

St. Edward's University is a private, Catholic liberal arts institution of more than 5,300 students located in the vibrant city of Austin, Texas. Founded in 1885 by the Congregation of Holy Cross, the university emphasizes critical thinking, social justice and ethical practice. Students enjoy the advantages of small classes, personal attention, excellent internships and service-learning opportunities. St. Edward's offers more than 50 areas of study for undergraduates. The university's nationally recognized New College program provides flexible class schedules, convenient locations, and online courses and majors for adults working toward bachelor's degrees. St. Edward's also offers 11 graduate programs.

1. BE YOURSELF.

We want to get to know you. In fact, that's the primary reason colleges require an essay for admission. Think of it as an amazing opportunity for you to showcase your personality. Be thoughtful and genuine. Make us laugh, make us cry or make us think. Above all, help us understand why getting your college degree is important to you.

2. TAKE YOUR TIME.

Give yourself plenty of time to think through what you want to say. Create an outline. Write one paragraph and take a break. Start over or stop for a while if you need to collect your thoughts. Also, pick a spot to write where you feel at ease, such as your garden or your favorite coffeehouse.

3. STAY FOCUSED.

Limit your essay to the details that support your story. At the same time, make sure your essay is long enough — aim for one to two pages — to successfully introduce yourself to New College.

4. TELL US SOMETHING NEW.

Remember, we'll learn a lot about you from your application and résumé, so avoid rehashing your work history, job duties and community service activities. Use your essay to share something different about yourself or to give us more detail about an aspect of your application that you can't fully cover there. Tell us what we won't understand from those other documents.

5. BE CREATIVE.

We read all the essays we receive. In fact, we love to read them. Why? Because they tell your story in your own words. The admission committee wants to get to know you through your essay. Think about what you want to say; then focus on conveying your message.

6. SHARE SPECIFIC DETAILS.

Develop your essay's main point, or theme, by including specific details, stories or facts. Here's an example. Instead of telling us, "I have always wanted to go to college," share with us why it's important to you:

- "I want my daughters to see the value of education."
- "I want to be the first person in my family to earn a college degree."
- "I want to pursue my dream of running my own business."

7. LET IT COOL.

Get your ideas on paper; then put them away for a few days and re-read them with fresh eyes. When you return, you'll be more likely to see where your essay may need improvement.

8. PROOFREAD!

Embarrassing typos or grammatical errors detract from your essay. Were you distracted? Did you rush? Whatever the reason, mistakes look unprofessional and sloppy. Carefully read your essay for mistakes before you turn it in, or ask someone else to help.

9. GET ANOTHER OPINION.

What's the best way to make sure your essay reflects who you are? Have someone else read it. Briefly explain why you chose your topic and approach. This gives the reader enough background to offer honest feedback. And be sure to choose someone who knows you well and whose opinion you value, like your spouse, a trusted friend or your boss.

10. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, ASK US.

We're here to help. If you have questions — about your essay or other aspects of applying to New College — let us know. We're available by phone or e-mail. We're also happy to meet with you at either our main South Austin campus near downtown or our campus in North Austin in the Arboretum area.