

Personal Statements

A personal statement is an essay that gives you an opportunity to describe how you are diverse and how your background inspired you to attend law school. Many law firms offer diversity fellowships/scholarships and request personal statements along with other application materials.

It's important to set yourself apart from other candidates, to indicate your specific interest in the position and employer, to give the employer insight into you as a person, and to let your voice shine.

Format

Follow all specific instructions provided by an employer regarding format.

- Abide by any word or page number restrictions expressed in the application instructions. If the employer does not set a word or page limit, the statement should be 2 pages or less.
- Use the same contact information/header that is included on your resume and/or cover letter.
- You do not need to address your personal statement to a specific individual.
- Your personal statement should be written in the same font as your resume/other materials.
- Ensure your statement is typo and error-free!
- If you have questions about format, speak with a CPD counselor.

Questions to Ask Yourself

Employers may prompt you to answer specific questions in your personal statement. Some things to consider based upon the employer's guidelines may be:

- Why is diversity in the legal field important to you? Why do you consider yourself a diverse candidate?
- What is different, impressive, or exceptional about you and your background?
- Why did you pursue law school? What challenges have you overcome to get here?
- Research the employer and their work. What are they looking for? Why are you interested in them?
- What are your goals and how can you best articulate them?
- How will you use your law degree to contribute to the local legal community?
- What can you share about yourself that is not included in your resume?

Tips

- Answer the specific question(s) asked by the employer, using results-oriented statements.
- Allow yourself to thoroughly brainstorm ideas before drafting your personal statement.
- Start with a strong opening paragraph. Captivate the reader from the beginning.
- Be yourself – show what drives you and why you are unlike any other candidate.
- Don't regurgitate your resume and professional experiences.
- Provide clear examples when describing your background and previous experience.
- Be honest and present a confident tone. Be proud of who you are!
- Avoid clichés and be sincere. If you're not interested in the opportunity, it will show.
- Proofread, proofread, and proofread some more! Enlist a CPD counselor to help with review.