

Personal Statement Guide

Medical School Edition



Writing a personal statement can be overwhelming!
In just five easy steps, you will be on track and ready to
meet with a career advisor to go through your first draft!

Step One: Where do I even start?

We get it. This is a lot. But we've got you: gain an understanding of what your personal statement should include by watching this quick video:

<https://tinyurl.com/MedSchoolPS>

Now, let's review the basics.

Things you should **DO**:

- Answer the question: Why would you make a strong physician?
- Make meaning of your experiences: tell a story, be specific.
- Get multiple opinions AND be sure to maintain YOUR voice
- Address any discrepancies in your application
- Write well and proofread!

Things you should **AVOID**:

- Speaking in clichés/ generalities.
- Feeling pressured to talk about traumatic events if you are not ready
- Repeating info from your resume: this means telling stories about your experiences instead of listing tasks

CONCEPTS TO INCLUDE

When preparing your personal statement, consider the following...

MOTIVATION

- What initially inspired you to pursue medicine?
- How has your motivation grown and matured over time?

FIT & CAPACITY

- How do your skills and values align with that of the profession?
- What experiences have you had that have prepared you for becoming a physician?

VISION

- What values/skills will you employ as a physician?
- What kind of impact do you want to make?



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Step Two: Enough about me. Let's talk about YOU.

Personal statements can often feel uncomfortable because we have to talk about ourselves. But the only way for the committee to get to know YOU is for YOU to tell them all of the amazing things that YOU have done.

Are YOU sensing a theme?

In the table on the next page, tell us about the activities/experiences that you have had that have motivated you to become a physician.

These experiences could include:

- Clinical: Working with patients/in a medical environment
- Research: Working through the scientific process in or out of the classroom
- Volunteer: Anything involving serving others; think about purpose
- Leadership: Student organizations, teaching roles, etc.
- Personal experiences: Close connections to medicine personally

NOTE: Fill out only the LEFT SIDE of the table for now.

Step Three: Tell me all about it!

You're still not done talking about yourself. I know, I know, I know. But this part is important.

Being able to talk about WHAT you did is a good start. But in order to REALLY convey your story, we need to talk about WHAT YOU LEARNED.

Consider the following:

- What skills did you develop?
- What values did you embody?
- If you were shadowing, what did you observe from the physician?
- Think back to the AAMC Competencies: which of the competencies relate to this experience?



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Tell us about YOU.

ON THE LEFT:

List your experiences. These could be clinical, research, volunteer, leadership, or even personal experiences.

ON THE RIGHT:

Tell us about what you learned from this experience. What values/skills did you develop? Be sure to think back to the AAMC Competencies!

EXPERIENCES	LESSONS LEARNED



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Use this page if you need more space!

ON THE LEFT:

List your experiences. These could be clinical, research, volunteer, leadership, or even personal experiences.

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Tell us about what you learned from this experience. What values/skills did you develop? Be sure to think back to the AAMC Competencies!

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Step Four: Connect the dots.

Review the lessons learned on the chart above. We're looking to develop a theme. A theme is a way for us to clearly define the story you are trying to tell. You may notice that you have identified values you want to embody as a physician: this could be a theme. You may have talked about several of the competencies: this could be a theme. Maybe you've shown a commitment to a specific cause/population that you'd like to serve- that's a theme too!

What themes do you see emerging in your story?
Highlight, circle or star the things that go together.

Step Five: Now, bring it all together.

This is the fun part. I promise.
What themes emerged from your experiences?
How do they connect to one another?



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Step Five: Now, bring it all together (cont.)

We're almost there.

Now, let's write your thesis statement. This sentence introduces your themes and is the sentence that says: In this essay I will talk about...without saying that.

NICE WORK!

You're ready to write your first draft. Before you meet with a career advisor, write out some of your experience paragraphs. Tell a story about the experiences you've had; be sure to incorporate your themes and how they would impact your medical practice in each paragraph! Remember: don't let the character count dictate your writing too much. Tell us the full story; we can make it more concise later.

Then, book an appointment on Handshake with a Career Advisor.

1. Log on to msu.joinhandshake.com
2. Click on Career Center, then select Schedule an Appointment
3. Select your appointment group (we suggest choosing your college or Interest Area Advising: Health Sciences)
4. Select your appointment type
5. Choose a time and date that works for your schedule
6. Celebrate! You've taken a major step in the med school application process!

Questions? Contact us at CareerServices@csp.msu.edu.



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