



W.M. Keck Science Department

Claremont McKenna College • Pitzer College • Scripps College

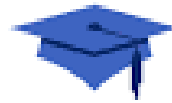
Personal Statement

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Why Medicine?



Academic
achievements

**What makes
a personal
statement?**



Voluntary
experience



Extracurricular
achievements



Work
experience

Outline

- Purpose of the Personal Statement
- Application
- Getting Started & Writing Tips
- Q & A

Purpose of a Personal Statement

A chance for your selected medical/dental schools admissions committee to truly understand why you want to be a physician/dentist.

Who are you? Things to Ponder.

Who are you?

You are unique already, don't get caught up in trying too hard to prove it.

Where do you come from?

What is your background, how did it shape you, and what inspired you to pursue medicine/dental and your experiences beyond the classroom?

What you are passionate about?

Discuss topics related to providing care to others and passions that are closely related to your pursuit of this career.



Your Application



GPA

What kind of student are you?

Are you confident for the next step which requires a solid science foundation?

MCAT/DAT

Are you a strong standardized exam taker?

Does your GPA compare to your MCAT/DAT score?

15 Things

A written resume in the form of 15 meaningful experiences, you will pick 3 to be your “most important”

Are your passions demonstrated through your involvement?

*no limit for dental

Personal Statement

Who are you and what can you contribute to others?

5,300 characters for MD & DO; 4,500 for Dental

Letters of Recommendation

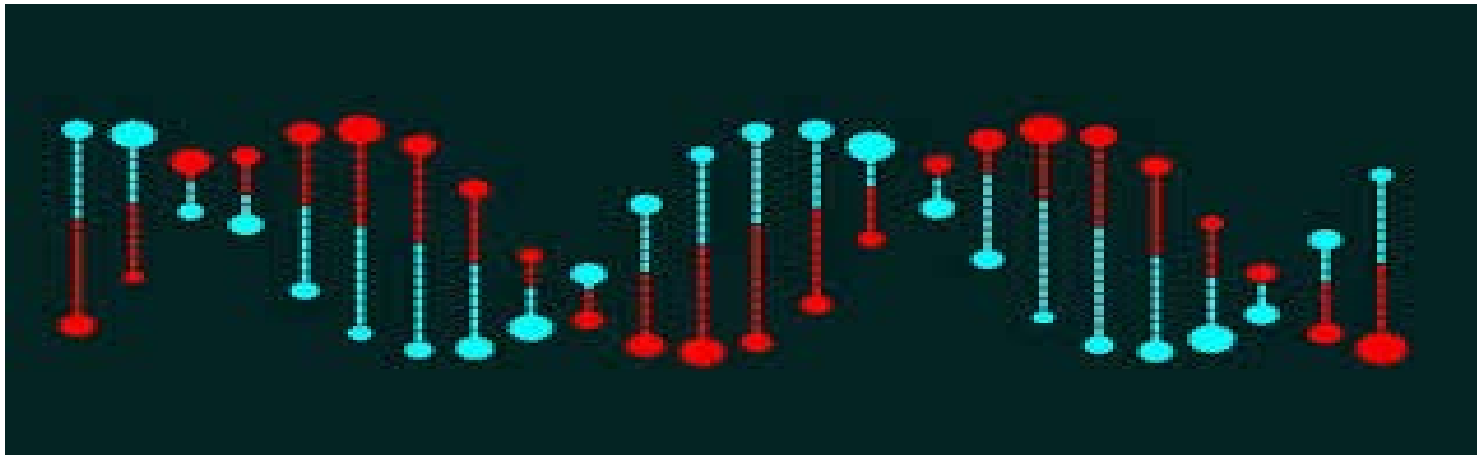
Impression you have made on others and what you have contributed to others.

Secondary Applications

COMMON THEMES

- **Personal or family illness that exposed applicant to medicine**
- **Premed student who has always known that they are supposed to be a physician.**
- **Just because your theme is similar to someone else's you will learn how to show the reader why and how your experiences have made an impact on you.**

- **Personal statement tells them why you are on your journey in the first place.**
- **Experiences tells them what you have done on your premed journey .**



THEMES CONT.

- Choose a theme and stick to it.
- Support your theme with specific examples – stay clear and concise.
- Highlight interesting qualities of your journey in medicine/dental.
- Be sure to vary your sentence structure. You don't want your essay to be boring!
- Pay attention to how your paragraphs connect to each other.



WRITE, MARINATE, RE-WRITE!

- Allow enough time to write your personal statement, with revisions, it may take up to 3-6 months.
- Have peers, advisers, and family members read your personal statement.
- Good writing is simple writing.
- Your essays should not be a struggle to comprehend.
- Beware of being too self-congratulatory or too self-deprecating.

