



**UCLA** Office of the Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs  
Early Academic Outreach Program

**TIPS FOR WRITING THE PERSONAL STATEMENT**

**Do not wait until the last minute to write your personal statement.**

- ❖ Follow instructions and answer the prompts.
- ❖ Write in your own voice, speaking honestly about yourself and where you have come from.
- ❖ This leaves no time for efficient revising.
- ❖ If you rush, you may misspell words or make grammatical errors.
- ❖ You may not say what you need to say.

**Type your first draft and save document so you may make revisions.**

- ❖ Double spacing allows you to make corrections between the lines.
- ❖ Use spell check; however, spell check will not catch words used incorrectly.
- ❖ Don't be preoccupied with the length of your statement at this time-you can add or delete later.
- ❖ Be careful with humor. Be straightforward in tone.

**Read your draft out loud to someone or to yourself and see if each sentence is clearly written and properly punctuated.**

- ❖ When reading out loud, if your voice stumbles or stutters, there is a chance of awkward sentence structure.
- ❖ Listening to yourself, your ear will catch mistakes you might have otherwise missed.

**Put your draft aside for 24 to 48 hours and read it again.**

- ❖ Your eyes tire and you will miss obvious mistakes by reading one draft over and over.
- ❖ Your draft will read freshly after a day or two.
- ❖ New ideas may come to you after a break.

**Make corrections in sentence construction, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and make an appointment with an English teacher for proofreading.**

- ❖ You should now be close to completing your statement. This is the rewrite portion of your draft.
- ❖ An English teacher or someone knowledgeable about writing can give helpful criticism.
- ❖ You will feel confident to know that all your words are spelled correctly and your sentences punctuated correctly.

**Print your final copy. Make sure it is legible and font size is not too small. Allow someone to proofread for typographical errors you might have missed.**

- ❖ You want your final copy to look as good as possible. Use a font size that is easy to read and does not stress the readers' eye.

- ❖ Remember that the selection committee members who review your statement will meet you through your work. Your statement should be error free. If you follow the steps given, you will have given your best shot and produced a strong statement.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

The purpose of a Personal Statement is to relay information about you that is not typically found in the application for admission. *It is an opportunity to distinguish your self as an individual in the eyes of the reader.* This information is important in that it gives a broader and well-rounded picture of you as a potential college student at the college or university you maybe applying. It is especially important in helping the admission office receive a more comprehensive picture of you as an individual – the more they know about you, the better. Listed below are just a few suggestions to guide you on what you might want to mention:

### 1. GOALS

Be very positive about your goals and aspirations. Talk about your career objectives and what you want to study. Why do you want to go to college? What are your interests (both academic and personal)? You are strongly encouraged to discuss your interest in your chosen area of study, showing a strong commitment to the field. Weave some evidence of interest into the personal statement, (i.e. research opportunities in which you engaged).

### 2. DISTINGUISH YOURSELF

You can use this as an opportunity to fill in gaps or explain unusual circumstances. For instance, some students take classes that are outside the UC/CSU approved course list but that could be useful in your future endeavors, and the personal statement is the place where you can highlight that. What achievements have you accomplished? What do you believe makes you stand out? Ask yourself “What do I want the admissions office to know about me?” not “What do I think they want to hear?” If you have experienced hardship you may discuss your circumstances, but remember that what’s important is to show how you faced challenges and matured through commitment, persistence, and determination.

### 3. EXPLAINING AREAS OF ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT

If you don’t think your GPA and test scores are going to be competitively eligible, discuss why you want the chance to be accepted, and tell why you believe that you can succeed in college. Personal qualities that are important for college work include: Motivation – is your desire to do well strong? Recent improvement – have you steadily improved in study habits despite low grades and test scores? Study skills – are you able to organize your time and work hard? Survival skills – are you a quick learner? Do you use positive assertion to obtain help when necessary?

### 4. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Avoid lists of accomplishments; instead explain the relevance to your life.

If you were a member of any clubs, whether or not you served as an officer of the club, or if you did any community volunteer work, you should definitely talk about this. Include what you learned and how the program may have helped you. Also, mention any academic achievements (i.e. essay contest winner, science contest winner, or honorable mention in any discipline, etc.) such as being named to your school’s honor roll or dean’s list, being a member of EAOP, MESA, YBS, or having been awarded any scholarships.

Remember that you are not limited to the above suggestions. The above is merely a guide to help you. Mention anything else you might feel is pertinent. Most importantly, don’t wait until the last minute to begin.