



Personal Statement Tips

TIPS

- A personal statement is a one-page narrative that describes your interest in a particular field/institution, and how your interest in it developed (what aspects fascinates you?)
- Complements but does not replace the CV.
- Different than a college, medical school, or residency PS.
- See it as your opportunity to talk about yourself before getting chosen for an interview.
- It could be the only opportunity to leave a good impression, show your personality and distinguish yourself from other candidates.
- Talk about qualities and skills you have that make you a good fit for the specialty and the program.
- Describe your future goals.
- Include what you are looking for in a fellowship program.
- Include a description of an influential experience or of an individual who inspired your career choice.
- Explain any unusual circumstances or gaps in your applications.
- Indicate that you have a life outside of Pathology.
- At the end, the reader should have a good idea of who you are, your experience, style and interests.
- The quality of your writing is as important as the content itself.
- Use consistent style and formatting.
- Use an easily read font: Times New Roman, Arial, Sans-serif, Calibri. 11 or 12-point font.
- Should be broken down into different sections that flow together with a beginning (lead, introduction), middle (body) and end (conclusion).
- Stick to 1 page, maximum of 2, 600-800 words, 4-5 paragraphs.
- Start early by brainstorming ideas, writing them down and adding to them.
- Use active rather than passive verb tense.
- Review your PS a few days after you initially wrote it.
- Have someone else proofread it.



Personal Statement Tips Continued

BE AWARE OF THESE PITFALLS

- Don't tell a story in which you outsmarted another team member. It puts you at risk for appearing boastful and not a team player.
- Don't include a detailed description of a case that may violate HIPAA.
- Don't negatively describe other specialties, institutions, programs, etc.,
- Don't overly romanticize your specialty area. Be realistic about the discipline and fellowship.
- Don't waste words!
- Don't self-aggrandize. You can talk about your strengths through examples without exaggerating.
- Use examples to indicate that you are hardworking, compassionate, persistent, and interested.
- Remember not to have any inconsistencies between PS and interview.
- Don't include false information/fiction.
- Although you should explain academic mishaps, you should not draw attention to items that would normally go unnoticed.
- Don't reveal your insecurities or perceived lack of skills.
- Make sure your PS is free from spelling mistakes, typos, and grammatical errors.
- Don't include irrelevant achievements.
- Avoid polarizing, political, or controversial statements.
- Don't use slogans, overused metaphors or clichés.
- Don't use acronyms.

RESOURCES

- Katherine G. Katzung MD, Felix Ankel MD, Mark Clark MD, Luan E. Lawson MD, Peter M.C. DeBlieux MD, Mohamad Ali Cheaito MD, Eveline A. Hitti MD, Michael Epter DO and Amin Kazzi MD. What Do Program Directors Look for in an Applicant? J Emerg Med. 2019 May;56(5):e95-e101.
- Woo R, Krawczyk Oman JA, Byrn L, Wakim NM, Dyne PL, Cheaito MA, Epter M, Kazzi A. Writing the Curriculum Vitae and Personal Statement. J Emerg Med. 2019 Sep;57(3):411-414.

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