



American University of the Caribbean  
School of Medicine

# OCA Match Corner

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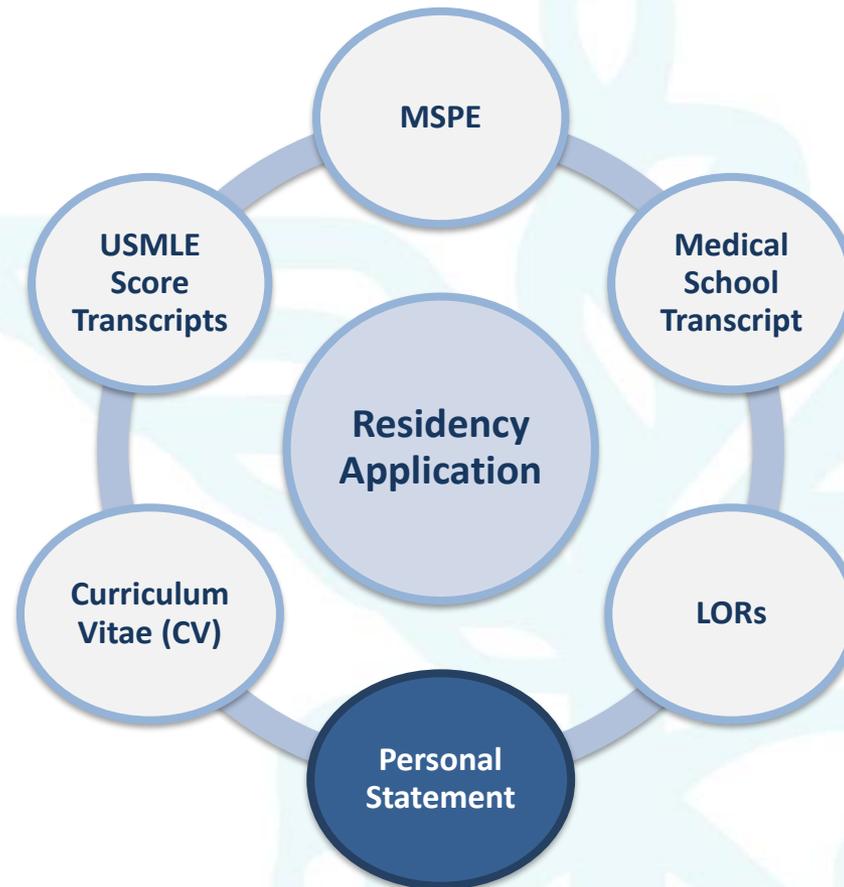
*Office of Career Advisement*

## *Personal Statement Guide*



# Residency Application Supporting Documents

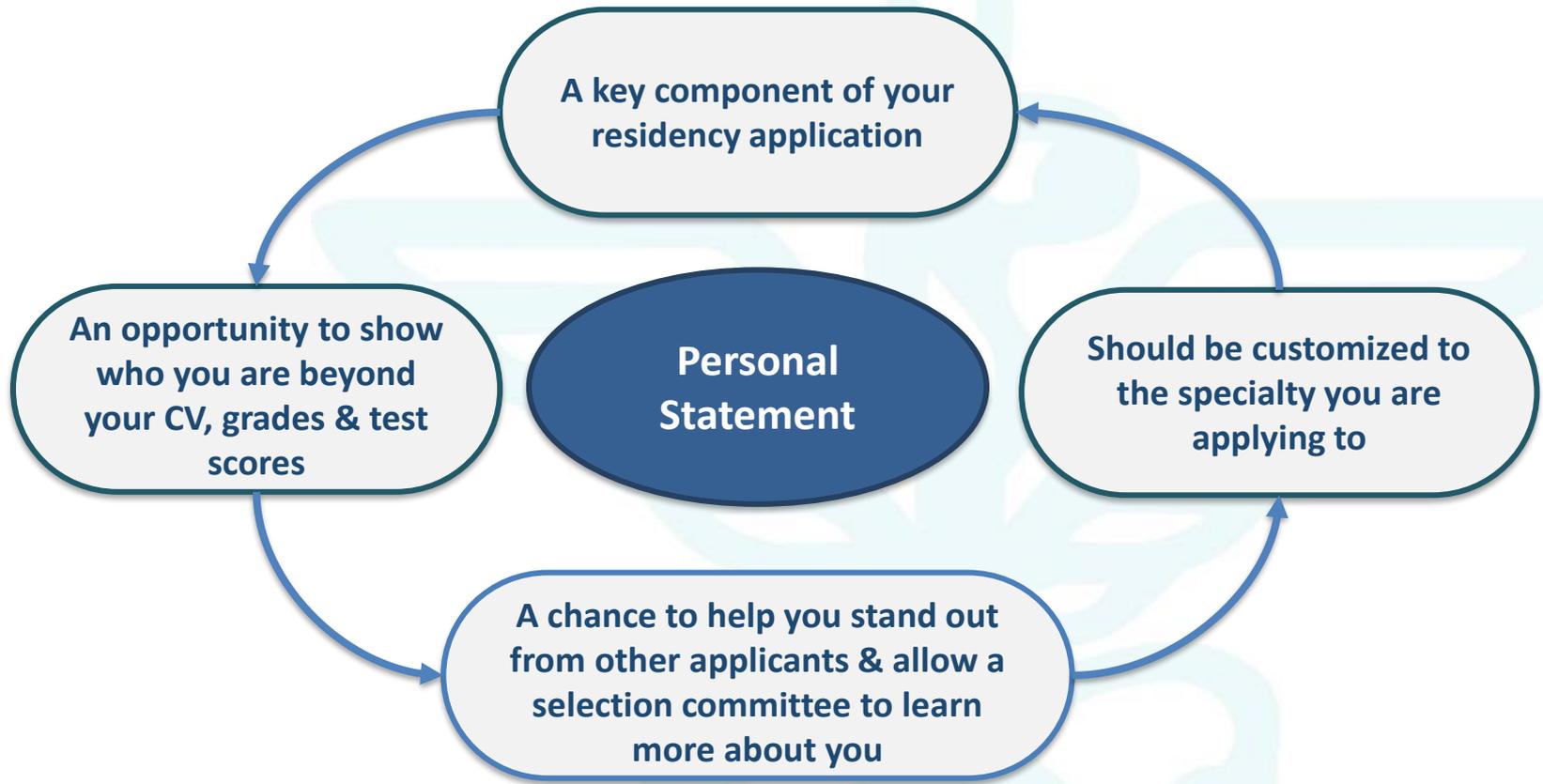
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# Personal Statement

