

Personal Statement Tips

- **Read the instructions.**

What is the Admissions Committee asking you to provide in your personal statement?

- **Self-reflect.**

Before sitting down to write, spend a good amount of time thinking about your strengths and what you want to convey to admissions committees. Reflect on what makes you stand out.

- **Talk to friends and family.**

Ask those who know you to provide feedback on who you are and what they have observed about you. What do they think you have to provide a to a graduate program? How would they describe you in five words?

- **Be authentic.**

Remember that Admissions Committees read hundreds of personal statements per year, so it's important that you stand out. One of the ways you can do this is by presenting your authentic self in your personal statement. Don't use words outside of your vocabulary or exaggerate your experiences. Present a polished yet real account of who you are and what you care about.

- **Keep it relevant.**

The focus should remain on why the you are qualified and what you could bring to the program/the track to which you are applying.

- **Get feedback from outside sources.**

Ask people you know to read your personal statement before you submit it. This can help you understand how your statement might be perceived by others.

- **Use specific examples.**

Try to stay away from general statements or listing your experiences and qualifications, that's what your resume is for. Use specific life examples and strong storytelling to draw the reviewer in and help them to better understand you individually.

- **Address potential shortcomings (Optional).** If you feel like there are shortcomings in your application, your personal statement is a good

opportunity to provide context on those things, if you feel it necessary and you're comfortable doing so. Applicants should be cautious about how they address any weak points; explanations should not sound like excuses but should be framed in a way that demonstrates perseverance, improvement or the learning that followed those challenges.

- **Use space efficiently.**

Personal statements are generally pretty short, often ranging between 500 and 1,000 words. Make strong points and avoid repetition. It's important to be concise and precise in your personal statement.

- **Draft, edit, repeat.**

Spend as much as time as you can preparing your personal statement; don't throw it together at the last minute. Allow adequate time to write multiple drafts, edit and thoroughly proofread your statement. Have other people proofread and check for grammar before sending in the application; you may catch errors that were missed in earlier drafts.