

GRADUATE SCHOOL ADVICE (applies to summer program statements also)

Personal Statement (pulls out most pivotal experiences from resume, and talk about them, what they meant to you, how did it help you develop and grow, how you want to further your education, what career do you want to achieve)

Who are you and why do you want to do research

Want to see passion, commitment to research and graduate training

Examples of your research

Convince committee that you are completely informed about career after you achieve after the program.

Talk about development as you as scholar and researcher

Why is this program/school/professor the right fit for you

Include examples, not vague general statements

How did you start to be an independent thinker, what experiences led you to do that, what responsibilities do you have to illustrate this

Interpersonal skills are important, that you worked as a member of a team, use examples

Document strengths with facts, not just "I had a great experience"

Also include CV/resume

Don't just list techniques, needs to talk about techniques within research, talk about the science, teach reader about the importance and finding of the research -- sound like a scientists.

If you had an obstacle, don't spend much time on it, let your recommenders talk about that. Keep your personal statement more about your research (90%).

If you are not sure what the program wants in a certain essay, call the graduate admissions director in that department.

Admissions committee looking for:

Strong grammatical structure

Clean and concise statement

Convince reader that you can write soundly

Honesty, no exaggerations

Clearly state your goals

Do your homework so you know that specific program

Don't ever apply to a program for only one professor, you need multiple options at each school

Need to see you have the passion, heartfelt (in statement and interview)

Make sure you know your statement well before you go into an interview, interviewer will ask about specifics

That you have goals and dreams

PhD applications are not narratives, not telling your story, its about research.

AAMC web site, handout available for graduate school admission

What if faculty says they are too busy and you really need that particular letter:

Can offer to write the letter for them, then they can revise and sign. If they are a research mentor, you need their letter. It will look funny to the admission committee if you don't have that letter.