

## Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications

### Graduate Student Applicant Writing Sample Requirements

The ALEC graduate program requires writing samples in place of the traditional GRE requirement. Students seeking admissions to an ALEC graduate program are required to submit writing sample(s) congruent with the requirements of the individual graduate program track they seek. The writing sample(s) should be submitted as part of the graduate admissions application within in the TAMU GraduateCas portal. The graduate admissions committee will evaluate the submitted writing samples using established rubrics, which students should consider when developing their writing sample(s). Additionally, the required statement of purpose (~2 pages) **is not** a writing sample, but the rubric may serve as a guide to developing that statement.

#### **Master of Agriculture or Master of Science (Non-thesis option) Applicants:**

1. Select a workshop topic to be delivered to a specific audience. Create a one-page, single-spaced summary of the workshop including an overview of the topic, a description of the audience, and an explanation of why you selected the topic. Develop a one-page, single-spaced, sentence outline of the presentation content to be shared with the audience. Provide a list of references you would access to create the workshop (a minimum of 10 peer-reviewed references). **Your writing sample should be three pages: summary page, outline, and references.** Your submission will be scored for content/information, structure, grammar/mechanics, and language usage, using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) as the official style manual.

#### **Master of Science (Thesis option) Applicants:**

1. Select one journal article by an ALEC faculty member as the lead author. Provide a critical analysis of the selected article. The article must have been published within the last five years. The critical analysis **must include (at a minimum): introduction, method, results/findings, and discussion/conclusions.** Additionally, within the critical analysis, you should summarize the study; describe the study's importance (impact) to the academic discipline, and/or its impact on the industry and/or the public it represents; and reflect on and explain how the study applies to your research interests. Your analysis should be 3 to 5 pages, single-spaced with one-inch margins and 12-point font. Your critical analysis will be scored for content/information, structure, grammar/mechanics, and language usage, using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) as the official style manual. Preference is to select a faculty member with your same area of interest.

#### **Doctoral Program Applicants:**

1. Complete the same writing requirement listed for Master of Science (Thesis option) applicants (i.e., a critical analysis of an ALEC faculty member's published journal article within the last five years). Preference is to select a faculty member with your same area of interest.
2. Submit one previous publication (conference abstract, journal article, etc.).
3. Select a topic related to your research interests. Write a position paper with at least 10 academic/research journal article references. The position paper should be three pages, double-spaced with one-inch margins and 12-point font. The position paper will be scored for content/information, structure, grammar/mechanics, and language usage, using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) as the official style manual.

Journal article information for each faculty member may be accessed by browsing Google Scholar, <https://scholar.google.com>. Additional information may be obtained by accessing the department faculty web page (<https://alec.tamu.edu/types/faculty>) and reviewing individual faculty profiles for publication information or their CVs.

## Evaluating a College Writing Sample RUBRIC

<b>CRITERIA / SCALE</b>	<b>-3- Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>-2- Meets Expectations</b>	<b>-1- Needs Improvement</b>	<b>-0- Inadequate</b>
<b>Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization</li> <li>Flow of thought</li> <li>Transitions</li> <li>Format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper is logically organized</li> <li>Easily followed</li> <li>Effective, smooth, and logical transitions</li> <li>Professional format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper has a clear organizational structure with some digressions, ambiguities or irrelevances</li> <li>Easily followed</li> <li>Basic transitions</li> <li>Structured format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is some level of organization though digressions, ambiguities, irrelevances are too many</li> <li>Difficult to follow</li> <li>Ineffective transitions</li> <li>Rambling format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no apparent organization to the paper.</li> <li>Difficult to follow</li> <li>No or poor transitions</li> <li>No format</li> </ul>
<b>Grammar/mechanics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sentence structure</li> <li>punctuation/mechanics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manipulates complex sentences for effect/impact</li> <li>No punctuation or mechanical errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses complex sentences</li> <li>Few punctuation or mechanical errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses compound sentences</li> <li>Too many punctuation and/or mechanical errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses simple sentences</li> </ul>
<b>Language</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary; use of vocabulary</li> <li>Tone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary is sophisticated and correct as are sentences which vary in structure and length</li> <li>Uses and manipulates subject specific vocabulary for effect</li> <li>Writer's tone is clear, consistent and appropriate for intended audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary is varied, specific and appropriate</li> <li>Frequently uses subject specific vocabulary correctly</li> <li>Writer's tone emerges and is generally appropriate to audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary is used properly though sentences may be simple</li> <li>Infrequently uses subject specific vocabulary correctly</li> <li>Writer's tone exhibits some level of audience sensitivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary is unsophisticated, not used properly in very simple sentences.</li> <li>Uses subject specific vocabulary too sparingly</li> </ul>
<b>Content/information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity of purpose</li> <li>Critical and original thought</li> <li>Use of examples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central idea is well developed and clarity of purpose is exhibited throughout the paper</li> <li>Abundance of evidence of critical, careful thought and analysis and/or insight</li> <li>Evidence and examples are vivid and specific, while focus remains tight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central idea and clarity of purpose are generally evident throughout the essay</li> <li>Evidence of critical, careful thought and analysis and/or insight</li> <li>There are good, relevant supporting examples and evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The central idea is expressed though it may be vague or too broad; Some sense of purpose is maintained throughout the essay</li> <li>Some evidence of critical, careful thought and analysis and/or insight</li> <li>There are some examples and evidence, though general</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central idea and clarity of purpose are absent or incompletely expressed and maintained</li> <li>Little or no evidence of critical, careful thought or analysis and/or insight</li> <li>There are too few, no examples and evidence or they are mostly irrelevant</li> </ul>