

## Writing Center Handouts

### Personal Statement

*Getting Started:* Read the prompt carefully and determine your purpose. While some schools will ask for a general personal statement, others may ask a specific question. Make sure you know your audience. Ensure you are adherent to their requirements, including word count, if applicable

### Writing Your Personal Statement:

#### DO:

- **Spark engagement.** Begin the statement with a short hook. This is something to draw your reader in: a hook, quote, eye-catcher etc.
- **Explain your journey.** Why did you choose this career? The route that, then, into why you have applied for this job.
- **Be honest about yourself.** Explain your strengths and weaknesses and how they apply to the job you are applying for. Mention any opportunities within the program that excites you and draws you to the school.
- **Include Notable References.** The paper will be 99% about you, but 1% of what drew you to this school and how you are as beneficial to them as they are to you!
- **Keep it simple and truthful.** Write simply and truthfully about your interests and experiences. What draws excitement for you? What past experiences have shaped you as an individual?
- **Fill in the gaps.** Your resumé doesn't touch on everything, so make them aware of what you couldn't say earlier. Why should they choose you? What makes you special from the other batch of candidates?
- **What's the point?** What are your goals for the future and how will this job or opportunity better prepare you for it? Make the reader understand that you have a lot to gain from this opportunity and are well-equipped to handle it.
- **Talk about the Program.** Show passion for what the school has to offer and do your research about these opportunities. Research the base of the program to emphasize how you could contribute.

## DON'T:

- **Use AI Generated Work or plagiarize.** Many institutions state within the application that AI generated writing will force them to throw your application away.
- **Overdo it.** Stray from telling overly long stories. Not everyone will want to pay attention, so make them believe you are someone worth listening to.
- **Be repetitive.** List the accomplishments that are already evident on your resumé. They're going to read it, so try to close the gaps in your story.
- **Appear impersonal.** Avoid clichés or overly general phrasing. No one wants to hear a robot, make yourself sound human and genuine!
- **Be controversial or poetic.** You want to make them like you. Don't say something that could spark debate, and don't try to write creatively. This is a statement, not a poem, be upfront and honest.
- **Overcompensate.** There are other people applying. Your application is your story! They want to know who you are, not who you think they want you to be.