outcomes (e.g. patient registries and the development or validation of patient-reported outcome measures to assess aspects such as health-related quality of life and patient-reported symptoms).

Market access

Even if a technology receives reimbursement, this does not necessarily mean that all eligible patients will get access to it. Market access activities are aimed at ensuring that patients who are eligible for treatment receive rapid and continuous access to effective technologies at an acceptable cost (in line with the added value of the technology). Market access specialists within pharmaceutical and medical device companies are tasked with communicating the value of technologies to relevant stakeholders to avoid barriers to uptake.
So what does HEOR and market access involve?

Health economics and health economic evaluation

Health economics applies economic theory to healthcare. In the current economic climate, healthcare systems have limited budgets (scarcity of resources) making it impossible to meet all patient demands for healthcare. Therefore, a choice must be made as to which healthcare needs will be met and who will consume them (i.e. which new technologies will be reimbursed, and which patients will be eligible for treatment). In making these choices, healthcare decision makers have to trade-off one healthcare good (e.g. a technology or a service) for another (opportunity cost).

Health economics applies economic theory to healthcare
(e.g. pharmaceutical drugs/medical devices or healthcare services)

Health economic evaluation is a comparative analysis of all the costs and outcomes of two or more competing goods (e.g. a new technology versus existing technologies) to inform decision making, introducing the concept of 'cost effectiveness' or 'value for money'.

In HEOR/market access agencies health economists develop mathematical health economic models (typically in programmes such as Microsoft Excel®). These models synthesise all the costs (e.g. treatment costs, adverse event costs) and all the outcomes (e.g. benefits or adverse events) associated with two or more technologies over a specific timeframe (e.g. lifetime of a patient) to derive an estimate of cost effectiveness. The most common types of health economic models are decision trees and Markov models. Uncertainty surrounding the cost effectiveness (results of the model) can be tested using sensitivity analyses (varying model inputs such as a specific cost) to determine the impact on the result.
There are five main types of economic evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of analysis</th>
<th>Cost measurement</th>
<th>Outcome measurement</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA)</td>
<td>Monetary</td>
<td>Single natural unit (e.g. life-year)</td>
<td>Cost per unit (e.g. cost per life-year gained)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost-utility analysis (CUA)</td>
<td>Monetary</td>
<td>Quality adjusted life-year (QALY)</td>
<td>Cost per QALY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost-minimisation analysis (CMA)</td>
<td>Monetary</td>
<td>None; outcomes are considered equivalent</td>
<td>Least cost alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost-consequence analysis (CCA)</td>
<td>Monetary</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Range of outcomes separated from costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost-benefit analysis (CBA)</td>
<td>Monetary</td>
<td>Monetary</td>
<td>Net cost/benefit ratio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HEOR/market access agencies predominantly report on the methods and results of cost-utility analyses (CUAs). Many global HTA bodies use CUAs to inform decision making. An advantage of a CUA is that it allows comparisons of results across technologies and disease areas providing a wider context in which to make decisions about ‘value for money’.

In a CUA the effectiveness of a technology is measured in terms of the impact it has on quantity (length) and quality of life, combined into a single unit – the quality-adjusted life-year (QALY). QALYs are calculated (Box 1) by weighting each year (or part year) of life with a quality-of-life (or utility) score, where death has a utility score of ‘0’ and perfect health has a utility score of ‘1’. One year of life lived in perfect health equals one full QALY.

**Box 1: QALY calculation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current treatment</th>
<th>50% (utility score 0.5) of that of a healthy person (quality of life 100%; utility score 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment A produces (5 x 0.5): 2.5 QALYs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New treatment</td>
<td>60% (utility score 0.6) of that of a healthy person (quality of life 100%; utility score 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment B produces (6 x 0.6): 3.6 QALYs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**New treatment results in 1.1 additional QALYs compared with current treatment**

The result of a CUA is expressed as an incremental cost-effectiveness ratio (ICER) – the ratio of the difference in costs to the difference in effects (QALYs) (i.e. cost per QALY). The ICER is calculated by dividing the difference in costs by the difference in QALYs (Box 2). Using the QALY calculation in Box 1, and assuming the current treatment costs £14,000 and the new treatment costs £20,000, the ICER for the new treatment relative to the current treatment is £5,455 per QALY (i.e. an additional £5,455 would need to be spent on the new treatment to gain one additional QALY compared with the current treatment).

**Box 2: ICER calculation**

\[
\text{ICER} = \frac{\text{Difference in costs}}{\text{Difference in QALYs}} = \frac{\£6,000}{1.1} = \£5,455 \text{ per QALY}
\]
Value communication and the ‘payer value story’

A key underlying principle of market access is the communication of value. Many new technologies come with higher costs than available alternatives. Therefore, it is important for payers and decision makers to understand the added value that this extra cost will deliver to patients, healthcare systems and society as a whole, so as to assess if the new technology offers true ‘value for money’ versus current technologies.

Health economic evaluation is critical to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of a new technology. However, it is also important to communicate other associated benefits (e.g. the clinical value). The added value in terms of cost and benefits is communicated to relevant stakeholders as a ‘value story’. The value story is usually in slide format comprising value messages and supporting evidence (typically information on the disease, and the patient and economic burden associated with it, its current treatment, any unmet needs, clinical and safety data for the new technology, and cost-effectiveness and budget impact analyses). These will help to establish an understanding of the disease, but also provide a foundation for presenting the value of the new technology and how it addresses current needs. The technology is therefore described in terms of:

- clinical value – through efficacy and safety endpoints
- patient value – through patient-reported outcomes, etc.
- economic value – through cost-effectiveness and budget-impact analyses.

This important market access tool may be used to inform formulary packs as well as specific payer discussions and advanced planning notifications (APNs). The ‘value story’ slide deck is usually supported by a GVD (see page 10).

The ‘value story’ for a new technology aims to communicate its added value in terms of cost/benefits to relevant stakeholders.
What will my role be?

As a medical writer in a HEOR/market access agency you will usually be assigned to several projects simultaneously and will need to multitask. In addition, you will also be expected to quality check the work of other medical writers. You will probably have a client-facing role and will be expected to travel to meetings (in locally or globally based offices) and participate in conference calls. You will form part of a project team, and as you progress, opportunities will arise to take the lead on specific projects.

