Tips for writing your personal statement

Write the essay
The application essay is your opportunity to show how you are different from other applicants and provides information about you that your transcripts alone cannot do.

Quick tips
- Start early
- Reveal yourself—show us who you are
- Address the prompts thoroughly and completely
- Revise, revise, and revise again
- Ask for help throughout the writing process

What do we look for?

Fit: When reviewing your essay, we look for a match between you and the major to which you apply. To put it simply, we want to know why you’ve chosen this major: Have you had work, volunteer, academic, or life experiences related to the major? What are your dreams, hopes, and plans for your life after college? Essay reviewers want to see a connection between the major of your choice, your experiences, and what you hope to do.

Extenuating circumstances: While this part of the essay is certainly not required, the admission committee will take into consideration any extenuating circumstances or situations which have impacted your academics. If there is something on your transcript which does not accurately reflect who you are as a student, please let us know about this! We take a holistic approach to application review but we don’t know the story behind your transcript unless you tell us.

Writing ability: Lastly, we are reading your essay to assess your communication skills. Be sure your statement is well-organized, proofread, clear, and concise. Have someone who knows you well review your personal statement and give you honest feedback on how to improve it. Use the writing center at your college/university. Use spell-check, but also read closely for typos as spell-check does not catch all errors.

For more information, contact CEHD Student Services, cehdinfo@umn.edu