

It IS All About You: Preparing a Personal Statement



What is a Personal Statement?

The personal statement is an organized, well-written statement in which you integrate various **academic, research, practical, extracurricular, employment, and life experiences** in a way that shows your determination to pursue your goals. The statement also illustrates that the program to which you are applying will maximize your ability to pursue your goals.

What is the Purpose of My Personal Statement?

Your personal statement is a major factor in an admissions committee's or a scholarship committee's decision. It allows the committee to gauge your interest in and familiarity with the program to which you are applying. It also illustrates your writing and critical thinking skills.

Who will Read My Personal Statement?

You have no control of who reads your personal statement once you submit it; therefore, avoid offensive, defensive, and combative language. The people reading your personal statement could possibly become your employers or colleagues. Your statement will likely be read by an admissions committee, a university committee, or a departmental search committee.

Questions to Ask Myself before I Write

How and when did I become interested in my field of study? What are my specific career goals? What knowledge and skills do I possess, and how can they serve the program and my field of study? Why should the committee consider me a leading candidate?

The Must Haves

Your statement should center on a theme or thesis. It should include an attention-grabbing introduction using an anecdote, experience, or quote that directly relates to your chosen theme. Relate any academic, research, life, extracurricular, or employment experiences relevant to the program or scholarship to which you are applying. Elaborate on how you will execute your research agenda (if applicable).

Revising Tips

Start writing your personal statement two – three months before it is due, so you will have enough time to carefully revise it before you submit it. After your first draft, set your statement aside for a week, and then revisit it. Slowly read your personal statement aloud to ensure your paragraphs are organized and fully developed according to your theme or thesis. Next, slowly read your paragraphs aloud, listening for clarity of ideas that are connected with transitions. Then, carefully read for errors including spelling, punctuation, grammar, and word choice. Allow others to review and critique your work, but do not allow them to write it for you.

For More Help

Please study the two sample medical school personal statements on the UWC's website. If you need more assistance, please visit the University Writing Center in A309 General Classroom Building, call the center at (336) 285-3531, or visit Purdue OWL at <https://www.purdue.edu/preprofessional/Documents/Writing%20the%20Personal%20Statement.pdf>