Who will I work with?

A medical writer in a HEOR/market access agency is a core member of a cross-functional project team, the precise make-up of which will depend on the size of the agency and the types of services it offers. Depending on the project/agency in question, as a medical writer you may work with health economists, systematic review analysts, digital designers and other medical writers. Each project will be overseen by a project/account manager.

Your clients will be a mix of globally or locally based personnel from pharmaceutical and medical device companies who are responsible for HEOR and market access activities (e.g. sales and marketing, health economics, and pricing and reimbursement professionals).

As a medical writer you will be a core member of a cross-functional project team

For more information about careers in MedComms, see www.FirstMedCommsJob.com
What types of materials will I develop?

You will primarily be involved in projects that generate evidence to support and communicate the added value of new technologies across a wide range of therapeutic areas. In a small HEOR agency the deliverables will primarily focus on health economic evaluation. In a medium-to-large HEOR/market access agency work will be more varied. The time spent on producing materials will vary, with a combination of short- and long-term projects. Although the variety of deliverables is too large to list here, some examples are provided below.

**Health technology assessments**

Every healthcare system must make decisions about which technologies should be made available to patients. HTA is a process used to inform this decision making. HTA processes differ in each country; however, in general the efficacy, safety, clinical effectiveness and cost of a technology (typically, a new technology) is systematically evaluated and compared with other, currently available technologies.

In some countries HTA bodies rely on the manufacturer to submit the evidence required to evaluate the technology (referred to as the evidence submission) and typically provide a template for completion (e.g. the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence [NICE]).

**Medical writer’s role:** Preparation of country-specific HTA submissions for a technology, and completing the clinical and economic sections of a submission on behalf of the pharmaceutical or medical device company.

**Global value dossiers and reimbursement dossiers**

GVDs, also referred to as core value dossiers, are detailed, internal documents developed for a new technology to support reimbursement. A GVD incorporates all the evidence and supporting key value messages required to internally align company affiliates and externally communicate (to payers and healthcare professionals) the added value of a technology.

Reimbursement dossiers are a central, internal resource to support company affiliates at a national level in developing HTA submissions or reimbursement applications. Key value messages are included as appropriate for this type of dossier. The focus is primarily clinical and economic information developed in a format that makes it easy to copy and paste into individual country templates for HTA submission/reimbursement applications.

**Medical writer’s role:** Developing evidence-based value messages and writing the content of GVDs/reimbursement dossiers.
Systematic literature reviews

SLRs are undertaken to answer a specific research question by identifying all published and unpublished evidence using prespecified inclusion/exclusion criteria. Many HTA bodies stipulate that SLRs should be conducted to identify evidence (e.g. clinical, quality-of-life and economic data) to inform HTA submissions.

Medical writer’s role: Succinctly and accurately describing the methods and results of SLRs, typically as standalone reports or as manuscripts/posters, or for incorporation into HTA submissions.

Health economic evaluations

Health economic evaluations are incorporated into HTA submissions or reimbursement applications and are often published as manuscripts or presented as abstracts/posters at conferences.

Medical writer’s role: Describing the methods and results, predominantly of CUAs, as standalone reports or as manuscripts/posters, or for incorporation into HTA submissions.

Market access tools

Tools to support local market access discussions with clinicians and payers include APNs, formulary packs and business cases.

Advanced planning notifications notify payers about the budgetary implications of a new technology if it is likely to make a significant impact on expenditure (higher or lower cost than current alternatives) prior to marketing authorisation.

Formulary packs contain information to support the inclusion of a new technology in local formularies (e.g. at hospital level) and are supplied by pharmaceutical companies to healthcare professionals who complete the formulary applications. Content includes details of the technology (e.g. formulation, indication); evidence of efficacy, safety and cost effectiveness; and local patient population and place in therapy compared with existing technologies.

Business cases are developed and typically attached to digital budget impact models (developed by the agency) and are used by field representatives in discussions with payers. Generally, developed for use via an iPad, these models allow the user to customise inputs to make them relevant to the local situation (e.g. patient population size). The business case is prewritten and dynamically attached to the model, feeding through local inputs and generating results. The tailored business cases can then be printed and left with payers.

Medical writer’s role: Developing the content of APNs, formulary packs and business cases.

A variety of deliverables can be used to generate and communicate evidence
How do I apply for a medical writing role in HEOR/market access?

If you have an interest in the commercial aspects of healthcare delivery and a genuine desire to work in the HEOR/market access arena, have a passion for writing and enjoy working in a fast-paced and challenging environment, then becoming a medical writer in a HEOR/market access agency will appeal to you.

Success criteria

To be successful in this arena you:

♦ are a team player, yet confident to work on your own
♦ are able to write clear, succinct and compelling content for a range of documents and presentations, delivering consistently high-quality deliverables within budget and on time
♦ can interpret and simplify complex data
♦ can offer your own solutions to problems
♦ are happy to accept constructive feedback.

Entry requirements

The ability to display an understanding of health economics and health economic evaluation will give you some bonus points; however, this is not a prerequisite. Most agencies offer in-house and/or external training in health economics. The usual entry requirements are a relevant biomedical or life-science degree (some agencies prefer a PhD graduate), confidence dealing with mathematical/statistical data and previous academic or pharmaceutical writing experience, although the latter is not essential.

What do HEOR/market access agencies look for in a medical writer?

The agency will be looking for your ability to demonstrate numerous core skills throughout the recruitment process.

Attention to detail

The prices charged by agencies are based on an estimation of the amount of time required for each team member to complete an assignment. Therefore, it is necessary for agencies to deliver high-quality deliverables on time and within budget to generate profit. Attention to detail is very important to avoid unplanned, additional drafts of material, which not only delay timelines but also incur additional costs that potentially can’t be charged on to the client. Although you may tell a potential employer that you pay great attention to detail you will have a much better chance of success by demonstrating it (e.g. by avoiding obvious errors on your cover letter and/or CV). In addition, you could create an opportunity to refer back to points made earlier in an interview to demonstrate that you are paying attention.
Teamwork
As you will be primarily working within cross-functional teams, it is important that you work effectively as a team member. The agency will be looking to employ medical writers who are able to express ideas, ask questions when unsure about something, effectively manage conflict and develop solutions with others. Think about ways you can demonstrate your ability to work as an effective team member in your application or interview (e.g. your experience in a sports or quiz team).

