

Advice for the PTCAS Essay From Admission Committee Members

We asked faculty and admission staff from five different doctor of physical therapy programs to share with us some recommendations for future applicants. Here are their top eight recommendations for writing your PTCAS personal statement:

- **Set yourself apart.** Your personal statement is an opportunity for the committee to learn more about you. Using the prompt, reflect on how you can use your words to differentiate yourself from others. As you write your essay, think like an admissions reviewer and consider whether this essay will help you stand out amongst the other applicants.
- **Plan how your essay will fit into your entire application.** While the personal statement is a major component of your application, there are other opportunities to share more about your experiences and how they shape who you are. Decide which qualities, attributes, and experiences you want the committee to know, then strategically include each in your application.
- **Show, don't just tell.** Don't just describe what a physical therapist is or the traits that they need. Use your personal stories to demonstrate those traits, like grit or empathy, and demonstrate a reflection on how you developed those traits.
- **Avoid the cliché injury story.** While it may be important to your personal journey, a story about how you were injured and saw a physical therapist is one that committee members have already read.
- **Be personal, but don't overshare.** Share meaningful details about the attributes that will make you a successful student and physical therapist. While a committee member wants to know more about you, consider what the story reveals and whether it is tied to a trait you are trying to demonstrate.
- **Include others' perspectives.** If possible, demonstrate that you can see beyond your own viewpoint.
- **Don't edit this alone: Your personal statement is a very important document that multiple people will read.** Make sure to use a spell-check and have others review your essay specifically for grammatical errors.
- **Use your community to provide feedback: If your campus has a writing center, make an appointment to get feedback about your writing.** If you don't have a writing center, ask a faculty mentor, your academic advisor, or friends and family to read it as well.

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