What is a Personal Statement?
- It describes who you are personally, professionally and academically
- It gives the school an opportunity to examine how you think and express yourself.

Types of Personal Statements / Graduate Admission Essays
- General / Comprehensive: Allows you to write openly with few specific requirements for the subject matter
- Specific Essays: Given specific questions to answer. *Goal:* respond persuasively to hold reader's interest.

Keys to Writing Your Essay
- Understand yourself
- Examine yourself and self-reflect on who you are
- What sets you apart from the other candidates?
- Tell a personal story
  - Stick to the facts
  - Make yourself memorable in a positive way
  - Be interesting, insightful and appropriately revealing
  - Describe your challenges and difficulties (without dwelling on the negative) and how you overcame them
  - Find a “hook” to your story that makes you unique
- Write a compelling opening paragraph
  - This is usually the most important component of your essay
  - Grab the reader’s attention!
  - Introduce the “hook” or other elements most relevant to your story
- Who are you?
  - Discuss your background and experiences
  - Explain how you are different from other applicants
  - Follow-up with interest and exposure to the field
  - Refer to classes, seminars, research, books and discussion with those in the field
- Complete a background check
  - Review your experiences, events and achievements
What not to include:
- Do not include high school information, unless you had extraordinary achievements and/or traumatic events which impacted your career plans.
- Do not include controversial topics such as religion, politics, etc.
- Do not include ALL achievements, be selective and highlight those that are most relevant.

Keep in mind...
- What you say and how you say it is most important!
- Be sure to answer any specific questions asked.
- When appropriate, tell a story about yourself.
- Include material that is “personal” in nature.
- Adhere to word and page limits.
- Avoid obvious clichés.
- Do not write what you think the school wants to hear, be honest!
- Be sure you have proofread your essay for spelling and/or grammatical errors.
- Know why you are applying to this particular school; research and be prepared to explain.

Example Questions
- What is special or unique about you or your life story?
- What are your personal characteristics, skills, or unusual obstacles that you have had to overcome?
- When did you become interested in your field and what were you doing when you decided?
- How have you learned about this field? (Write about classes, articles, seminars, work, or other experiences)
- Who are you favorite writers, professors, researchers, etc.? What is the most important book, play, article, or film and how has it influenced you? What is the single most important concept you learned in college?
- What are your short and long term career goals? How will a graduate education facilitate those plans?
- What are you biggest accomplishments to date?
- Research: Was your research published? What role did you play in the research? Describe the hypothesis and findings. What was the purpose of the research? What did you really learn (about yourself, working with others)?
- Are you there any gaps or discrepancies in your academic record that you should explain?
- Why might you be a stronger candidate in your program of study than other applicants?

Wright your personal statement for graduate and professional school, Career Development Center, Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania. Retrieved from http://www.albright.edu/resources/
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Writing your personal statement for graduate and professional school, Career Development Center, Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania. Retrieved from http://www.albright.edu/resources/careercenter/students-Grad-Prof.html

Kendall Wilson-Lamourine
Career Advising Coordinator
Parker Library 14
(302) 736-2391
careerservices@wesley.edu