Communication
Medical writers liaise with clients and colleagues via face-to-face meetings, conference/telephone calls and emails. Your verbal and written communication should be clear and succinct. Listening to others and being able to clarify your understanding of what you have heard are essential when providing accurate reporting and adapting your writing style to different audiences. Potential employers will evaluate your communication skills throughout the recruitment process starting with a review of your application.

Organisation
As you will be working on multiple projects simultaneously it is essential that you are able to manage your own time and prioritise your workload effectively (this requires you to micro-manage your own time, to the hour or even quarter-hour in some instances!). Throughout the recruitment process, you should use examples to demonstrate that you are flexible and can deal with new situations as they arise.

The recruitment process
Application
Entry-level medical writers typically apply directly to an agency advert by sending in a CV or completing an application form. As you are applying for a writing role, reviewers of your CV/application will be highly critical. It is therefore essential to ensure there are no grammatical errors or spelling mistakes. A short cover letter alongside a CV is recommended and provides an opportunity to succinctly express your understanding of, and interest in, the role.

Alternatively, you can look out for annual graduate recruitment programmes.

Interview process
The interview process differs across agencies and may or may not include an initial, short interview by telephone and/or a written test. The reviewers will gain a good understanding of your medical writing capabilities from your CV, so whilst it may be tempting to seek help do not ask someone else to do the test for you. You may also be required to undertake a further test during the interview; you will normally be given a time and word limit. Some examples include:

◆ writing an abstract for a poster or a manuscript
◆ comparing/contrasting clinical trials and summarising under specified headings
◆ writing a disease background summary, including epidemiological estimates (using web-based resources).

The total number of interviewers will vary depending on the size of the agency (expect at least two) and may include a mix of agency personnel.
Some agencies may require you to deliver a presentation in the interview about yourself or on a specific topic (prepared by you in advance). The interviewers will ask you questions about yourself and your experience, and you will also have an opportunity to ask them questions about the role and the agency.

The time scale for an offer or rejection is generally short. Notification of an offer or rejection is normally via telephone followed by written confirmation by post/email. In the event you are not selected for the role, most agencies will be happy to supply you with feedback, which you can apply to future applications.

What is my earning potential?

Initial salaries vary across agencies and will depend on your experience, skills and qualifications. New graduates can expect a starting salary of ~£20K. Starting salaries for trainee writers with a PhD range from ~£25 to 30K. The rate at which your salary will increase is dependent on how well you progress as a medical writer.

What are my future prospects?

You will usually receive in-house training on medical writing and health economics; some agencies may, in addition, send you on short external training courses. Your writing as you progress will be assessed by more senior medical writers, and feedback on other aspects of your work will be sought from project/account managers. You should expect to be a trainee for a minimum of 12 months. The trainee writer role typically moves to medical writer and then senior medical writer. There is the potential to manage a team of writers and lead on specific projects as you progress. Working in an agency that offers many services provides an opportunity to cross train in other areas of the business (e.g. conducting SLRs).

Working in an agency that offers many services provides an opportunity to cross train in other areas of the business
Useful books


Professional bodies

- European Medical Writers Association – www.emwa.org
- Health Technology Assessment international – www.htai.org
- International Health Economics Association – www.healtheconomics.org
- International Society for Medical Publication Professionals – www.ismpp.org
- International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research – https://www.ispor.org

Pharmaceutical industry news, views and information

- HealthEconomics.Com – www.healtheconomics.com
- MedComms Networking – www.medcommsnetworking.com
- Pharmaceutical Executive – www.pharmexec.com
- PharmaFile – www.pharmafile.com
- pharmaphorum – www.pharmaphorum.com
- PharmaTimes – www.pharmatimes.com
- PMLiVE – www.pmlive.com
- The Publication Plan – www.thepublicationplan.com

Careers support

- FirstMedCommsJob.com – www.firstmedcommsjob.com
- NextMedCommsJob.com – www.nextmedcommsjob.com

Other

- National Information Center on Health Services Research and Health Care Technology (NICHSR). Self-study courses with glossaries
- The ‘What-is’ series – a set of short and clear explanations on several important topics. It contains a range of titles covering not only health economics, but also statistics, evidence-based medicine and HTA – www.bandolier.org.uk/extra.html
David Bode
Consultant Writer
OPEN Health, Evidence & Access

After navigating the world of academia, I have come to realise that market access writing is one of the best-kept secrets among the expansive landscape of scientific careers.

At the end of my biochemistry PhD, I decided that the trials and tribulations of the academic lifestyle were not for me. I found myself less interested in the nitty gritty detail of a molecular structure and more interested in potential real-world medical applications of my research. Unfortunately, even the finest academic work may not have a real-world application for many years – or worse – never!

This is where ‘market access’ comes in; a place for scientific, pharmaceutical and medical minds to come together at the leading edge of medical innovation. At OPEN Health, I work as part of a close-knit team of project managers, associate consultants, senior consultants, medical writers and health economists. Together, we provide solutions that enable pharmaceutical and medical device companies to bring a medical product to the market. All of the above means exposure to a wide spectrum of diseases, therapeutic pathways and novel treatments.

As a consultant writer, I am responsible for developing written materials that communicate the key benefits and value of an upcoming treatment to a variety of stakeholders, including patients, clinicians, formulary managers, regulatory institutions and reimbursement bodies. These materials include value dossiers, health technology assessments/reimbursement submission dossiers and visually impactful PowerPoint presentations. Beyond writing, some projects also give me the chance to get creative – especially when translating text-heavy supporting evidence into an array of colourful infographics and figures, or when developing interactive virtual workshops. A fundamental pillar of market access writing is to always ask myself “How will this therapy help patients in ways that other therapies do not?”

It is also important to remain in close contact with clients and all project team members. Clients are typically reliant on your familiarity with the data and supporting evidence, as you are often closer to it than any other member of the team. A writer may expect to attend client meetings to provide an update on progress, discuss content or even listen in to take notes.

