

Writing Requirements

ADMISSIONS/WRITING REQUIREMENTS BY PROGRAM

Each graduate program has specific writing sample and/or portfolio requirements. Please review the following list carefully and complete the appropriate supplemental items. Only complete applications are forwarded to the Admissions Committee for review. **(Do not combine essays.)**

Department of Journalism

All Journalism Categories (except Photojournalism) Requirements 1, 2, 3
Photojournalism: Requirements 1, 2, 3, 4

Department of Film & Television

Film Production: Requirements 1, 2, 9, 10
Screenwriting: Requirements 1, 8
Film Studies: Requirements 1, 7
TV Production: Requirements 1, 6
Media Ventures: Requirements 1, 5

Department of Mass Communication, Advertising & Public Relations

Mass Communication (Communication Studies and Research): Requirements 1, 3
Advertising (Creative Track): Requirements 1, 3, 11
Advertising (Thesis Track, Management Track): Requirements 1, 3
Public Relations: Requirements 1, 3

Descriptions of the sample and/or portfolio requirements follow.

WRITING REQUIREMENTS

Please check the specific writing sample requirements for your program of study. You must complete all the submissions required for your program but do not need to complete all of the below. Please include your name and intended major on each page of every essay. Do not substitute other essays for our required essays. **Do not combine essays.**

1. REQUIRED FOR ALL STUDENTS:

- Write a narrative about your life. This should include information about your accomplishments, family, educational experience, and outside activities. Be creative rather than philosophic. Remember that you are writing for a reader who knows nothing about you or your background. (1,000 words maximum)
- List periodicals that you read regularly. What do you think of them? What books have you read recently? What, briefly, do you think of them? Who is your favorite author? Why? What is your favorite book? Why? (1,000 words maximum)
- Write an appraisal in clear declarative English of your experience in any area of communication (if any). Include what you expect from a career in the field and why you chose to enter it. (1,000 words maximum)
- Present a portfolio of up to 20 photographs including examples of your best work. Photos may be submitted as digital files on CD or as unmounted prints, in color or black and white. Technical quality, variety of subject matter, and ability to employ photographic techniques should be apparent in the portfolio.
- Over the past several years, many new businesses and services have used emerging media to encourage new ways of communicating, socializing, working, extending a brand, or enjoying entertainment. Tell us what you think are the most interesting recent media ventures and why. What is motivating you to apply to the Media Ventures program?
- Write an essay on why you think a career in television is worthwhile and why you chose to enter the field. If you wish to supplement your application, feel free to include a portfolio consisting of any of the following: videotapes;

films; photo; slides; or example of existing creative writing.

- Submit two academic writing samples, each of at least 750 words in length (three to four double-spaced typed pages or longer). The samples should be essays actually submitted to recent arts or humanities courses. Ideally, the essays should not be rewritten or freshly printed out, but should be originals or clear photocopies of the actual marked papers that were turned in, exactly as they were turned in — if possible showing the course numbers and names of the instructors to which they were submitted, the dates of submission, the instructors' comments in the text and margins, and the grades the papers received. If the originals or clear copies of the papers are not available, newly printed-out copies of the papers are acceptable. Write on the first page the course name, teacher's name, date, and grade the paper received (if remembered). If neither originals nor photocopies nor new print-outs of papers from the past five years are available, applicants may submit two newly written essays of 750–1,000 word length. In either case, the essays need not be about film. Discussions of any work of art, artistic movement, or issue in literature, drama, painting, sculpture, or film are equally acceptable. (Note to international applicants: both essays should be submitted in the English language, but the translation, if necessary, should be done by the candidate.) No one else is allowed to assist in the preparation or correction of the writing samples submitted.
- Submit two samples of your fiction writing. It may be a portion of a screenplay, a short story, a play, a poem, or a portion of a novel. The length should be no more than 30 pages. (Please do not include more than two samples.)
- Write a short story that is no longer than two typewritten pages (1,000 words). Write in the present tense, describe principal characters, and write only what can be seen and heard (not what people are thinking). Don't use filmic terms or formats, and avoid long passages of dialogue. Remember, you are writing a short story, not a script.
- Use nine photographs to tell a short story that illustrates the development of a clearly defined emotion. Arrange your photos in a numbered sequence. Photographs must be taken by you and

must stand alone without words. Visual storytelling and design will be judged above photographic quality. (Please no slides, videos, or CDs.)

11. Creative Track applicants for the MS in Advertising at Boston University must submit all the same forms, transcripts, essays, recommendations, and test scores as Management Track and Thesis Track applicants. Students applying for admission into the Creative Track must also submit three print samples of their work. These samples will be considered as the final part, but not necessarily the most important part, of each application for the MS in Advertising Creative Track at Boston University. Please note: it is not necessary to declare yourself as an art director or as a copywriter during the application process.

About your samples: Your three print ad samples should be in the form of rough layouts showing: a rough sketch of the main visual (stick figures are okay), the wording and position of the headline, and any other key elements (smaller visuals, product, copy, logo, or tagline). These three ads should each be for a different product/service. They should be 8.5" x 11" in black-and-white or color, plus a separate typed sheet for copy. The ads should NOT be mounted. Please choose ordinary products or services that are national brands, not local or regional ones. Don't choose nonprofit organizations or causes (charities, diseases, or social/political causes) as subjects of your ads. Let the power of your ideas show in the way the visual, headline, art direction, and copy work together, not in the selection of an unusual subject. Do not use celebrities of any kind. Please do not submit any scripts, tapes, or other work.

Guidelines and hints: Your three samples may be rendered by hand or on computer, but use rough sketches instead of existing photos or illustrations created by others. Stick figures of people are just fine. Samples will not be judged on the basis of drawing skill, but on the power of the ideas and the potential shown in developing the basic idea, the art direction, and/or the copywriting. So a sketch roughly drawn with a black marker can do the job as long as you've put thought into the content and arrangement of elements to convey your idea. Do not create ads that extend existing or past ad campaigns. At least one of your three samples should have two or more paragraphs of copy so we can appreciate the strength of your writing. At least one of your three ads should be based on an approach other than humor.

International Students Only

International Student Video Requirement

ALL international students (non-U.S. citizens) must submit a three-minute video as described below:

1. State your name and your intended major.
2. Address each of the following subjects:
How do you plan to advance your community as a result of your study in the field of communications?
Discuss a significant person in your life and describe the ways in which you have been influenced (positively/negatively and why).
If you were to describe where you grew up to someone who hadn't visited there before, what would you highlight?

The video must be in DVD or Windows Media Player format. It must be unedited and unscripted. You should not memorize or read your answers. Make sure to label your video with your name and your intended major before you send it to the College of Communication. Do not exceed the three-minute time limit. Videos and CDs will not be returned.