

## PERSONAL STATEMENT/AUTOBIOGRAPHY

It seems that not everyone knows that there is a difference between the Autobiography required by this office and the Personal Statement required by all health professions schools. . They are clearly different. The Autobiography is written about an individual by that individual and covers the important events of his/her life. It may include almost anything important to you, but for the premedical or pre dental file, it must include such items as how and when and under what conditions did you become interested in the field; what experience as a volunteer, paid worker, or observer you have had; what are your personal related experiences such as self and family illnesses; what research has been carried out and with whom; in what community (including college) activities have you been involved; your hobbies or what you like to do in your spare time; and anything else which may be of interest to the person reading the autobiography. The autobiography should be at least two pages long single spaced and not longer than 5 pages single spaced. Please double space your document for ease of reading.

But what about the Personal Statement? That is a different matter altogether. In this essay, one must deal with the questions of why medicine/why me? ~ what got me here? Try to illustrate points with references to personal experiences which have helped you to decide on a goal ----- what excites you and what interests you about medicine. Try to avoid use of the proper pronoun "I" over and over. Such usage is hard to take when being read; there are other ways to say the same thing. And don't try to be too funny or cute because this is a serious essay and will be read as a serious statement provided by a serious student. At the same time, there is always a little room for a snippet of fun. If you have something that you think the admissions committee ought to know about you, here is the place for it.

Try to start with a good lead which attracts attention. Once begun, get on with it. One does not have to fill the page, but the writing shouldn't be so long that a small font has to be used to fit it into the space allowed. Remember that several people will be reading this essay. After it is in what you think is good shape, put it aside for a couple of days and then go back and read it critically and make changes which seem right to you. Use Spell Check (see below) and review it yourself to be sure that each word is what you meant. Don't forget that Spell Check accepts any properly spelled word even if it isn't what the writer meant. If one must write about a poor semester or some other poor performance, don't try to make a lot of excuses; just state the fact and if there was a good reason for this performance, state that and let it go.

Finally, get someone else to read it, preferably someone who knows what this statement should say and someone who can catch grammatical errors. Finally, proof read it yourself one last time before submitting it. If it isn't to your liking, throw it out and begin again.

Just a reminder: we have a file of some selected personal statements in the HPO for you to review to get ideas about how others have written their statements. Take a look, but don't try to fit someone else's writing to your needs. It isn't likely to work. And if you want someone in the HPO to review an essay, bring it to the office in printed form, preferably double spaced, and with your name and telephone number or e-mail address on it. It will be reviewed and commented upon in a day or so and you will be notified that it is ready.

"I have a spelling checker, it came with my PC;  
It plainly marks four my revue, mistakes I cannot see.  
I've run this poem threw it, I'm sure your pleased to no,  
It's letter perfect in its weigh, my checker tolled me so."

From: "Spellbound" by Sam Zaslavsky