Statements

Personal Statement or Statement of Purpose

A personal statement or statement of purpose is usually a requirement of graduate school, post-doctoral programs, fellowships, and academic positions. It helps to provide the writer to elaborate on who they are and their accomplishments outside of the resume of CV to provide the reader with a holistic picture of you. Some institutions or programs provide an open-ended prompt, which allows freedom to include aspects that you deem important to include while others provide a specific prompt through questions.

Questions to consider before writing:

1. What makes you uniquely qualified or suitable to be admitted to the program? What sets you apart from other applicants.
2. What skills and personality traits do you possess that would make you a successful candidate?
3. Why have you chosen this field of study and what has prepared you so far to be successful in it?
4. What are your future career goals and plans and how you plan to accomplish them?

Parts of a Personal Statement

Introduction: As in a traditional essay, this is also known as the hook. Here you will grab the reader’s attention and frame what is to be expected for the rest of the document. Create a custom personal statement for each application and be sure to mention the institution and program in the introduction.

Body: Talk about 2-3 experiences that demonstrate your skills, abilities, competence, and preparedness for the program. Use specific examples in professional but direct language. Use this section to tell your story.

Conclusion: Restate the theme and focus of your essay and your plans for your career and future.

General tips

- Proofread your essay and have other professionals proofread it as well
- Pay attention and stick to the formatting guidelines provided by the institution/program (eg. length). The typical length is one page, single-spaced or two pages double-spaced.
- Write in first person
- Use standard, readable fonts

Resources:

- Penn State: Writing Personal Statements online (highly recommended)
- Purdue Owl: Writing a Personal Statement
- Florida State University: Writing a Personal Statement

Research Statements

Research statements are usually a requirement of graduate school, post-doctoral programs, fellowships, and academic positions. It provides a summary of previous research, where you research is currently and the future of your research. Be sure to also include particulars about potential research and industry partnerships and how your research matches the need, goals, and objectives of the department.
General formatting
- 1-2 pages single-spaced.
- Utilize subheadings and bullet points
- Use standard, readable fonts, 11-12 pt.
- 5” – 1” margins

Resources
- Cornell University Graduate School: Research Statement : Graduate School (cornell.edu)
- University of Florida: Teaching-and-Research-Statement-Handout.pdf (ufl.edu)
- Purdue Owl: Writing a Research Statement // Purdue Writing Lab