

Personal Statement Tips

The personal statement is a brief essay describing why you would make a good fit in a particular graduate program. Career Services recommends that you do not use “sample” essays often found online, as they will limit your own creative and original thoughts.

When writing a personal statement, there are several questions you will want to answer:

- How did you decide on this particular area of study?
- How did you decide on this particular program?
- Why do you believe you will be successful in the program to which you are applying?
- What are your short and long term goals?

How did you decide on this particular area of study?

- Ideally, you will want to address a single event or series of events that led to your decision to pursue your career
- Reflect on experiences with family, volunteering, travel, work or school to help you with this question

How did you decide on this particular program?

- Research the program thoroughly
- Focus on their mission statement and how it might match your skills and goals
- Consider any other attributes of the program that are appealing to you
- Do you know any graduates of the program? What have they said about the program?
- Have you been acquainted with any of the professors at the university to which you are applying? What have they said about the institution?

Why do you believe you will be successful in the program?

- Link your previous educational, work or volunteer experiences with transferable skills that will convince an admissions committee that you have what it takes to be successful in their program.
- Back up your skills with real life examples
- What are your short and long term goals?
- What do you hope to accomplish in your future career?
- How will this graduate degree contribute to your long term career plans?

Make sure your personal statement is professional, well-written and free of grammatical errors. Think carefully about your introductory sentence as it sets the tone for the entire essay. Make sure your essay’s concluding statements circle back to your opening to create a complete thought. Finally, we suggest you have your faculty advisor, as well as one of the professional staff at Career Services, assist you in reviewing this very important document.