



National Fellowships Writing a Personal Statement

Fellowships may ask you to compose a personal statement to strengthen your application. This is not meant to be a regurgitation of your application or as the title might suggest your personal beliefs. This is your opportunity to show the fellowship committee who you are and why you are the best candidate for this opportunity.

A personal statement offers you the opportunity to discuss your accomplishments and what makes you unique. You should think of this statement as a personal story of who you are, what you hope to become, and how the events of your life have shaped and influenced your life and career goals. This gives fellowship committees a snapshot of who you are, what your priorities are, and how this program will enhance your life.

Questions to consider while drafting your personal statement:

- What have you accomplished in your life that has led you to apply for this fellowship (scholarship, graduate program)?
- How have your education, family life, travels, work, or/and personal hardships shaped you as an individual and your decision to apply for this opportunity?
- What are your life or career goals and how have you developed these over time?
- What specific events in your life have shaped you and your goals?
- How will this opportunity help you in your career goals?

Some fellowships require that you respond to specific questions. If so, answer the questions given to you; do not use a generic essay. Also, discuss the specific school/program/fellowship in your statement by using the precise words that the application uses!

Trust your process:

According to past fellowship applicants, the process of writing and applying for nationally recognized fellowships, regardless of the outcome, is 100% worth it. Through the entire application process you will learn more about yourself, and you will improve your writing skills. Will it be easy? No, but it will be worth it, so be patient. Start brainstorming and writing as there will be many drafts and revisions before you create a personal statement that you are confident in. Don't be afraid to reach out to the Fellowships Office for assistance and encouragement!

Examples and tips about writing personal statements for various scholarships/fellowships:

- <https://www.e-education.psu.edu/writingpersonalstatementsonline/p5.html>