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


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