

STATEMENTS FOR GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

Tips for writing statements for graduate and professional program applications.

Depending on the post-graduate program you are applying to you may be asked to write a research statement (sometimes also called a statement of interest or statement of purpose) and/or a personal statement. You may also be asked to write a diversity statement. In this tipsheet, you'll learn about the purpose of these statements and some ideas on information and/or strategies for writing them.

No matter what type of statement you are writing, your writing is critical.

- Your ability to communicate your ideas in a clear and concise manner will help your application stand out.
- Have other people review your statement.
 - Consider asking professors, teaching assistants, and the Writing Centre for help.
 - [Career Educators and Coaches](#) can provide general feedback and help you consider what to write in your statement.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

What is a personal statement?

Personal statements may be requested as part of an application to professional and graduate school programs. They can take the form of essays, letters, or paragraphs of varying lengths. In personal statements, applicants are typically asked to explain their interest in the program, motivation for applying, and how their background relates to the program.

What information should be included in a personal statement?

Programs typically provide guidelines on what to include in a personal statement. Make sure you read these guidelines carefully and follow the directions (e.g. information to include, word count and so on). If there are no instructions, consider including some of the following information:

- *Why you are applying*
 - E.g., What is your motivation? Why are you interested in the specific field or specialty? How does the program relate to your career direction?
- *Why you are applying to this program and/or school*
 - E.g., What appeals to you about the program/and or school? How do these qualities align with your motivation for applying?
- *Why you will be successful in the program*
 - E.g., How has your coursework, experience in different roles, and so on prepared you for the program? What personal qualities will make you successful? Give examples and be specific.

Tips for writing a personal statement

- A common structure for personal statements is a linear narrative: beginning with how you came to be interested, what you have learned or accomplished that is relevant to the program, and what you plan to do after you have completed the program.
- The opening sentences of your statement are particularly critical in capturing the reader's attention. Consider opening with an appropriate personal anecdote, an unexpected observation, or a bold and perhaps mildly provocative statement.
- At the end of your statement, provide a clear summary of the key points of your statement.

Resources

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/preparing_an_application/writing_the_personal_statement/examples.html

RESEARCH STATEMENT

What is a research statement?

Research statements describe your research interests as well as your past research, skills, and relevant research experience. It should outline the general topic of interest and your specific research focus and/or questions. Research statements help the program and potential supervisors understand whether your interests align with their current area of focus. Statements of interest and statements of purpose are very similar to research statements. The following tips can be used for statements of interest and purpose.

What should be included in a research statement?

The program will likely provide instructions on what to include in your statement. Be sure to read and follow these instructions (e.g., information to include, word count and so on). If there are no or few instructions, consider including the following information.

- *What you plan to research*
 - Outline the general area that your research interests belong to and what knowledge gap or significance your research interest(s) address. If relevant, include theoretical frameworks, methods, and/or methodologies you plan to use.
- *Why this program and/or supervisor*
 - Explain why the program and/or supervisor is the ideal place for you to conduct your research.
- *Relevant experience*
 - Detail any research experience that is relevant to the research you plan to do in the program. (E.g., wet lab techniques, literature reviews, essays, research posters or presentations, honours thesis, directed study, and so on).

Tips for writing a research statement

- Include academic references and write in the academic tone appropriate for the discipline.
- Make an argument for why you are the best person to do this research and why this program and/or supervisor are the best context for this research to be conducted.
- Explain why the research your plan to conduct is important and what the impact of the research will be (i.e., how it contributes to the field).
- Highlights any funding sources you have applied for or plan to apply for.

- If appropriate, detail specific research questions. If research questions are not required, describe one or two ideas in detail that you are interested in investigating.
- If you choose to disclose aspects of your identity that are relevant to the research, articulate why this information is relevant.

Resources

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/graduate_school_applications/writing_a_research_statement.html

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/preparing_an_application/writing_the_personal_statement/examples.html

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/statement-of-purpose-examples>

<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/statement-of-purpose-examples>

DIVERSITY STATEMENTS

What is a diversity statement?

Diversity statements are required by some institutions as part of an application package. In a diversity statement, you describe how you will contribute to the program's and/or institution's goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion (EDI). It is an opportunity for you to show your awareness of and engagement in cultural humility and your perspectives on diversity and inclusion.

What should be included in a diversity statement?

The program will likely provide instructions on what to include in your statement as well as a few prompts. Make sure you read these guidelines carefully and follow the directions (e.g. information to include, word count and so on). If there are no or few instructions, consider including the following information.

- Describe experiences (from your day-to-day life, volunteer roles, professional roles, and so on) that have shaped your perspective and/or experience of the intersection of social identities and culture. This may also include knowledge from coursework (such as specific articles, essays and so on), workshops, exercises (e.g., KAIROS blanket exercise), and certificates (e.g., the Intercultural Awareness Certificate from the Queen's University International Centre).
- Explain how these different experiences shape how you think and your actions. This may include details about your values.
- Show how you will use your knowledge and experience and use it to add to the diversity of thought and practice within the program through your research and/or involvement on campus while studying.

Tips for writing a diversity statement

- If you would like to disclose personal identity or share something about your life, you are welcome to, but do not feel obligated to do so. Choosing to identify as an equity-deserving group is not mandatory and is something you should only do if you are comfortable.
- It can be helpful to read any formal statements by the university or program on EDI.

- If you don't feel like you have any experience with aspects of DEI, it may be helpful to consider why that is the case.
- This statement is distinct from other types of statements that make up post-graduate applications and will likely take on a more personal tone.

Resources

<https://graduate.asu.edu/graduate-insider/6-tips-writing-diversity-statement-graduate-admissions>

<https://careerservices.upenn.edu/blog/2022/11/18/how-to-craft-a-diversity-statement-for-graduate-school-application/>

Have more questions?

If you have more questions, reach out to

- The program you are applying to and ask for clarification, and
- Book an [appointment](#) with a Career Educator and Coach.