

Preview Day Organizers & Presenters



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	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Week 1	2	3 Nuts & Bolts of Grad School 	4	5 Personal Statement Workshop 	6
Week 2	9	10 How to Apply & Timeline 	11	12 Office Hours 	12
Week 3	16	17 Funding & Grant Writing 	18	19 Navigating Grad School Identity Panel 	20
Week 4	23	24 Find a Good Fit 	25	26 Office Hours 	27
Week 5	30	31 Is this Right for Me? 	1	2 Wrap-Up! 	All sessions will be 5:00-6:30pm PST via Zoom

Session Scope & Facilitator Roles

Scope

90 minute workshops are an introduction, with resources to dig deeper!

Roles

We are peer facilitators, here to help guide participants' discovery.

Session Norms



Please have video on, if possible



Stay muted unless speaking



Use the “raise your hand” feature or chat us if you have a question or comment



Be respectful, be curious

Session Goals

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the key elements and structure of personal and diversity statements
2. Identify components of their own personal histories they could include in their statements

Outline

1. Overview of personal and diversity statements
2. Writing tips and resources
3. Brainstorming themes
4. Breakout rooms for statement workshopping

Types of Statements

- Statement of Purpose
- Statement of Interest/Intent
- Personal statement
- Diversity statement

Prompts tend to have overlapping but somewhat different requirements, depending on school or program

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Read the prompt!

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Overview of Personal vs Diversity Statements

Personal Statements

Universally required

Focus on research and
academic background

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Diversity Statements

May be optional

Focus on experiences
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Overview of Personal vs Diversity Statements

Personal Statements	Both	Diversity Statements
Universally required	Personal narratives	May be optional
Focus on research and academic background	How past experiences shaped you	Focus on experiences and commitments to diversity

Additional information on Diversity Statements

- Two main strategies
 - How you have promoted justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in your community
 - How you have overcome obstacles related to aspects of your identity

Statements and Trauma

Be cognizant of triggering emotions that may come up as you craft your statements

[How Applying to Grad School Becomes a Display of Trauma for People of Color](#)

“White America asks people of color to tokenize and exploit themselves in order to gain acceptance into programs and institutions we are otherwise barred from”

- *Deena Elgenaidi*

Sample prompts

Statement of Purpose:

Please highlight your academic **preparation and motivation**; **interests, specializations and career goals**; and **fit** for pursuing graduate study at UC Davis.

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- **Preparation and motivation** may include your **academic and research experiences** that prepare you for this graduate program (for example: coursework, employment, exhibitions, fieldwork, foreign language proficiency, independent study, internships, laboratory activities, presentations, publications, studio projects, teaching, and travel or study abroad) and **motivation or passion for graduate study**.

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- **Interests, specializations, and career goals** may include your **research interests**, disciplinary subfields, area/s of specialization, and **professional objectives**.
- **Fit** may include how **your preparation, experiences, and interests match the specific resources and characteristics** of your graduate program at UC Davis. Please **identify specific faculty** within your desired graduate program with whom you would like to work and how their interests match your own.

Sample prompts

Personal History and Diversity Statement:

The University of California Davis, a public institution, is committed to supporting the diversity of the graduate student body and promoting equal opportunity in higher education... We invite you to include in this statement how you may contribute to the diversification of graduate education and the UC Davis community.

The purpose of this essay is to get know you as an individual and potential graduate student. Please describe how your personal background informs your decision to pursue a graduate degree. **You may include any educational, familial, cultural, economic, or social experiences, challenges, community service, outreach activities, residency and citizenship, first-generation college status, or opportunities relevant to your academic journey;**

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Sample prompts

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The purpose of this essay is to get know you as an individual and potential graduate student. Please describe how your personal background informs your decision to pursue a graduate degree. **You may include any educational, familial, cultural, economic, or social experiences, challenges, community service, outreach activities, residency and citizenship, first-generation college status, or opportunities relevant to your academic journey; how your life experiences contribute to the social, intellectual, or cultural diversity within a campus community and your chosen field; or how you might serve educationally underrepresented and underserved segments of society with your graduate education.**

This essay should complement but not duplicate the content in the Statement of Purpose.

Questions?



Brainstorm themes

What kind of narrative theme would you thread through your personal statement?

Examples:

- Natural history has become underrated in ecology, but that's what sparked my interest and what I want to bring into my research
- My interest in nature vs nurture due to my background as an adoptee motivated me to study interactions between genes and the environment

Let's brainstorm on this [Google Jam board](#)

Statement structure

- No one “right” format
- Chronological order is usually good
- Read lots of examples!

Statement structure

One method:

Hook



Body



Conclusion

- Introduction
- Why do you want to go to grad school?

- Relevant experiences
- Your science

- Future goals
- Why this specific program?

Do's and Don'ts of statement writing

Avoid...

Generic statements

Listing or summarizing your
resume

Long intro about growing up
doing nature activities

Oversharing

Instead...

Be specific and describe your
experiences

Highlight key experiences and
why they were important to you

Concise intro about something
unique to you

Write about what motivates you to
do research/go to grad school

General writing tips

- Keep essays concise, clear, and free of errors
- Be authentic but don't overshare
- Write about topics that are unique and meaningful to you
- Thread your theme(s) throughout the statement(s)
- The statements should complement but not repeat each other

Advice from professors

“What have been the major factors that have shaped you as a person? What is your ambition and why?”

“Avoid narratives that start with 'when I was a kid ...' just stick to recent experiences that motivate a PhD”

“A good statement shows personal growth, motivation, and maturity. It can include challenges overcome to show resilience and determination. It's an opportunity to show communication skills, therefore it ought to be structured like an essay. I want an understanding of who the person is, though, so it doesn't have to be completely formal and dry.”

“Not too personal -- emphasize why this part of you feeds into your professional self.”

Resources

[Example statements](#) - *Please do not share*

[Statement of Purpose Do's and Don'ts](#)

[NIH Powerpoint of Personal Statement tips](#)

Questions?



Breakout rooms

Icebreaker: If you had more time/all the time in the world, what is a hobby you would like to pick up?

Discussion prompts:

- What motivates you to go to grad school?
- How will you structure your statements?
- What personal narrative will you thread through your statements?
- What kinds of qualities do you want to portray about yourself?

Option to share
a screen and
review sample
essays











Workshop Feedback

Your feedback is important to us. Please take a few minutes to complete evaluations for this session.



**Workshop 1: Personal and
Diversity Statements**

tinyurl.com/preview21feedback

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