

Master of Arts in Teaching - Secondary

Writing Sample Guidelines



Just as an artist prepares a portfolio of representative artwork (paintings, drawings, photographs) for others to review, you are asked to prepare a sample of writing that represents your ability to engage in clear writing and critical thinking. One or more members of the faculty will assess your writing competency and determine a "pass" or "no pass."

The writing sample is a Statement of Professional Objectives, consisting of a 2-3-page typewritten, double-spaced formal paper containing a statement of the educational experiences that have led to these goals. In this paper, refer to up to three items you see as strengths that you noted in the *Student Self-Evaluation* sheet.

For graduate application purposes, the paper will be evaluated for the compatibility of your objectives and strengths with the program aims. This statement is given to potential host teachers as part of the placement process, so honest, polished, personal writing that would encourage someone to accept you as an intern are critical in the placement process.

Expectations for a Passing Writing Sample

In addition to looking at your treatment of content, your paper should possess the following qualities: a clear focus that is maintained throughout, adequate support (explanation and examples) that appear in substantive body paragraphs consisting of appropriate transitions, your critical thinking and paragraph conclusions; effective concluding paragraphs and technical proficiency (grammar, spelling, proofreading and polish).

In short, your writing should be efficient and readable, making it possible for your audience to read straight through your writing without confusion. To meet these criteria, you should edit (or re-edit) and polish each part of your writing. The general rubric used is as follows:

Ideas

• Unclear thesis	• Adequate thesis and ideas	• Clearly stated thesis
• Critical thinking not present	• Attempt at critical thinking	• Thought-provoking ideas
• Examples, quotes, images not used to support ideas	• Examples, quotes, images used to some extent	• Effective use of examples, quotes, images and details

Organization

• Organizational scheme is difficult to follow	• Organizational scheme is present, but may be sketchy and/or hard to follow	• Clear, efficient, focused, engaging organization
• Critical thinking not present	• Attempt at critical thinking	• Thought-provoking ideas
• Examples, quotes, images not used to support ideas	• Examples, quotes, images used to some extent	• Effective use of examples, quotes, images and details

Fluency

• Topic sentences inadequate or not present	• Some topic sentences are inadequate	• Topic sentences and transitions are used effectively
• Abrupt transitions	• Abrupt transitions	• Sentence structure is economical, varied and elegant
• Repetitive, hard-to-follow sentences	• Sentence structure may be repetitive or hard to follow	

Word Choice

• Vocabulary is weak, underdeveloped and/or inappropriate	• Appropriate vocabulary	• Rich, varied and appropriate vocabulary
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Voice

• Inappropriate use of language	• Language is appropriate	• Language is crisp, appropriate, fresh and vivid
• Individual voice is not apparent	• Individual voice is not apparent	• Writer's unique voice is evident

Conventions

• Errors in proofreading, grammar, syntax, punctuation or spelling distract reader and obscure meaning	• Errors in proofreading, grammar, syntax, punctuation or spelling may distract reader, but do not obscure meaning	• Virtually no errors in proofreading, grammar, syntax, punctuation or spelling
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Formatting the Writing Sample

It should be typed and double-spaced with 1-inch margins and page numbers from the second page forward. Previously published materials may be submitted in their published form. Each submission needs the following heading:

Name
Student ID (optional)
Statement of Professional Objectives
Date (current or date of original preparation with latest revision date in parentheses)

Send to:

UAS Admissions
11066 Auke Lake Way
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Fax: 907-796-6002
uas.admissions@alaska.edu

Questions?

For advising about appropriate content of your writing sample, contact Dr. Scott Christian at 907-796-6563 or srchristian@alaska.edu