

## WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Here are some topics you may want to include in your personal statement. Try to select no more than 3-4 topics. Keep the statement to **one page**.

- 1. Reasons for select the specialty**
  - List/explain the factors that attracted you to this specialty.
  - Why do you feel well-suited for this specialty?
  - Discuss nature of work
  - Desire to make contribution to medicine
  
- 2. Relevant Experience**
  - Discuss any paid or voluntary work experience that is relevant to this specialty (i.e., research)
  - Research accomplishments, publications, and/or awards
  
- 3. Skills/attributes you possess that are valued by the specialty**
  - Interpersonal
  - Intellectual
  - Perceptual, motor
  
- 4. Personal and Practice Goals**
  - Long-range career plan
  - Academic medicine, private practice, public health, etc.
  - Possible fellowships
  - Do not talk about continuing in academic medicine when applying to community-based program.
  - Do not talk about private practice in a small town when applying to highly competitive academic oriented programs
  
- 5. What are you looking for in a residency program?**
  - What do you want?
  - What do you have to offer?
  - What contributions can you make to the specialty and/or residency program?
  - Discuss aspects you feel are important in a training program.
  
- 6. “Human interest” information**
  - Family
  - Regional/cultural background
  - Interest outside of medicine
  - Extra-curricular activities (not related to medicine), hobbies, unusual travel experience, etc.
  - Any special qualities

You do not have to discuss **all** of the aforementioned items. Any combination is appropriate. However, #1 and #5 are a “must”: why you are selecting a program and what you are looking for.

Do not simply repeat all the information from your CV. Use the personal statement to expound upon items listed on your CV. The personal statement should be clear, concise and articulate; not flashy or “too creative.”

### **Other Points**

- You may include explanation of major problems, deficiencies, or questions that might develop from your application materials.
- Explain your record if there are “blemishes.”
- Demonstrate your ability to learn from poor performances and negative incidents. **CAUTION:** Don’t sound defensive. Don’t dwell on the negative.
- You may want to highlight something outstanding and unique from your college years.
- Avoid religion and politics.

### **Personal Statement Tidbits**

1. Be sure that you have expressed yourself clearly and in simple sentences. Shorten long, complicated sentences into easy-to-read ones.
2. Vary the length of sentences.
3. Use active voice and action verbs. Avoid “I believe, I think, I feel” at the beginning of sentences.
4. Do not use long multi-syllabic words just to impress the reader. Write for easy comprehension.
5. Delete any repetition or unnecessary words, sentences, or paragraphs. If it does not add anything of significance, eliminate it.
6. Conclude with a positive statement that summarizes your best qualities and describes the contribution you hope to make in your chosen specialty.
7. Revise and rewrite. Type on good quality paper . . . white or conservative off-white.
8. Ask 2-3 people and your advisor to read your personal statement – for grammar, punctuation, spelling and, of course, content/message. *ASCC is available to proofread your personal statement.*

### **Reference**

The Elements of Style (1999) William Struck, Jr & E.B. White  
Resumes & Personal Statements from Health Professionals James Tysinger, PhD  
Getting into a Residency Kenneth Lserson, MD