Having worked in market access for 2.5 years, I can confidently say that it has been a life-changing experience with ample opportunity to learn and grow as an expert in healthcare. I feel extremely grateful to work in a supportive team of market access, real-world evidence and HEOR specialists with a positive ‘can-do’ attitude at OPEN Health. People really go out of their way to help each other, and senior management make efforts to place us on projects that suit both our interests and strengths. On a personal level, I take great pride in ensuring that patients gain access to much-needed treatments that can significantly improve their day-to-day life, and even prolong survival. If you’re looking to play a key role in giving patients access to medical therapies, market access writing could be for you.
Caroline Freeman
Communications Team Leader
Value Demonstration Practice
Oxford PharmaGenesis

Now that I have worked in the Value Demonstration Practice at Oxford PharmaGenesis for more than 7 years, it’s probably safe for me to admit that I joined the company as an associate consultant with very little idea of what value demonstration actually entailed! I had done a certain amount of reading about the MedComms industry, and felt confident that I had some of the right skills for the role, but I was not sure what to expect from a job in market access. For someone coming from a career in academia there was a lot to take on board at first – getting to grips with HEOR and consultancy, as well as new therapy areas – but I can look back now and say that I am delighted I was offered a job that has enabled me to keep learning and to develop my expertise in a new and evolving field.

My expectations of HEOR were perhaps skewed towards the health economics side, but I have since found that an awareness of patients’ experiences and needs is inherent to much of our work, with many opportunities to understand and to communicate the impact of disease on people’s quality of life. Also, contrary to my expectations, only part of the work that we do is product specific or has a direct focus on market access, and some of the most rewarding projects that I have worked on have involved developing internal training and guidance for our clients. It has been fascinating to learn about the nuances of the markets in different countries and to interview our clients to find out what challenges they face. As with all our work, the breadth of our interactions has been amazing: over the past 6 years, the materials produced by our team have been used across nearly 50 countries.

From the very beginning of my time at the company, I have been lucky enough to work on a huge variety of projects, including congress publications, manuscripts, training workshops and evidence dossiers, among many other deliverables. These projects have spanned multiple therapy areas and clients, so there is always the opportunity to take my existing knowledge and apply it to something new. I feel especially fortunate to have found a role that lets me work in-depth with data and contributes to the scientific literature, but that also requires adaptability and creativity.

Everyone in the team gets the chance to work closely with our clients and to contribute to discussions, and there is a great commitment to allowing everyone to continue building on their experience and moving to the next stage of their career. The past 7 years have been a really exciting time to be at Oxford PharmaGenesis: the company has doubled in size; we have opened several new offices, including Oxford Central where I am now based; and we have received the Queen’s Award for Enterprise and the Great Place to Work award. I am so pleased to have found a career with so much scope and opportunity for growth, and I am excited to see what the future holds.

As with all our work, the breadth of our interactions has been amazing: over the past 6 years, the materials produced by our team have been used across nearly 50 countries.
Robert Gardner
Principal Medical Writer
Bioscript

My route into HEOR was not the classic route! After completing my PhD in biochemistry at the University of Bristol, I took a job in regulatory affairs with GSK, where I developed my career through moving into medical writing, preparing study reports, protocols and investigator brochures. At this stage, I started to think about careers in HEOR and the possibility of taking a new course of study.

I took a new job with GSK Vaccines that led to a move to Belgium to write study reports, protocols and new document types, such as investigational new drug (IND) and pre-IND submissions, and briefing documents for scientific advisory boards. It was only after another 2 years that I took my first proper steps in HEOR as a senior medical writer in GSK’s Epidemiology department. In this role, I was able to work on burden-of-disease studies in which the frequency or incidence of disease is measured using either large databases or trials conducted as part of routine clinical practice. This information is important for building the case for vaccination, particularly in countries where there are many competing priorities. I also had the opportunity to work on post-authorisation safety studies, looking at whether one vaccine was associated with autoimmune diseases or another vaccine was associated with solid-organ transplant rejection. These projects were very rewarding because algorithms were used to select patients from the UK Clinical Practice Research Datalink (CPRD) GP records database, and the case histories were examined to look for safety signals. Importantly, none were found. This is key, because this type of conclusion can’t be reached in a clinical trial with a limited sample size and can only be reached through using real-world data.

I had discovered an enthusiasm for all things HEOR, and it was clear to me that this would be an important area for the future, so I enrolled for a Master’s degree in public health at the highly regarded London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. This course gave me the opportunity to study modules on epidemiology and statistics, which were directly applicable to my medical writing role, and also on health economics (e.g. economic evaluation, healthcare evaluation and analytical models for decision making), which gave me valuable insights. Subsequently, I had the opportunity to take a 7-month secondment in medical affairs in which I was able to work on manuscripts, a value messages slide set and numerous presentations including a TED Talk.

Turning to the present day, and I am now working for Bioscript in the UK. Bioscript is a full-service agency that specialises in regulatory writing, MedComms, HEOR, strategic consultancy, medical education, and the concise communication of scientific, medical and economic data. We work across multiple therapy areas, and always love the challenge of being presented with a new therapy area or communication challenge by our clients. I am currently working on several deliverables and the first of possibly a series of HEOR blogs explaining different aspects of HEOR. The blog will be available on the Bioscript website – why not take a look at https://www.bioscriptgroup.com/blog/.
Chris Hellmund

Senior Medical Writer
Source Health Economics

In the final year of my PhD, I realised that the most enjoyable moments of my time in research occurred when I was in the office rather than at the lab bench! The process of interpreting raw data, turning it into a story and communicating that story appealed to me; producing conference posters and presentations, writing a review article on my subject area and writing my thesis were highlights. I also wanted to broaden my understanding of medical science, rather than focusing on a specific research niche. As a result, I decided to move away from the lab, but I still wanted to keep in touch with the latest scientific developments.

Luckily for me (and others facing the same dilemma), I discovered medical writing. My day-to-day role allows me to apply these skills as I work with pharmaceutical and medical device companies preparing to launch their products. An additional bonus is having the opportunity to work with new clinical trial data from a wide range of disease areas.

I started my career at Source Health Economics, and instantly felt welcomed as part of the friendly, informal and supportive work culture. There is great variety in the type and subject matter of the projects at Source. I have had the opportunity to learn about different cancers, cardiovascular diseases and eye conditions, to name a few. We work with our clients to produce manuscripts, conference posters, global value dossiers and health technology assessment dossiers. The latter are submitted to payers like the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) who make funding decisions based on clinical and cost-effectiveness evidence. It is very rewarding to see a product you have worked on made available to patients.

