

Transfer Essay Workshop Tips

(Transfer Essay Checklist on the back)

Essay length: Minimum of three paragraphs; one-two pages.

Paragraph 1: State purpose of writing, which is applying for transfer to the specific institution’s specific department and why. Summarize career goals, perhaps including a forecast of where you see yourself being in five or ten years. Summarize why you are a good fit for the institution and department—strong GPA, demonstrated work ethic and commitment to academic and professional growth, honorably completed military service, or special life experiences or accomplishments that have inspired your chosen career path.

Paragraph 2 (and other interior paragraphs as needed): Provide explanatory narrative detail in support of the specifics summarized in Paragraph 1. Focus on the positive, but be forthright if your overall GPA is relatively low. Briefly explain why, emphasizing that that was *then*, but here is where I am *now*. Many of us, including review committee members, were uncertain of their academic goals, or immature when they began college but overcame personal deficits and obstacles.

Final Paragraph: Restate the reason(s) why you want to transfer in a way that answers this question: “What makes you a good investment?” Conclude by thanking the unknown readers for their time and thoughtful consideration.

Pitfalls to Avoid: Students assume that their audience “bleeds maroon” or shares their enthusiasm for the institution. (While some review committees do want to know if the student is a “legacy,” this should be mentioned once.) Generally, the audience does *not*, and is going to make a risk-assessment business decision.

Watch for your tone crossing the confidence line into cockiness. Proofread. Pay attention to the red, green, and blue squiggly lines in Word alerting you to problems. Read what you have written aloud to ensure that there are no missing words or confused phrases. There can be no misspellings or serious mechanical defects. Have one of your peers read over your essay and provide you with feedback.

The TAMU prompt: *The statement of purpose will provide an opportunity to explain any extenuating circumstances that you feel could add value to your application. You may also want to explain unique aspects of your academic background or valued experiences you may have had that relate to your academic discipline. The statement of purpose is **not** meant to be a listing of accomplishments in high school or a record of your participation in school-related activities. Rather, this is your opportunity to address the admissions committee directly and to let us know more about you as an individual, in a manner that your transcripts and other application information cannot convey.*

Website you may find helpful: <http://transferweb.com/>

Source: Dr. Linsey Oates, Technical Writing, Humanities Division, Blinn College – Bryan Campus

Transfer Essay Checklist

_____ Be able to explain what you want to study and why. How will you use this degree? What career interests you? Ask yourself, “How will a degree in _____ help me accomplish _____?” This information will help in developing your essay, specifically, paragraph 1.

_____ If you are unsure about goals, aspirations, and/or area of study, then come up with something that best fits these item specifics and stick with them throughout the entirety of the paper. Uncertainty is a detriment to any transfer essay.

_____ Take an inventory on what you know about the prospective university and the program of study you desire. Have you met with an advisor from that program? Do you understand how to be a competitive applicant? This research will help determine what information to highlight in the essay.

_____ If you have not made contact (email, phone, in-person) with someone from that university, plan to do so. This meeting will help in writing your essay, especially paragraph 1. It also shows initiative on your part.

_____ Determine the meaning of the prompt. Do you have an understanding of what should be included? Do not be confused by the vague and broad nature of the essay’s prompt. Helpful tip: brainstorming, outlining, and listing ideas or details will provide focus and structure in addressing the prompt.

_____ Essays should address the prompt in a specific and concise manner. Essay should have a conversational tone but should be free of loose writing, contractions, slang and clichés. Length: 1-2 pages, single-spaced (closer to 1 page preferred). Transfer essays DO NOT require a title.

_____ Stay current. You may refer to senior year of high school up until the present time. The exception to this would be if you are tying a special life experience from your past that is distinctly related to your desired major.

_____ Universities receive many applications. Be sure to emphasize your uniqueness! Tell a story or discuss special opportunities/experiences that have shaped you as a person and/or created interest in a specific course of study. NOTE: experiences can include volunteer or charity work, church activities, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts, etc...

_____ Briefly (no more than a couple sentences) address difficulties (grades/personal hardships), but accentuate the positive. How have you matured? What changes have you made? What resources were used to overcome obstacles?

_____ Enthusiasm for a school or program is great, but do not oversell the emotion. A&M, UT, etc... are not the only good schools, and the person reading the essay may have attended another university.

_____ Make sure university names and locations are included and correct. (There are different Texas A&M campuses). Do not send U.T. Texas A&M’s transfer essay and vice versa.