

The Personal Statement

If you are applying to a 4-year university or to scholarships, you will likely be asked to write a “personal statement” also referred to as a “statement of intent” or a “statement of purpose”.

A personal statement is a piece of short writing, often around 500 words, that lets you explain your motivations, experience, and goals in order to encourage a group of reviewers to accept your application.

Some colleges, scholarships, or programs may give you directions for how to write the statement, and might provide questions or prompts that you can respond to. This is not always the case. This guide will provide you with resources that explain how to draft and revise the statement, and provide tips and samples to help you complete this part of the application process.

Check out these links first before you start to work on your statement:

- [Purdue OWL: Personal Statements, vidcast-](#)
This short video, brought to you by Purdue Owl, shows you how to draft and revise your personal statement. It provides an outline of how to start a personal statement and explains its objectives.
- [How to Write a University Personal Statement in 10 Minutes-](#)
Follow along with this video to have a draft of your statement by the end of the presentation. This video provides an excellent explanation of the purpose of a personal statement.
- [Gaining Experience During a Lockdown](#)
This guide is organized by subject and provides you with ideas on how to gain valuable experiences during the pandemic when internships or volunteer work was limited due to the shutdown. This web page is also referenced in the above video.
- [Personal Statement Evaluation Chart from FSU, PDF](#)
This handout reviews the objective and purpose of a personal statement while providing tips on how to get started, how to format your essay, and how to avoid common mistakes. It provides a blank personal statement evaluation chart.
- [Personal Statement Revision Guide, PDF-](#)
This handout is a general guide for your personal statement.
- [20 Steps to a Personal Statement, PDF-](#)
This is a worksheet that allows you to fill in guiding questions that are relevant when you write your personal statement. It is a good outline that can be printed out.

Sample Statements

Do not copy and paste sample statements for your own use. Instead, personalize your statement according to your achievements, goals, personal experiences, and the specific programs, colleges, or scholarships that you intend to apply.

- [Statements from University of Connecticut](#)-scroll to bottom of page [Statements are for Business, Psychology, Medicine, Pharmacy, Education, English] This link provides some samples of personal statement and is intended to provide you with some ideas.
- [Statements from University of Richmond](#)-scroll to bottom of page [Statements are for Art, Humanities, Medicine, Science] This link provides some samples of personal statement and is intended to provide you with some ideas.

Parts of the Statement

Your statement should include an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Make sure that you read the instructions for your statement carefully before you begin.

1. Introduction

Like any good essay, the introduction should grab your reader's attention and let them know what you'll be writing about. Start with an interesting and relevant statement. Then, share the main idea or your statement. It's a good idea to introduce one or more relevant personal experiences from the start. What has inspired you to be interested in your intended field of study?

2. Body Paragraphs

The body of the paper should be the longest section of your statement. Elaborate on two or three specific experiences you mentioned in your introduction paragraph, and explain how you gained skills, expertise, and insight that would make you a good addition/fit/asset to the program (scholarship) you are applying to.

This is also a good place to discuss any weaknesses you might have. If your GPA is not great, discuss the reasons why it is not great and what you have learned from this experience. Perhaps there were specific circumstances that hindered you from achieving your best. Ensure that you do not use these as excuses, but highlight how you overcame challenges/problems or issues. End this part of your narrative on a positive note. Show that you have

learned skills, insights, or emotional growth that you might not have had if it were not for that particular challenge.

3. Conclusion

End with a brief section that will stick with the reader. Emphasize why this program is important to you, and finish the statement on a positive note. This would be a good place to discuss your long-term goals. For example, how will this program help you reach your goals, and why will this matter in 5 Years? Why is it essential that your application be accepted?

Tips

- ✓ **Follow the directions provided**-If specific guidelines or questions are offered, follow them. Be aware of due dates, word count, formatting guidelines, and style guides.
- ✓ **Make it personal**-Avoid clichés and instead talk about unique and relevant experiences you have had. The essay should reflect your personality in the best possible way.
- ✓ **Do your research**-Find out information about the program you are applying to and its faculty so you can mention this and discuss why that makes you a good fit for the program, and vice versa.
- ✓ **Do not reuse the same statement**-If you are applying to multiple programs, such as different colleges, submit a different statement to each. You can use the same ideas if they are relevant, but each statement should be fine-tuned to appeal to the individual program you will be submitting it to.
- ✓ **Make it look clean**-Use the program/college/scholarship suggested formatting. Write a well-organized essay free of grammatical errors and spelling errors. Proofread your statement before submitting it.
- ✓ **Get feedback and revise**-TCC/The Learning Commons has tutors that can help via Smarthinking, Zoom, or in-person. It is also a good idea to get a trusted advisor or peer to review your statement.