

## First-Draft Personal Statement

Since I was in high school, I always knew I wanted to study medicine and help people. My grandmother was diagnosed with cancer during my freshman year of college, and since then, I've known I wanted to learn more about cancer and new treatment options. Doing research in the Sample Lab will allow me to explore this interest and prepare for medical school. In order to be a competitive applicant for medical school and my future as a pediatric oncologist, I will need research experience, and this opportunity is a good fit for me.

I think cancer research is especially interesting because there's so much that we don't know. I am excited to make new discoveries that will lead to better treatment options for patients. I started learning about cancer research in my BIO 112 class. I knew immediately that I wanted to learn more about this fascinating topic and the connections it has to real patients. In the Sample Lab, I would have the chance to research cancer epigenetics and how differential gene activation impacts cancer initiation and progression. The experience will expose me to biological tools and procedures that I won't see in my classes, such as state-of-the-art cell sorting and sequencing techniques. On exams and in lab classes, I sometimes struggle to "connect the dots" between ideas, and that can be reflected in some of my grades. I anticipate that working in a real lab setting will allow me to see connections between biology concepts and how they can be applied in a practical setting, which I think will help my in my courses, too. I hope to continue to make these real-life connections as a medical student and doctor.

You are welcome to use an open, narrative-style format for your personal statement; just be sure you're addressing the questions raised in the prompt.

Try to avoid clichés—dig deeper into your motivations that address the “why research” question. Is there a more powerful way to speak about an interest in medicine?

Your personal statement is a place to tell the story of why this research experience is meaningful to you. Be sure to address why you *want* to do research, not just why you *have* to. What makes it a good fit? Why?

Don't be afraid to take pride in your intellectual curiosity! What let you know that you wanted to learn more about this topic? What drew you to this experience in particular?

Your GPA will not be taken into account in the evaluation of your Discover Grant application. It's OK if you've been struggling in class or want a new place to apply your knowledge.

Uncertain about your future plans? That's fine! Whether you know exactly what you want to do in your career or whether you're trying to figure that out, just let us know about how research connects.

Dr. Sample is my ideal mentor as a fellow woman in science. I am excited to learn from her and her lab team about how to grow as a researcher and a leader in the field. Being part of the group will help my time management skills while encouraging me to ask questions while I gradually become more independent. I am most excited to present at lab group meetings because it will be excellent practice for my communication skills. I hope that I will be able to present my research at a conference next year and maybe even be a co-author on a publication.

Through this research experience, I will grow as a scientist and gain valuable insight about how I could integrate research with my study of medicine. As I prepare for my future in pediatric oncology, I know I will look back on this experience as a valuable starting point in my career. I look forward to taking part in this summer research opportunity and appreciate your consideration.

*[Word Count: 453]*

If you've found a supervisor that's a particularly good fit for you, feel free to tell us why! We are excited for you to build your skills as a researcher—both technical AND personal / professional.

Look back through the narrative. Did the applicant meaningfully address the prompts:

- Why research?
- What has led you to wanting to engage with this experience?
- What is this experience's relationship to your personal, academic, and professional goals?
- How and why do you think this experience will meet your expectations?

Highlight evidence you see for each prompt.

Are there areas that could use additional support or explanation?