

## Prompts and Parameters for Graduate School Application Statements

### Get the Current Prompt

Find out from the current application what the prompt is for every program to which you want to apply. The prompt from a previous year may not be the same as the current one.

### Understand the Prompt

Prompts can be specific or broad. Examples are:

- **Prompt for a master's program at Stanford that is specific**

*Your Statement of Purpose should be concise, focused, and well written. It should describe succinctly your reasons for applying to the proposed program at Stanford, your preparation for this field of study, research interests, future career plans, and other aspects of your background and interests which may aid the admissions committee in evaluating your aptitude and motivation for graduate study...*

- **Prompt for a PhD program at Berkeley that is broad**

*The personal history statement describes how your personal background and experiences influenced your decision to pursue a graduate degree.*

### Know the Format Parameters

Find out what the formatting expectations are for your applications related to:

- page limit
- word limit
- character limit (including spaces)
- spacing (e.g., double)
- font style and size (e.g., Times New Roman, 12 pt.)
- margins

Not following formatting requirements gives the impression that you cannot or will not follow directions and can also weaken or even disqualify your application. Consistency in formatting across applications makes reviewing them easier for admissions committees.

### If you are not given formatting parameters, consider using:

- no more than 2 pages
- single or double space
- 11 or 12 point font size and style such as Arial, Calibri, Georgia, or Times New Roman
- the same font for all of your application materials to create a polished look
- 1" margins on all sides (standard)

Font styles are not all the same size. Using a different style can help solve page length issues.

- Arial - 11 point: Switching to a smaller style can shorten your statement.
- Calibri - 11 point: Switching to a smaller style can shorten your statement.

### Writing Help

- Pre-Graduate Advisor, Susan Belmonte (Advisor Link at <https://advisor.gatech.edu>)
- GT CommLab. [communicationcenter.gatech.edu](https://communicationcenter.gatech.edu)