



Writing a Personal Statement or Letter of Intent

PURPOSE

The personal statement or letter of intent is your opportunity to present your qualifications and reasons for choosing a particular graduate or professional school. Your statement should persuade the selection committee that you will be successful in their program and have the potential to contribute to the profession. The following broad elements should be included in your statement:

- A few authentic facts about yourself as an individual
- Your academic achievements
- Your experience as it relates to the graduate program/profession
- Any academic, personal or life experiences that led you to choose this program
- Why you are interested in this particular graduate/professional school
- Your future goals

CONTENT

Your content should illustrate that you have thought about the connections between your education, the requirements of the profession and your life experiences. Before you begin to write, spend time reflecting on what you know about yourself.

- Develop lists or an outline of what you want to convey. This list may include experiences, important qualities and skills, or achievements.
- If family members, professionals or a life event influenced your decision, identify what key aspects you want to highlight.
- Additional content will include evidence of your qualifications such as:
 - Paid or unpaid work experience
 - Community service or volunteer experience
 - Research experience or independent study
 - Internships
 - Academic or social organizations and leadership positions
 - Intercollegiate athletics
 - Teaching experience
 - Study abroad experience
 - Life events/obstacles you have overcome

MAKE IT HAPPEN

- Read application instructions carefully. Address your content to the questions or directions specifically required in the application.
- Do not merely describe your experiences, but explain their significance. Tell a compelling story.
- Write about your experiences in a way that conveys how they sharpened your perceptions, taught you important lessons, or clarified your goals.
- Develop various themes (i.e. community involvement, the role of teamwork, the power of persistence, etc.) to provide a framework and structure for your content.
- Look at each sentence you have written and ask; why it is important? What does it say about you? Does it answer the questions posed in the application?
- Be honest. Never misrepresent or overinflate your achievements, but do not underestimate your accomplishments and potential.
- Avoid overused clichés, quotes, and poems.
- Proofread your statement several times and make an appointment to have a Career Center Consultant review it.