



Career Advising:

Composing your Personal Statement

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Outline

Overview

Purpose

Creating the Essay

Approach to Writing

Common Pitfalls

Objectives



Review the purpose of the personal statement



Discuss the components of the essay



Describe the process of writing this essay



Discuss the common pitfalls of the personal statement



Overview

- Part of Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) application
- One-page essay about who you are
- 700-800 words

Purpose

Student Perspective

- Personalize application to specific program or specialty
- Clarifies what you are looking for in a program
- Prepares you for the interview

Program perspective

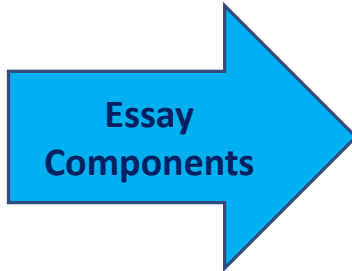
- Evaluate enthusiasm for medicine and specialty
- Assess writing skills and organization
- Identify candidates with undesirable personality traits

Purpose

- Market yourself
- Opportunity to address irregularities in your academic career
 - Gaps in education
 - Grades
 - Professionalism citations
- Added benefit - helps authors with your Letter of Recommendation (LoR)

Creating the essay

- No limit to number of essays
- One essay for each specialty
- Assign only one essay to each program
- Use the prompts to free-write
- Refine each draft into a standard essay format



Introduction

Body

Conclusion

1. Who are you?
2. Why are you interested in this specialty?
3. What are your strengths for the field?
4. Summarize and Career Goals

¶1: Who are you?

Introduction:

- Interesting | Attention-grabbing
- Reflect on your motivation for your chosen field
- Identify core values and relate to field you are entering
- Examples from your life (personal, academic or professional) which reflect how you embody these values
- Thesis statement is last sentence

¶2: Why this specialty?

Reader(s) is knowledgeable in the specialty

NOT why you are going into medicine

Check specialty organization(s) if you need to understand field better

What sparked your interest?

What attracts you to this field?

Does specialty offer unique opportunities: research, global health, practice in underserved communities, etc.

Builds on the first paragraph

¶3: What are your strengths?

Market yourself

Highlight your strengths for specialty

NO bragging or boasting

Avoid too many “I”s and “me”s

- ❖ Showcase achievement or attributes through example or anecdote
 - Be respectful and show gratitude
- ❖ Attributes you value or lessons you learned that fits with specialty
 - CSOM mission, health disparities, social determinants of health, etc.

¶4: Discuss red flags, if applicable

- Gaps in education: leave of absence
- Grades: Step failures, repeat course/clerkship
- Professionalism citations
- Describe what happened
- Take responsibility for it - don't place blame elsewhere
- Show how you have grown from this experience
- How it will make you a stronger resident physician

¶ Conclusion

Outline your career goals

- Where do you see yourself in the future? Short term? Long-term?
- What impact do you want to have on society?

Brief summary

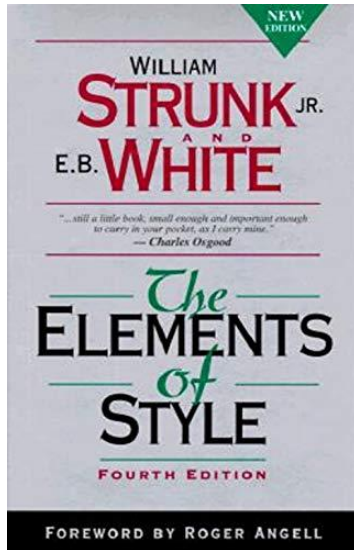
- Put all the elements from each section into why you are going into this specialty
- Consider referring to a matter you had discussed earlier to tie the essay together

Approach to writing



- Start early
- Outline
- Flesh out each bullet point
- Revise to more structured and concise sentence
- Edit and refine
- Proof-read
- Process

Style



- Flow
- Theme
- Style indicative of:
 - Organization
 - Thought processes
 - Ability to communicate
 - Detail oriented

Common Pitfalls



- Arrogance
 - Brag about accomplishments
 - Put other people or specialties down
- Restate activities from CV
- Re-use Sophie Davis application essay
 - Why you want to go into medicine
- Substitute for Step scores / course grades

Common Pitfalls



- Overly - creative writing
- Sloppy
- Disorganized
- Grammatical errors
- Spelling errors
- Awkward writing
- Mixed metaphors, run-on sentences
 - Try online writing tool: ex. Grammarly

Common Pitfalls



- Plagiarism
- Purchase essay
- HIPAA violation
- Starting late

Resources

- <https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/csom/personal-statement-preparation-materials>
- Grammarly: <https://www.grammarly.com/>
- CSOM Writing Coach: TBA

Be sure to meet the deadline: 5/21/2021



Submit to Dr. Lam:
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No penalty if you submit **early**
Late submission penalty – professionalism form

Late initial draft, may result in ERAS
application delay