Technical Writing Basics

Potential PDH: 8

Description:

This course provides basic guidance and Best Practices to be followed when creating technical documentation. The background and purpose of technical writing standards will be discussed, as well as the standards themselves. Examples and exercises will be provided and workshopped throughout the course to provide trainees with hands-on experience and practical applications of the standards. Formatting best practices for Microsoft Word and PowerPoint documentation will be discussed, along with useful tips and tricks to streamline the documentation process.

Outline:

Introduction:
  - Course Objectives
  - Purpose of Technical Writing Standards

Documentation Process:
  - Understanding Scope
  - Information Sources
  - Stakeholder Input
  - 3-Cs (Coherent, Concise, Consistent)
  - Standardizing Language and Terminology
  - Templating
  - Enforcement and Alignment of Standards

Writing Style and Mechanics:
  - "Good" Writing Guidelines:
    - Focus
    - Scope
  - Format
    - Sequencing, Scaffolding, Parallelism
  - Tone
    - Active Voice, Accurate Language
  - Vocabulary
    - Accurate Wording, Standard Terminology
  - Grammar
    - Mechanics/Conventions, Punctuation

Document Formatting:
- Word Documents:
    - Table of Contents
    - Headings
    - Spacing and Alignment
    - Correct Use of Template
    - Emphasis
        - Figures, charts, tables, and captions
    - Footnotes
    - Document Header and Footer
- PowerPoint Slides (optional):
    - Consistency in Headings
    - Consistency in font sizes
    - Use of images
    - Tables
    - SmartArt
    - Layout and Templating
    - Master View and Handout View

Tips & Tricks:
- Shortcuts
- Helpful tips
- Q&A

Subject Matter Expert (SME):

Maureen Brody is a Curriculum and Instructional Design specialist with a background in document production, technical writing and editing, and project management. As an educator with over 10 years in the classroom, Maureen has taught various age groups, from middle schoolers through adults, and has authored multiple curricula, classroom materials, and assessments. In her time with Becht, Maureen formerly served as Production Support Manager to Becht Performance Group, where she assisted with the development of technical training materials and document standards and provided project management both internally and externally for multiple training and document management projects. As Training Lead with the Learning & Development Division, Maureen uses her expertise in curriculum and instructional design to help guide and strengthen Becht's public and private training offerings, as well as providing client needs assessments and project management for private training courses. Maureen holds a BA in English from the Pennsylvania State University as well as an Instructional Certification in Secondary Education from Stockton University.