

EMWA

European
Medical Writers
Association

The *Write Stuff*

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**A feminine
workforce**

What's news at EMWA

Master of Science in Medical Writing at the Medical University of Innsbruck

This autumn sees the launch of Europe's first-ever fully-fledged MSc in Medical Writing (http://www.i-med.ac.at/ulg/docs/Folder_neu_v5_definity_Print.pdf). The two-year course is the brainchild of Professor Michael Nogler (Department of Experimental Orthopaedics and Vice Chairman at the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery) supported by Sonja Weber at the Faculty Office of the University.

In order to optimise a critical intake of students at launch, the content has been initially geared to meet the needs of those in academia whose foremost concerns are in the areas of publication and grant writing. However, the course includes within it a comprehensive introduction to basic medicine taught by members of the medical faculty, and the organisers are well aware of the greater scope of medical writing outside the university setting which will lead to further development of the course content once the programme has become established.

Inspired by the wide range of topics presented in EMWA's conference brochures, Michael contacted me in May and invited me to Innsbruck to discuss with him and Sonja how the University and EMWA may each benefit by joining forces both for the roll-out and for the future development of the MSc.

Michael had certainly done his homework and had studied EMWA's strategic plan on our website (<http://www.emwa.org/PresidentMessage.pdf>) where he noted that *"our Education Officer and his committee are currently investigating the possibility of developing a partnership with a university or other academic institution."* For my part, I was inspired by the enthusiasm, insight and energy that Michael and Sonja had put into drafting the programme, not to mention the resources—from classrooms to e-learning facilities to faculty lecturers—that they had already lined up. It was also obvious that they had done a lot of work 'behind the scenes' to convince the powers-that-be in university administration that this course would attract sufficient students to be a financially viable venture.

I was of course delighted that EMWA had been approached in this way. Following up EMWA's strategic plan, I had in fact taken the initiative over the past year or so to contact various academic institutions where some sort of collaboration seemed worth exploring. None of these leads came to anything, and now here was a major European university reaching out to EMWA for help and support.

Michael was very keen to welcome EMWA workshop leaders as temporary university lecturers, and my next move was to canvass our workshop leaders to see who might be interested in making a contribution. I assembled a dossier in July, which included those workshop leaders who had expressed interest and the topics they currently present at EMWA. Much is still to be decided for the second year.

The MSc course will be structured according to the European credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS) and will weigh in with 94 ECTS points. The University will credit ECTS points towards the MSc to EMWA members who enrol in the course and are holders of EPDP certificates, though the details must still be worked out.

At the time of writing this item, a month before the Nice conference, I am preparing for discussions with the EMWA Professional Development Committee (EPDC), which will meet in Nice, on establishing a permanent subcommittee to provide a bridge between the University and EMWA that will provide the continuity needed to maintain this collaboration as the MSc develops, and as EMWA members enrol in the course as students or support it as lecturers.

It certainly looks as though our strategic goal of a partnership with an academic institution that will bring real benefits to EMWA members—indeed to the medical writing profession in general—is finally within our reach.

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