

**West Virginia University School of Nursing
Guidelines for Applicants Writing the Personal Essay
(PhD Program)**

Applicants must submit a personal essay that discusses the following:

- How you have prepared for doctoral work (background)
- Why you want a PhD (how does a PhD fit in your career plan)
- Personal/academic strengths and weaknesses
- Research area of interest
- Current/long term goals.

Tips for writing the personal essay:

It is absolutely imperative that you follow these guidelines and that you cover each topic area.

- Be clear, concise, and cogent.
- APA format
- No more than 5 pages
- Legible 12 font.
- Assure correct grammar, punctuation, organization, and creativity. There should be no spelling errors.
- Include an introduction and conclusion.
- Make certain that the essay is technically correct.
- Do not rush. Write drafts, edit, and have someone else read the essay prior to finalizing.
- Revised: 6/1/2025