

a guide to developing your

PERSONAL STATEMENT

★ WHAT IS A PERSONAL STATEMENT?

A personal statement is a short essay, usually between 2-3 pages in length, that helps admissions or the hiring committee better understand who you are by explaining your interest in applying, why you are a strong candidate for the job, position, academic program, or institution, and describing your achievements, talents, interests, and goals.

★ 3-STEP PROCESS ★

1 Brainstorm

Ask Yourself Questions

- What is special, unique, or impressive about you or your life story? What takeaways would you like for other people to have after meeting you? “What do I want the people reviewing my application to know about me?”
- What are your career goals?
- How/when did you become interested in this field, discipline, position, institution, etc.?
- What experiences have you had, or do you have, that relate to the job, field, position, etc.?
- What skills do you possess? What strengths do you possess?
- What from your resume would you like to speak to or expand upon?
- What makes you the best fit for this field, position, or program? What makes this field, position, or program the best fit for you?
- What are your short- and long-term goals? How will you achieve them?
- What differentiates you from other candidates or applicants?

2 Draft & Write

Intro, Body, Conclusion

- Introduction Paragraph: Reflects you and your personality. Include why you are interested in the job or degree, and your recent experience that is relevant.
- Body Paragraph: Share relevant skills, interests, and experiences.
- Conclusion Paragraph: Creates a strong, lasting impression for the employer or university. Restate why you applied and what you hope to achieve.

3 Revise

Proofread Your Work!

Things to consider when revising:

- Spelling, grammar, and sentence structure and transitions
- Relevancy
- Specificity
- Simple, easy-to-understand language



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checklist & tips

Be specific

Include examples via **STAR** Method

Situation - provide context

Task - share task or problem

Action - describe what you did

Result - explain what happened

Answer the Question(s)

Be sure you are **addressing all parts** of what is being asked if provided with a prompt or specific questions and **modifying responses** to fit each question among multiple programs

Keep it Simple

Write in **short sentences** and use **simple language** for clear and effective writing, and **avoid clichés** such as beginning your statement with a quote or definition

Use an Active Voice

Use **strong action verbs** that engage the reader (e.g., communicated, led, managed) while highlighting your accomplishments and use a **positive tone** to demonstrate your enthusiasm and passion

Don't Overshare

Showcase your experience, but do not describe your entire life story. Only **share what is relevant** to the case you are trying to make, and do not be presumptuous

Know Your Audience

Find a way to make your story interesting by **using a hook** to grab the attention of the reader, and be sure to remember your audience and stay professional

Be Yourself!

Write in your **own voice** and tell your story without lying or exaggerating. Everyone is unique, so share what makes you different from the other candidates

Do Your Research

As you would for a job interview, **research the program** you are applying for, what it offers, its mission and values, and the type of applicants they are seeking

Revise & Proofread

There should be **no spelling or grammar mistakes**