***Essential Reflective Writing at Evergreen***

***Questions***

These **questions** are listed to inspire you while you write and revise all of your reflective writing projects at Evergreen. These projects include the:

* Admissions Essay
* Orientation Essay
* Self-Evaluations for each course or program
* Evaluations of Faculty for each course or program
* Annual Academic Statement
* Final Academic Statement

For more information about these projects, like **word-limits**, **deadlines**, and **audience**, see this big useful chart on the Writing Center’s website [Essential Reflective Writing at Evergreen](https://www.evergreen.edu/sites/default/files/Essential%20Reflective%20Writing%20at%20Evergreen%20%282019%29.pdf) (pdf) and to see the content of that chart in text, see [Essential Reflective Writing at Evergreen](https://www.evergreen.edu/writingcenter/evaluations) (html).

**These questions are themed.**

**Each theme might apply to more than one of the reflective writing projects.**

**Click to navigate to the theme that matters to you!**

* [*Your Undergrad Origin Story*](#_Toc37335111)
* [*This Year Compared to Last and Next*](#_Toc37335112)
* [*Program by Program, Course by Course*](#_Toc37335113)
* [*Milestones & Turning Points*](#_Toc37335114)
* [*Six Expectations Lens*](#_Toc37335115)
* [*Whole Self & Reader Impact Lens*](#_Toc37335116)
* [*Quick Tips for Final Academic Statements*](#_Toc37335117)

**from the Writing Center at the Evergreen State College 2020.**

**You’ve got this!**

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# *Your Academic Origin Story*

Use these questions to *inspire* your draft. They apply to your **Admissions Essay**, your **Orientation Essay**, your **Annual Academic Statement**, and your **Final Academic Statement**.

* What initially draws/drew you to Evergreen?
* What career paths and fields of study interest you most?
* What do you hope to learn?
* What do you expect will be difficult for you? How will/did you respond to the challenge? What did you expect to be easy? How will/did you respond to success?
* What are your passions and interests at this time?
* How would you define the purpose of a liberal arts degree?

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# *This Year Compared to Last and Next*

Use these questions to *inspire* your drafts or *revise* your drafts. They apply to your **Annual Academic Statement** and your **Final Academic Statement**.

* Today (now) what do you want to learn?
* What do you hope to do with your learning in society?
* What personal significance does your learning hold?
* Has your ideal career path changed? If so, how?
* What is challenging for you as a student? How are you overcoming or not overcoming those challenges? How are your challenges changing as you continue on as a student?
* Which areas of study most interest you today?
* What do you want to express to yourself and your current and future faculty about your goals?
* Are you working towards or thinking about applying to graduate school or entering a professional field?
* What credit equivalencies might you need in order to create the undergraduate degree that will support you in applying to a graduate program or professional work after college?
* Are you working on or working towards an advanced-level capstone project? Internships? ILCs? Study abroad? Student-Originated-Study?
* Have you been able to engage your whole self in your education? (E.g. engaging intellectually, emotionally, socially, ethically, physically, spiritually, vocationally, and personally? (See evergreen.edu/handbook for definitions.) Do you have goals to focus on an area of your whole self through your education?
* What have you said in your recent assignments and recent Self-Evaluations that accurately captures how you assess your current place in your undergraduate career?
* How would you define a liberal arts degree today? What is it for? How does what you are doing/did this year related to your understanding of a liberal arts degree?

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# *Program by Program, Course by Course*

Use these questions to *inspire* your drafts or *revise* your drafts. They apply to your **Self-Evaluations**.

* What was the main point of the course or program, as you saw it? How did you come to this understanding?
* In your transcript, faculty will give a course description describing the activities students were expected to do. How did you do at meeting your faculty’s expectations? Did your expectations for yourself differ from your faculty’s expectations for you? How did you navigate the difference?
* What are you most proud of as you complete this program or course?
* What can you say about how you navigated the Six Expectations during this program? (See “Six Expectations Lens” questions, below)

Use these questions to inspire your drafts or revise your drafts of your **Evaluations of Faculty**.

* Did your faculty help you learn through their presentations, lectures, workshops, and labs? Do you remember a specific time when they were particularly helpful?
* In seminar, did your faculty facilitate the conversation so that you learned more about a text? Do you feel more able to contribute in seminar thanks to the work your faculty did to create a learning community?
* Did your faculty help you learn to think more critically and/or more deeply about a particular topic, question, or issue? If so, can you give an example?
* Were the texts you read good choices given the questions and concepts you addressed? Was there a particular text that stood out for you? Why?
* Did you learn specific concepts or ideas that will remain with you because of your faculty’s approach to teaching them?
* Did you improve your writing as a result of the assignments and feedback from your faculty and/or peers?
* Did your faculty encourage your learning in some specific ways such as meeting with you individually or in a group?

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# *Milestones & Turning Points*

Use these questions to *inspire* your drafts or *revise* your drafts. They apply to your **Annual Academic Statement** and your **Final Academic Statement**.

* What big ideas, faculty members, and educational experiences have had or are having the most influence on you? And what was/is/will be the impact of this influence on you, others, and the world?
* What have your experiences at Evergreen prepared you to do in other contexts?
* What is an example of you overcoming a challenge that you are particularly proud of?
* What major turning points have you come to? What did you turn toward? What did you turn away from?
* What core values have become your priority as you pursue your undergraduate degree? (E.g. courage, compassion, reliability, humor, innovation, etc.)

