

Applicant Name:

Reviewer Name:

University of Massachusetts T.H. Chan School of Medicine
Application Preparation Workshop – Megan Tisdale
Personal Statement Rubric

Applicants should refer to the **Personal Statement Tips** document for instructions on how to craft a Personal Statement **BEFORE** evaluating themselves with this rubric. Once you have a Personal Statement draft, set aside time to reflect on your drafted statement with this rubric. Make sure to evaluate which statements you find true with the check boxes, indicate which color column you align with, and provide a brief reflection on your choices.

If you need grammatical help or writing assistance, we encourage you to visit your school's writing center. Writing Center staff are trained in helping students and alumni write personal statements, and they can help from the very beginning of the process creating an outline and structure for what you want to write about or giving feedback on a draft as you are mid-way through the process.

This rubric is designed to be either/both a self-assessment tool as well as a way for you to gather more detailed feedback from others who may not be as familiar with what specifically makes a strong personal statement. Feel free to share this with your reader(s) as you share your draft(s).

Each component of the personal statement is presented with a traffic light approach.

- **Red light**: Stop. Do not repeatedly write pages and pages of drafts that do not meet the expectations for a good personal statement. Look at what you are missing and focus your thoughts and energy there.
- **Yellow light**: Just like when driving, this may mean proceed with caution or hurry up. Think about whether you can improve upon this or if you need to take a different approach in order to achieve the green light.
- **Green light**: Just like when driving, this means keep going. As you will hear many times, this is not a checklist. This does not mean you have completed your journey, but it means you are on the right path.

	Red	Yellow	Green
Topic Addressed: Why this profession? <i>What is your motivation for this career? If you have experience in a health profession outside of what you are applying to professional school for, it may benefit you to explain why your</i>	☐ Topic is hardly addressed. ☐ Applicant does not or struggles to articulate their desire for the professional school. Motivation does not go beyond "I like science and helping people." ☐ Reader is left asking, "Why not another helping	☐ Topic is addressed briefly, but in a manner that is not unique compared to other applicants. ☐ Applicant shows some connections to their "why," but should clarify their reasoning more. Do not leave your	☐ Topic is clearly covered in detail. ☐ Applicant shows clear motivation for their desired professional program and can articulate their "why." ☐ Applicant has described experiences and reflection on those experiences that

<i>experience does not parallel your desired profession.</i>	career (researcher, professor, etc.)?"	motivation up for interpretation. ☐ Reader is left asking, "Why not another helping career (researcher, professor, etc.)?"	help demonstrate their "why." ☐ Applicant is eloquent in their understanding of physician role, responsibilities, and expectations.
Description/Justification/ Comments: Which Color Do You Fall Into? (Select One)			
	Red	Yellow	Green
Topic Addressed: What do you bring to the table? <i>What experiences do you provide that make you a qualified candidate? This can be a clinical, volunteer, leadership, or personal perspective. Prove this with evidence or examples.</i>	☐ Topic is attempted, but not complete. ☐ Applicant tells but does not show the learning they have done. ☐ Applicant speaks in hypotheticals without concretes as to why they are a good applicant.	☐ Topic is somewhat covered. ☐ Provides examples, but does not connect them to larger application narrative. ☐ Applicant seems aware of expectations and competencies, but cannot demonstrate/articulate their own experiences that reflect their knowledge of the profession.	☐ Topic is clearly covered in detail. ☐ Applicant provides concrete examples that explain their preparation up until this point. ☐ Connects their experiences with values learned and with their career aspirations.
Description/Justification/ Comments: Which Color Do You Fall Into? (Select One)			
Topic Addressed: Tell your story. <i>What makes you a unique applicant? How did you decide to pursue this path? What has shaped you into who you are as an applicant today?</i>	☐ Topic is included but uses most of the allotted space. ☐ Included personal stories do not relate to the profession.	☐ Topic is included but does not necessarily always relate to the profession or is too lengthy in detail. <i>(Recommend limiting this section for an applicant who needs more room for the second topic.)</i>	☐ Topic is included and connected to larger goal of professional school admission in a complete yet succinct manner.
Description/Justification/ Comments:			

Which Color Do You Fall Into? (Select One)

	Red	Yellow	Green
Writing Conventions - Grammar - Punctuation - Sentence Structure - Spelling	☐ Writing has enough convention errors in the essay to distract a reader. (e.g., 5-6 types of errors)	☐ Writing has a few errors to fix, but generally uses correct conventions. (e.g., 3-4 types of errors)	☐ Writing uses correct conventions nearly all the time. (e.g., 1-2 types of errors)

Description/Justification/ Comments:

Which Color Do You Fall Into? (Select One)

	Red	Yellow	Green
Organization - Introduction (Paragraph or several sentences) - Conclusion (one sentence or several) - Key topics - Flow of ideas	☐ Applicant has minimal organization. ☐ Main ideas are disorganized but present. Intro or conclusion distract incredibly from the tone of the rest of the statement. ☐ Stories/examples are off topic or not explained thoroughly. ☐ Narrative ends abruptly; no conclusion.	☐ Applicant uses hyperboles or creative writing too much and this takes away from the overall purpose of the statement. ☐ Key ideas are addressed but not fully balanced or organized well. ☐ Conclusion simply recaps earlier points, without adding to overall narrative.	☐ Applicant introduces and concludes ideas in a clear manner. ☐ Limits storytelling and uses these segments solely as summarization. ☐ Key ideas are fully addressed and logically planned. ☐ End of statement is not abrupt, and succinctly wraps up statement in a persuasive way.

Description/Justification/ Comments:

Which Color Do You Fall Into? (Select One)

	Red	Yellow	Green
Descriptions <i>Give examples of your qualifications and experiences. SHOW us, do not just TELL us.</i>	☐ Applicant provides minimal examples or does not clearly connect the content of them to their professional program.	☐ Applicant provides examples that are valuable, but too long or short in length/detail. ☐ Examples are present, but not always clear. Minimal reflection on the examples.	☐ Applicant provides descriptive examples that add clear reflection and value to overall narrative in a succinct manner.

Description/Justification/ Comments:			
Which Color Do You Fall Into? (Select One)			
	Red	Yellow	Green
Professional Tone	☐ Applicant uses basic language and terminology. ☐ Writing is difficult to connect with or lacks relatable sentences. ☐ Verbiage is neutral and does not convey any personal perspectives to the reader. ☐ Negative or unprofessional content is expressed.	☐ Applicant uses appropriate language and terminology but struggles to articulate their writing clearly. ☐ Verbiage is positive regarding their accomplishments but does not necessarily catch/hold the reader's attention. ☐ No negative or unprofessional content is expressed.	☐ Applicant uses appropriate language and terminology throughout. ☐ Engages the reader while communicating things effectively and in a positive manner. ☐ No negative or unprofessional content is expressed.
Description/Justification/ Comments:			
Which Color Do You Fall Into? (Select One)			

Additional Comments:

Megan Tisdale for UMass Chan References:

Carter, Savannah. "Pre-Health Professions Advisory Committee Application Deliverables." Loyola University Chicago, October 2022.

Crum, Jennifer. "Improving Personal Statements with Rubrics." *National Association of Advisors for Health Professions (NAAHP)*, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, June 2022.

Makela, J. P., Villareal, B., & Jerez, J. (2022, June). Writing effective personal statements: Improving practice with rubrics. Roundtable presentation at the National Career Development Association Conference in Anaheim, CA.