

# Pre-Health Personal Statement Workshop



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# Personal Statements

- Before we can talk about **how** and **what** you have done to be a successful pre-health student, we need to understand **why** healthcare moves you
- Think about how you feel about **why** you are applying to professional school and how you can convince an admissions rep to pick you
- **People usually aren't captivated by what you do, they are captivated by why you do it**

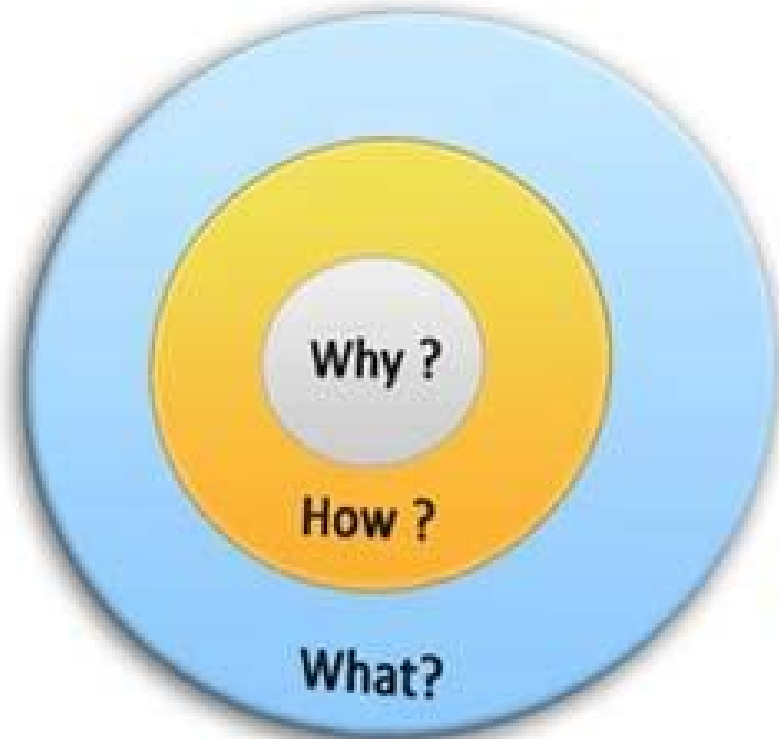


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# The WHY: Your Specific Health Field?



**Why** = The Purpose

*What is your cause? What do you believe?*

**How** = The Process

*Specific actions taken to realize the Why.*

**What** = The Result

*What do you do? The result of Why. Proof.*

# THE HOW: What have you done?

**What experiences have led you to your WHY?**

- Personal
- Academic
- Professional
- Clinical

**How do I make people see the field through my eyes?**

# THE WHAT: What do you do?

## What makes you unique?

- Skills
- Values
- Personality
- Perspective
- Strengths
- Research
- Professional experience
- Academic experience



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# THE WHAT: Brainstorming

## Brainstorming Questions:

- How do you fit in the field?
- How have you been shaped by your experiences
- What have you learned about yourself from your experiences?

# Insider tips to gain admission

- **The first draft will never be the best draft**
- **Tell the story in the order best for you**
- **Show them, don't tell them**
- **Active voice, not passive voice**
  - “I was able to have the opportunity to learn about...”
- **Avoid writer's block**
  - Reward yourself
  - Don't stop for “the perfect word”
  - **Get the story out and revise later**

# Turn to a partner

In 2 minutes:

**Why** do you want to go into your specific health field?  
What do you believe in?

Were they the same reasons? Different?



# General Prompt

Please describe what inspires your decision for becoming a \_\_\_\_\_ (*doctor, dentist, optometrist, physical therapist, nurse, etc.*), including your preparation for training in this profession, your aptitude and motivation, the basis for your interest in \_\_\_\_\_ (*medicine, dentistry, optometry, physical therapy, nursing, etc.*), and your future career goals.

In 4500 characters.

