

## Personal Statements

Depending on the topic chosen for this important piece of the application package, the essay provides additional evidence of a student's intellectual and creative achievement. The essay is also the only opportunity for the readers of an application to get to know the applicant as a person, as well as a student. The essay is also the place where the student can put the academic record into the context of opportunities and obstacles. This is the place for the application panel to get to know the applicant, as well as allowing the applicant to clarify things in the rest of their application. Here are a few guidelines when reading a personal statement:

-Is there a specific question that needs to be answered? Do not write a blanket statement and include it in all of the applications. A personal statement must be personalized to the application, school, or award being applied to.

-Does the applicant present themselves as a package or a brand? There should be a thesis about the applicant that ideally runs through the entire application.

-How does the essay provide evidence of achievements that aren't reflected in other parts of the application?

-How and why do the events that described shaped the student's attitude, focus, and, most of all, intellectual vitality?

-Can you articulate a particular idea of the applicant that makes them a good fit for this school?

- Does the essay show how and why the applicant became interested in the field?

-What are the applicant's interests, and strengths?

-Are there any discrepancies in the applicant's academic record that should be addressed in the personal statement?

-Does the essay tell a story? Is it interesting?

-Is the first paragraph interesting, informative, and attention-grabbing?

-Does the applicant avoid controversial issues?

-Is the essay well written, with a clear and interesting angle?

-Is the applicant's knowledge of the school, scholarship, or award evident? Is it apparent that the student has researched what they are applying for?

**\*\*\*The Writing Center recommends consulting with Career Services, faculty, staff members, or other professionals before submitting a personal statement.\*\*\***