

Personal Statements

Presented by the UConn Pre-Medical/Dental Center
and the University Writing Center

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Today We Will Cover

- What is a personal statement?
- Why write a personal statement?
- Do's
- Do not's
- How to submit
- AMCAS
- Resources
- Q&A

Getting Started: What is this thing?

- A short document (5,300 characters) that:
 - Sets you apart from other applicants
 - Provides a more complete picture of you than test scores or a resume/CV can
 - Shows what you value
 - Proves that you can write clearly and coherently *for your audience*

Getting Started: Why am I writing this thing?

- Medical schools want to know:
 - Who you are
 - Your past experience (more than your plans)
 - It's easy to make up plans for the future, but harder to fabricate your past
 - Obstacles you have overcome
 - Successes you have enjoyed

Do's: Rules of Thumb

- Stay focused
- Stay simple
- Stay on topic
- Stay within the rules

Do's: More Rules of Thumb

- Find your angle
- Represent yourself honestly
 - Avoid being too positive or negative about yourself
- Get feedback
 - This will come up again in this presentation because it is probably the most important rule

Don'ts: Common Mistakes

- Writing before thinking
- Omitting the desire to be a physician
- Trying too hard not to sound generic
- Listing positive attributes without examples
- Writing too poetically or philosophically

Don'ts: More Common Mistakes

- Apologizing
 - Don't worry about every "C"
- Passive Voice
- Controversy
- Forgetting the interview
 - Be prepared to talk about what's in this statement in person!

Big Mistake: Not Drafting

- Proofread, proofread, proofread
- Share your work with:
 - People who know you
 - People who know writing and grammar
 - People who know your field

Submission: Where is this thing going?

- American Medical College Application Service: AMCAS
 - Online system for applying to medical schools across the US

AMCAS Specs: How do I write this thing?

- Plain text, unformatted
- 5,300 characters, including spaces (approx. one page)
- Typed directly into application
- Proofread, proofread, proofread
- AMCAS application has no spellcheck
- Standard writing practices
 - Case, capitalization, punctuation

AMCAS Specs: How do I write this thing?

- Avoid plagiarism
- No need to repeat information
- *This information goes to all schools you specify*

Additional Information

- 2017 AMCAS Instructions: www.aamc.org/amcas
- The Princeton Review: www.princetonreview.com/med-school-advice/medical-school-personal-statement
- Kaplan Test Prep: www.kaptest.com/mcat/medical-school/medical-school-personal-statement
- US News: www.usnews.com/education/blogs/medical-school-admissions-doctor/2014/03/25/craft-a-stellar-medical-school-application-with-a-personal-story
- UConn Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.uconn.edu/>

Questions?

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