PERSONAL STATEMENT – ALL MAJORS

A personal statement distinguishes you from others and gives the admissions panel or reviewer information about who you are. It is your opportunity to sell yourself to the committee, providing what you want the reader to know about you. However, the personal statement is not just about you; it can also tell the committee what you can contribute to the school or the program.

Make a memorable entrance; grab the reader's attention with the opening statement or paragraph. Be creative, but not over the top. You are applying for a selective, professional program, so be professional while setting yourself apart from everyone else. Think about your life and what will interest the reader and write it in an imaginative and creative way, keeping an optimistic and upbeat tone.

The personal statement should be written in a formal tone. Do not write as if you are texting or speaking to a friend. Always use proper grammar. Write the statement and let it sit for a day or two. Once you have had a little time to process, it will be easier to edit the statement. Use spell check and ask others to proofread the statement.

Be sure that you are answering the question or addressing the prompt. It is better to have a focused statement with in-depth information than to have many ideas that jump from point to point. Think about the type of school you will be attending. What types of students does this university or program attract? How can you position yourself as one of those students?

Reflection

Take time to think before you write. Serious reflection about yourself and your goals will be apparent in a well-written statement. Use the personal statement to let the reader know what motivates you. Do not try to impress readers; use the statement to present yourself in an honest manner. There will always be students whose achievements are lesser or greater than yours, so make yourself stand out by being honest and stating **your** truth.

During your reflection, think about what makes you unique. What qualities and personality attributes make you the right fit for this professional program? Think about what personal characteristics led you to choose this program? What makes you a strong candidate?

Think about the past; what happened in your history that started you down this path? When did you start thinking about a career in this area? What obstacles have you overcome to get to this place? Who or what inspired you to pursue this goal? Even the smallest detail makes you stand apart from others who are trying to gain a spot in the program.

Think about your successes and failures. What is your biggest accomplishment? How have you overcome failure in your life? What was your family situation or upbringing that brought you to this point in your life?

Write Your Story

As you write, think about your academic career and how it has impacted your current goal. What classes changed you? How and why did they change you? What have you learned from work? What have you learned from participating in internships, externships, or co-ops? What is your ultimate career goal?

Use the personal statement as an opportunity to demonstrate your passion and write persuasively about what you can contribute to the program.

Use the personal statement to demonstrate:
- Self-awareness
- Excellent writing style and ability
- Ability to follow directions and answer the question/prompt

What to include in the statement:
- Who you are as a person
- Self-reflection and what you have learned and gained
- Analysis and evaluation of your experiences

What to leave out of the statement:
- Cookie cutter or template statements
- Information about monetary needs; flattery about how great the program is
- Non-memorable content
- Errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling
- Do not copy your resume in the personal statement

Final Checklist
- Proofread, proofread, proofread
- Revise, focus, revise, focus
- Be sure to answer the question/prompt
- Be sure to follow the length requirements – not too long or too short!
- Utilize the University Career Center resources/services early and often!