# What goes in a personal statement?

- Experiences that were **not represented** in other parts of the application, or which were not described in enough detail.
- As a program applicant, you volunteered a lot of hours, but what kind of experiences did you **gain** from it?
- Think about how did your experiences **motivate** you even further to pursue this career?
- Express **unique** qualities/experiences you have that you would like the committee to know about.

# Boil it down

- Why this field?
- What experiences have you had?
- Why this school?
- Why this program?
- Future goals?

# Personal Statement: Do's

- Proofread! Have others read your essay. Ask them to comment not only on grammatical errors, but also on what kind of person the essay makes you sound like. **Do you sound sincere?**
- Write your draft in a word document and then transfer to the application
- Quality is more important than quantity.
- If explaining anything negative (such as a bad semester or overall GPA), be open and honest, but also be **positive**. Mention facts and move on. Explain, but do not make excuses.

# More Pointers

- Try to stick with why you are interested in your chosen field, what you have done in the field, etc. Do not try to use this as an essay to review the field, its strengths, weaknesses, current trends, etc. This essay is intended to **provide details about you, not your chosen field.**
- If you are reapplying, write a new personal statement. Show that you are willing to put effort into your new application.
- Tell a **story** or anecdote. Don't tell your life story or be too broad. Be specific and focus on one or two experiences that illustrate who you are as a person and as an applicant
- Avoid repeating information that is already available elsewhere on your application. Focus on content more than dates, names, and places.

# Personal Statement: Don'ts

- Do not use the same answers as other applications
- Do not include high school achievements (unless you are a freshman or they are absolutely remarkable!)
- **Do not touch on controversial or political topics**
- DO NOT LIE!!!
- Avoid clichés

# Personal Statement Examples & Activity

- Split into groups based on your interests
  - Medicine
  - Dentistry
  - Nursing
  - Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy
  - Pharmacy
  - Physician Assistant
- As a group, read through your personal statement
- Share what you thought of your personal statement, both positive and negative critiques



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## **Graduate Health Programs: Interview Workshop**

Friday, February 21, 2 - 4 p.m.

University Student Commons, SGA Senate Chambers

*Co-sponsored by VCU Career Services, Pre-Health Advising, and Pre-Professional Health Advising*

Many graduate and professional healthcare programs still utilize the traditional interview style to interview their applicants. This workshop will educate students on interview tips and techniques to better prepare for their admissions interview. Students will be able to practice traditional interview questions with VCU advisers.

## **Non-Healthcare Biology Career Panel**

Friday, March 14, 3:30 - 5 p.m.

University Student Commons, SGA Senate Chambers

*Co-sponsored by VCU Career Services and VCU Biology Advising*

Interested in biology, but don't know what your career options are outside of healthcare? Hear from professionals in different biology-based career fields about their paths and what their careers are like. Students will get a chance to network and interact with panelists to ask more personal questions to help them during their own career exploration.

## **Pre-Health: MMI Prep Interview Workshop**

Friday, April 3, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

University Student Commons, Virginia Rooms A&B

*Co-sponsored by VCU Career Services and Pre-Professional Health Advising*

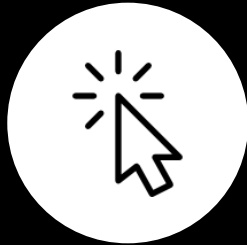
Many graduate and professional healthcare schools are using the Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI) format to interview applicants. This workshop will educate students on what MMI is and how to make the most of their MMI during their admissions process. Students will be able to practice and simulate an MMI with VCU advisers.



# Come see us now!

Appointments: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Drop-ins: Monday - Friday, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.



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University Student Commons  
Room 143  
Across from Chick-fil-A



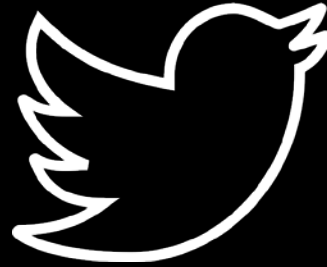
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