Personal Statement Interest
The interest factor is crucial in keeping the admissions officers reading and remembering your essay. Look at your essay with the interest equation in mind: \textit{personal + specific = interesting}. Answer the following:

- Is the opening paragraph personal?
- Do I start with action or an image?
- Does the essay show rather than tell?
- Did I use any words that are not usually a part of my vocabulary? (If so, get rid of them.)
- Have I used the active voice whenever possible?
- Have I overused adjectives and adverbs?
- Have I eliminated clichés?
- Have I deleted redundancies?
- Does the essay sound interesting to me? (If it bores you, imagine what it will do to others.)
- Will the ending give the reader a sense of completeness? Does the last sentence sound like the last sentence?

Personal Statement Structure
The meaning of an essay can be obscured by not properly ordering your ideas. Your essay should be a roadmap leading the reader to an inevitable conclusion.

To check the overall structure of your essay, conduct a first-sentence check. Write down the first sentence of every paragraph in order. Read through them one after another and ask the following:

- Would someone who was reading only these sentences still understand exactly what I am trying to say?
- Do the first sentences express all of my main points?
- Do the thoughts flow naturally, or do they seem to skip around or come out of left field?

Now go back to your essay as a whole and ask these questions:

- Does each paragraph relate to the thought that was introduced in the first sentence?
- Does a piece of evidence support each point? How well does the evidence support the point?
- Is each paragraph roughly the same length? Stepping back and squinting at the essay, do the paragraphs look balanced on the page? (If one is significantly longer than the rest, you are probably trying to squeeze more than one thought into it.)
- Does my conclusion draw naturally from the previous paragraphs?
- Have I varied the length and structure of my sentences?
Office of Career Development – Personal Statement Checklist

Personal Statement Substance

Substance refers to the content of the essay and the message you send out. Here are some questions to ask regarding content:

✓ Have I answered the question asked?
✓ Do I back up each point that I make with an example? Have I used concrete and personal examples?
✓ Have I been specific? (Go on a generalities hunt. Turn the generalities into specifics.)
✓ Could anyone else have written this essay?
✓ What does it say about me? After making a list of all the words you have used within the essay to describe yourself, ask: Does this list accurately represent me?
✓ Does the writing sound like me? Is it personal and informal rather than uptight or stiff?
✓ Regarding the introduction, is it personal? Is it too general? Can the essay get along without it?
✓ What about the essay makes it memorable?

Proofreading:
✓ Did I punctuate correctly?
✓ Did I eliminate exclamation points (except in dialogue)?
✓ Did I use capitalization clearly and consistently?
✓ Do the subjects agree with the verbs?
✓ Did I place the periods and commas inside the quotation marks?
✓ Did I keep contractions to a minimum? Do apostrophes appear in the right places?
✓ Did I replace the name of the proper school for each new application?
✓ Have I caught every single typo? (You can use your spell-checker but make sure that you check and re-check every change it makes. It is a computer after all.)

I have gone over these objectives with a Career Adviser on this date and understand that any revisions that I choose to make/ or not make is at my own discretion & will only be written by me.

__________________________________________                            ____________________________
Signature of Student      Signature of Adviser