



# O'NEILL CAREER HUB

## Personal Statement Guidelines

for Graduate or Professional School

### Document Title

When applying to graduate school, you will see a list of documents required for admission to that institution. One of these documents may be called a number of things:

- Personal Statement
- Letter of Intent
- Letter of Application
- Statement of Purpose
- Application Letter

### Purpose

- To share your interest or passion for the academic and career fields you are pursuing
- To outline and demonstrate attributes and assets you will bring to the program
- To state your general research interest areas as well as labs, faculty or programs you aspire to work with
- To state your professional and career goals and how this program will help you reach those goals
- To outline the skills that will lead to your success in the program: academic ability, persistence, time management, organization, emotional maturity, clarity of goals, work ethic, etc.

### Program Requirements

Some programs include specific questions to answer in your personal statement. Some programs provide general guidelines. Some programs simply direct candidates to write and submit a personal statement with little or no direction. Read the application requirements carefully for each program. This provides candidates direction on how to write the personal statement.

### Topics to include:

Education	Experience	Contribution to the program
Career Goals	Skills for Success	Academic Ability and Past Success
Research Experience & Interests	Why you selected this program & How you Fit	

### Format

This document is to be written just as you write your academic papers. The format should include 3 sections:

1. **Introduction:** Strong opening paragraph introducing your background and purpose for applying to the program. Include a “hook” or anecdotes that compel the reader to continue reading. This paragraph ends with a clear and concise thesis statement.
2. **Body:** Connect your background, goals, and experience with the program. Address topics referenced earlier and answer any questions specified in the application

materials. Organize sections/paragraphs by theme. Open each paragraph with a clear topic sentence that outlines the theme of that section/paragraph.

3. **Conclusion:** Summarize the main points in the body of your document and restate and/or reference the thesis statement. Thank the reader for their time and restate why you are a good candidate for the program.

### **Writing Process**

Begin working on your personal statement at least three months before the deadline. Have multiple readers review your draft and give you feedback. Use academic and professional writing. Stop by the Career Studio and have the Career Hub staff review your personal statement to make it a highly competitive document.