

Writing Sample Guidelines

Many applications for opportunities that include analysis, research, communications, or are academically based will require a writing sample as part of the initial application package. Consider the following when preparing or sending a writing sample:

- Usually 3-5 pages in length.
- If you already have a well written writing example longer than the recommended 3-5 pages, write an abstract for the first page summarizing the hypothesis, main points, and conclusion. Let the reader know the following pages are an excerpt of the same document. Include page numbers, your name, and the title of the paper on each following page.
- It's ideal that the paper combines both a topic of interest to, or relates well with, the employer.
- Most importantly, the paper must demonstrate your best writing whether or not the topic relates with the employer.
- If expected to have writing samples as part of the application process, select one or two ahead of time and ask a faculty member to review and suggest improvements. Incorporate the edits and prepare the abstracts ahead of time; this will help you get an application out quickly if meeting a tight deadline.
- Most employers are seeking to assess how well you write and communicate critical thinking. The writing sample will give them an idea of the type of research and topics you have chosen to examine and what matters to you. The writing sample allows the employer to have a small window into your perspectives. Many employers are seeking to understand your analytical, critical thinking, integrative and synthesis skills.
- Some employers are seeking to assess your creative communication, how well you persuade others through your writing, and what kinds of ideas you integrate or present in an interesting twist of perspective.
- When considering what writing sample to send, look at the work of the employer. What are the underlying skills most needed in the internship or job for which you are applying (critical thinking, research, academic writing, creative, persuasive writing, etc.)? Select a writing sample that best exemplifies the skills the employer is seeking.



- Writing samples must not contain confidential information, grammatical errors, or misspellings.
- Your writing sample must have been written solely by you. A group project paper is not acceptable and submitting one would be a misrepresentation.
- Provide a "roadmap" for your reader. The recruiter is reading a lot of writing samples. At the top of your document, include your name, date you wrote the document, why (for what class or project), and what you think it demonstrates about you; no more than three sentences.

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WRITING SAMPLE

With the holidays right around the corner, it's timely to address the most delightful pastime of this season: well-meaning, but perhaps misguided family members questioning you about your major and/or career choice at dinner. On the one hand, it's understandable. They're excited to see you since you've been away the whole semester. And the most natural questions to ask college students are "what are you majoring in?" followed by "what are you going to do with that?" and for our seniors, "so you're graduating in the spring...what are you going to do next year?". What they may not realize is these questions can be a source of great anxiety for students, regardless of your year or major. So if you anticipate some or all of these questions could arise through the course of dinner conversation, read on for suggestions to navigate them as painlessly as possible.

"What are you majoring in?" This first question will most likely be directed to younger students - first years and sophomores. While some of you may have a clear sense of your academic direction, it's important to remember that developmentally it's perfectly natural to be exploratory and undecided on your