Personal Statement

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For more information, also see the Personal Statement Chapter in this Atlas.

Do Not Underestimate the Importance of Your Personal Statement

The personal statement is the only part of your application that depends entirely on your own imagination; it is truly *personal*. Therefore, you might want to use it to demonstrate personal facets of your life, education, and character. Use it to illustrate to potential readers about who you are as a human being. The assessors might also interpret this statement as a surrogate marker of your communication skills. Although a great personal statement might not be the deciding factor in why you are chosen for a certain position or for an interview, a mediocre or controversial personal statement can ruin your chances.

How Long Should It Be?

Your personal statement should not be longer than one full A4 page. Choose a sensible font size and a simple design. Also, keep in mind that neurosurgeons, especially those sifting through hundreds of personal statements, are generally busy, which means you should not wander off into a

which your interviewer might not yet be aware.

Special Considerations for IMGs

You might be able to go into more detail about important achievements in your curriculum vitae (CV), such as competitive research prizes and grants, the competitiveness of your university, and your excellent academic performance, as well as other accomplishments and activities that might otherwise be difficult for US assessors to interpret, because they might not be familiar with the particulars of these foreign achievements. Focusing on these subjects could strengthen your application as a whole.

Remember also that your personal statement might be judged as a surrogate marker for your English language skills. The importance of impeccable grammar and style in your personal statement, and—nota bene—for every written part of your application, cannot be stressed enough.

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