

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

### Learning Objectives

Trainees will:

- ▶ Articulate career goals and reflect on research experiences.
- ▶ Draft a personal statement.
- ▶ Review peers' personal statements.

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Graduate school admissions committees, internship application reviewers, and employers usually ask for personal statements as part of their application. Since these statements are used to evaluate candidates, learning to write them well is an important skill. Use the questions below to define what you'd like to convey in a statement for a specific position. Use the answers to the questions to draft your personal statement (one or two pages).

1. What is your long-term career or professional goal? What do you aspire to be?
2. Why do you have this goal? What have you learned from your previous experiences that have contributed to your decision to pursue this goal? What is most interesting or motivating to you about working toward this goal?
3. Identify a position (summer research program, graduate school, a job, etc.) to which you are interested in applying. Briefly describe that opportunity or position.
4. What will you learn or do in this position that is interesting to you and will help you achieve your goal?
5. What have you learned from your previous experiences that you will be able to contribute to this position?
6. What sets you apart from others applying to this position? What unique assets or skills do you possess?

Contributed by Bramson, A. (2018). *Personal Statement*.

**Additional questions that may help you to draft your personal statement/research statement:**

Describe your previous research experience – what was the question you were pursuing, how did you try to answer that question, what did you find, what are the future questions to be answered? What was your role in the project?

Why are you interested in this particular graduate/professional program?

Why is this your research interest area? Describe what motivates this interest. Use examples from details of your life that might help the committee understand your motivations.

Are there any gaps or discrepancies in your academic record that you want to provide context for? (A particularly difficult semester, an upward trend in grades, a personal difficulty that contributed to issues). What have you learned or how did you address the issues?

Describe particular ways you have contributed to diversity or are willing to contribute. For more context, see: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/developing-and-writing-a-diversity-statement/>