

TELLING YOUR STORY THROUGH YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Writing a personal statement may seem like a daunting task. You had little trouble completing the application, requesting letters of recommendation, etc. Now it's time to tell the programs who you are and why they should include you in next year's class.

The personal statement allows you to:

- Introduce yourself to the reader
- Show your interest and preparedness (i.e. how long have I been considering this field?)
- Demonstrate your ability to write well
- Highlight what you bring to the program
- Share your personal values related to the field (i.e. what related experience do I have?)

Overwhelmed? You are not alone. The following tips will help, and you are always welcome to meet with your LSU Career Coach to start the process, help with ideas, or to review your draft!

CONTENT

Provide a word picture of yourself with one or more stories. Ask yourself:

- Does the essay say something about me as a person and future professional in the field
- Does it have element that will stick with the reader?
- Do the action words accurately describe me?
- Are there specific, personal examples to back up my statements and illustrate my qualities?
- If applicable, have I answered the essay questions posed in the application?

ORGANIZATION

Even the best content will be lost if the ideas are presented in a jumbled, incoherent manner.

- What is your message? Write that first.
- How will your ideas logically progress to get to that conclusion?
- Write your key sentences. These may be parts of your larger story, but should lead to the message.
- Provide a framework for your essay, with the first and last sentences referring to the same topic.
- Do the key sentences flow in a logical order? Does the entire thing make sense?
- Can you "flesh out" each of the key sentences with interesting paragraphs that complete the sentence's idea?
- Does the final essay say what you wanted in a logical and compelling way?

UNIQUENESS

Demonstrate the qualities that will make you an outstanding practitioner. Your essay should:

- Sound interesting. At this point, your essay may bore you, so ask others what they think about it.
- Read like a story that ends in a logical conclusion.
- Start with a personal anecdote that will entice readers to continue reading.
- Continue to show, by example, your finest traits.

**Now that you have a main point/thesis for your paper, you need to back up that claim with your experience – community involvement, internships/part-time jobs, leadership experience, what you're passionate about, etc.

You never want to “dump” your resume into your personal statement so pick the most important things/best material to back up your main point/thesis. Here's a space to start listing what you've done in each of these areas. Then, decide what makes the most sense to include in your personal statement.

Activity #2 - Skills & Qualities

Personal Accomplishments:

Community Involvement:

Academic Accomplishments:

Professional Experience/Research/Study Abroad Experience:

