



# Personal Statement Assistance Quick Guide

## Why Create a Personal Statement?

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- Demonstrate your writing ability on a more personal level for your application into a graduate program.
- Discuss your personal, career, and educational goals or answer a general question posed by the graduate school's admission committee.
- Show your critical and analytical thinking as well as your writing, editing skills, and general reasoning skills.
- Illustrate your ability to reflect on your education and work experience.
- Provide insight into who you are which helps to determine if you would be a good fit into a specific graduate program.

## Get Started

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- **Read Instructions of Institution Carefully.** Make sure your essay explicitly addresses and answers the essay question(s).
- **Conform to Guidelines.** If the essay instructions tell you that the essay should be two pages long, on white 8.5x11 inch paper, then the essay should be two pages long, on white 8.5x11 inch paper.
- **Be Reflective.** Remember that the focus of the essay is YOU--your achievements, your obstacles, your goals, your values.
- **Begin with an introduction that will keep the reader interested.** Write an essay with a catchy introduction, one that gets right to the point and uses precise language and vivid imagery.
- **Choose Quality over Quantity.** A reader will be much more interested in how your experience demonstrates the theme of your essay, not the number of accomplishments.
- **Revise Several Drafts and Get Feedback from Others.** Revision allows an essay to grow and improve.
- **Transform Drawbacks into Positives.** It's okay to have flaws! Give examples of your perseverance and overcoming obstacles and setbacks. The reader does not want to hear complaints about problems, but how you have overcome them.
- **Demonstrate your Knowledge of the Major/College.** Knowing everything about the college is impossible, but readers will want to know that you know some and have done your homework.
- **Exude Confidence.** Colleges and universities want to admit the best students, which are those who can demonstrate their ability to pursue goals regardless of where they are admitted. Think of this as quiet confidence--the kind that reveals itself through your description of lifelong interests, sustained commitment, and/or perseverance in the face of adversity.
- **Visit the Learning Hub for Extra Writing Help.** Use appropriate logic, flow, clarity, organization, and grammar. No spelling errors. **The Learning Hub:** [www.uis.edu/thelearninghub/](http://www.uis.edu/thelearninghub/)

## What to Include In Your Personal Statement

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- An introductory paragraph that provides your essay's main theme and foreshadows the upcoming paragraphs.
- 2-4 body paragraphs that develop your theme through examples and detailed experiences and build upon each other.
- The final body paragraph will contain your most moving and pertinent information.
- A conclusion that wraps up your entire essay without repeating what has already been said.

## Refine Your Content

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- Edit your rough draft to preferably fit on one or two pages, with the most important information at the top based on the requirements of what you are seeking.
- Save the final copy of your polished personal statement in several locations.

## Helpful Resources

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- **Utilize Career Library and Access Online Tools** to help develop your personal statement.
- **For more information on Personal Statements, Visit** [uis.edu/career/students/career-planning/launch-your-career/graduate-school-strategies/personal-statements/](http://uis.edu/career/students/career-planning/launch-your-career/graduate-school-strategies/personal-statements/)

