



The Personal Statement

Your essay will be read by an Admissions Committee composed of members of your future profession or academic discipline. They will be seeking depth and substance, along with a true passion and commitment to your field of study. In general, the admissions committee hopes to learn about your personal characteristics, such as creativity, intellectual curiosity and achievement, ability to overcome hardships, recognition for exceptional performance, unique talents, initiative and motivation, leadership, persistence, service to others, and multicultural experiences. You should not attempt to address all of these factors. A better approach is to describe what is important to you, why it is important, and how you have demonstrated that importance in your life. Different colleges and universities have various essay requirements and look for modified kinds of information.

The essay is an opportunity for you to:

- Convey your long term and short term career goals.
- Present yourself as an individual with desirable personal abilities, background, interests, and plans.
- Describe the nature and significance of your relevant experiences, and give concrete evidence of your competence and motivation in the field of your choice.
- Explain your special interest in this particular graduate program.
- Account for any conspicuous weaknesses in your record.
- Demonstrate your writing ability and communication skills.

Things to think about and consider before you start writing:

- Why do I want to pursue a graduate or professional school degree? Can I trace my interest and motivation to a specific experience or influence?
- What are the special features, approaches, or values of this particular program? How do my interests, values, strengths, experiences, ambitions, and plans relate to what this program offers?
- Why do I want to be part of this program? Why would this program want me?
- What are my strengths related to this field - personally, academically, and professionally? What experiences demonstrate my competence in this field?

Need More Help With Your Personal Statement?

Workshops are offered each quarter. Please check career.ucla.edu/Workshops for details.

Personal Statement Critique Sessions

Receive an invaluable 30 minute analysis. Register online through BruinView™ at career.ucla.edu.

Drop-In Counseling

Meet with one-on-one with a career counselor for a 15 minute content check of your personal statement. For fluctuations in the drop-in schedule, please go to career.ucla.edu/DropInCounseling.

Covel Composition Tutorials

Students can receive three 50 minute sessions with a tutor to work on content, structure, flow and grammar. For more information, go to www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/aitc.

Personal Statement Resources

Please note that the UCLA Career Center is not responsible for the content of the following website links and the appearance of each site does not imply any type of endorsement.

GENERAL INFORMATION

From Northwestern University Careers Services comes this Graduate and Professional School guide that contains a to-the-point section on the Personal Statement.

www.northwestern.edu/careers/explorecareers/career/grad_prof_school.html#personalstatement

Accepted.com is a web site full of tips and outlines for the graduate application process. There are sample essays of Personal Statements for all of the major areas: medical, law, business, and graduate school programs. Please note that the listing of this site does not serve as an endorsement for the use of accepted.com as an editing service. **www.accepted.com**

Berkeley's Career Center has created a well thought out step-by-step process on writing the personal Statement. **career.berkeley.edu/Grad/GradStatement.stm**

COMMENTS FROM ADMISSIONS OFFICIALS

Ever wonder what admission officials are really looking for? **“Perfect Personal Statements” by Mark Alan Stewart** (available in the Career Center Lab, located on the second floor of the Strathmore Building) contains comments about the personal statement directly from admissions officials from top medical, law, and business programs.

SPECIFICALLY FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL

The Student Doctor Network website has a very useful six step process to writing the personal statement. Included are sample essays utilizing various techniques and angles. **www.studentdoctor.net/essays**

“Essays That Will Get You Into Medical School” by Daniel Kaufman, et al. (Available in the Career Center Lab, located on the second floor of the Strathmore Building)

“Essays That Worked for Medical Schools” by Stephanie Jones

SPECIFICALLY FOR LAW SCHOOL

From the University of Maryland School of Law comes an explanation of what they look for in the personal statement. **www.law.umaryland.edu/prospective/applying/pstatement.html**

“Essays That Will Get you Into Law School” by Daniel Kaufman, et al. (Available in the Career Center Lab, located on the second floor of the Strathmore Building)

“Great Personal Statements for Law School” by Paul Bodine

CAREER CENTER LAB RESOURCES FOR ALL GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

(Located on the Second Floor of UCLA Career Center)

“How to Write a Winning Personal Statement for Graduate and Professional School,” by Richard J. Stelzer

“Graduate Admission Essays” by Donald Asher

“Get Into Graduate School: A Strategic Approach” by a nationwide team of graduate school admissions advisors (see Chapter 15: The Personal Statement)

SPECIFICALLY FOR BUSINESS SCHOOL

“Essays That Will Get You Into Business School” by Daniel Kaufman, et al