

ANATOMY OF A PERSONAL STATEMENT: STRUCTURE AND STRATEGY EXPLAINED BY A STUDENT

Nowadays multimedia is everywhere, posters, websites, logos and so much more. It touches almost every aspect of technology, which is an integral part of our lives now. This is why the field of multimedia is so interesting. I am happy to be studying it because it has given me a broad set of skills and helped me find something that I am passionate about: programming.

My main hobbies when I was growing up were video games and drawing. I always thought I would end up doing something related to either of those interests, without thinking about it much more than that. As I approached my high school graduation from Collège Saint-Alexandre de la Gatineau, I had to start thinking about what I wanted to study at Cégep. I went to talk with the guidance counselor at school. He showed me the Multimedia integration program at the Cégep de l'Outaouais and described it as a mix of creativity with design classes and more technical work like coding. It also offered a shortcut to a video game related university course. I kept that conversation in the back of my mind, but I decided to try the Visual arts program to see if drawing could become more than just a hobby. After one semester, I realized it was not my thing and enrolled in the Multimedia integration program.

At first, it seemed a bit overwhelming because many people in the course already had an interest in some of the subjects and already had developed relevant skills. Meanwhile, I was jumping in blind. Luckily, my previous art classes had familiarised me with some of the apps used, and my love of video games had made me adept at using computers. As I progressed through the classes, one subject stood out as my favourite: programming. I have always enjoyed math and algebra, so programming's logical nature and its reliance on rules really resonated with me. Getting your code to work and figuring out a difficult math problem gives a similar kind of satisfaction. I often stay late after my coding class has ended because I get completely absorbed in making my code work.

Start with an engaging hook or anecdote related to your field of interest.

Clearly state your main theme or purpose for applying.

Discuss your academic background and relevant coursework.

Explain challenges you have overcome and how they influenced your growth.

So far I have only had academic experience in this field. For most of Cégep, I was working at Jean Coutu, first as a cashier and later as a cosmetics advisor. The customer service experience this gave me was invaluable. Leaving was bittersweet as I had grown attached to a lot of the regulars and helping customers in general. I made the decision to quit, so I could allocate more time to **working with the iGem** team at the Cégep. iGem is a synthetic biology competition. The students in Science come up with a scientific project and the multimedia team helps them create materials to promote and vulgarize that project. It has only just begun, but it has helped me be more disciplined, work better in a team and accept constructive criticism. I am looking forward to seeing how it develops and what other skills I will gain from it. At first, I wasn't sure about joining since I did not want to quit Jean Coutu. A few days later, I received a message telling me teachers had recommended me for the project and that gave me the confidence boost I needed to take the leap.

Before joining the Multimedia integration program, I **was not sure what I wanted to do in the future**. Now, I have a goal thanks to my newfound passion for coding. This program is amazing because it is so vast, anyone can find something to be passionate about. What started as a seed planted by my guidance counselor years ago has sprouted into a real career path for me.

Katérina Gagné, Cégep de l'Outaouais, May 2025



Demonstrate your passion and **commitment** to the field.

Highlight key **experiences** (internships, volunteer work, projects) that shaped your goals.

Use specific examples to illustrate your strengths rather than making general statements. Instead of saying, "I am passionate about teaching," describe an experience that demonstrates your passion.

Reinforce the **impact** your journey as a Cegep student has had on you.

End with a memorable final statement that leaves an impact.

Questions to Consider Before Writing your Personal Statement

- What makes you unique? Any personal experiences, challenges, or influences that set you apart?
- When and how did your interest in this field develop? What have you learned that reinforces your passion and suitability?
- How have you developed knowledge?
- If you have work experience worth mentioning, what skills did you develop?
- What are your career goals?
- Do you need to explain any gaps or inconsistencies in your academic record?
- What personal qualities make you a strong candidate?
- Why should the admissions committee or the hiring committee choose you over others?



General tips

Your personal statement is an opportunity to introduce yourself, share your experiences, and explain your academic and career goals. It should highlight what makes you unique and why you are a strong candidate for a particular program, scholarship, or opportunity.

- Answer the question: tailor your response to each school's specific prompts or the specific job or company.
- Tell a compelling story: use concrete experiences to engage the reader or the audience and make your text or your video memorable.
- Be specific: support your claims with examples.
- Find a unique angle: even an ordinary story can stand out with the right perspective.
- Hook the reader or the audience: your introduction should set the tone.
- Demonstrate knowledge: show your understanding of the field using relevant terminology and experiences or use relevant industry terms and show that you understand the company's mission and goals.
- Stay relevant: avoid discussing controversial topics, unrelated personal details or experiences.
- Do your research: if asked why you are applying to a specific school, highlight unique aspects of the program. If applying to a specific company, mention why you are interested in them. You can mention their values, culture, or projects.
- Write clearly and professionally: proofread carefully, follow word limits, and avoid clichés.
- In a video: use a natural and engaging tone. Be clear and concise and avoid jargon overload.