
Personal Statement Planning Worksheet & Review Checklist

A Structured Guide for Writing Strong Graduate Statements

Section 1: Research Interests

- What academic or research questions genuinely interest you?
- Why do these questions matter in your field?
- How did these interests develop over time?

Write clearly and specifically. Avoid vague career goals.

Section 2: Academic Preparation

List and briefly describe:

- Relevant coursework
- Academic strengths
- Skills or methods learned
- Areas where you developed advanced understanding

Focus on preparation for graduate-level work.

Section 3: Research Experience

For each experience, note:

- Project or topic
- Your specific role
- Methods used
- Outcomes or findings
- What the experience taught you

Emphasize thinking, problem-solving, and intellectual growth.

Section 4: Program Fit

Answer clearly:

- Why this program?
- Which faculty align with your interests?
- What resources, labs, or strengths attract you?
- How your interests fit the program's direction

Avoid generic praise or rankings.

Section 5: Career Direction

- What do you hope to do after graduate school?
- How will this program help you reach that goal?
- Keep this concise and academically focused

Final Personal Statement Review Checklist

Before submitting, confirm:

- The statement is tailored to this specific program
- Faculty and research areas are clearly named
- Research interests are central, not personal history
- The writing is clear, focused, and professional
- No spelling, grammar, or formatting errors
- The tone is confident but not entitled
- The statement fits the word limit exactly

Reminder

A strong personal statement connects **past experience**, **current interests**, and **future goals** into one clear academic narrative.