WHAT MAKES YOU, YOU! HEARD IT BEFORE...

I'VE HEARD IT
ALL BEFORE..

- We all go through trials and tribulations, success and failures. It's how you react to those incidents that's most important. What sets you apart from other applicants.
- Use your own perspective and experiences in your personal statement to present a memorable impression.
- You're wanting to help people and love for science is nice but everybody else is also writing about that.
- Be personal and specific – if you love to help others give examples of how you assist others.

ARE YOU INTERESTING? SHOW THEM.



- Try to gain the reader's attention - something that will pull them in.
- Create intrigue before starting the story of who you are.
- The goal is to grab the admission committee's attention – make them want to read more!
- Instead of telling the admissions committee about your unique qualities (like compassion, empathy, and organization), show them through the stories you tell about yourself.
- Don't just say it—actually prove it.

Additional Essays - MD/PhD

- **Will write two additional essays within AMCAS:**
 - **Why MD/PhD: describe why you want the dual degree**
 - 3000-character limit
 - **Significant Research Experience**
 - Describe your research experiences
 - 1000-character limit

5-POINT ESSAY FORMAT.

WORD COUNT, WHAT!



- **1st paragraph:** These four or five sentences should "catch" the reader's attention.
- **3-4 body paragraphs:** Use these paragraphs to reveal who you are. Ideally, one of these paragraphs will reflect clinical understanding and one will reflect service.
- **Concluding paragraph:** The strongest conclusion reflects the beginning of your essay, gives a brief summary of you are, and ends with a challenge for the future.
- **Watch your word count.**
- **That's 5,300 characters (including spaces) for AMCAS applications, 4,500 characters for TMDSAS, and 5,300 characters for AACOMAS.**
- **Stay on topic.** Rambling not only uses up your precious character limit, but it also causes confusion!

COULD YOU PLEASE READ? DOUBLE-CHECK DETAILS



- Before you hit “submit,” ask several people you trust for feedback on your personal statement.
- The more time you have spent writing your statement, the less likely you are to spot any errors.
- A professor or friend whose judgment and writing skills you trust is invaluable.
- Always check for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.
- This goes for the rest of your application (like your activities list), too.
- A common oversight is referencing the wrong school in your statement! Give yourself (and your proofreaders) the time this task truly requires.

CONSULT WITH AN EXPERT



- **Pre-Health Adviser: Susie Fang**
- **Admin Asst/Advisor: Messina Zurbuch**
- **Career Services**
- **The Writing Center**
- **Get help and guidance to write an effective personal statement that showcases not only your accomplishments, but your passion and your journey.**
- **You have many resources, USE THEM!**

Writing Examples



Weak Example:

Traveling to an unfamiliar place where I did not speak the language and had no medical training was challenging. I saw things that needed to be addressed but I couldn't do anything about them.

Better Example:

I decided to study abroad in South Africa because I wanted to be challenged in an unfamiliar place. I learned that effective communication is essential when building trust and relationships. Although I did not speak the native language, I came well equipped with a positive outlook, a motivated personal drive to make a difference, and a humble heart which enabled me to better understand the struggle that the local people have endured for years.

YOU CAN DO IT!



- Take time to think, reflect and dream about “Why Medicine/Dental/etc.?”
- Keep a journal, or jot down notes on your phone
- Talk to your family and friends
- Think carefully about where you came from
- Think about where you are going
- Pen to paper, or fingers to your keyboard, just write... don't worry about character count or what you believe you “should” be writing
- Be you, be true, let them get to know you.

Online Resources

- **AAMC Resources:**
 - <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/7-tips-write-your-essay/>
 - <https://students-residents.aamc.org/choosing-medical-career/article/advisor-corner-crafting-your-personal-statement/>
- **ADEA Resources**
 - https://www.adea.org/dental_education_pathways/aadsas/applicants/pages/personalstatement.aspx
- **Books**
 - **Pre-Med Play Book – Dr. Ryan Gray**
- **University of Pittsburgh SOM Samples**
 - https://www.healthdiversity.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/SNMAPersonalStatementsvol2_2_.pdf
- **Duke University Dental Personal Statement Resources:**
 - <https://sites.duke.edu/pre dental/application/personal-statement/>
- **Duke University Medical School Samples**
 - <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-graduate-schools/top-medical-schools/articles/2018-06-07/how-to-showcase-diversity-in-a-med-school-essay>

**These samples reflect personal experiences and admission committees remember essays.
Therefore: plagiarism would be both reckless and unwise.**

Q & A

