Accounting Writing Admission Assessment Tip Sheet

This tip sheet offers advice and information for students taking the Department of Accounting’s Writing Admission Assessment. At the assessment, you will receive a newspaper article on a general business topic. You will have 75 minutes to write an essay in which you should summarize the article’s content and offer an argument about a relevant issue pertaining to the article. For full instructions, refer to the [Writing Skills Assessment General Instruction Sheet](#).

**General Advice**

- An original argument is the **most important** element of your essay. The essay should contain more than just summary; it also needs your own argument.
- The assessment is only 75 minutes long, so use your time wisely. Take a few minutes to craft a rough outline of the article you are given and identify an argument you would like to make.
- Save 5-10 minutes at the end of the session to proof-read your essay.

**Micro Skills**

- Pay close attention to correctly using articles (a/an, the) and noun plurals. Mistakes involving these basic language elements are common and cost students a significant number of points.
- Subject/verb agreement (“he is” instead of “he are”) is also essential to establishing professional-level communication. Take a few extra seconds to make sure your verbs match their subjects.
- Sentence fragments are an issue for domestic and international students alike. Make sure each sentence has the necessary components to make it complete.

**Thesis and Development**

- Essays should contain between 1/4 and 1/3 summary. Include enough summary to provide context, but your essay should **never** be just summary.
- **The thesis statement is worth as many points as the entire micro skills category.** Spend a few extra minutes on this one crucial sentence and make sure it clearly articulates your own position/argument. The sentence following the thesis should narrow the argument and identify your first point of analysis in the essay.
- **Each paragraph should begin with a claim statement that addresses a portion of your overall argument.** For more information on claim statements, see the Frank Center’s [Effective Claims Tip Sheet](#).
• Stay on topic. Don’t spend time on statements your family members have made, movies you saw, or personal anecdotes. Rely on the information from the article and your ability to make an argument.

**Clarity**

• An original argument requires precise language to convey your intended meaning. Watch out for using the same word too many times in a paragraph, and avoid starting multiple sentences in the same way.
• Anytime you use “this”, it must be paired with a noun.
  o “This leads to...” is vague and lacks insight.
• Be precise with your words! If there are too many words in a row that are 1-4 letters long, you can probably eliminate some.
  o “I want to make you see that I have a good argument” becomes “I want to impress you with my argument”.

**Style**

• Avoid beginning paragraphs with “firstly”, “secondly” and “thirdly”.
• While use of 2nd person is fine in informal communication (like this tip sheet), it has no place in academic and professional writing. Avoid the generic “you” (as in “brushing your teeth is healthy”) and find another way to express the same idea.
• Avoid passive voice as much as possible. Instead of “handshakes were exchanged”, add the actual actors in the sentence and write “the attendees exchanged handshakes”.