

WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

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WHAT IS A PERSONAL STATEMENT?

AND WHY DOES IT MATTER...

YOUR APPLICATION, YOUR VOICE

- ❖ A Personal Statement is, at its core, a piece of writing that describes who you are, your reason for pursuing this application, and how CSUSB can help you in your educational and professional goals.
- ❖ The Personal Statement is your moment of freedom in the application to insert your own narrative as an accompaniment to your online application and transcripts and test scores. This is where you get to present yourself on your own terms and tell your story.
- ❖ A Personal Statement can often fall into categories, depending on the program you are applying to:
 - The general, comprehensive Personal Statement
 - A response to specific prompts given by the department you are applying to.



HOW TO FORMAT YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

IT'S AS EASY AS 1,2,3

YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT IN THREE STEPS

Step One: The Introduction

- ❖ Many students find it difficult to simply start writing their Personal Statement. A good way to kick things off, is to simply introduce yourself.
 - My name is Megan Kinnally, and I am applying to the graduate program for English Literature at California State University, San Bernardino.
- ❖ This is a good space to talk about your educational background, relevant professional experience, philanthropic work, and begin the narrative that will frame your story (contextualization, anecdotes, etc.).
- ❖ Think of this as your opportunity to explain why **you** would be a good fit for the **program**.

YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT IN THREE STEPS

Step Two: Why CSUSB?

- ❖ With various educational opportunities available, why does this program specifically call to you?
- ❖ What resources, faculty, and student support does this program offer that you feel will encourage success in your education?
- ❖ How do you plan to be involved with your department in regards to events, programming, research, employment, etc.?
- ❖ This is the time to show that you have really done your homework in researching this program, and how the **program** would be a good fit for **you**.
- ❖ Good places to find this information will be the department website, faculty bios, the university web calendar, student engagement, and so forth.

YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT IN THREE STEPS

Step Three: Defining Your Future

- ❖ As a nice endcap to the Personal Statement, it is advised that you give some kind of illumination on what your plan to do with this particular degree once obtained, or how it lends itself to your educational journey.
- ❖ It need not be ironclad, as graduate school is often a time where student focuses will become more specialized and finite as you take classes and participate in mentorship and research, but some kind of loosely defined plan will show the program that you have a vision for how this degree will work in your overall path.
- ❖ Showing the department that you have tangible goals for this degree will also assure them you are motivated to complete this degree, as well as to make accommodations for any necessary life-changes (grad school can definitely be taxing on your time and energy)



TIPS FOR WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

THE DO'S AND DON'TS

TIPS AND ADVICE

- ❖ Answer the questions that are asked
Make sure to check the department website and Cal State Apply for any questions or prompts to be addressed in the Personal Statement
- ❖ Show familiarity when speaking about the program you are applying to
It is imperative to show the program that you have researched their department thoroughly, as well as to be as specific as you can in your Personal Statement, especially if you are applying to multiple schools.
- ❖ Use graduate-level writing
All programs will be requiring their students to use graduate-level writing, so be sure to take your time writing your Personal Statement and to proofread for grammatical and syntax errors.

TIPS AND ADVICE CONTINUED...

- ❖ Include only relevant content

Remember, even if the program application doesn't specifically state a maximum for the number of pages your Personal Statement can be, 1-2 pages is standard. Make sure you only including the most relevant information, so your statement reads as clean, coherent, and concise.

- ❖ Write something exclusive to the program you are applying to

If you are planning to apply to more than one graduate school, that's great! But be sure you are taking the time to write a personal statement that is exclusive to each application.

- ❖ Just say no to AI

We can see how it would be tempting to use online generative writing tools to complete your Personal Statement. Please note that submitting AI-generated text as your own work is generally considered plagiarism or academic dishonesty, as well as a misrepresentation of yourself as a candidate.



RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

APPOINTMENTS AND CONTACTS

SOME EXTRA HELP

- ❖ One-on-One Appointments with Megan Kinnally.
While I cannot assist you in *writing* the Personal Statement, I can assist in *reviewing* completed Personal Statements for grammatical errors and formatting issues. Please note, these appointments are limited and must be made at least five business days in advance and ideally about ten days prior to the application submission deadline. Appointments can be made via email at Megan.Kinnally@csusb.edu
- ❖ Graduate Writing Center
The Graduate Writing Center has agreed to assist applicants in reviewing their Personal Statements, but please note this does not apply during the summer term. They are open Mon-Thurs: 8:30 AM to 8:00 PM and Friday: 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM and can be reached at WritingCenter@csusb.edu or at 909-537-3127.
- ❖ Graduate Programs
If you have questions regarding your Personal Statement, please free to contact the program you are applying to and ask for assistance in clarifying any questions or concerns you may have. You can view a list of [Department Contacts](#) on the Graduate Studies webpage.



QUESTIONS?