

Preparing a Personal Statement

1. Get started by considering the questions below, and be sure to answer any other required questions listed in the application materials:

- What are your specific goals for graduate study?
- How have you been prepared academically?
- What experience has helped you prepare?
- What are your goals beyond graduate study?

2. Explain why you are uniquely suited to be an asset to their program:

- Show how the program you are applying to fits your background and interests
- Graduate schools are interested in your motivation, your intellectual skills, and your suitability
- Start with a vivid story or narrative using concrete examples and striking details about your life experience
- Convey confidence by transforming blemishes into positives

3. Tailor each personal statement to the school you are sending it to:

- Demonstrate your knowledge of the field and institution by mentioning faculty and their work (programs, journals, institutes, etc).

4. Proofread and review

- Neatness, accurate spelling and correct grammar are important
- Ask your academic advisor, mentor and/or Career Services to critique and edit

Requesting Letters of Recommendation

- Make requests courteously and early
- Allow ample time for them to complete letters
- Provide faculty with your personal statement, transcript and resume
- Write thank-you notes
- Be sure to notify them when you are accepted

Website resources

- <http://www.gradschools.com/> (can search by subject, specialty, format & location)
- <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools.aspx>
- <http://www.ets.org/>