What kind of animal is a medical writer?
Attributes and attitudes

Jane Fraser
An intelligent ape

• A quick learner
  – Lots of different therapeutic areas
  – Lots of different drugs

• Highly adaptable
  – Lots of different kinds of projects
  – Lots of different people and situations

• Highly socialized
  – It’s all about teamwork and communication
  – Not an ivory tower
Passionate about writing

Things you can learn before you apply for jobs

• Write as much as you can (papers, posters, abstracts, magazine articles)
• Edit others' work
• Read as much as you can
• Be an enthusiastic journal club member
• Take advantage of any training your university offers
  – writing skills
  – presentation skills
  – Word
  – Powerpoint
  – reference management
  – statistics
A nit-picker – and willing to be nit-picked by others

• Accuracy
• Spelling
• Grammar
• Word use
• Consistency
• Compliance with industry guidelines and codes of practice
An elephant

• A heavyweight
  – able to mix with opinion-leaders
  – without getting crushed

• An excellent memory
A donkey

- Hard-working
- Carries heavy loads without complaint
- Able to take direction
- Do your share of the boring work
- Will be offered carrots
A cheetah

- Curious
- Alert
- Quick
  - meets deadlines
  - without compromising accuracy
A camel

- Travels long distances (sometimes fun but not always!)
- Tolerates difficult conditions when necessary
- Able to go for long periods without food and water (or at least able to survive on sandwiches and coffee for days at a time when attending conferences)
A swan

- Serene on the surface
- Even if paddling frantically underneath
A rhinoceros

- Has a thick skin (you will be criticized; your text will *always* be amended by other people such as clients and opinion-leaders)
- Charges a lot (good writers are at a premium)