

Guidelines for the Writing Sample

Please submit a five-page writing sample along with your application. A writing statement is optional for applications for Spring 2019. Applications for Fall 2019 or later require a writing sample.

The writing sample is your opportunity to demonstrate your ability to produce graduate-level writing. We are interested in seeing a paper that is thesis-driven, presents your ideas clearly, and uses evidence effectively. In that paper, you should also use appropriate citations for quoted material as well as ideas taken from others. We are asking for a short sample here. It is possible that you will need to either extract five pages from an existing essay or condense a longer paper.

It is also possible that you may not have an essay that you feel comfortable submitting and would like to start from scratch. If that is the case, please write a double-spaced, five-page paper on any topic that uses evidence to support an argument, uses citations where appropriate, and is clearly written. Please remember to be specific. A paper that focuses a discrete topic using a clear and limited set of evidence will be more effective than one that attempts to make a large claim that may be difficult to substantiate. Here are some ideas to consider:

1. You may want to explore a topic that is related to the concentration you would like to pursue in the MALS program.
2. If you have an idea for a thesis topic, you might want to write an essay that explores one or two of the questions you hope to pose.
3. Is there an issue that you would like to explore that is the reason you are interested in the program? If so, you can write an essay that addresses that issue or question.