

Write a Winning Personal Statement

Your personal statement is your opportunity to win the race for a place in the program of your choice. We'll share some tips on how to distinguish yourself from the rest of the applications with your content, organization, and writing skills.

Types of Personal Statements:

- The general, comprehensive personal statement: This is a general statement that allows the author to determine the subject matter of the essay. You will typically prepare this for a medical or law school application.
- The response to specific questions: Other graduate school programs, like business, often pose questions and you should respond to them throughout your statement. They usually ask for responses to 3 questions.

Basics:

The best personal statements give the reader a glimpse of who you are, often by using examples and stories. Regardless of the type of personal statement you are writing, there are some important rules to follow.

1. **Think before you write.** Start to brainstorm stories, experiences, or moments that led you to the field you are applying within. Jot down distinctive or impressive details about you that would help you stand out to a committee.
2. **Tell a story.** Write about something that is genuine for you. What details of your life have shaped or influenced you and your goals? Use concrete examples to make yourself memorable and tell your unique and lively experiences.
3. **Be specific.** This applies to both your context and writing style. Try to avoid generic statements, and back everything up with a personal or specific reason. Avoid jargon, cliches, and overblown vocabulary words-stick to straightforward language.
4. **Use a hook.** Figure out a way to introduce yourself with an engaging opening. The lead should create interest, share a passion, and make the reader want to continue on. Your first paragraph, or hook, becomes the framework for the rest of your statement. Spend extra time here.
5. **Provide appropriate context.** Do your research to find out what sets your choice school/program apart from others. How does that apply to your career goals? Also, try to avoid using dated experiences or potentially controversial subjects (such as controversial religious or political views).
6. **Write well and correctly.** Type your essay and proofread it multiple times. Have others read and critique it, and make sure you have plenty of time to revise and polish your statement. Good writing skills and correct use of language are just as important to admissions committees. Adhere to word limits and guidelines, and submit your statement exactly as instructed by the program.

Potential Pitfalls:

- Avoid re-stating your resume and focus on telling your story.
- Recognize the importance of your personal statement and give yourself an appropriate amount of time to submit a crafted, error-free essay.
- Do not use impersonal, insincere, or cliched writing. Stay away from complaining about your circumstances or preaching your opinions to the readers.

Resources at Loyola:

Take advantage of the many people at Loyola who want to see you fulfill your dreams and plans. Visit us for help along the process including brainstorming ideas, grammar guidelines, and proofreading:

- ✓ Schedule an appointment with a Career Coach on [Handshake](#)
- ✓ Visit the [Office for Writing and Learning Services \(OWLS\)](#) for proofreading and grammatical help
- ✓ Ask your professors to discuss potential topics or read through your draft