

WELCOME *to Wharton*

The MBA Writing Requirement: An Overview

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What We'll Cover Today:

- Why is there an MBA Writing Requirement?
- What is the MBA Writing Requirement?
- The Writing Waiver Exam:
 - Where do I find it and when is it due?
 - What is the exam?
 - How should I prepare for it?
 - What are some tips for doing well on it?
 - How do you evaluate it?
 - When do I learn if I waived?
- Questions?

Why is There an MBA Writing Requirement?

- **A Requirement That's Alum-Driven and Grounded in Data:**
 - 2010 MBA Curricular Review
 - For Wharton MBA alums, the largest, reported skills-gap between career-importance and Wharton-preparation was in writing.
 - **Alums reported that writing was crucial to their career success, but that Wharton hadn't done a very good job of preparing them to write effectively. That's why there is an MBA Writing Requirement.**

What is the MBA Writing Requirement?

There are two parts to the MBA Writing Requirement:

- **An exam** (*the Writing Waiver Exam*):
 - Required for all incoming MBA students
 - Completed online over the summer
- **A course** (*WHCP 6210: Clear and Persuasive Business Writing*):
 - Required only for students who don't waive the exam
 - Completed in-person in the fall

The Writing Waiver Exam: Where & When?

Where do I find the exam?

- Through the Pre-Arrival Assessments Page on the Onboarding Site
- Or under 'Courses' in the left menu if you log in to Penn's Canvas site (canvas.upenn.edu)

When is it due?

- For students admitted on or before July 1, the exam is due **July 15th (11:59 P.M. EDT)**
- For students admitted after July 1, the exam is due **August 1st (11:59 P.M. EDT)**

What is the Writing Waiver Exam?

- The exam is designed to evaluate your ability to write clearly, concisely, and persuasively for a business audience.
- You will have two hours to write a persuasive memo of approximately 300—500 words (1-2 pages) in response to an industry-related prompt. You'll have a choice of four prompts.
- **Keep in mind:** when time expires, the exam's text box automatically locks and uploads whatever is or isn't in it.
- For that reason, we **STRONGLY** encourage you to work in the exam's text box, not Word.

How Should I Prepare for the Exam?

- Review the sample prompts to get a sense of what the exam prompts will ask of you
- *Carefully* review the Persuasive Memo Checklist on the exam's Canvas site

What Are Some Tips for Doing Well on the Exam?

Organization:

- **Intro:**
 - Recommendation and road map sentence
 - Connect recommendation to outcome (why it matters)
- **Body:**
 - 2-3 fully developed supporting arguments
 - Risks & Mitigations or Counter-Arguments section
- **Conclusion:**
 - Reiterate recommendation and supporting arguments
 - Create positive or negative urgency to act (what can be gained if we act, or what can be lost if we fail to act)

Developing Your Argument:

- Don't just regurgitate the data we've given you
- Remember to close the back door (state the significance of the data you've cited)

How Do You Evaluate the Exam?

Grading Rubric (100 Possible Points)

Criteria	Points
Argument & Development	40
Style (Clarity & Concision)	30
Organization & Formatting	20
Grammar & Usage	10

When Do I Learn if I Waived?

Results available in mid-August:

- In mid-August, I will email you your results (waive/not waive).
- All students will also have access to a rubric in Canvas with the averaged scores of your two graders.

Next Steps:

For those who waive:

- Congratulations, you have completed the MBA Writing Requirement.

For those who don't waive:

- You will be placed in a section of WHCP 6210 before Course Match opens, so that once Course Match opens, you'll be able to plan the rest of your schedule around WHCP 6210.

Questions?

If you didn't have time to ask your question in the live session:

- You might find it answered in the FAQ we've included on the Writing Waiver Exam's Canvas site
- If not, feel free to reach out to me (Brennan Maier) at:
bmaier@wharton.upenn.edu