Source has supported my career development and I have been given the opportunity to manage projects, build relationships with clients and mentor junior staff. Working in multidisciplinary project teams of health economists, systematic reviewers and statisticians provides an environment for continuous learning, with no two projects being the same.

I feel very fortunate to have found a career path that fits my interests and that has a positive impact on patients and the healthcare system.

I feel very fortunate to have found a career path that fits my interests and that has a positive impact on patients and the healthcare system. I would strongly encourage those with similar interests and experiences to consider a career in medical writing.
People in the job – in their own words

Nick Leach
Founder
redthread market access

Mine’s probably a familiar story. Reflecting during my DPhil on what I wanted to do, I knew that I just wouldn’t find a career in academic research fulfilling. What I really enjoyed was writing about science. And although academia offered opportunities to learn and to tackle challenging problems – both of which I enjoyed – I wasn’t sure it was for me. But what to do instead?

Oxford was – and still is – a great place to get started in medical writing. And after serendipitously discovering it as a potential career, that’s what I intended to do. I spoke to some agencies, completed my writing test and was set for a career in MedComms. Or so I thought.

Two writing positions were available in the same company: one in the neuroscience team and one in market access. I naturally thought the neuroscience team would be a perfect fit, given my DPhil research into pathways underlying neural plasticity. So to find myself starting my first day in the market access team was something of a surprise. I can still remember thinking “What’s market access?” and “Who on earth thought all these acronyms were a good idea?” But after more than 10 years in market access, I’m genuinely grateful to have had the opportunity to work in this field.

Because while I started in market access by accident, I’ve stayed because I believe it’s a truly great place to work. I’m lucky to be able to work with passionate, brilliant people in the world’s most innovative pharmaceutical companies. To provide consulting and writing support on health technology assessment submissions means our team is genuinely helping patients get potentially life-changing treatments. To work in partnership with the NHS to improve service provision. And to spend my time untangling complicated evidence to tell a compelling and visually impactful story around the value of a therapy. It’s an immensely rewarding area to work in.

I’ve worked in a few agencies across my career in healthcare communications. Some were enormous, multi-billion dollar behemoths; others were smaller and had a more personable vibe. My preference is certainly for the latter, though I believe there’s an agency to suit most personalities. For me though, I never quite found an agency that fully aligned with my values. One that really believed people and purpose were as important – if not more so – than profit. So, in 2020, I decided to create it myself and founded redthread market access.

Over the last 18 months it’s been amazing to see our team grow, and our clients trust us to deliver our signature blend of brilliant writing and market access insights. Every day is different. And yes, every day has its challenges. But ultimately that’s what we enjoy. Solving problems to help our clients and patients. And I wouldn’t have it any other way.

So even if you have your heart set on a more traditional MedComms role, keep an open mind about market access and value communication. You never know where it might lead you.
Ruth Lewis
Senior Medical Writer
HEOR

I am a senior medical writer at HEOR, and a native Welsh speaker with a background in applied biological sciences and two 13-year-old twin girls, but how did I get here?

During my degree I worked in the USA as part of a placement year carrying out research in a cardiovascular electrophysiology laboratory at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond. It was here that an interest in science became the passion that would draw me into academia for the next 16 years.

My early days were spent teaching pharmacology students at Bath University, but this quickly led to me diving headlong into research roles, first at Bristol University and then closer to home, at Cardiff University. It was the focused nature of research that resulted in my decision to embark on a PhD, studying the role of the innate immune system in cardiovascular disease.

The next few years were a blur of laboratory experiments, scientific discovery and collaborations with both public and private sector institutions. I was in my element, right up to the moment where my twin girls tumbled into my life. If the first 2 years were challenging, the final year of my PhD would be almost impossible. Nevertheless, despite this challenge I not only successfully completed my PhD, but also secured a prestigious fellowship with the Welcome Trust.

I think having a family has really helped me decide on what I now want from my career. I loved the frenetic pace of academia, but I now have other responsibilities. I still want to make a difference and be able to use the experience I’ve gained, and it was this desire that led me to HEOR and medical writing.

It was the perfect career move for me. The work is varied, fast paced and challenging, offering a wide range of services to market access on a global scale. Projects involve the production of systematic literature reviews, health technology assessments, global value dossiers and publications across a broad range of disease areas.

It’s the people who make an organisation and I’ve really enjoyed having the opportunity to work alongside and learn from a multidisciplinary team made up of scientists, health economists, analysts, statisticians and developers. I also get to network, collaborating with clinicians and leading scientists from across the world, but most importantly I’m able to make a difference, by helping to bring life-changing therapies to market.

As I approach my third year with HEOR I look forward with excitement to the new opportunities and experiences that will come from being part of this rapidly expanding organisation.
Pin Lu
AMICULUM Access and AMICULUM Asia

I came to the UK after completing my PhD in cell and developmental biology. The transition from being a student in bustling Hong Kong to working as a postdoc in northeast England wasn’t hard; however, the uncertainty associated with being a fixed-term researcher took its toll. I still loved research, but I couldn’t see a future for me in science; at that time, being a lecturer or lab researcher were the only options I knew of.

That was when I discovered my interest in writing. I was fascinated by many aspects of life in the UK and started to write about them for publications in China and the UK, to the point that I began to consider it as a career option. So, after a second postdoc stint, I quit research and became a writer. For a few years, I worked for several publications, including The Guardian, and I still write for a couple of newspapers and magazines.

However, the scientist inside me had never left. I eventually concluded that I wanted something that combined science with my passion for writing. When a friend (now colleague) introduced me to MedComms, I found the perfect way forward.

I’m extremely grateful to the owner of a UK-based MedComms agency who took me in when I had no experience. Fortunately, my interest in market access and health economics matched the agency’s speciality. With an open-minded boss and a supportive team, I had many chances to learn from experienced writers and account managers.

Moving to AMICULUM gave me opportunities to expand my horizons. As part of both the Access and Asia teams, I have worked on a wide range of projects. AMICULUM supports staff members to work flexibly. I started working from home long before everybody else was forced to do so during the pandemic. It doesn’t suit everyone, and it lacks the benefit of being close to your colleagues, which is perhaps more important for new starters, but it can be very rewarding if you can establish clear boundaries between work and home life.

