

# **EDGE Leadership Development Program**

## **Essay Writing Guidelines**

To ensure your application reflects your experiences and highlights your leadership potential, please review the following guidelines. These will help maintain the integrity of the application process and ensure fairness for all applicants.

### **General Guidelines:**

#### **1. Share Your Personal Story:**

You are encouraged to share personal and professional experiences that demonstrate your leadership skills, challenges, and growth. Your responses should be unique to you and reflect your personal journey.

#### **2. Follow the Prompt and Answer the Questions Fully:**

Make sure to carefully read the essay prompt and any specific questions provided. Address all parts of the prompt directly and fully, ensuring your essay stays focused on the topic at hand. Incomplete or off-topic responses may detract from the strength of your application.

#### **3. Stay Within the Word Count:**

Adhering to the word count is essential for fairness and clarity. Essays that exceed the word count limit may be truncated or disqualified. Ensure your writing is concise, relevant, and within the specified word count to maximize your impact.

#### **4. Seek Constructive Feedback:**

It is acceptable to seek feedback or advice from trusted peers, mentors, or leaders who are not part of the reviewing committee. However, the final writing and ideas should remain your own. Guidance should help refine your thoughts, not rewrite your work.

#### **5. Plan, Outline, and Proofread:**

Feel free to discuss your ideas and structure with others as you plan your essay. Proofreading for minor errors is encouraged, but your essay should clearly reflect your voice and insights.

#### **6. Use Grammar and Spell Check Tools:**

Tools for grammar and spell-checking are encouraged to help you submit a professional and clear essay. These tools should improve clarity but not change the content or ideas of your writing.

#### **7. Originality is Key:**

The essay must be written entirely by you, using your ideas, examples, and reflections. Guidance from others should focus on feedback, not content creation.

### **Prohibited Practices:**

#### **1. Avoid AI Tools for Content Creation:**

Using AI to generate ideas or write any part of your essay is not allowed. The essay must be a genuine reflection of your thoughts, experiences, and growth. While AI tools may seem helpful,

using them can hinder your scores, as they may compromise the depth of self-reflection, personal insight, and originality we are looking for.

## **2. Plagiarism is Unacceptable:**

Copying or presenting someone else's work as your own is prohibited. This includes using text from external sources without proper citation or submitting work that is not originally yours.

## **3. Do Not Outsource Your Essay Writing:**

While feedback and suggestions are welcome, the essay should be fully written by you. Having someone else draft your essay or write any portion of it, is not acceptable.

## **4. Represent Your Experiences Accurately:**

Misrepresenting someone else's experiences or ideas as your own undermines the fairness of the process. Ensure that the stories, challenges, and achievements you share are personal to you.

## **Additional Suggestions:**

### **1. Reflect on Your Growth:**

Consider how your leadership journey has evolved over time. Sharing both successes and challenges can show resilience, self-awareness, and a commitment to improvement.

### **2. Keep It Authentic:**

Your essay should reflect your authentic self. Avoid writing what you think the committee *wants* to hear. Instead, focus on genuine experiences that shaped your leadership skills.

### **3. Stay Focused and Organized:**

To ensure you are fully answering the prompt, it may help to create an outline that addresses each part of the question. This will help you stay organized and prevent you from leaving out any key details.