

Writing Tips

Let Yourself Shine!

Your personal statement is an opportunity to introduce yourself, your goals, and your skills to the university. Take advantage of this statement to share detail on the most important experiences on your CV. Write specifically *what* you did and *how* you learned from it. Your personal statement can show faculty your important qualities for graduate school including problem solving skills, interpersonal skills, independence, and openness to supervision.



Show, Don't Tell

Let your experiences speak for you. Rather than telling the reader, it is almost always more powerful to give an example that demonstrates your point. Instead of writing "I'm interested in researching if peer mentorship is effective," try writing "After my experiences as a peer mentor, I had questions about if our work was effective." You can use the same format to demonstrate your skills. Illustrate how you developed a skill, instead of saying that you have it!

Embrace the First Draft

Don't pressure yourself to get it right on the first try! Writing a good personal statement takes time. Try writing your first draft in the format of a letter to a friend, family member, or even your future self. A first draft is a great way to get all of your thoughts down on paper in simple language. After you have all your thoughts on paper, it is much easier to make edits and additions. Just set a timer for 20 minutes and start writing the first draft!



Edit, Edit, and Edit Again!

Write your personal statement early so you have plenty of time to edit. After you write a draft that you are comfortable sharing, reach out to reference writers, other professors, family, and friends. Most universities also have a writing center that can be a good resource for getting feedback. Getting an outside perspective on your essays can help make sure that you are communicating your ideas clearly. Sometimes a fresh reader will pick up on something that everyone else has missed!

Share Your Ideas Clearly

Your personal statement should be extremely clear and easy to read. The reader should leave the essay with a better picture of who you are and what qualifications you have. A personal statement should never leave the reader with more questions or uncertainty! Sometimes it is hard to communicate our own ideas clearly, so be sure to specifically ask any editors to let you know if any sections are unclear to them or confusing.

