

Personal Statement

An important part of your AADSAS application is your personal statement, an essay of about one page single-spaced, which should in some way explain why you would like to go to dental school and become a dentist. Your personal statement will be typed into a text box on the AADSAS application. This text box has a character limit of 4500 characters with spaces, so when you are drafting your personal statement in a word processing document you can check the character limit to make sure that your statement will fit within the maximum space allowed.

An effective approach that applicants often take is to write in some detail about a few experiences that got them interested in dentistry or confirmed to them that dentistry was the path they wanted to pursue. Often, applicants employ narrative techniques in their statements, through which the writer recounts an experience or event that shaped the writer, sparked an interest in dentistry, or an event that clarified that dentistry was the right choice for him or her. Using concrete, descriptive language in writing about your personal experiences can be very effective and convincing to an admissions committee. Detailed descriptions of events and experiences tend to reveal more about the inner experience of the writer than generalizations.

Admissions committees are reading lots of essays and after a while they all sound alike. There are many commonalities in the backgrounds and experience of the students who are attracted to the dental profession. You may have had similar experiences to other students who are applying to dental school, but your unique ability to reflect on your experiences and draw insights about them can set you apart from other applicants. Often, writing in a more detailed, specific way and avoiding generalities can turn a vapid statement into a more interesting one.

Keeping a journal can be very helpful for preparing for this stage in your journey to dental school. The journal can help you generate ideas so that then you can pick out the best ones to include in your personal statement. You may find that you have written some material in your journal that you can revise and incorporate into your personal statement. Your journal also may be of help later on when writing essays for supplemental applications and preparing for your interviews.

Some additional tips:

- Your personal statement should not simply recount things that are included in the activities and experience section. In fact, in deciding where to include information, the activities section should generally be focused on “what” you’ve accomplished, whereas the focus in the personal statement should stay focused on “why” go to dental school. You can write about your activities in your personal statement inasmuch as they illuminate the answer about why you are going to dental school, but your personal statement should not come across as merely an essay about your accomplishments.