APPLICATION ESSAY PROMPTS

Engineering Summer Bridge 2027 · The University of Oklahoma

The Engineering Summer Bridge (ESB) Program has become a model for ensuring engineering students' academic preparedness and success. The four-week, residential program is for first-year students who have been accepted to the University of Oklahoma and plan to major in a program within OU's Gallogly College of Engineering or Mewbourne College of Earth and Energy. It is designed to help students prepare for college-level engineering and math coursework. Since its inception in 2007, it has impacted the lives of nearly 1,000 students.

ABOUT THE ESSAY QUESTIONS

The essay questions help our committee gain deeper insight into you: your perspectives, your experiences, and what motivates you. Your individual voice is the most important part of each response. Specific, honest answers in your own words matter more to us than polished writing.

Generative AI. We acknowledge that applicants may choose to use generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Gemini, etc.) to improve their writing, including grammar, sentence structure, and spelling. The ideas and experiences you share must be your own. To uphold academic integrity, you must disclose any use of generative AI through the attribution statement at the end of this application (Question 6).

1 WHY ENGINEERING/STEM?

300 words or less

Share the story behind your decision to pursue an engineering and/or science degree. Rather than telling us you have always liked math or building things, take us to a specific moment, person, or experience that made you decide this path was worth committing to.

In your response, consider:

- What is driving you toward this degree, including any people, communities, or goals you are working for.
- What you hope to do with it: your academic goals at OU and the kind of work you want to do afterward.

2 MATH BACKGROUND

300 words or less

In paragraph form, detail your math background/coursework from high school to now. Please include:

- **Your most recent math class:** the course name and when you took it (semester and year). If you are currently enrolled, name the course and the current semester and academic year (for example, Spring 2027 of the 2026–27 school year).
- **Math you have completed in high school,** such as Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Trigonometry, Precalculus, Statistics, or Calculus.
- **Math you plan to take** before starting at OU.
- **Concurrent enrollment, dual credit, AP, or IB courses** in any subject, completed or in progress. For each, list the course, the college or program offering it, whether it is complete or in progress, and the college credit or exam score you expect.
- **Your ALEKS Math Placement score and test date,** if you have already taken it.
- **Anything else that shaped your math path,** such as a course your school did not offer, a long-term substitute teacher, changing schools, online coursework, or time away from school.

3 YOUR MATH GAME PLAN

300 words or less

Engineering Summer Bridge (ESB) helps incoming engineering students build the mathematical foundation, problem-solving skills, and academic habits needed to succeed in rigorous STEM coursework. Why are you willing to invest four weeks of your summer in preparing for the academic challenges of engineering/science? Describe the habits and opportunities you hope to embrace through ESB to support your success, the resources or support you will need to achieve your academic and professional goals, and how ESB can help you access that support both during the summer and throughout your early college experience.

You might consider:

- **Your high school math experience:** What has come easily, what has been challenging, and how have you responded when a concept did not click?
- **Your learning strategies:** How do you learn math best (for example, working practice problems, studying with friends, asking a teacher or tutor, watching videos)?
- **Your support needs:** What resources or support would help you strengthen your math skills, build effective academic habits, and succeed during ESB and throughout your early college experience?

You listed your math courses in Question 2, so focus here on your experience rather than a course list. Being honest about where you feel less confident helps us plan your support and will not count against you.

4 ENGINEERING FOR PEOPLE, PLANET, AND PLACE

500 words or less

Choose one specific, real-world challenge that matters to you or your community: a problem that affects people, the environment, or a specific place and might benefit from engineering design. We encourage you to choose a problem you have seen or experienced firsthand, in your hometown, school, community, family, or workplace, rather than a global issue described in general terms.

In your response, address:

- **The problem:** what is happening, where, and why it matters to you.
- **Who is affected:** the people or groups involved and how they are impacted.
- **Beyond the technology:** why a technical fix alone might fall short.
- **Working with people:** how you might work with the community and partners to shape and test solutions.
- **Your part:** the role you hope to play as an engineer, and one first step you might take toward a solution.

5 PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES

100 words or less

Describe any formative or substantial experiences you have had in science or engineering. These can be formal or informal: a class project, a robotics or STEM club, a camp, research, a job, fixing equipment at home or on a farm, or something you built or taught yourself. If you have not had formal opportunities, tell us about something you figured out on your own.

6 GENERATIVE AI ATTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Required for all applicants

If you used generative AI (such as ChatGPT, Gemini, etc.) at any point in preparing this application, copy, paste, and complete the statement below in the text box for this question:

> *"The applicant would like to acknowledge the use of [Generative AI Tool Name], in the preparation of this application. [Generative AI Tool Name] was used in the following way(s): [e.g., brainstorming, grammar and spelling correction, rewording sentences] for [which question(s) or portion of the application]."*

If you did not use generative AI, enter **"Not applicable"** in the text box for this question.

NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

- Write in paragraph form. Specific examples from your own life tell us more than general statements.
- You are welcome to share lived experience as context, such as being a first-generation college student, working or caring for family while in school, or having limited access to STEM courses and activities.
- Stay within each word range. The ranges keep the process fair and consistent for every applicant.
- Draft your responses in a separate document and paste them in, so you do not lose your work.