

## Graduate School Match: MBA

### Writing Guide

The writing components of the QuestBridge application include the short-answer questions, personal essay, career goals statement, and all areas to provide additional information. They add depth to your application and deserve your close attention.

#### Key Writing Tips

- *Be specific:* The reader needs to learn about you, so it's critical that you provide concrete examples, details and context to convey a strong sense of who you are.
- *Be authentic:* Evaluators read many essays year after year. An authentic piece stands out. Don't try to predict what they want to hear. Instead, write about what is important to you. If it has value to you, then that will come through in your writing and help the reader understand your purpose and values.
- *Answer the question:* Re-read the question and your response to ensure you are answering the prompt. Sometimes our writing can get off course or go too far on a tangent. Double check that you are answering the central question being asked.
- *Observe word limits:* Check that your final piece is within the word or character limit. If you are over the limit, it's likely that part of your writing will get cut off.
- *Proofread:* Carefully proofread your application for typos and grammatical errors. These avoidable errors are distracting and will undermine your message.

#### Career Goals Statement

Articulating your career vision is a crucial part of your MBA application. Your career goals statement will be closely read and evaluated. It should clearly convey where you want to take your career, whether that's advancing to leadership in your current industry, starting your own business or pivoting to a new field. Moreover, you need to answer the question: Why do you need an MBA to realize this vision? Not all career progression requires an MBA, so you'll need to demonstrate why business school is essential to your particular path. Our partners are seeking students who are self-aware and ready to make the most of their MBA experience.

#### Personal Essay

The QuestBridge personal essay asks you to reflect on what has shaped you and your aspirations. To answer this broad prompt, consider the influences and experiences that have brought you to this current juncture. What life experiences have shaped you and your career vision? And how do they continue to propel you forward? Be specific, detailed, authentic, and self-reflective. You are drawing on your past to look ahead.

### **Short Answers**

There are two types of short answer questions in the QuestBridge application: 35-word answers and 200-word answers. Although these are shorter than the essay, these are still valuable aspects of your application that will be closely reviewed. All of the key tips still apply. Additionally, think about how your responses reveal new parts of yourself and expand upon other areas of the application.

### **Additional Information**

Each question included on the application has been carefully considered to gather all of the information the evaluators need, so do not feel obligated to write in the optional additional information sections. However, if you have something that's important to share that was not addressed in other areas of the application, you may wish to use the additional information section.

### **The Cohesive Message**

Think about how your writing compliments, explains, or expands upon the rest of your application. Check to ensure you are not repeating information. Instead, use each section to share something new or to provide further context and details. Consider:

- Are you sharing the most important stories of your life and career?
- Will your application be easily understood by someone who doesn't know you?
- Does the reader walk away with a distinct sense of who you are?

### **Revision & Feedback**

It can be helpful to get a fresh set of eyes on your work. One way to do this is to step away from your essays for a few days before revisiting them. You may also consider asking one or two trusted people for feedback on your ideas and drafts, and if your essay really conveys who you are. This can be someone who has attended or is currently pursuing an MBA program. It can also be helpful to hear from someone completely removed from the process. They may have good feedback on how your overall message lands. Be sure that you are asking for feedback, and never asking for individuals to revise or rewrite parts of your essay. Your essays must be a work of your own.