Essay / Writing Sample

Essay Requirements

- All applicants are required to compose a personal essay based on specific writing prompts.
- You must submit all three of the following items to fulfill the essay requirement:
  - The completed/final draft of your essay
  - All outlines, rough drafts, and other developmental materials used to create your essay
  - Information about your essay-writing process
- More detailed information about specific requirements for each of the three required components can be found in the step-by-step descriptions below, as well as on the following page.

Step 1 – Write Your Essay

- Use the following prompts to develop a personal essay. Be sure to address each prompt in your essay.
  - Why are you interested in attending ECU?
  - What are your goals for the future?
  - Describe the impact you feel your learning disability has had on your school experiences so far.
  - Describe the impact you feel your learning disability may have on your goals for the future.
  - How do you believe that participating in the STEPP Program will help you achieve your goals and overcome the challenges related to your learning disability?
  - What other information would you like to share with the STEPP Admissions Committee that you believe will assist them in considering your application? (e.g., achievements, awards, training, personal statements, etc.)

- Throughout your writing process, keep in mind that you need to save a copy of each version or draft of your essay to submit along with the final draft/completed essay.

- Please carefully review the guidance and tips on the following page before you begin your essay-writing process.

Step 2 – Submit Your Final Essay and All Drafts

- The second step is to submit all your essay materials.

- Your final essay and your drafts must be submitted electronically as PDF files. There are two options for this:
  - You can upload the files directly within the Essay Information Form when you complete it in step 3; or
  - You can upload the files to your individual applicant folder.

- It does not matter whether you submit the files via the online form or via your individual applicant folder. When you complete the Essay Info Form, you will be given the option to either upload the files at that time or to select “I will upload this item to my individual applicant folder instead.”

Step 3 – Online Form

- The third step is to answer the questions about your essay-writing process on the Essay Information Form.

- This form is intended to help STEPP to develop a clearer understanding of your writing process. It will ask you to describe any assistance you received with your essay, any resources or assistive technology you used, and other relevant information about your essay-writing process.

- Please note that the online form is the last step for the essay – in contrast to most of the other application items, where the online form is often the first step. You will not be able to answer the questions on the Essay Information form until you have completely finished your essay and are ready to submit all drafts and the final version.
Essay / Writing Sample – Additional Information

General Guidance & Requirements

• The STEPP Admissions Committee is primarily interested in getting to know you better through the content of your essay and better understanding your writing process. Therefore, your essay should express your own ideas in your own voice, and should reflect your writing style and abilities along with your responses to the prompts.

• Your final draft must be typed, but your rough drafts and other materials may be handwritten.

• Please be sure to label all your essay materials in some way so the Admissions Committee can easily differentiate amongst your final draft, rough draft(s), and any other developmental materials. You will also need to make sure your name is on each draft.

• There are no requirements about the essay’s length. Focus on the content instead of the length, and take as much or as little space as you need to answer the prompts thoroughly.

• The format and writing style you use for your essay is completely up to you. There are no requirements about spacing, typeface, font size, or any other aspects of how you present the content of your essay. If you’re already comfortable with a particular format or writing style, please feel free to use it; however, you don’t have to use any specific format or style.

The Writing Process – Assistance, Resources, & Support

• You may use support, resources, assistance from other people, and/or technology at any stage of your writing process.
  ◦ In fact, we encourage you to access the resources you usually use while writing an assigned essay.
  ◦ However, keep in mind that any supports you use should help refine your writing, but should not fundamentally alter it. In other words, your resources may help you express yourself more effectively in writing, but the final essay should still clearly reflect your ideas, style, and ability.
  ◦ Please ensure that your responses on the Essay Information Form create a clear picture of the resources you used, the individuals who helped you, and the specific types of support or aspects of the writing process that each person helped with.
  ◦ In addition, the markup on your drafts should differentiate between any edits/changes that were suggested by others versus those that you made independently.

• Although many students do choose to use various supports, resources and assistance during their essay-writing process, please note that getting help on the essay is entirely optional.
  ◦ We emphasize the option to get help because we want students to know that they can feel free to use their usual supports; but if your usual supports don’t involve outside assistance, then that’s perfectly fine too!
  ◦ If you completed all stages of the writing process without any support, you will still need to answer the questions on the Essay Information Form. Please do not leave any items blank; instead, you can enter “n/a” or simply tell us that you did not use any assistance.

• The most important thing to know about the essay requirement is that the STEPP Admissions Committee truly does not want it to be a source of stress or anxiety for you! 😊
  ◦ It may help to keep in mind why the STEPP application process includes an essay requirement at all. For us, the essay serves two main purposes:
    ▪ First, and most importantly, it lets us directly hear and understand your perspective on the essay topics in your own words. All of your application materials are about you, but the essay is also by you.
    ▪ Second, it gives us some insight into your writing process and approach to the task. Even though that’s only one aspect of your academic experiences, it’s an opportunity for us to learn more about you in a way that’s different from what your other application materials provide.
  ◦ The bottom line is that we want you to take the essay seriously and submit something you feel is a good representation of you; but it’s only one part of the big picture of you that we develop through the admissions process. Furthermore, we know that writing is not a strength for every student, and the Admissions Committee naturally keeps that in perspective while reviewing applications.