

# Personal statement

Personal Statements are a standard component to applying for graduate and professional programs that allow you to provide an insight to you as a candidate. A good personal statement clearly articulates your personal investment in a field and emphasizes how the program will benefit your career goals.

## Your personal statement should

- Clearly articulate the relationship between your previous academic and professional experiences, the program you are applying to and your plans after completing the program.
- Describe why you are interested in their program and how you intend to make use of the degree in the future.
- Demonstrate to the admissions committee who you are rather than telling them.
- Explain your rationale for applying to the graduate program and why you are a good candidate.
- Highlight your personality, motivations and goals that are unique to you.
- Share your interests, experiences and goals.
- Use stories and personal examples to explain who you are.

## Questions to consider before starting

What experiences have driven you to this program?

How are you currently pursuing this field of study?

Did you face any challenges while studying this topic?

How do your goals align with the mission of the program?

What do you plan to achieve after you have completed the program?

## Tips for success

- Review application and understand what is required.
- Keep your audience in mind.
- Explain why you are pursuing this specific program.
- Consider your unique ability to succeed.

- Avoid clichés!
- Proofread (use the **Writing Center** for grammar and spelling).
- Follow application instructions (answering all the questions, addressing the prompt, word count, formatting, etc.)

# Create an outline

There are many ways to structure a personal statement. Below is a guide to help you start writing your personal statement. An outline will help you organize your thoughts and ensure you address each prompt.

## Introduction

**Your introduction should be 1-2 paragraphs** clearly stating your goals and interest in the program. Include a "hook" - something unique about you to grab the reader's attention.

## Your background

**Your background and interests should be 2-3 paragraphs.** Include undergraduate (and graduate, if applicable) degrees, previous research and relevant work experience and explain how these experiences have informed your current interests. This is the most in depth section of your personal statement and should showcase your experience in the discipline. Use the prompts below to get started:

What classes have impacted your decision to go into this field?

What experiences do you have that solidified your interest in the field/ this program?

## Present - What are you doing right now?

**Explain what you are doing currently in 1-2 paragraphs.** How is this providing you with additional experience? Use the prompts below to get started:

What are you doing now to keep up with the industry?

What additional experiences and activities in the field have influenced your decision to pursue this program?

## Future - What are your goals?

**Explain your goals and how this program fits your aspirations in 1 paragraph.** Use the prompts below to get started:

How will this program help you succeed after graduation?

Why are you selecting this program and this school?

What are your professional goals after the program, and how will this program help you achieve those?

## Conclusion

Summarize your points and use a clear, consistent font!

