



PERSONAL STATEMENT GUIDELINES

Writing a personal statement is an essential part of the application process, providing you with an opportunity to articulate why you are an ideal candidate. The Ed.D. program is dedicated to fostering a close-knit and supportive learning environment by actively recruiting doctoral students to participate in small-size cohorts. This commitment makes the selection process competitive and underscores the importance of choosing applicants who stand out due to their distinctive qualities and their potential to contribute to the program and the academic field.

Compose a thoughtful Personal Statement (2-3 double-spaced pages) addressing the following criteria:

1. Introduction

- Briefly share your personal background, including key life experiences, values, and any influential factors that have shaped your journey.
- Provide an overview of your academic background, highlighting key milestones, achievements, and academic interests.
- Discuss your professional background, detailing relevant educational or leadership work experiences, responsibilities, and any notable accomplishments.
- How have your personal, academic, and professional backgrounds collectively influenced your decision to pursue a Doctor of Education program?

2. Critical Self-Reflection

- Reflect on a pivotal moment in your life where you accomplished something significant. Discuss the obstacles you encountered on your journey and elaborate on the strategies you employed to overcome those challenges.

3. Research Interest

If admitted to the program, you will begin dissertation work early on. While we understand that your research focus may shift, we encourage you to think about a potential topic that matches your academic and professional interests. You are not confined to this topic, but the closer you get to choosing a research area, the better prepared you will be to begin your doctoral research journey.

- Articulate the specific research topic you intend to pursue during your doctoral studies.
- Provide a concise description of the problem or issue that your research aims to address.
- Suggest a target population and propose the types of data you anticipate collecting to understand, analyze, and address the research problem.

4. Fit with the Program

- Explain why the Ed.D. in Interdisciplinary Leadership Program at TLU is the right fit for your doctoral pursuits.
- Consider how your academic and personal goals align with TLU's core values of Education, Community, and Faith.

WRITING SAMPLE GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The Ed.D. in Interdisciplinary Leadership Program at TLU requires a significant amount of writing, including research proposals, literature reviews, academic articles, reflective writing, and the dissertation itself. For that reason, to be considered for admission to the program, every candidate is required to provide a thorough writing sample. Our Admissions Committee utilizes the writing sample to evaluate applicants' writing skills, including their ability to (a) engage in critical analysis and synthesis of information, (b) dialogue with scholarly literature, (c) express intricate ideas with clarity, and (d) demonstrate their research potential and interests.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS

Length: Submit a writing sample consisting of 5-7 pages of content. In addition, include a professional title page and a reference list comprising all the works cited in the paper.

Preferred Format: APA Style (7th edition) is our preferred format for your writing sample.

- NOTE: If you have previously written a substantial academic piece in MLA or Chicago style, and it meets the requirements described throughout this document, you may submit it as a writing sample, provided there is consistent adherence to the chosen style throughout the entire paper.

Overall Approach: You have two options for submitting a writing sample. Choose **OPTION A** if you already have a significant previous piece of academic writing that fulfills the requirements outlined in this guide. Opt for **OPTION B** if you need to generate a new writing sample that better aligns with the Ed.D. program's expectations.

OPTION A

Select this option if you have authored a Master's-level academic writing within the past 4 years or if you have published a scholarly article.

When considering a previous Master's-level academic writing.	- Focus on content that demonstrates your readiness for doctoral-level study. - Refrain from submitting papers that are typical of coursework essays or reflective assignments. Submissions should go beyond the mere expression of personal opinions or reflections and instead demonstrate your ability to engage with academic literature, conduct research, and contribute to rigorous academic discourse.
When considering a previously published scholarly article	Submit the article along with a link to the database that published it.

OPTION B

Select this option if you need to compose a new writing sample.

Structure your paper according to the **length** and **preferred format** instructions provided above. The following criteria should help you frame the writing sample:

SECTIONS OF THE WRITING SAMPLE	CONTENT OF EACH SECTION
Professional Title Page (Follow APA 7th Edition)	■ Title of the Paper ■ Author's Name ■ Institutional Affiliation (either where the author works or studies)
Introduction (1 page)	■ Provide an overview of a research problem (a specific issue, gap in knowledge, or question in education or leadership studies that prompts further investigation and exploration) emphasizing its significance and relevance. ■ Offer background information to contextualize both the research problem and the broader topic. ■ Concisely, state the research question or thesis that the paper aims to address within the chosen topic. ■ Outline the scope and purpose of the paper.
Literature Review (2 pages)	■ Selectively survey existing scholarly literature (7 – 10 academic sources) related to the research problem and broader topic. ■ Identify key themes or patterns, gaps, debates, or trends in the literature. ■ Provide a synthesis of the literature, demonstrating an overall understanding areas of agreement and disagreement among scholars, gaps in knowledge, and limitations in the existing literature.
Critical Analysis and Problem-Solving (2 pages)	■ Offer your interpretation of the problem and propose practical solutions to address the identified gaps, controversies, or debates within the literature. ■ Identify specific areas that warrant additional research and exploration.
Further Research and Discussion (1 -2 pages)	■ If you were to conduct empirical research on the problem to provide practical and feasible solutions, specify the data you would be interested in collecting. Outline your approach in accordance with the nature of your research interest, providing a brief discussion of the potential methodologies (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods), data collection methods, and ethical considerations associated with your approach. ■ Discuss how the data collection process could yield solutions and insights, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the problem.
Reference List	■ Include the full citations for all the sources you cited, formatted according to APA 7th Edition.

THINGS TO **AVOID** WHEN SUBMITTING A WRITING SAMPLE

Lack of Originality	Submit a writing sample that reflects your own ideas and insights. Avoid plagiarism and make it clear when you are referencing or citing the work of others.
Lack of Relevance	Avoid submitting samples too broad or unrelated to the program's focus. Your writing sample should generally be related to the fields of education and interdisciplinary leadership, unless you are submitting a published scholarly article you have authored.
Incomplete Citations	Since your writing sample must include references, make sure that all citations are complete and accurate. Inadequate citation can raise concerns about academic integrity.
Joint Authorship	The submitted writing sample must be the sole work of the applicant. Collaboration with others in the creation of the sample is not permissible. This requirement is in place to ensure the authenticity of the applicant's intellectual contributions and to uphold the principles of academic integrity.
Failure to Follow Guidelines	Adhere closely to the writing sample guidelines regarding formatting and other requirements.