

Moulton M, Lappé K, Raaum SE, Milne CK, Chow CJ. Making the personal statement “truly personal”: recommendations from a qualitative case study of internal medicine program and associate program directors. *J Grad Med Educ.* 2022;14(2):210-217.
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Supplementary Data

Questions for semi-structured phone interviews to program Directors (PDs) and associate program directors (APDs)

1. When you read the personal statement, what components do you look for/what stands out to you? Please provide examples of what you look for. (the list below can be used to prompt participants if needed)
 - a. Personal attributes (work ethic, team player, strong fund of knowledge, confidence, humble, compassionate, etc)
 - b. Highlights from curriculum vitae (volunteer activity, research, work experience, etc)
 - c. Patient story (clinical case)
 - d. Career goals (what area of medicine applicant wants to focus on – fellowship for subspecialty like Cardiology, Pulmonology, etc; research; medical education; clinical practice)
 - e. Description of what applicant is looking for in a residency program
 - f. Description of what strengths an applicant believes they will bring to a program
 - g. Explanation of poor performance (failing course grade, step score, etc)
2. What components do you believe an applicant should always include in a personal statement? (use list above as prompt if necessary)
3. What makes a personal statement stand out to you as one of the “best”?
4. What makes a personal statement stand out as one of the “worst”?
5. Does your program use any metrics (i.e., natural language processing, review for plagiarism, rubrics) to review personal statements? (If yes, ask APD/PD to explain it in more depth)
6. Do you use an applicant’s personal statement as part of your selection of applicants to interview for internal medicine residency?
 - a. If yes,
 - i. What are you looking for in a personal statement to support your decision to offer an applicant an interview?
 - ii. What are you looking for in a personal statement that would support your decision not to offer an applicant an interview?
 - iii. How do you weight/rank the personal statement in selection of candidates to interview?
 - b. If no,
 - i. Why don’t you use an applicant’s personal statement in your review for selection of applicants to interview?

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- ii. Is there anything an applicant could include that would help in your review process for selecting an applicant to interview?
7. Do you use the applicant’s personal statement for ranking?
 - a. If yes,
 - i. How do you weight the personal statement in selection of applicants to rank?
 - ii. What are you looking for in a personal statement to support your decision to move an applicant up on the rank list?
 - iii. What are you looking for in a personal statement that would support your decision to move an applicant down on the rank list?
 - iv. Is there anything in a personal statement that would prompt you to remove an applicant from the rank list?
 - b. If no,
 - i. Why not?
 - ii. Even though you don’t generally use the personal statement for ranking, is there anything in a personal statement that would prompt you to add an applicant to a rank list (or move an applicant up on rank list)? Remove an applicant from a rank list (or move an applicant down on rank list)?
8. Do you anticipate using the personal statement differently this year given virtual interviews? If yes, how?