

# Guide to Building Your Best Personal Statement

Applying to the Graduate Certificate program requires a one-page personal statement. This essay of 500–1,000 words gives you the opportunity to explain why you are interested in the program and why you are a good candidate. We want to know what you care about and how the certificate will help you achieve your goals.

## Build Your Personal Statement

This is one possible outline with which to structure your personal statement. We recommend writing:

- ◆ one half of the essay about the courses or program and the impact you hope that it will have on your career
- ◆ one half writing about yourself and your abilities

**Paragraph 1:** Explain what drew your attention to the program. What do you like about it? What are you excited to learn?

**Be specific.**

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**Paragraph 2:** What experience do you have that is related to the your chosen certificate program? Can you tell an interesting story about your experience? Any challenges that you have overcome?

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### Questions to Consider when Writing:

- ◆ Why do you want to pursue a Graduate Certificate?
- ◆ How do you hope the certificate will affect your career?
- ◆ Why did you choose your current career path?
- ◆ What work experience do you have that has impacted your decision?
- ◆ What experience or learning are you seeking to achieve your goals?
- ◆ What insights, skills, or perspectives will you contribute to the classroom?

### General Tips:

- ◆ Start early—give yourself time to think this through
- ◆ Be specific
- ◆ Be original—make sure that this is your own writing
- ◆ Be sincere—show us that you have a genuine interest in the classes
- ◆ Explain your professional interests
- ◆ Do not just repeat what is already written on your résumé—help us get to know you and what you care about
- ◆ Show that you have read about the program and understand of how specific classes will contribute to your career
- ◆ Demonstrate your enthusiasm
- ◆ Carefully proofread your essay

**Paragraph 3:** How do you hope the program will positively impact your career? What practical skills or knowledge do you hope to gain from completing the program?

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**Paragraph 4:** Tell us a little more about yourself and what matters to you. What have you done outside of work that says something about who you are? Are you involved in any organizations or committees? What are you most proud of?

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**Paragraph 5:** Close your statement by telling us about your long-term goals or ambitions. Can you tell us something memorable? What makes you a unique candidate?

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These are general guidelines for completing your statement. You don't need to follow them exactly. Be flexible and creative, but remember, ***the most important things we need to know are: why are you interested in the program? And, how will it benefit your professional career?***

We are eager to get to know you—there's no need to be nervous. We just want to know what makes you who you are!

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