

The Law School Personal Statement

What is the Personal Statement?

- It is required by most law schools as part of the application. Be sure to carefully review the application instructions from each school, as they may have differing writing prompts.
- It should be about two pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point font, no less than 1-inch margins. Carefully review the application instructions from each school for specific details.
- It is the most important writing sample a school will receive from you. Lawyers write professionally, so you must demonstrate exceptional writing abilities throughout your application.
- For most schools, it takes the place of an interview, and it will separate you as a unique individual from other candidates with similar academic qualifications.

How Do I Get Started?

- Ask yourself why you want to go to law school and why you wish to practice law.
- Inform yourself about the schools to which you would apply, and ask yourself why you are interested in those schools specifically and what you would contribute to them.
- Read through personal statement samples, and ask yourself how you will stand out from them.
- Create an outline to determine the structure of your personal statement.
- Attend a personal statement workshop hosted by the NYU Preprofessional Advising Center.
- Discuss possible personal statement topics with a prelaw advisor.

Things to Consider

- Be “personal” and keep the focus on *you*. Focus on a concrete experience and the impact it had on you. Tell a story where you are the main character and you changed, grew, or shifted your perspective.
- You don’t have to write about your interest in the law, but your personal statement should highlight the qualities that would make you a good lawyer and a good colleague.
- If your ethnicity, family religion, socioeconomic background, or similar factors are motivating you to succeed in law school, be sure to highlight them.
- Tailor your personal statement to reflect the individual law schools to which you are applying.
- Consider your audience. Most admissions evaluators are professors, third-year law students, or admissions professionals not long out of law school. You will want to come across as an attentive student, interesting classmate, and accomplished. Consider what you most want them to know and refrain from restating information provided in other parts of your application.
- Be flexible. It is expected that you will go through several drafts so be prepared to adjust your topic, style, and structure in response to feedback.
- Check your essay thoroughly for grammatical, punctuation, or spelling errors and make sure to avoid clichés, slang, contractions, “legalese,” and passive voice.

Additional Resources

- Use online resources through various websites, such as [NYU Prewlaw](#).
- Have others review and edit your drafts, such as friends, instructors, and lawyers.
- Both the [NYU Writing Center](#) and the [NYU Wasserman Center](#) review personal statement drafts for graduate and professional school admissions. Schedule an appointment.