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# Steps for Writing Your Personal Statement

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**1** Review the guidelines and make sure you are aware of the required format.

**2** Brainstorm Ideas

**3** Draft, and redraft until you are confident with your statement.

**4** Seek feedback from a mentor, faculty, or peer, and ask someone to proof read for grammatical or stylistic errors.

**5** After all edits have been made, upload to ERAS to submit as part of your residency application.



# Personal Statement: Format & Guidelines

## One Page

(try to keep it under 700 words)

## Single Spaced

## Standard & Legible Font

(ex: Times New Roman/Arial)

**Be aware of sentence structure, writing style & transitions**

**Writing style flows smoothly and is void of any grammar or spelling errors**

**Specialty Specific** - Tailor your personal statement to a particular specialty.  
If you are applying to more than one specialty, write a personal statement for each specialty.

**Focus on the positive.** If there are *red flags* in your application that you would like to explain, you can incorporate this briefly, but only do so if you are able to tie this back to a learning experience, or something that you have overcome.

### KEY TIP:

Be sure to review the **“MyERAS Residency USER GUIDE”** located on the AAMC website for specific details regarding the full guidelines for your Personal Statement in ERAS.



## Personal Statement: Where to Begin

***Brainstorm ideas of which direction you would like to take your personal statement.  
When brainstorming, consider:***

Reason for choosing a specific specialty  
& the experiences that led to this

Your interests, motivations, and what you  
would contribute as a resident to a program  
and/or a physician to the community

Include a story or anecdote that  
demonstrates your commitment to a  
particular specialty

Meaningful hobbies, skills or key attributes  
that distinguish you from other candidates

A patient encounter that had the greatest  
impact on you and inspired you on your path  
towards a specific specialty

Any “aha” moments that changed how you  
approach life, medicine, or your work today

Develop a narrative that connects something  
personal about you to your pursuit of  
becoming a physician and your goals  
post-residency

The skills you developed through prior work  
experience and ways in which these skills can  
contribute to your practice of medicine



# Personal Statement: Sample Structure

## Introduction (1 Paragraph)

- Lays the foundation for the rest of the Personal Statement
- Explains a personal story that led you to your desired specialty
- Should entice the reader and be intriguing

## Body (2-3 Paragraphs)

- Focus on what you bring to the table
- Provide clinical examples and any story of influence relatable to your specialty
- Suggest specific skills that distinguish you from other candidates

## Conclusion (1 Paragraph)

- Reiterate interest in desired field and emphasize goals
- Include future long-term goals
- Convince the reader that you will be a valuable asset to the program



## Personal Statement: What to Avoid

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Clichés &  
Generic Statements

Speaking in general  
terms rather than using  
specific examples

Sensitive topics such as  
religion or politics

Grammar &  
Spelling Errors

Not having the right  
balance of emotion and  
professionalism

Including too many  
different topics and not  
considering the *flow*

Items copied straight  
from your CV

Waiting until the last  
minute to begin drafting  
your statement

Not following the  
guidelines



## Personal Statement: 4 Key Tips

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### **Start early & dedicate enough time**

Begin brainstorming ideas & develop a draft by January of your application year

**Follow the guidelines  
required by the AAMC using  
the *MyERAS Residency  
User Guide***

**Seek feedback  
& thoroughly proof read**

**Be specialty specific &  
incorporate examples**



## Personal Statement: Additional Resources

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ACP

[Medical Student Perspectives: Writing the Residency Application Personal Statement](#)

[Personal Statement “Do’s” and “Don’ts”](#)

ECFMG

USMLE  
AdvisorMD

[Part 1: The Personal Statement by Dr. Brian](#)  
[Part 2: The Personal Statement by Dr. Brian](#)

[Iserson’s Getting into a Residency: A Guide for Medical Students](#)

Kenneth V.  
Iserson