

Let's Get Personal

Writing Personal Statements for
Dietetic Internships and Grad School
Applications

Agenda

- Purpose
- Common Personal Statement Parameters
 - Length
 - Prompts
- Organization
- Writing Exercise

Personal Statement Purpose

- Introduce yourself to the program
- Demonstrate how your background aligns with program emphasis
- Illuminate your strengths
- Give some color to work experiences you've had
 - How have they shaped your skill set?

Length

- DICAS length
 - Each question should be answered in 500 words or less
- Other programs - variable

DICAS Prompts

In your personal statement, please address the following items.

1. Why do you want to enter the dietetics profession?
2. Discuss experiences that have helped to prepare you for your career.
3. What are your short-term and long-term goals?
4. What are your strengths and weaknesses or areas of needing improvement?
5. What other information do you consider important for the selection decision?

UVM Grad College

- “Outline your reasons for wishing to undertake graduate study, and comment on your plans for a professional career. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of your preparation for graduate study in your proposed field.”

UVM MSD Application

- “The letter serves as your personal introduction to the selection committee. Include information that will emphasize
 - your unique skills and qualifications
 - your specific interest in the MSD program
 - relevant background information
 - your personal and career goals
 - summary of how related work experience and/or academic achievements have prepared you for a professional career as a dietitian
 - related extra-curricular activities demonstrating leadership abilities and potential.”

General Organization

- Every paragraph should have a topic sentence and then 3-5 sentences presenting evidence that supports that topic sentence.
- Summary paragraph at the end reiterating why you are a great candidate and the program is your FAVORITE EVER.
- Integrate the information the prompt is asking for you.
 - Your strengths and weaknesses should be integrated throughout.

General Organization

- Paragraph stating why you're interested in nutrition
- Several paragraphs illustrating how your past experiences have bolstered your nutrition interest and demonstrated your strengths/weaknesses
- Paragraph summing things up and stating why you're interested in a specific program

More Subtle Tips

- Show don't tell
 - Don't say, "I am a leader." Show us how you were a leader by recounting an experience you were involved in.
- Address weaknesses or transcript flubs head on.
 - Tell your side of the story, don't just let people infer from the transcript what happened or think they won't see it.
- Make sure you say something specific about the program you are applying to.
- Find a hook
 - What makes you special?
- No clichés – "I want to help people."
 - Don't we all?

Oh Gosh, How Do I Start?!!

- Self-Reflective Free Writes
 - How did you become interested in nutrition? What about nutrition “grabs” you?
 - What about nutrition are you most passionate about?
 - What experience have you had that illustrates that this area of nutrition is a serious interest for you?
 - What do you see yourself doing in the field of nutrition?
 - Your professional goal

Champion Your Strengths!

- List three adjectives that describe your strengths
 - List three experiences that demonstrate how each of these adjectives are true
- List two weaknesses you have.
 - Are there experiences you have that demonstrate how you're working on them or have dealt with them successfully? Are you willing to work on them?
- What is one instance where you have been a "Leader"

Do Your Homework

- Why are you applying to THIS SPECIFIC program?
- What do you hope to gain from completing the program?
- How do your experiences match up to the program's emphasis?