Mastering the Personal Statement

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Presentation: “Mastering the Personal Statement”
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What should your personal statement include?

- Interest in the field (background - your early interest)
- Past research experience
- Include academic awards, research experiences, presentations, and results
- Interest in the school
- The graduate center/program – explain why you’re applying to a particular department
- Faculty with whom you'd like to work
- Planned contribution to the field of study (short term/ long term goals)

Other tips/insight:

- If you’re going to mention a particular faculty member’s research, you'll want to touch base with that person before you include them in your personal statement. Let them know about your particular interest in their work as well as your interest in applying to the program. Send them a copy of your resume or CV as an attachment in your email.

- Be careful about cutting and pasting when applying to different universities.

- Make sure you're applying to the correct campus!

- You need to be able to speak the language of the discipline in your statement; speak to the research you've done and how this makes you a good fit for the program.

- Don't focus too much on personal things. Focus on the specifics of the research you want to be involved in.

Questions to ask when drafting a personal statement:

- Why do you want to go to graduate school?
- Why do you want to go to that particular school?
- Who do you want to work with?
- Why are you a good fit? (i.e. research skills and experiences)
- Who else would match your interests (i.e. faculty members and other grad students in the program)?
- Who can speak well of you (i.e. in letters of reference)?
- What do you want to do?
- What is your passion?
- What would you like to contribute to a particular field of study?