

## A General Guide for Writing Statements for Graduate School Applications

An integral part of graduate school applications are the written statements.

Written statements

- give review committees more insight into who you are as person and student,
- can be your only chance to “talk” about yourself if interviews are not part of the process, and
- should be taken seriously.

### General Types of Application Statements

#### *Statement of Purpose*

A statement of purpose (SOP) expresses your main reasons for applying to a program. The overarching elements of the SOP are

1. your career goals,
2. what you have done to work towards those goals, and
3. how the program will help you reach your goals.

If applying for a PhD, you also must include which researchers you want to work with and why; the same applies for thesis or research-based master’s programs.

#### *Personal Statement/Personal History*

A personal statement (PS), sometimes called a personal history, for graduate school applications is above all personal. A PS gives you the chance to tell readers about

- your motivations for applying beyond your career goals,
- the story behind your resume/CV and beyond your professional goals,
- how you have come to your decision to apply across multiple aspects of your life, and
- how your background and life experiences have shaped your decision to apply for a program instead of professional reasons for applying, e.g. you want to become an academic researcher.

Note: Personal statements for medical or law school applications are not the same as for graduate school.

#### *Research Statement*

A research statement is your chance to be as technical as you know how to be and gives you a chance to offer full details about the research you have done and want to do. Faculty in your field are the best resources for helping you write research statements. Not all schools require a research statement.

### Writing Help

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