



Megaron – Optional Essay

Understand how you can take advantage of this opportunity in your application.

Basically, there are two variations in the scope of **Optional Essays**:

01.) The applicant will use this offered room to integrate elements of his **candidacy positioning** that he could not detail elsewhere and/or for there was not enough space in the regular essays.

Example, Columbia: “An optional fourth essay will allow you to discuss any issues that do not fall within the purview of the required essays.” ([Columbia Essays](#))

02.) The applicant will use the offered room for **extenuating circumstances**.

Example, Wharton: “All reapplicants to Wharton are required to complete the Optional Essay. Explain how you have reflected on the previous decision about your application, and discuss any updates to your candidacy (e.g., changes in your professional life, additional coursework, extracurricular/volunteer engagements). You may also use this section to address any extenuating circumstances. (250 words) ([Wharton Essays](#))

IMPORTANT: Many times schools will not offer Optional Essay for the applicant to detail **extenuating circumstances**, but the Data Form often reserves some room for such purpose. IN general, they refer to this space as **Additional Information**. Observe, case by case, how each school offers this room for justification.

Common Mistakes

- Using it as a space to throw the stuff you wrote to other schools or couldn't find place in any of the previous essays;
- Using it to summarize your candidacy values;
- Making use of lame excuses;
- Not being candid.

Winning Approaches

Don't use it unless really necessary. Don't worry about not answering it, because “sometimes ‘optional’ means optional”. You should resort to an **Optional Essay** in very restricted cases:

- **Where there is not enough room in the regular essays to contextualize personal values.** For instance, you can use this Essay to detail your partner's project during your MBA program. AdCom members appreciate serious cases founded on research. Reveal concrete facts of your family's plan;
- If you couldn't ask your immediate superior to be your recommender;
- If there are gaps in your employment history;
- If you think the Admissions Committee may have concerns about poor grades at colleges;
- If you think GMAT/TOEFL doesn't reflect your potential to succeed academically at MBA;
- If you are attending a specific course to address some concerns on your application (an on-line course on English Business, an extension summer course, etc.);
- If it is important to go into details about your community service, hobby, etc;
- If you hold any kind of disability, and can prove that you have overcome it.

Keep Running



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