I expect more colleagues will be back in the office in the coming months, but the impact of the pandemic will be long lasting. It’s not just clients’ disrupted pipelines and activities going virtual, but also that a clearer demonstration of value will be demanded by everyone when healthcare resources are stretched to the limit. The ability to make complex clinical and economic data more accessible and to communicate value to a wider audience of payers, healthcare professionals and, increasingly, patients, will be crucial, and that is our strength. I’d like to think that our work in some small way contributes to the development of a fairer and more sustainable healthcare system.

I do see a role for me in science now, albeit on the communication side. I envy the current graduates who have access to much more support than I did, including the good work by MedComms Networking. MedComms is certainly a science career worth considering.

I’d like to think that our work in some small way contributes to the development of a fairer and more sustainable healthcare system.
Brandy Menges
Lead Medical Writer
Fishawack Health

During my undergraduate degree, I gained a passion for both molecular microbiology and public health. I pursued a PhD in biological sciences assuming I would move into a research position upon completing my dissertation. Towards the end of my PhD programme, I realised that I didn’t enjoy the monotonous bench work as much as I had anticipated and knew that a career in either industry research or academia just wasn’t for me. I began looking for a career path that intersected the things that I did enjoy: science, writing, analysing complex data, constant learning, and communicating and teaching science to various audiences.

A career as a medical writer seemed like a great opportunity to combine my interests and the skills I gained while working on my PhD. I got my initial start working as a medical writer for a small consultancy firm in the field of HEOR, a subject I was not familiar with but in which I found myself quickly immersed. Working in that role allowed me to learn about patient outcomes, real-world evidence and utilising economic evaluations to inform healthcare decision making. HEOR really appealed to me as I enjoyed developing materials that clearly communicate both the clinical and economic value of a product. From there, I moved on to working as a medical writer primarily in HEOR for Fishawack Health, a move that has provided an opportunity for further professional growth and development, upward mobility and experience developing a wide variety of deliverables.

Working at a premier global MedComms agency like Fishawack Health, which recently added PRMA Consulting to further develop market access capabilities, ensures that no 2 days are the same. What I like most about working in HEOR at Fishawack Health is that each project is challenging and comes with the knowledge that my work is helping patients to access treatments and give them a voice in their perceptions of disease. Working as a medical writer in HEOR allows me to utilise my scientific knowledge and training to interpret a variety of complex data sets across multiple therapy areas, problem-solving skills, writing skills and creativity to develop publications and incorporate the data into compelling value stories. My role at Fishawack Health has given me the ability to develop diverse skill sets, improve professional and personal skills, and learn about new disease areas and their management. I love having the chance to work on a wide range of deliverables and with various clients in a constantly evolving environment. I feel fortunate to work with a great team in which there is a commitment to building the professional skills needed to succeed and opportunities for advancement in an important field like HEOR.

HEOR really appealed to me as I enjoyed developing materials that clearly communicate both the clinical and economic value of a product.
Only 2 years before starting university, I was still unsure whether a degree in arts or science would be for me. After 1 year of studying for my A-levels, it became clear that biology and chemistry were more appealing than delving into the meaning of a novel in English literature. I chose to study biomedical science at university and thoroughly enjoyed completing scientific communication projects during my degree, while being less enthused by lab work. As a result, I conducted my final year project outside of the lab, instead choosing a patient-focused option that involved conducting interviews and literature searches to develop my dissertation. From this, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in which I could benefit patients while continuing to gain an in-depth understanding of a range of disease areas.

I stumbled across HEOR and market access through careers events hosted by the university and by MedComms companies, which I discovered through research into medical writing positions. Eventually, I discovered the Value Analyst role at Adelphi Values | PROVE, which encapsulated everything I was looking for – combining scientific acumen and communication skills with the end goal of benefiting patient lives.

Within my role, I am responsible for identifying, analysing and consolidating scientific data into impactful stories to clearly convey the value of a product within a disease landscape. Understanding client objectives is paramount to success across all project types to ensure each deliverable is tailored to their needs. This begins with offering a wide range of deliverable types, such as comprehensive global value dossiers and rigorous systematic literature reviews, or developing creative slide decks and posters that allow key messages to be understood at a glance.

No day is the same when working in the fast-paced industry of market access. Every project is unique, requiring a different skill set for each deliverable type along with an ability to quickly grasp new therapy areas. As the pharmaceutical industry is continuously evolving, initiative and adaptability are key to making sure a deliverable is fit for purpose and relevant within a treatment landscape. Remaining up to date with industry news and frequently communicating with clients are essential in order to be aware of any new developments that are relevant to ongoing projects.

Helping to build and maintain client relationships is an important and enjoyable aspect of my role, whether it’s through regular project meetings, or by producing high-quality work that exceeds their expectations. A clients’ enthusiasm is often my key motivation, while their positive feedback and gratitude for the deliverables we produce is extremely rewarding. Working with a range of clients provides insight into the nuances between healthcare systems worldwide and how barriers to patient access differ across countries.

A role in HEOR/market access allows me to utilise skills and knowledge from my undergraduate degree, while continuing to learn about new and exciting therapy areas. Working collaboratively within project teams provides an opportunity to learn from the expertise of others. This guarantees that each deliverable fulfils our collective aim to improve patient access to effective therapies globally.

Gillian Nicol
Value Analyst
Adelphi Values | PROVE

Every project is unique, requiring a different skill set for each deliverable type along with an ability to quickly grasp new therapy areas.

For more information about careers in MedComms, see www.FirstMedCommsJob.com
Like many, I entered MedComms from an academic research background. Following my PhD in clinical biochemistry, I continued my academic career as a postdoc research fellow and lecturer. As a lead researcher, I was responsible for authoring and reviewing many publications, which was really enjoyable. I knew this was something that I wanted to do further, and set up my own independent consultancy where I combined my skills in medical writing with market access. I got a lot of satisfaction from communicating health promotion, nutrition and disease prevention to laypeople, as well as building relationships with high-profile stakeholders in the industry.

