



Personal Statement

Overview of the personal statement:

- Personal statements are sometimes also called “application essays” or “statements of purpose.” They are essentially essays which are written in response to a question or questions on a college or university application form.
- Some applications ask more specific questions than others. There is no set formula to follow in shaping your response since each person is different. Answer the questions promptly and be selective and concise in your responses. Be personal but also professional in your examples.
- From application to application, requested personal statements also vary widely in length, ranging from a couple of paragraphs to a series of essays of a page or so each.
- Personal statements are important. They can especially help you when you are applying to an extremely competitive program, or when you need the essay to compensate for a low GPA.

Context considerations:

- Most personal statements will be read by professors or advisors who serve on an admissions committee in the department to which you are applying. Consider this audience when writing your statement. What are the areas of specialty of this department, and what might an advisor be looking for in a transfer student?
- Since personal statements are read as part of your “package,” they offer an opportunity to show aspects of yourself that will not be developed in other areas of your application. Think of the statement as the single opportunity in your package to allow the admissions committee to hear *your* voice.
- Committees sort through large numbers of applications and essays. You will want your statement to readily engage the readers, and to clearly demonstrate what makes you a unique candidate—apart from the rest of the stack.

One process for writing a personal statement:

1. Analyze the question(s) asked on a specific application.
2. Research the school and/or program to which you are applying.
3. Take a personal inventory (see questions on next page). Write out a 2-3 sentence response to each question.
4. Write your essay. Write honestly, show your qualities, and share your goals!
5. Revise your essay for form and content. Adhere to word or page limits.
6. Ask someone else—preferably a faculty member in your area – to read your essay and make suggestions for further revision.
7. Revise again!

****Personal Inventory Questions****

- What makes you unique, or at least different from, any other applicant?
- What attracts you to your chosen career? What do you expect to get out of it?
- When did you initially become interested in this career? How has this interest developed?
- What are your intellectual influences? What writers, books, professors, concepts in college have shaped you?
- How has your undergraduate academic experience at Cascadia Community College prepared you for this degree or school?
- What are two or three of the academic accomplishments which have most prepared you?
- What research have you conducted? What did you learn from it?
- What non-academic experiences contributed to your choice of school and/or career (work, volunteer, family) ?
- Do you have specific career plans? How does graduate or professional school pertain to them?
- What's the most important thing the admissions committee should know about you?
- Think of a professor in your field that you've had already and that you like and respect. If this person were reading your application essay, what would most impress him or her?