

The Law School Personal Statement

What is the Personal Statement?

- It is required by most law schools as part of the application. Be sure to carefully review the application instructions from each school, as they may have differing writing prompts.
- It should be about two pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point font, no less than 1-inch margins. Carefully review the application instructions from each school for specific details.
- It is the most important writing sample a school will receive from you. Lawyers write professionally, so you must demonstrate exceptional writing abilities throughout your application.
- For most schools, it takes the place of an interview, and it will separate you as a unique individual from other candidates with similar academic qualifications.

How Do I Get Started?

- Ask yourself why you want to go to law school and why you wish to practice law.
- Inform yourself about the schools to which you would apply, and ask yourself why you are interested in those schools specifically and what you would contribute to them.
- Read through personal statement samples, and ask yourself how you will stand out from them.
- Create an outline to determine the structure of your personal statement.
- Attend a personal statement workshop hosted by the NYU Preprofessional Advising Center.

Things to Consider

- Be “personal” and use experiences from your own life. Be honest and insightful, not dramatic.
- Tailor your personal statement to reflect the individual law schools to which you are applying.
- Do not summarize your resume or reiterate information available from other parts of your application.
- A strong introduction and conclusion are essential. Show continuity throughout.
- Maintain a positive, enthusiastic, and optimistic tone. If you have weaknesses to address, you should write about them in an addendum, not in the personal statement.
- Avoid clichés, slang, contractions, “legalese,” passive voice, and controversial issues.
- It is expected that you will go through several drafts. Once you think your personal statement is complete, put it away for a few days, then return to it to review and edit again.
- Your grammar, punctuation, and spelling should be flawless.

Additional Resources

- Use online resources through various websites, such as [NYU Prelaw](#).
- Have others review and edit your drafts, such as friends, instructors, and lawyers.
- Both the [NYU Writing Center](#) and the [NYU Wasserman Center](#) review personal statement drafts for graduate and professional school admissions. Schedule an appointment.