



Planning for Personal Statements

Why are Personal Statements important?

- Provides the opportunity to show interest in the program
- Highlights relevant experience and strengths
- Gives the opportunity to show how are you unique and different from other applicants
- Provides the opportunity to persuade the admissions committee to be interested in YOU

This is one aspect of the application process that you have complete control over

Do's	Don'ts
✓ Write concisely	✓ Be too general and not tailored
✓ Define career goals	✓ Be too wordy or disorganized
✓ Indicate what makes you unique	✓ Start every sentence with "I"
✓ Show how your experience is relevant	✓ Use clichés
✓ Make connection on why a fit for program	✓ Lie or exaggerate your experience
✓ Maintain confident and enthusiastic tone	✓ Have spelling/grammar mistakes
✓ Have a specific purpose when writing	✓ Forget to proofread repeatedly
✓ Tell a story and be memorable	✓ Repeat exactly what is on resume or CV

What are important things to consider when writing a Personal Statement?

1. **Know why you are applying to graduate school and specifically this program**
 - Why is graduate school a good fit?
 - Why are you applying to this specific program?
 - *If you aren't clear of how to answer these, then this may not be a good fit*

2. **Know your experiences that make you unique**
 - How are you different than other applicants?
 - What background/experiences do you have that you can bring to the program?
 - *Tip:* Be specific about your experience and why you are a great candidate because there is no one else like you
 - *Tip:* Think about relevant experience: work, volunteer, classes, projects, interest, etc.

3. **Explain why you selected this particular path**
 - Was there a certain event that led you to consider this career?
 - What aspect of your experience (job, education, volunteer) made you consider this career?

4. **Explain what you want to gain from the program**
 - What does this program offer you?
 - How can this program help with your long-term goals?



5. State how you are a value to the program

- What can your experiences bring to the program?
- Why should they choose you over other candidates?

6. Start writing

- Why wait to write?
- Why write everything all at once?
 - *Tip:* Don't feel like you have to sit down and write the paper- (jot notes in your phone, think in the shower, brainstorm with friends/family), then write a few sentences/ paragraphs along the way
 - *Tip:* Tell your story and be memorable
 - *Tip:* Demonstrate your writing skills and critical thinking abilities

7. Answer the question/ prompt

- What is the specific question and prompt?
- Did you answer the question presented?
- Is the document tailored to a specific program?
 - *Tip:* Make sure you follow directions and answer the questions
 - *Tip:* Highlight why are a good fit for the program, and why the program is a good fit for you
 - *Tip:* Don't be general, make the personal statement specific and tailored to a particular program

8. Be concise

- Who wants to read a bunch of fluff?
 - *Tip:* Be detailed, but to the point

9. Be positive and sincere

- Can you hear your voice throughout the document?
- Do you sound excited and passionate about graduate school?

10. Proofread repeatedly

- Have you read the paper?
- Have you gotten others to read your paper?