M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction
Writing Sample Requirement for GRE Alternative Admissions
Updated February 2021

Students seeking alternative admission to the M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction using Option 2 may submit a writing sample in addition to planning to take or having completed two program-required courses (indicating grades of B+ or above) in lieu of submitting GRE scores.

The writing sample is designed for you to demonstrate your skills related to academic writing, critical thinking, and developing ideas with strong evidence/support, applying these skills in the context of your intended area of emphasis. If you have a graduate-level paper from previous coursework or a publication in which you were the sole author, then you may submit it in lieu of completing the writing sample instructions. If you have any questions about the writing sample, then please contact Anne Jewett (bar2h@virginia.edu).

The writing sample should be a new piece of writing that you develop independently in response to the following prompt:

- **Instructions:**
  - Using at least 4-6 resources to provide evidence and support for your ideas, develop a 3-4 page paper in which you briefly describe the controversy/issue and its relevance to your intended area of emphasis, critically analyze both sides of the issue, and build a persuasive argument to support your stance.

- **Specifications**
  - APA Style (7th edition):
    - typed, double-spaced, 8.5 x 11 paper, 1-inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font, appropriate headings, etc.
    - Title page
    - Body (3-4 pages)
No abstract

In-text citations (minimum of 4)

References list (at least 4-6 sources). You should select quality resources that are credible and appropriate for your topic. With the exception of optionally including one seminal resource that may be more dated, your resources should also be recent (generally from about the past 10 years or so).

We strongly recommend that you consult the APA Publication Manual (7th edition), the Purdue Online Writing Lab (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html), APA Module (https://extras.apa.org/apastyle/basics-7e/?_ga=2.145461490.753597458.1583170095-410964684.1565106062#), or other APA resources as needed.

Writing Sample Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Meets High Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Approaching Expectations</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Writing Style</strong></td>
<td>● Writing is consistently strong, with engaging and compelling voice, tone, language, sentence fluency, grammar, mechanics, organization, and transitions.</td>
<td>● Writing is generally strong, with effective voice, tone, language, sentence fluency, grammar, mechanics, organization, and transitions.</td>
<td>● Writing needs minor improvement in one or more areas including voice, tone, language, sentence fluency, grammar, mechanics, organization, and transitions.</td>
<td>● Writing needs significant improvement in one or more areas including voice, tone, language, sentence fluency, grammar, mechanics, organization, and transitions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Writing reflects nearly flawless use of APA style.</td>
<td>● Writing includes relatively few/minor APA style errors.</td>
<td>● Writing includes several APA errors.</td>
<td>● Writing includes numerous APA errors or does not attempt to use APA style.</td>
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| **Content/ Ideas** | • Controversy/issue is clearly described and explicitly connected to the intended area of emphasis.  
• Critical analysis thoroughly details both sides of the issue.  
• Argument is explicitly stated and consistent throughout. | • Controversy/issue is described and relates to the intended area of emphasis.  
• Critical analysis details both sides of the issue.  
• Argument is stated and is generally consistent throughout. | • Controversy/issue is generally described; connection to the area of emphasis is somewhat unclear.  
• Critical analysis includes some details from both sides of the issue.  
• Argument can be easily inferred, but may be somewhat inconsistent. | • Controversy/issue is not clearly described or related to the intended area of emphasis.  
• Critical analysis is underdeveloped or focuses mainly on a single side of the issue.  
• Argument in unclear or inconsistent. |
| **Argument/ Evidence** | • Ideas are well-supported throughout, reflecting strong critical thinking.  
• Connection between ideas and evidence in clear and explicit.  
• Evidence is synthesized from across variety of several appropriate, recent, and credible sources. | • Ideas are consistently supported with evidence, reflecting critical thinking.  
• Connection between ideas and evidence is clear or can be inferred.  
• Evidence is drawn from a variety of sources that are recent, appropriate, and credible. | • Some ideas need additional supporting evidence or reflect minor flaws in critical thinking.  
• Connection between ideas and evidence is sometimes unclear.  
• Evidence is drawn from multiple sources, some of which are a bit dated or may have questionable credibility or appropriateness. | • Ideas are generally underdeveloped, lack sufficient supporting evidence, or reflect major flaws in critical thinking.  
• Connection between ideas and evidence is often unclear.  
• Evidence is drawn from a limited number of resources or from resources that are mostly outdated or otherwise inappropriate. |