After consulting for 2 years, I moved to the MedComms agency, Envision Pharma Group, where I have now been for over 5 years. My role within the evidence review team at Envision is fast-paced and highly varied: covering systematic literature reviews to rapid scoping assessments across a broad range of indications and therapeutic areas. On a day-to-day basis, I am involved with multiple projects that often have tight deadlines, but there is a great sense of satisfaction and achievement delivering a review knowing that you have made a real contribution.

There is no such thing as a typical day in evidence reviews. For example, any day may vary from having client-facing meetings with key opinion leaders (usually clinicians) to establish their needs and providing strategic planning advice, developing proposals and budgets, designing slide decks to support a client’s internal or external needs, reviewing and quality checking colleagues’ work, and writing reports to support regulatory submissions or manuscript publications. Being a good team player is a cliché thing to say, but in a deadline-driven industry it is important to be able to support your colleagues and to be supported in return. Moving between disease areas means there is always the opportunity to develop new scientific knowledge and stay current with emerging therapeutics.

As my career has progressed, I spend more time client facing, so having the ability to communicate well with pharmaceutical and clinical specialists from across the globe is essential, and it is a part of my role that I really enjoy. I am also involved with mentoring and developing junior staff, and this is another aspect that I find particularly rewarding.

MedComms can also be a flexible career. For example, with Envision there is the option for full-time remote working with flexible hours to fit around the demands of family/home life, which allows you to fulfil both your career and family goals. This flexibility also made for a smooth transition in and out of recent lockdowns. The fast pace and exposure to numerous indications and therapeutic areas means that I never get bored at work. There are always interesting challenges and opportunities to learn new things daily. This is made all the more enjoyable working with a great team that is always there to provide support.
Jack Said

Associate Consultant
Prime Access (a Prime Global Consultancy)

From a young age, I wanted to pursue a career in healthcare. In secondary school, I really wanted to study medicine and become a surgeon. However, I soon realised I wasn’t comfortable with performing surgery as I could barely handle carrying out dissections in biology class! Ultimately, my interest in biology led me to pursue an undergraduate degree in biotechnology with industrial experience at the University of Manchester. During my degree, I became increasingly interested in how scientific research translates into therapeutic technologies that benefit patients and society.

After completing my undergraduate degree, I chose to pursue a Master’s in biotechnology and enterprise. During that time, I was first introduced to the world of HEOR and market access, and I quickly appreciated the importance of their vital contribution to getting medicines on the market and within patients’ reach. That motivated me to seek a career in the field and sent me on an exciting journey to where I am today, 4 years later.

I started my career in HEOR and market access as an analyst for a market access consultancy. Initially, my work focused on carrying out desktop research to understand different disease areas and treatment landscapes. I really enjoyed this role because it introduced me to the fast-paced commercial side of the pharmaceutical industry and provided an opportunity to further develop the analytical and scientific writing skills I started building during my degrees. As I gained more experience and understanding of the complexity of the healthcare systems and increasingly demanding payer and health technology assessment requirements necessary to achieve approval and reimbursement for different therapies across various markets, my thinking became more strategic. I joined Prime Access over a year ago with the aim of further developing my career and contributing to the delivery of both tactical and strategic market access outputs for our clients.

Prime Access is a Prime Global Consultancy that partners with pharma and biotech companies to support their market access strategy and develop a range of payer communication materials to help navigate different reimbursement landscapes. My role within the team involves development of a variety of deliverables, liaising with clients, payers and key opinion leaders, and overseeing the day-to-day management of multiple projects to ensure high-quality delivery within agreed timelines and budgets. No 2 days are the same; I am usually working on multiple projects in tandem and every new project comes with a unique set of objectives and challenges.

The work environment at Prime Access is welcoming, collaborative, motivating and fun. Everyone supports each other and there is an emphasis on nurturing career development as well as achieving business performance goals. Being a growing team, we are always looking to recruit motivated individuals who wish to either start or further their career. As a company, we take pride in knowing the work we do will help benefit patients’ lives.
Helene Wellington

AMICULUM NZ

Unlike many individuals who discover medical writing as a fulfilling way to escape the lab, I was keen to become a medical writer as my primary career since my undergrad days. The twist for me is that, about 10 years into my writing career, having previously supported a few scattered market access materials from a broad range of clients, I have refined market access writing as one of the focus areas within MedComms where I am able to add value to clients.

I obtained my degree in pharmaceutical product development before joining the AMICULUM agency, Mudskipper, as a trainee writer. During this time, I also completed the pharmacoepidemiology and pharmacovigilance certificate at the London School of Health and Tropic Medicine. Working with a variety of clients at Mudskipper for the next 8 years provided a strong foundation for my writing career. I had opportunities to design and execute communications plans for several products from early development through to lifecycle management, which allowed me to develop long-term client and clinician relationships and enjoy regular travel.

As I joined Mudskipper so early in my career and remained there for nearly a decade, I left the company to broaden my experience with a competitor agency in the UK. I re-joined the AMICULUM family less than 2 years later, but I do feel this time away – my ‘gap year’, so to speak – was very valuable for me, personally, and for my professional development, to test and validate my skills within a different environment.

My return to AMICULUM was marked by a major life change: moving to New Zealand to establish and co-lead AMICULUM NZ as an editorial-only medical writing centre of excellence within AMICULUM. The team provides writing support directly to clients, as well as through various AMICULUM agencies, enabling client access to a genuine 24-hour team, and providing diversity and complexity to projects that NZ-based writers support. The NZ team, based out of Auckland, now includes nearly 20 writers, including several with >15 years’ experience, and others who joined as trainees.

Working within the Auckland setting provides several unique opportunities. In this environment, I have been able to nurture a professional interest in market access deliverables, as well as support these activities through the AMICULUM Access agency and other AMICULUM agencies with one-off projects that sit within the market access portfolio. It has been extremely rewarding to provide an expert skill to many teams across the business. In addition, I am obtaining further qualifications alongside my writing responsibilities in studying for a Master of Science degree in pharmaceutical outcomes & policy at the University of Florida, with specialisations in both applied pharmaco economics and managed care pharmacy systems. I took on the first year of study during maternity leave (this was a risk, but I loved the structure and challenge it provided during my time away from the office), and I’m looking forward to completing my degree while balancing writing responsibilities, leading the team and looking after our delightful toddler.

