

Seven Paragraph Essay Format for Writing a Personal Statement

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P1 - Opening

You want come to program
You think you are a good fit
How the program will serve BOTH short term AND long term goals
[saying you will offer evidence for this]

P2 – Interests and Career goals/Life experience [brief]

Interests in the field [thoughtful, avoid clichés]
Why are you interested?
Long term goals are _____
Why these?
How will this degree facilitate these goals?
Life experience [not required]
What brought you here?
Later entry into academics/Changing career paths
Skills you learned from other experience

P3 – Experience: Research or applied experience

What you worked on or did
For how long
With whom you worked
Detail what you learned
Critical analysis (thoughtful, avoid negativity)
Skills you developed
RESEARCH: literature searching, run a lab, preparing an experiment, writing reviews, poster submission preparation, professional presentation, grant writing/submission, publication writing]
APPLIED: populations worked with, what skills learned, challenges overcome, how used supervision

P4 – Again with experience

What you worked on or did
For how long
With whom you worked
Detail what you learned
Critical analysis (thoughtful, but avoid negativity)
Skills you developed from your experience
See above for ideas

P5 – Summarizing value of experience [shorter]

How experience helps prepare you for your immediate goals
State how experience informs your decision to pursue career (long term) goals
State how this experience ties into your immediate goals for program you are applying to

P6 – Why this program

I am applying to ___ because it will [allow me to do this goal]
Program is a fit because
use what you learned from program materials
again how it facilitates your long term goals
Specifics
Who are interested in working with and why (for research programs)
Who else are you interested in working with and why (for research programs)
What do you want to accomplish
RESEARCH: what you are interested in investigating [keep consistent with research at *this* program]
APPLIED: what skills for practice you want to develop [keep consistent with training at *this* program]

P7 – Summing it all up

You want come to program

You think you are a good fit

How the program will serve BOTH short term AND long term goals

[offer evidence for this]

Tips and suggestions**want to do**

present yourself professionally

make your argument succinctly

write clearly

show sophistication

convey your fit

convey your passion/dedication

let your personality come through [carefully]

vary sentence structure [not all sentences start with “I did...”]

avoid

clichéd writing

vague goals or experiences

just talking grades

negativistic or hostile tone

arrogant tone

over self-disclosure/leading with own suffering