

Application Month: Personal Statements



Descriptive Elements of the Application(s)

- Experience/Activities section: **What have you done?**
- Personal statement: **How has what you've done informed your decision to pursue this career?**
- Secondaries/supplemental essays to individual schools: **Why are you a good fit for our school?**

Activities/Experience Section

- Basic Information
 - Type of Experience (paid work, volunteer, leadership, etc), Dates, Total hours, Organization name, Location, Contact information
- Use recent (last 3-4 years) activities/experiences
 - No High School activities unless they continued throughout your college experience
- Focus on accomplishments. If space allows, consider including:
 - What you learned from the experience?
 - How do this activity has helped prepare you for professional school and/or your chosen profession?
- Quantify your experiences in the description
 - Patient transport. vs. Transported over 75 patients to and from surgery.

Activities/Experience Section

- Help the reader learn about who you are:
 - include part-time jobs, hobbies, unique experiences, “unrelated” activities
 - Explain criteria for honors and awards (i.e. James Scholar)
- AMCAS: Most Meaningful Experiences
 - Should have breadth and/or depth
 - At least one should be medically related
 - Describe experiences that have challenges you to learn and grow
- Do not worry about:
 - Entering the max number or having each “type” of experience
 - filling ALL the space

Personal Statement

Your opportunity to demonstrate who you are and why you are ready

Practical Issues

- Read the instruction manual. It includes...
 - The prompt and/or suggestions
 - Character limits
 - Tips for writing your statement and avoiding formatting errors
- Know your resources...
 - [The Career Center](#)
 - [Writer's Workshop](#)
 - Peers, faculty, graduate students

Topics You Must Cover: Motivation

- What motivated you to become a _____?
- Provide evidence that you are committed to this choice
- Make it unique to that profession
 - “I want to help people” is a common response, but you can help people in a variety of career choices. Focus on what makes this health profession unique...why do you want to do it?

Topics You Must Cover: Preparation

- What have you done to prepare for this career choice?
 - This is where you prove your motivation for the career choice.
 - This should be the bulk of your essay.
 - CAUTION: Do not just list your experiences. This was already done in the activities section of the application.

Topics You Could Cover: Family Background

- Fill in the gaps left by the outline of your life as revealed on the application
- Talk about individuals or incidents that have shaped your life and convey what you value

Topics You Could Cover: Explanations

- Academic Record
 - Withdrawals, Incompletes, Repeated courses
 - Breaks in your education
 - Below-average grades
- Low test scores
- Breaks in education
- Conduct on campus
- Criminal record
- Applying again after a failed attempt

Topics you Could Cover: Traumatic Events

- It is common for students to become interested in a health profession after a traumatic event or experience.
- However, it can raise questions to an admissions committee.
 - Are you still traumatized?
 - How did you recover from this event? What resources did you utilize to recover?
- If you are thinking about writing about such an event, we recommend discussing it with a health professions advisor first.
- Remember, anything that you write in a personal statement, can be used in the interview process. Would you be comfortable answering direct questions about this event?

Topics You Could Cover...

...But Probably Shouldn't

- Complicated Themes
 - Quotes/Song Lyrics
 - Humor
 - Sad observations
 - “The profession of _____ is....”
 - Negative experiences with any health profession
- “When I am a _____ I will be....”
 - Overly dramatic stories
 - “I’ve wanted to be a _____ since I was 5.”

Authenticity

Do not focus on trying to be unique

Focus on being YOU

Just tell your story.

Genuine is better than Clever

Personal Statement Tips

- Make sure your statement is well written.
 - Spelling
 - Correct grammar including sentence structure
 - Flow- it should be pleasant to read
- Don't wait until the last minute
- Get feedback on your statement
 - Writers Workshop
 - The Career Center
- Type directly into the text box
- Copy/Paste out of doc to spell check. Then make corrections

Do NOT plagiarize your
statement!

Writing Time!

- **Activity:** Choose a prompt and write one paragraph. The idea is to actually use this time to start your personal statement.
- **Question Prompts:**
 1. What motivated you to pursue this career path?
 2. Describe one activity/experience that you have completed that has helped confirm for your career path.
 3. Who are the most influential people in our life? What did they do to inspire you towards this career choice?
 4. What have been the pivotal moments in your life? How do they connect to your career goals?

Final Application Month Workshop

Waiting for Yes

- Thursday April 27th, 4-5pm at 616 E. Green Street
- The application process is a full year. Learn how to make the most of your application year. Attend this workshop to learn about completing supplemental materials to individual schools, academic updates to the centralized application service, and letters of intent/update.

Application Work Days

- If you would like assistance while you are ACTUALLY working on the application, come to The Career Center's application work days:
 - Monday, May 15th 3-5pm
 - Tuesday, May 23rd 2-4pm
 - Wednesday, May 31st 3-5pm
- These will be held at The Career Center's Interview Suite, 616 E. Green Street.
- Bring a copy of your application or your laptop to sign into the application.

Don't Forget!

The Career Center is open over the summer!

- Individual appointments or drop-ins can occur in person or over the phone.
- Subscribe to the Chronicle for updates throughout the application cycle.
- Personal statements can be submitted online at The Career Center's website to receive feedback over e-mail.
 - <https://www.careercenter.illinois.edu/service/personal-statement-reviews>
 - Will review 1 statement, 1 time, per student per semester
 - Feedback via email; Approx. 3 business days

Questions?

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