

United States Sports Academy  
*America's Sports University®*

# Guide for the Personal Statement

## For Admission to the Master of Sports Science Degree

*The United States Sports Academy accepts students regardless of race, religion, gender, age, disability, or national origin.*

## Introduction

Since the United States Sports Academy relies on a *qualitative metric* for admission, the critical entrance requirement for those wishing to enter the Academy's Master of Sports Science (M.S.S.) program is the written Personal Statement.

This guide is designed to assist applicants in preparing a statement that will indicate an ability to complete graduate-level studies in the Academy's Master's Degree Program. It outlines appropriate types of content for the essay, and also serves as a guide for format and style.

The Personal Statement is also an integral part of the Portfolio evaluation process and lays the framework for both the analytical presentation of goals and the closing document of the Portfolio, the Summative Narrative.

The Personal Statement for admissions is a *comprehensive narrative* presenting:

1. the applicant's autobiography
2. the applicant's career plans
3. the applicant's goals in pursuing a master's degree at the Academy.

The Personal Statement is evaluated in terms of its content, which reflects requisite qualities and abilities including:

- motivation, maturity, judgment, and creativity
- possession of sound personal and professional objectives
- awareness of intellectual strengths as well as skills needing development
- ability to express concepts and communicate meaning in concise writing
- proficiency with standard written English.

## Format

The Personal Statement must be written in the following format:

**1. Title page** (See example in Appendix B)

**2. Narrative**, which must contain:

**2.1. Biographical Component**

Earlier learning experiences, both formal and informal, should be described in a concise, yet comprehensive narrative. The nature and general outcome of all prior study, for example, sports management related work experience, and participation in scholarly research, if any, should be presented.

## **2.2. Career Plans Component**

The need for master's level education should be explained in terms of career goals in the applicant's selected degree program. This component should specify how master's study, in conjunction with background and interests, will further those goals.

## **2.3. Goals in Pursuing a Master's Degree**

This part of the Personal Statement should briefly discuss why applicants wish to enroll in master's study at the United States Sports Academy, including, but not limited to:

- a. reasons for selecting the Academy program
- b. how master's study may reflect, and may affect, personal and professional growth, interests, concerns, and choices
- c. particular goals anticipated to be achieved through completion of the master's curriculum
- d. proposed specific topics of interest and research an applicant wishes to pursue.

The essay must be double-spaced and typewritten in Times New Roman 12-point font.

In all matters of style and format not addressed in this guide, the Academy has adopted *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) as the accepted style guide in the preparation of academic papers. The Academy always uses the most current edition of the Manual. Applicants may access the *Manual* at the APA website: [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org).

## **Rubric Assessment**

The assessment relies upon the *Rubric for the Personal Statement for Admission* established by the United States Sports Academy. See Appendix A for rubric assessment.

## APPENDIX A

CRITERION	COMMENTS	SCORE
<b>BEGINNING OF THE QUALIFYING ESSAY (INTRODUCTION)</b>		
Exceptional Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an exceptionally interesting lead that is well-ordered and presents a compelling introduction</li> <li>▪ an exceptional beginning that incorporates one or more of three essay components (biography, career plan, goals in pursuing the MSS degree)</li> </ul>	
Proficient Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an interesting, orderly, proficient introduction with an effective theme</li> <li>▪ a proficient beginning that incorporates one or more of the essay components (biography, career plan, goals in pursuing the MSS degree)</li> </ul>	
Adequate Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an adequate beginning showing a clear enough progression and an adequate theme</li> <li>▪ adequately incorporates one or more of the essay components (biography, career plan, goals in pursuing the MSS degree)</li> </ul>	
Weak Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a weak, unfocused beginning without a theme</li> <li>▪ a beginning that seems not to address any of the essay components (biography, career plan, goals in pursuing the MSS degree)</li> </ul>	
<b>Score Earned: Introduction</b>		
<b>MIDDLE OF THE QUALIFYING ESSAY – NARRATIVE</b>		
Exceptional Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an exceptionally illustrative, convincing series of examples supporting the theme, through which ideas are developed in a firmly logical sequence</li> <li>▪ exceptionally skillful use of transitions between topics and paragraphs</li> </ul>	
Proficient Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a pertinent series of examples supporting the theme, through which ideas are proficiently developed in logical sequence</li> <li>▪ proficient use of transitions between topics and paragraphs</li> </ul>	
Adequate Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ adequate examples are provided that tend to support the theme</li> <li>▪ ideas proceed logically, overall, but some gaps in logic are present</li> <li>transitions between topics and paragraphs are used adequately</li> </ul>	
Weak Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ supporting ideas or examples are weak and fail to create a logical argument for any theme that is offered</li> </ul>	
<b>Score Earned: Narrative</b>		
<b>END OF THE QUALIFYING ESSAY – CONCLUSION</b>		
Exceptional Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an effective summary and at the same time an exceptionally skillful continuation of the theme that advances the discussion into a new and perhaps broader context</li> </ul>	
Proficient Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a proficient summary of the entire essay that meaningfully links the final paragraph to the first paragraph suggests continuity throughout</li> </ul>	
Adequate Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an adequate summary of much of the essay that reiterates the theme or suggests some implication of the presentation</li> </ul>	
Weak Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ absent or weak summary of the essay creating an overly abrupt cessation of discussion</li> </ul>	
<b>Score Earned: Conclusion</b>		

<b>USE OF STANDARD WRITTEN ENGLISH</b>	
Exceptional Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ each sentence is exceptionally well- composed: grammatical, utterly clear, properly punctuated, and characterized by economy of expression</li> <li>▪ a strong variety of apt sentence structures is used</li> </ul>
Proficient Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ most sentences are proficient: grammatical, clear, properly punctuated, and usually concise</li> <li>▪ a variety of sentence structures is evident</li> </ul>
Adequate Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ sentences include occasional grammatical and/or punctuation errors but remain adequately clear</li> <li>▪ some variation of sentence structure</li> </ul>
Weak Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ numerous grammatical and punctuation errors and misuse of words make comprehension difficult</li> <li>▪ command of sentence structure is absent</li> </ul>
<b>Points Earned: Use of Standard English</b>	
<b>USE OF PRESCRIBED FORMAT AND EDITORIAL STYLE</b>	
Exceptional Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ all spelling is correct</li> <li>▪ exceptional command of APA editorial style is evident</li> <li>▪ essay is double- spaced in 12-point font and includes the prescribed title page</li> </ul>
Proficient Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ all spelling is correct</li> <li>▪ proficient command of APA editorial style is evident, with only minor errors</li> <li>▪ essay is double- spaced in 12-point font and includes the prescribed title page</li> </ul>
Adequate Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ occasional spelling errors</li> <li>▪ command of APA editorial style is adequate but imperfect</li> <li>▪ essay is double- spaced in 12-point font and includes the prescribed title page</li> </ul>
Weak Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ numerous spelling errors</li> <li>▪ use of capitalization, punctuation, abbreviations, italics, numerals, headings, and other conventions flouts guidelines in APA Publication Manual</li> <li>▪ incorrect format and/or lack of proper title page</li> </ul>
<b>Points Earned: Use of Prescribed Format and Editorial Style</b>	
<b>Total Points Earned</b>	

## **Appendix B**

### PERSONAL STATEMENT

AN ESSAY SUBMITTED IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
ADMITTANCE REQUIREMENTS TO THE  
M.S.S. DEGREE PROGRAM  
OF THE UNITED STATES SPORTS ACADEMY

First Name Last Name  
Month Year