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# *Six Expectations Lens*

Use these questions to *inspire* your drafts or *revise* your drafts. They apply to your **Self-Evaluations**, **Annual Academic Statement** and your **Final Academic Statement**.

Evergreen sets “[Six Expectations](https://www.evergreen.edu/about/expectations)” for student achievement. These expectations are similar to the goals that other liberal arts schools set for their students, therefore, responding to these questions may help your readers clearly understand your experience at Evergreen as a liberal arts degree. **Not all of the following questions must be answered in your Final Academic Statement! This list is here to support you in choosing which parts to include to round out your statement.**

* In what ways have you articulated and assumed responsibility for your own work/academic career? What are some examples?
* In what ways have you participated collaboratively and responsibly? What are some examples?
* In what ways have you participated in a diverse society? What are some examples?
* In what ways have you communicated creatively and effectively to others? What are some examples?
* In what ways have you demonstrated integrative thinking? (E.g. thinking that responds to at least two lines of thought, e.g. using ideas gained when studying civil engineering and ideas gained when studying botanical knowledge.) What are some examples?
* In what ways have you demonstrated critical thinking? (E.g. thinking that reveals the ability to exercise judgement in relation to at least one existing line of thought/ questioning the facts given to you using analysis.) What are some examples?
* In what ways have you demonstrated independent thinking? (E.g. independent thinking uses your own interests and skills to engage with topics without necessarily responding to existing lines of thought by coming up with a new method or strategy for tackling a problem.) What are some examples?
* In what ways have you demonstrated your ability to use qualitative modes of inquiry? (E.g. taxonomy, ethnography, historical research, textual analysis, film analysis, cultural analysis, field observations, interviews, archival research, linguistic description.) What are some examples?
* In what ways have you demonstrated your ability to use quantitative modes of inquiry? (E.g. scientific tests, statistics or data analysis, solving quantitative design issues in media or art projects.)
* In what ways have you demonstrated your ability to use creative modes of inquiry (E.g. using material or aesthetic modes of expression to explore ideas: visual, performing, or media arts, creative writing, or another form of metaphorical expression.)
* In what ways have you appropriately applied modes of inquiry to understanding or creating theories?
* In what ways have you appropriately applied modes of inquiry to practical problems?
* In what ways have you appropriately applied modes of inquiry across disciplines?
* When you examine the sum of your experience, how does your liberal arts education compare to the AAC&U’s definition of a Liberal Arts degree? What are the benefits of your education at Evergreen being similar to that definition? What are the benefits of your education at Evergreen being different from that definition?

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# *Whole Self & Reader Impact Lens*

Use these questions to *inspire* your drafts or *revise* your drafts. They apply to your **Annual Academic Statement** and your **Final Academic Statement**.

* After reading your transcript/evaluations from faculty and Self-evaluations, do you get a reasonable understanding of your time at Evergreen? Does your transcript accurately describe your learning? What do you need to bring to the reader’s attention that is the key to their understanding of your experience?
* Your Final Academic Statement introduces your reader to your transcript and your Annual Academic Statement may be the first thing your next faculty reads about you. How would you like to introduce yourself and personalize your Evergreen story? Can you get a sense of who you are, what you value and prioritize, and what you are capable of, from your Final or Annual Academic statement?
* Have you gone above and beyond what would be expected of an undergraduate?
* Have you done anything at Evergreen that you couldn’t have done anywhere else?
* Did you have a capstone project of any kind during your junior or senior year? (Internship, Study Abroad, culminating project, performance, thesis, or extensive research)
* Is your draft overly personal or overly formal? How can you add a bit more personality? How can you add a bit more polish or consistency?
* Does your transcript lead a reader to believe you have an area of focus or would you like to describe one in your Final Academic Statement? How would you define your area of focus?
* Does your transcript reveal any academic clubs or on-campus jobs that have influenced you in a powerful way? Would you like to include them in your Final Academic Statement?

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# *Quick Tips for Final Academic Statements*

* **Use the space well by eliminating redundancy!**
  + **Do not list each of your course or program titles.** That information is already present in other parts of your transcript: your credit breakdown and in your faculty’s evaluations of you.
  + **Do reveal or highlight your proudest and most distinctive experiences and achievements and include your area of emphasis, if you have one.** This information can only be provided by you!
* **Be purposeful in what personal information you choose to include.** 
  + **Be very cautious when including information that cannot be legally asked in an interview**—marital status, religious practices, disability status, etc. in your Final Academic Statement which goes into your transcript. Employers are not allowed to ask you these questions in the interest of reducing bias in hiring practices, and you may share this document with employers.
  + **Do show your uniqueness and story through your academic and co-curricular achievements or share the previous information with eyes open!**
* [**Many readers can help you**](https://www.evergreen.edu/writingcenter/readers-your-final-academic-statement)**.** Check out the Writing Center’s resources tab for more information about who you can reach out to help you write, revise, edit, and proofread your Final Academic Statement.
* **More resources are available.** 
  + Need more support? Make an appointment at the Writing Center! [evergreen.edu/writingcenter](http://evergreen.edu/writingcenter).
  + Confused about the purpose and audience of these documents? See this helpful article by Caryn Dudley, [“Hacking Your Transcript: How to Intentionally Shape Your Transcript”](https://www.evergreen.edu/sites/default/files/Caryn%20Dudley-Hacking%20Your%20Transcript.pdf)
  + Stay tuned for a forthcoming guide to the Academic Statement from the Writing Center