



Writing a Personal Statement: Guidelines

The purpose of this requirement is to learn about you, a prospective Nichols College graduate student, and to discern whether you are academically, professionally and emotionally ready to embark on a graduate degree with Nichols College. We have researched some of the concepts we would like to see incorporated into a personal statement, and have included some general ideas about what separates a good personal statement from a great one.

**Please note these are just guidelines.*

- It is about you. Show off your talents to the reader. Do not “stray” or include negative information about yourself. If you have trouble writing about yourself, imagine you are writing this statement about one of your best friends.
- Write around a theme. Whatever theme you choose, make sure it has some relevance to your application. Explain some situations in which you applied skills you have learned. Tell a story and show the reader the person behind the words.
- Show the reader rather than “tell” the reader. Instead of writing, “I am motivated. I study hard.” demonstrate those qualities with concrete and meaningful examples. How are you motivated? Tell the reader about a time in your life when being motivated helped you accomplish a hard task.
- Use clear language and proper grammar. If you do not have great writing skills, you may want to consider having someone review the statement before submitting it.
- Proofread your statement (a few times). Avoid long sentences. Be concise. Include paragraph breaks for the benefit of the reader.
- Write a focused essay (about four paragraphs in length) that covers the basics. The first paragraph should introduce you to the reader. The second paragraph should let the reader know how you arrived at your choice of specialty. The third paragraph should confirm why you think this choice is right for you (can include extracurricular or work experiences). The fourth paragraph should inform the reader what you see as your long-term goals or how you see yourself in this specialty.
- Use your own words rather than rely on quotes; your own thoughts are more powerful.
- Your statement should be between 500 and 800 words.