The Personal Statement for Health Professional Schools

YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT SHOULD MAKE THE ADMISSIONS DEANS AND DIRECTORS WANT TO MEET YOU

The personal statement serves two purposes: It is used to evaluate the individual's candidacy, as well as a mechanism to advance the health professional school applicant process. Use your personal statement to complement other criteria in your health professional school application. Do not use the personal statement to simply reiterate information found in other areas of your application. The personal statement serves to capture qualities, skills, experiences, personal insights and beliefs not easily conveyed through other portions of the application.

Remember that a personal statement will not only make a cognitive impression, but an affective one too. Therefore, writing a sincere personal statement that is true to your experience will best represent you as an applicant. Consider organizing your personal statement around the following topics:

1. Your motivation for a career in the field you are pursuing.
2. The influence of your family/early experiences in your life.
3. The influence of people, extracurricular work/volunteer activities in your life.
4. Your long term goals.
5. Your personal philosophy.

In addition, you may wish to include information such as:
Special hardships, challenges, or obstacles that may have influenced your educational pursuits. Commentary on significant fluctuations in your academic record, which are not explained elsewhere in your application.

Helpful Tips

- Keep a journal during clinical experiences to record memorable events, people or conversations.
- Consider making a list of influences, goals, achievements, and personal history. Look for themes to generate ideas for your essay.
- Be sure to write rough drafts and have it proof-read. Spelling and grammatical errors should not exist.
- Ask others to read it—those who know you well and don't know you well. Your final audience will not, so find out what those who know little about you learn from your essay.
- Make it personal. Your audience should get a good idea of who you are and what you are like as a person.
- Tell a story or an anecdote. Don’t tell your life story, rather focus on one or two ideas. Describe experiences, events, or people that influenced you.
- In presenting your many achievements, do so with a gratitude for the opportunity rather than a testimonial to your greatness.
- Focus on concrete, honest, original biographical information. Use your own voice. A professional yet conversational tone works best. If you do quote someone, make sure the quote is highly relevant and invigorates your message.
- Catch the readers’ attention from your first sentence. Keep your readers’ attention with a well organized, concise personal statement. A strong conclusion will further convince your audience that it is in their best interest to interview you.

Resources

Office of Pre-Health Advisement
Figueroa Building, FIG 107
213-740-4844

Writing Center
Taper Hall, THH 321
Hours: M-Th 9am – 6pm; F 9am-3pm
213-740-3691

Www.futuredoctor.net
Www.studentdoctor.net
Www.explorehelthcareers.org