I have refined market access writing as one of the focus areas within MedComms where I am able to add value to clients.
I work in HEOR/market access...

“"I work in HEOR/market access because I have no doubt that market access is one of the most rewarding career paths of choice within healthcare and the pharmaceutical industry. The work involves a fascinating combination of science and the commercial reality of bringing medicines to market and making them accessible for patients. I enjoy exploring solutions for our clients’ market access challenges and being instrumental in the implementation of both strategy and tactics. HEOR/market access involves a large variety of therapy areas, products, project types and deliverables – from global value dossiers to payer research to health technology assessment negotiation tools and budget impact models – providing exciting opportunities to learn and develop professionally, every day.”

Theilha Areteou, Global Market Access Director at Prime Access (a Prime Global Consultancy)

“I work in HEOR/market access because it allows me to combine my passions for scientific research and creative thinking and apply them in a way that may significantly impact patient care. As an associate medical writer in HEOR, I work on a variety of projects and disease indications, so every day is different and full of interesting topics! The role offers a continuous flow of learning and the ability to gain a diverse range of new skills.”

Jen Ferris, Associate Medical Writer at Source Health Economics

“I work in HEOR/market access as it provides the opportunity to combine my scientific knowledge and passion for healthcare, medical advancements, business development and health economics whilst enabling me to build on my regulatory knowledge. Market access is a highly rewarding and intellectually stimulating career path. It provides the opportunity to make a positive impact towards patient access to novel medical therapies and technologies, by supporting pharmaceutical and biotechnology organisations to navigate complex global market access landscapes through the development of effective market access strategies and tools.”

Chris Bradshaw, Associate Market Access Writer at Prime Access (a Prime Global Consultancy)

“I work in HEOR/market access because I really enjoy the huge variety of work and range of therapy areas. Every project is different and challenging, providing the opportunity to continuously develop my knowledge, creativity and skills. Communicating science, and making it accessible and effective, is key to demonstrating the value of new, innovative medicines and the benefits they bring to patients.”

Max Harris at AMICULUM Access

“I work in HEOR/market access because it constantly allows creative thinking and requires close working across all key functions of pharma – HEOR, medical, strategic marketing, PR and communications. The marriage of access and commercial – getting other teams to understand the importance of, and align their activities with, the access strategy – is a constant challenge and requires people skills, patience and collaboration!”

Philip Drew, Global Business Development Director at OPEN Health, Evidence & Access

“I work in HEOR/market access because I enjoy learning something new every day and being involved in projects that are interesting and varied. I particularly love the challenge of very quickly becoming immersed in a new therapy area and using my scientific knowledge and creative skills to generate content with immediate real-world use, which ultimately benefits patients.”

Rachael Kershaw, Market Access Consultant at Prime Access (a Prime Global Consultancy)

“I work in HEOR/market access because I enjoyed writing my thesis more than the lab work. In conducting literature reviews, I am exposed to a wide variety of disease areas that allow me to continually grow my knowledge base and to develop in-depth analytical skills. I really enjoy feeling that I am making a valuable contribution to delivering novel therapies to patients.”

Victoria Last, Associate Market Access Director at OPEN Health, Evidence & Access

People in the job – in their own words

For details of careers events, plus much more, visit: www.FirstMedCommsJob.com
People in the job – in their own words

Emma Lones, Associate Medical Writer at Source Health Economics

“I work in HEOR/market access because of the opportunity to continually expand my scientific knowledge, working on a range of deliverables across different disease areas. I enjoy collaborating with clients and colleagues in the systematic review and health economics teams to effectively communicate the value of healthcare innovations that will improve the lives of patients.”

Rebecca Newman, Value Analyst at Adelphi Values | PROVE

“I work in HEOR/market access because it gives me the opportunity to work on such a wide range of projects across diverse therapy areas. The treatment landscape is always changing and evolving, allowing for exciting novel opportunities to collaborate with clients to ultimately improve patients’ lives.”

Sue O’Leary, Senior Vice President at Prime Access (a Prime Global Consultancy)

“I work in HEOR/market access and have been doing so for over 20 years now, and I’ve never stopped learning!”

Andria Pelava, Market Access Writer at redthread market access

“I work in HEOR/market access because I like helping people access novel treatments. As a medical writer within market access, it is exciting to be challenged on a variety of projects across many therapy areas. Market access allows me to keep up to date in a rapidly changing industry, and learn about several aspects of a product, from clinical data to marketing and strategy.”

Manca Povsic at AMICULUM Access

“I work in HEOR/market access because it allows me to combine science, creative thinking and strategic knowledge to drive real change for patients worldwide. Working across several disciplines, disease areas and countries to bring new therapy to market is a unique and rewarding experience that combines a varied and fast-paced scientific environment with tangible results and benefits for patients.”

Karen Smoyer, (VP) Portfolio Director & Team Lead, HEOR & Value at Envision Pharma Group

“I work in HEOR/market access because it enables me to contribute to the evidence base that helps provide patient access to important treatments.”

Joanne Welton, Medical Writer at HEOR

“I work in HEOR/market access because contributing to getting drugs reimbursed makes a difference to patients.”

Jo Whelan, Principal Medical Writer at HEOR

“I work in HEOR/market access because I enjoy the broad scope of projects and having the opportunity to apply knowledge from my scientific PhD to understand new disease areas. HEOR medical writing requires a collaborative approach, and it is extremely gratifying to pull together and be part of the journey that ultimately results in a patient receiving novel therapy.”

Pip White, Senior Medical Writer at Source Health Economics

“I work in HEOR/market access because it allows me to work across multiple workstreams, gaining experience in a range of disease and therapeutic areas. Working in this field has allowed me to apply the scientific knowledge and critical thinking I gained in my Master’s and develop increased commercial awareness. The complex interplay between drug costs and healthcare budgets has made market access a challenging and interesting area. I particularly enjoy how my work is able to resolve these often-juxtaposed viewpoints, supporting clients’ needs and ensuring patient access to novel medicines.”

Katriona Withers, Senior Value Analyst at Adelphi Values | PROVE

“I work in HEOR/market access because it gives me the opportunity to use and expand upon my scientific knowledge and academic skills in a variety of therapeutic areas, with the contentment that the projects that I work on will ultimately benefit patients.”

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