

# **Understanding the Power of the Personal Statement**

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# More Webinars about Graduate Study in Psychology

## Finding Fit: Understanding the Power of Letters of Recommendation

- ☐ November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1 PM Eastern
- ☐ November 14<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM Eastern

## Finding Fit: Interviewing for Graduate School

- ☐ Date - TBD



## PSYCAS

the centralized application service  
for graduate psychology

## PSYCAS: Everything You Need to Know

- ☐ November 14<sup>th</sup>, 3 PM Eastern
- ☐ December 11<sup>th</sup>, 12 PM Eastern

# Personal Statement

- ***Purpose:*** to present yourself effectively and to make the connection between your interests and the program to which you are applying
- don't depend on the reader to make this connection- do not stop with "I'm an excellent and interested person," take the extra step: "*why I would be a good fit for your program*"**



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# **Personal Statement**

- **Ordinarily only 1 to 2 pages and no two are alike**
- **start with broad statement, usually with H.S. or college**
- **Then focus on specific experiences, events, and opportunities that have sharpened your focus and interests**

# Personal Statements

- Use “upbeat words” and expressions  
-e.g., “excellent”, “terrific opportunity”, “very pleased to have been chosen”, “gratified to have been selected for...”, “surprised at how excited and interested I was in...”



# Personal Statement

- **Identify current research interests (get tagged by these) and faculty you might like to work with**
  - natural if you have already emailed faculty**
  - do not list everyone**
  - check to make sure they are “core” faculty (every program has extensive affiliate faculty who would not ordinarily pick up students)**

# Personal Statements: Style

- **Enthusiasm**
- **Humility**
- **Focus and dedication**





# Personal Statement: Style

- **Do not stretch, modify, or enhance anything, including your level of interest in research if that is not true-recipe for disappointment**
- **Do not try to sound “smart” or prove yourself- just be yourself**
- **Attribute flattering things about yourself to sources other than yourself, e.g., “A number of my faculty have noted the level of dedication and initiative that I have taken in my work, and I have been gratified to have been chosen to serve as the head of the research team.”**

# Personal Statement

- Read the statement out loud. Time it.
- Give it to friends to read (does it sound like you?).
- Give it to a faculty member to read and provide feedback on.
- Ask him/her what overall impression it leaves?  
“On a scale of 1 to 10, how would he/she view this statement?”
  - How could you improve it?



# Questions and Answers

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# More Resources from APA

## Frequently Asked Questions About Graduate School

<https://www.apa.org/education/grad/faqs.aspx>

## APA's Graduate Study in Psychology

<http://gradstudy.apa.org/>

## PSYCAS: The Psychology Centralized Application Service

<https://psycas.liaisoncas.com>

## Graduate Education And Training Calendar

<https://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/events>