

Guidelines for Writing a Personal Statement

The personal statement is an opportunity to stand out among the other applicants and demonstrate how you are unique. It also provides a way to highlight something that may not stand out in the rest of your application.

Before writing the personal statement (at least 6 months before the deadline), think about the following:

- What makes you passionate and interested in the field?
- What makes you unique among the other applicants?
- What are the things that you want the admissions committee to know about you?
- Relate the content to the field that you are interested

While writing the personal statement (at least 3 months before the deadline):

1. Introduction

- Set up what you are going to talk about
- Should be attention getting

2. Body

- Demonstrate your passion and interest in the field
- Where is the proof? Documentation? Evidence? Provide specific examples.
- Share what you learned
- Be detailed
- Is there anything that is left out?

3. Closing

- Avoid including any new points
- Remember that this is the last part that admissions committees will read, so leave a strong and positive impression!

Voice & style

- Make sure the personal statement sounds like it is coming from you
- Still keep the personal statement professional and appropriate
- Things to avoid:
 - Trying to sound like you are an expert in the field
 - Listing your curriculum vitae

Make sure that you discuss each point equally

After writing the personal statement:

1. Remember the essay character/word limitations

- Make sure you get EVERYTHING you want to say down first
- Cross out what is not important
- Different schools vary in the length requirement

| Health Profession | Application Service | Maximum Character Count |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Dental | AADSAS | 4500 |
| Allopathic Medicine | AMCAS | 5300 |
| Osteopathic Medicine | AACOMAS | 4500 |
| Occupational Therapy | OTCAS | 7500 |
| Optometry | OPTOMCAS | 4500 |
| Pharmacy | PHARMCAS | 4500 |
| Physical Therapy | PTCAS | 4500 |
| Physician Assistant | CASPA | 5000 |
| Podiatry | AACPMS | 4500 |
| Public Health | SOPHAS | 1500 |
| Veterinary Medicine | VMCAS | 5000 |

2. Consider the flow of the personal statement: Regardless of how much you cut out, make sure that the personal statement flows in regard to words and content

3. Proofread for grammatical and spelling errors

4. Have a variety of reviewers

Personal Statement Worksheet

This handout mainly summarizes information from Richard Stelzer's *How to Write a Winning Personal Statement for Graduate and Professional School* (Princeton, NJ: Peterson's Guides, 1989).

Use the following sets of questions to help you *generate material* that you can use when constructing your personal statement.

1. Who are you?

- a) What's special, unique, distinctive, and/or impressive about you or your life story?
- b) What details of your life (personal or family problems, history, people or events that have shaped you or influenced your goals) might help the committee better understand you or help set you apart from other applicants?

2. What is your area of interest?

- a) When did you become interested in this field and what have you learned about it (and about yourself) that has further stimulated your interest and reinforced your conviction that you are well suited to this field?
- b) What insights have you gained?
- c) How have you learned about this field--through classes, readings, seminars, work or other experiences, or conversations with people already in the field?

3. What experience do you have? If you have worked a lot during your college years, what have you learned (leadership or managerial skills, for example), and how has that work contributed to your growth?

4. What are your career goals?

