



## **Graduate School Personal Statements**

Consider thinking of a personal statement as a series of questions that need answers that also correspond with the most major accomplishments that you can touch on listed on your resume.

The trick though is to remember that whatever you bring up needs to both be in service of lending credibility to the sort of student you would be once accepted and your grasp of the program you are applying to.

*These are a few questions to ask yourself to get the ball rolling:*

### **What school are you applying to and what is that school looking for?**

- Think of referring to that school's name and the name of the program that you are applying to throughout the paper.
- What are they looking for in their students? If accepted, what would you be asked to do during your time there? How prepared are you for what they will ask of you? Imagining yourself there might be a good way to start thinking about how to format your "I want to go to this school because "fill-in-the-blank" section / thoughts.

### **What do you want to do eventually?**

- Though you may be a great student, implied too is a forward momentum towards starting your career and how much you know about the field (and by extension, the field of study) that you are opting to venture into.
- This school will be helping you to be a professional in "fill-in-the-blank". Why do you want to do that?



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### **How can your going to this school / program specifically help you become a professional?**

- Ask yourself “Why here?” This paragraph will be whatever you come up with for an answer.
- A mistake that many make is to focus on themselves and not show the research that you have done into what that individual school offers over any other. The extent to which you can show how much you know about that program and the faculty / faculty research there attests to a deeper understanding. (A second reason to do this is that it shows that you are not sending a “cookie cutter” essay in which you can just swap school names in and out of.)
- What can you offer to the school once you are a student there?

### **What *previous work* in the field / *formal research* have you done that led you to pursuing this degree?**

- This speaks to your prowess outside of the classroom and your experience with your application of your coursework in the real world.
- The quintessential “key moment(s)” insert may also prove to be another point which makes you stand out over other applicants. Discuss it! So as long as you can bring this instance back to the main focus (the focus being why you’re applying to that institution to further whatever you are looking to further) it would be wise to mention it. This is especially the case since a resume, at least in the classical sense, should be a snap-shot and not an analysis of your endeavors -- your personal statement being the opposite.

A concluding paragraph meant for final thoughts may also be warranted.

*Questions about specific essay formats questions are inquiries designed for (a) the specific office of admission that you will be applying to, (b) the school’s website, and/or (c) Rider’s Office of Career Services.*