

# Discover Technical Communication

Why It Might Be the Right Degree for You



KENNESAW STATE  
UNIVERSITY



# Executive Summary

One of the biggest challenges you'll find yourself facing in your college career is the struggle of choosing a major. Perhaps you're interested in adapting your writing skills to the professional world but aren't too sure about a degree in journalism or literature. Maybe you're not too keen on becoming a software engineer or computer scientist but still want to do something with technology. Technical communication (TCOM) blends these ideas to help professionals communicate specialized information with a generalized audience.

A major challenge facing the TCOM field is its lack of widespread recognition. This white paper will introduce the foundations of TCOM, what the field can provide you as a student, and what the job market looks like for technical communicators.

## **Intended Audience**

Current and future Kennesaw State University students who are interested in exploring majors.

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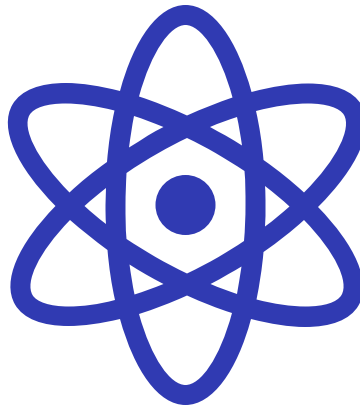
# 10 Reasons Why TCOM Is for You



## **1: Apply Your Writing Skills Beyond Literature and Journalism**

TCOM, like literature, is an art form that expresses ideas of universal interest. In both, writers communicate their ideas through strategic language and writing skills. These writing skills include research, audience analysis, editing, tone, and organization. TCOM uses the same literary techniques, like pathos, metaphors, and imagery.

Like journalism, communicators write and prepare information to broadcast to a broad audience. Another element they share is how they both develop and share information through various mediums like video, illustration, websites, and documents. Adaptability, digital media, problem-solving, reporting, storytelling, and validity are values that are appreciated. TCOM values most, if not all, of the same elements used in writing.



## **2: Combine Your Interests in STEM with Communication**

TCOM encompasses every element of STEM due to its wide range of disciplines. High-level Information related to science, engineering, or other technical fields is communicated through TCOM and conveyed in language that would be understood by various audiences.<sup>1\</sup>

TCOM is technology-heavy since communicators employ technical strategies and programs to produce documents and projects tailored to their audience. TCOM also steps into the bounds of engineering because communicators must be able to read a programming language and comprehend how developers use it to write software or API documentation.<sup>2</sup> Science is also engaged because in TCOM they can join a research group and address complex science research questions. In mathematics, communicators write proofs and develop documents about math theories, rules, and ideas.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Defining Technical Communication," Society of Technical Communication, 2024

<sup>2</sup> "What is Tech Comm," UNT Tech Comm, 2024

<sup>3</sup> "Math 2705W — Technical Writing in Mathematics," University of Connecticut, 2024



### **3: Expand Your Skills Through Comprehensive Coursework**

The TCOM program provides comprehensive training in various aspects, including

- design decision-making,
- enhancing proficiency in technical writing,
- developing documentation that mimics real-world work,
- proficiency in various software programs, and
- adherence to ethical standards commonly observed in the field.<sup>4</sup>

A degree in TCOM also allows you to expand adaptable skills such as

- collaboration,
- communication, and
- teamwork.

These transferable skills translate to numerous careers across industries, increasing accessibility to a wider variety of job opportunities.

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<sup>4</sup> “B.S. Technical Communication,” Kennesaw State University Department of Technical Communication and Interactive Design, Retrieved April 2024



#### **4: Enjoy Flexible Job Options Across Industries**

The TCOM program may not be widely familiar, but demand for technical communicators in the job market is substantial. Pursuing a career in TCOM opens numerous opportunities, including

- technical writing
- user experience (UX) writing,
- grant writing,
- technical illustration,
- usability research, and
- digital accessibility specialization.<sup>5</sup>

Alongside the wide range of career choices available, pursuing a degree in TCOM involves developing a diverse set of skills that apply to various roles in different industries. This versatility allows you to explore alternative career opportunities beyond writing.

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<sup>5</sup> “12 Jobs To Pursue With a Technical Communications Major,” Indeed, April 2024





## **5: Enter a Rapidly Expanding and In-Demand Job Market**

Just as social media has changed how we connect and share online, the demand for people who can communicate clearly in the digital age is skyrocketing. Companies increasingly recognize that technical writers are crucial for

- simplifying complex information,
- improving user experience,
- ensuring compliance,
- facilitating globalization,
- managing knowledge,
- fostering collaboration, and
- optimizing efficiency<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, the employment of technical writers is projected to grow 7 percent from 2022 to 2032, faster than the average for all occupations.<sup>7</sup> This growing demand offers graduates ample opportunities to secure stable, rewarding careers.

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<sup>6</sup> “Reasons to Hire Technical Writers (Explained),” Essential Data Corporation, January 2024

<sup>7</sup> “Technical Writers: Occupational Outlook Handbook,” Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 2024



## **6: Earn a Competitive Salary in the Field**

Technical communicators are paid astonishingly well. As of March 2024, the average salary for technical communicators in the United States is about 82 thousand dollars.<sup>8</sup> That translates to **\$39 an hour on average**. The best-paid 25% made 92 thousand dollars a year, and the bottom 25% were paid **74 thousand dollars**.

