

# Tips for a *Strong, Stand-Out* Personal Statement

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With the spring application deadline just weeks away, final adjustments are being made to help land that dream internship. Transcripts, experience, a resume, and personal recommendation letters are all considered when the selection process begins. However, a strong personal statement can be key to securing your top internship choice. A personal statement is a written description that highlights a person's achievements and interests in their personal/academic life and workplace. For a dietetic student, the personal statement not only emphasizes these accomplishments, but also demonstrates how well a prospective intern follows directions or focuses on details such as grammar or word count. Personal statements are a brief reflection of you; this is not the time to be humble! Brag away and explain why this is your field of choice and why you are well suited to it.

## Introduction

It's important to start your personal statement with a bold, attention-grabbing first sentence. "As an Honors student as well as President of my sorority, etc...". Explain why dietetics is your passion and why you want to get into the profession. Vague explanations such as "I have a passion for helping others" or "I want to help people lose weight" are not necessarily bad, they just don't set you apart from other applicants. Explain very briefly, why you have a passion for helping others or why you want to help people lose weight. Let your unique path help shape this section of your personal statement.

## Experience and Skills

When discussing the experiences that have helped you prepare for your internship and career in dietetics, it's important that you review your programs directions and focus. Many students write generic personal statements; but the successful applicant identifies exactly why they chose that specific program. For example, Michigan State has a community nutrition focus; if you have been volunteering through Gleaners as a Cooking Matters Nutrition Instructor, detail the experience you gained while volunteering and explain how that relates to the Michigan State Community Nutrition focus. Making this connection makes YOU stand out. Use words like leadership, develop and create to describe your experiences; a dietetic internship can be very self-driven. Explaining how you already possess the skills to be self-sufficient can sound very desirable. A personal statement should also include short- and long- term goals, emphasizing how your desired program will help you reach those goals. Becoming a

dietetic intern is not a short-term goal; that is implied with your application. Really think about where you would like to be in five years, versus ten. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is a wonderful resource for researching how you can advance your career to set these goals. Joining a DPG group, finding a mentor, or learning about certifications post-registration are just a few suggestions.

### Strengths and Weaknesses

When it comes to discussing our strengths in our personal statement letter, we tend to do that very easily. Some internships would like to hear about your weaknesses; nobody is perfect! This is a great way to prove that you are flexible, willing to learn, and have experience overcoming obstacles. As mentioned before, be sure to look over the internships requirements very carefully. Failing to do so may reflect badly on you if it appears as though you did not take the time to research their program.

### Proofreading

Once your personal statement is complete, it is extremely important to have several people read it before submission. Some great proofreading choices are: dietetics professors, a writing center, family members, or even friends. Getting feedback from several different sources can help you perfect your personal statement. There are also dietetic student groups available to join on Facebook. Some of these groups have students who have transitioned to Registered Dietitians; many have offered to read and critique student personal statements. The overall goal here is to have many sharp, critical eyes look at your letter before you submit it.

Overall, your personal statement is a reflection of everything that makes you the best candidate for your program of choice. Sell your strengths and really let your passion, drive and commitment to dietetics shine through.

### References

Personal Statement. DICAS. [accessed 2020 Jan 26]. [https://portal.dicas.org/applicants2012\\_spring/instruction/ins\\_essays.htm](https://portal.dicas.org/applicants2012_spring/instruction/ins_essays.htm)