

Your questions about the writing sample, answered

One of the most distinctive parts of Hamline's EdD application is the writing sample — and it's also the one that raises the most questions. We want to make this as clear as possible, because the goal isn't to screen out qualified applicants. It's to understand how you think on the page.

The writing sample tells us something your resume and statement of purpose can't: how you engage with a complex idea, build an argument, and synthesize evidence to reach a conclusion. That's the core intellectual work of doctoral study — and this is your chance to show us you're already doing it.

FAQ

What exactly is the "article"? The writing sample should be a piece of writing — up to 10 pages — that demonstrates your ability to engage with a critical issue in education. It should reflect your capacity to analyze, synthesize, and develop an argument. Think of it less as a formal journal article and more as a demonstration of how you think about a complex educational problem.

Can it be co-authored? No — the writing sample must be solely authored by you. We need to assess your individual voice, reasoning, and analytical capacity. If your most relevant work was co-authored, we encourage you to submit a different piece that reflects your independent thinking, or to write something new for this purpose.

What topics are appropriate? Your writing sample should engage with a critical issue in education — broadly defined. This can include equity and access, leadership and organizational change, curriculum and instruction, policy, student success, community-based education, or any other area relevant to your professional context. There is no required topic or prescribed format.

What if I don't have anything that fits? You may write something specifically for the application. Many strong applicants do. A well-reasoned 8–10 page analysis of an educational challenge you've faced in your own practice — grounded in relevant research or evidence — is exactly what we're looking for.

Is 10 pages a hard limit? Yes. Submissions should be no more than 10 pages, not including references. If your existing work is longer, we encourage you to submit an excerpt or a condensed version that stands on its own.

What makes a strong writing sample? Strong samples tend to: identify a specific problem or question clearly, engage with relevant evidence or scholarship, develop a reasoned argument rather than just describing a situation, and reflect the applicant's own perspective and

professional lens. You don't need to write like an academic — you need to write like a thoughtful practitioner who takes ideas seriously.