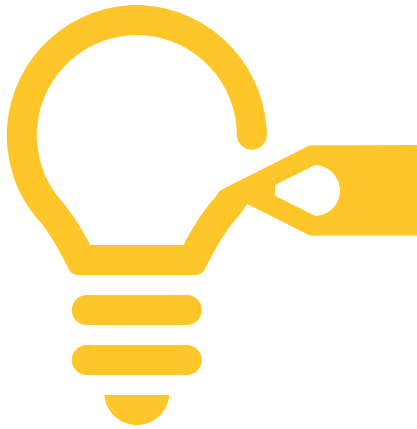
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<sup>8</sup> "Technical Communicator Salary in the United States," Salary, 2024



## **7: Experience a Better-Than-Average Work-Life Balance**

TCOM offers a unique balance between challenging work and personal time, making it ideal for those who value both career success and well-being. With flexible work hours, professionals can manage their workload effectively, allowing them to tailor their schedules to fit their lifestyles. In addition, many companies allow their technical communicators to work from home or other locations, eliminating long commutes and providing more control over their environment. This flexibility leads to increased productivity and a better work-life balance. Overall, a better work-life balance in TCOM leads to happier, healthier, and more productive employees, ultimately benefiting both individuals and organizations alike.



## 8: Learn and Apply Design Thinking for Problem-Solving

While TCOM focuses on writing, it also emphasizes design thinking, which impacts audience engagement and problem-solving. Design thinking in TCOM involves

- **Understanding Audience Perception:** Designing information in ways that resonate with different audiences.
- **Creating Functional and Efficient Solutions:** Not just making a product but designing it to optimize user experience.
- **Aesthetic Information Design:** Ensuring information is visually appealing and logically structured.
- **Balancing Visual and Written Elements:** Coordinating text, visuals, and formatting for maximum clarity and engagement.

Learning design thinking will help you stand out in the professional world by finding innovative solutions that others may overlook.



## 9: Build and Strengthen Rhetorical Skills

TCOM's constant use of rhetorical elements helps users develop their skills. Rhetorical elements persuade readers and frame information for comprehension. Technical writers use rhetorical techniques to inform or persuade. Rhetorical appeals, devices, situations, and approaches are revamped and used in TCOM to achieve this purpose. For example, writers can effectively handle new writing scenarios by considering the audience, goal, and context.<sup>9</sup>

TCOM consistently uses rhetorical elements to frame information for different audiences. By studying TCOM, you'll develop skills such as:

- **Rhetorical Appeals:** Mastering persuasion through
  - **Ethos:** Building credibility
  - **Pathos:** Appealing to emotions
  - **Logos:** Using logical reasoning
- **Rhetorical Devices:** Leveraging tools like metaphors and rhetorical questions to enhance communication.
- **Rhetorical Strategy:** Tailoring messages by considering audience, purpose, and context.
- **Effective Written Persuasion:** Creating content that informs, persuades, or engages stakeholders.
- **Critical Thinking:** Analyzing and assessing arguments objectively to improve communication outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> "1.3 Understanding the Rhetorical Situation," Pressbooks, 2019

<sup>10</sup> "10 Powerful Benefits of Rhetoric," LinkedIn, 2023

These rhetorical techniques are invaluable for project meetings, client engagements, and even job applications.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> “2.3 Writing To Persuade,” Pressbooks, 2019



## **10: Practice Good Ethical Communication Principles**

Since a lot of TCOM deals with the transmission of information with the least amount of interference possible, the emphasis of good ethical practices cannot be understated. In a few words or less, our jobs as technical communicators are to make the complex understandable and the unreadable clear, and the unusable to intuitive and logical. Depending on the industry you choose for your career, making information not just understandable, but truthful could cost lives. At the TCOM program in Kennesaw State University, we emphasize the importance of proper ethical practices in not only life but also in professional circumstances to be proficient in transmitting not only clear but honest information.

# Conclusion

TCOM is one of the most versatile majors offered at Kennesaw State University because of the wide range of skills taught within the program. The TCOM program teaches skills that will help you become a productive educated member of society and allow you to grow into a respected industry professional for your career. No matter what job you end up with, the learned proficiency in skills like technical writing, technical editing, UX design, and information design, will improve your effectiveness as a professional. Not only will you be able to distinguish yourself from the status quo in the job market, but you will also learn skills for freelance work that could grow into a successful business. If you aren't sure which major to go into or if you aren't happy with your current major, check out the TCOM program and see if it's right for you!

## About Us

The Kennesaw Bachelor of Science in Technical Communication is dedicated to equipping its students with valuable skills to promote success in their future careers. Our curriculum introduces students to a variety of topics, such as accessibility issues, information architecture, SEO, analytics, usability, user experience, and research methods.

We also offer a program for a Bachelor of Science in Interactive Design (IAD). The IAD program addresses the growing demand for skills in user interface design and development. Through a combination of practical experience and interdisciplinary learning, the IAD degree equips students with the technical, theoretical, and creative skills required to meet the demands of modern digitally centered careers.

Our graduates benefit from internships, insightful coursework, and career-centered practices offered by both the TCOM and IAD programs. Whether you are a recent high school graduate or simply seeking new opportunities, our programs can open exciting new paths for your future.

## Contact

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