



Ten Tips for Crafting a Fellowship Personal Statement

Congratulations on choosing a pediatric subspecialty! We are excited for you to join our community of dedicated pediatricians. As you begin the application process, we want to provide some guidance on crafting a strong personal statement. Your personal statement is your chance to make a first impression on fellowship program leaders. Use it wisely to highlight your strengths, aspirations, and suitability for the program.

1. **Be Authentic:** Your personal statement is your chance to showcase your unique experiences, passions, and goals. Be genuine and let your personality shine through. This is the first opportunity for program directors to get to know you as a person and a physician. Avoid clichés and try to include details that distinguish you from other applicants. Artificial intelligence (AI) is a great tool but should be used carefully. It is reasonable to use AI for ideas, however, be sure your personal statement is written in your voice and is not plagiarized.
2. **Tell Your Story:** Share a compelling narrative about what led you to pursue pediatrics and why you're drawn to your chosen fellowship specialty. Highlight key experiences that have shaped your journey. This could be a unique and influential patient encounter, research project, or a particularly meaningful experience with a mentor or role model, among many others. Some questions to consider: What draws you to the specialty? What skills or qualities will you bring to fellowship that will help you succeed? What are your long-term plans?
3. **Focus on Impact:** Discuss the impact you hope to make in your chosen field. Highlight any research, clinical, educational, or community experiences that demonstrate your potential to contribute positively to the specialty. If you have identified an academic career path, be sure to mention it here and include how it aligns with the fellowship program.
4. **Highlight Achievements:** Emphasize any awards, honors, or leadership roles you've held during your residency, *as long as it is relevant to the fellowship*. This should not be a comprehensive list of achievements or a recapitulation of your entire CV but don't be shy about showcasing a small number of select accomplishments. It's ok to brag a little bit but do so in a way that connects past achievements to your passions and career path. And don't exaggerate or falsify information.
5. **Connect the Dots:** Draw clear connections between your past experiences, current interests, and future career goals. Explain how your background has prepared you for success in the fellowship program and how the fellowship will help you achieve your goals. Include pertinent information on your long-term career plans and potential aspects in a fellowship that are important to you.
6. **Address Gaps or Weaknesses:** If there are any *major* gaps or weaknesses in your application, use your personal statement to address them candidly and explain how you've overcome or learned from these challenges. This should be separate from the "Impactful Experiences" portion of ERAS.
7. **Seek Feedback:** Don't hesitate to seek feedback from mentors, colleagues, or residency program directors. Their insights can help you refine your statement and make it stronger.
8. **Be Concise:** Keep your personal statement concise and focused. Aim for clarity and avoid unnecessary jargon or verbosity. Your personal statement should be a maximum length of one page.
9. **Proofread Carefully:** Before submitting your personal statement, proofread it carefully for grammar, spelling, and formatting errors. Attention to detail shows professionalism and attention to quality. We also recommend that everyone have another person edit for readability, grammar, and spelling, in addition to content. Multiple websites exist that can also perform this function, including sites that can identify biased wording.
10. **Don't Stress!** While you should take it seriously and be thoughtful about your personal statement, it is only one piece of your application. A strong personal statement won't make up for an otherwise flawed file. On the other hand, a very poorly written one (e.g. numerous grammatical errors, unclear train of thought, or exceedingly generic) could hurt a strong candidate.