

NISOD Student Essay Contest - Self-Assessment Checklist

Before you submit your essay, take a few minutes to review it using the following checklist. Be honest with yourself. This will help you submit your strongest work!

1. Did I stay focused on the essay prompt?

- ☐ I clearly describe how a faculty or staff member made a difference in my life.
- ☐ My story connects directly to the prompt without going off topic.

2. Is my story powerful and meaningful?

- ☐ I shared a specific example or personal story that shows the impact this person had on me.
- ☐ My story feels personal, heartfelt, and genuine.

3. Is my essay clear, organized, and easy to read?

- ☐ My ideas are in a logical order and easy to follow.
- ☐ I checked grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes.
 - Pro Tip: Use AI to provide feedback and catch grammar and punctuation mistakes.
DO NOT use AI to write your essay. **It must be your own work.**

4. Does my voice come through?

- ☐ The essay sounds like *me*—my own words and feelings.
- ☐ I shared my thoughts honestly and respectfully.

5. Did I bring something original or creative to my writing?

- ☐ My essay reflects a unique perspective or story.
- ☐ I used interesting details or descriptions to bring it to life.

Final Check:

- ☐ I've read my essay out loud to catch any awkward or confusing sentences.
- ☐ I asked someone I trust to read it and give feedback.

Pro Tip: Take it to your college's writing center for feedback. Allow the writing center enough time to provide a response, and yourself time to make any changes.

- ☐ I feel proud of what I've written!