

Consider**Cornell**

Understanding & Preparing Your Personal Statement

Overview

There are two types of statements included in the Graduate School's online application, (1) the Academic Statement of Purpose and (2) the Personal Statement, both of which are required for all graduate degree programs.

Your Personal Statement should provide the admissions committee with a sense of who you are as a whole person and describe how your background and experiences influenced your decision to pursue a graduate degree. It should also provide insight into your potential to contribute to a community of inclusion, belonging, and respect where scholars representing diverse backgrounds, perspectives, abilities, and experiences can learn and work productively and positively together.

Writing your Personal Statement allows you to share experiences that provide insights into how your personal, academic, and/or professional experiences demonstrate your persistence and resilience, especially when navigating challenging circumstances. Additionally, it allows you to provide examples of how you engage with others and have facilitated and/or participated in productive collaborative endeavors. Your statement also provides you with an opportunity to provide context around any perceived gaps or weaknesses in your academic record.

Content in the Personal Statement should complement rather than duplicate the content contained within the Academic Statement of Purpose, which should focus explicitly on your academic interests, previous research experience, and intended area of research during your graduate studies.

Personal Statement Prompt

- Please describe (within 1000 words) how your background and experiences influenced your decision and ability to pursue a graduate degree. Additionally, provide insights into your potential **to contribute to Cornell University's core value** to provide a community of inclusion, belonging, and respect where scholars representing diverse backgrounds, perspectives, abilities, and experiences can learn and work productively and positively together. Within your statement, you may also include relevant information on any of the following:
- How your personal, academic, and/or professional experiences demonstrate your ability to be both persistent and resilient especially when navigating challenging circumstances.
- How you engage with others and have facilitated and/or participated in productive teams.
- How you have come to understand the barriers faced by others whose experiences and backgrounds may differ from your own.

- If relevant, how your research interests focus on issues related to diversity, inclusion, access, inequality, and/or equity.
- Details on your service and/or leadership in efforts to advance diversity, inclusion, access, and equity, especially for those from backgrounds historically underrepresented and/or marginalized.
- Additional context on any significant barriers you have navigated to make graduate education accessible to you.
- Contextual details on any perceived gaps or weaknesses in your academic record.
- Within the personal statement, you may also provide **details of lessons learned** from any of your lived experiences including but not limited to
 - being a first-generation college student or graduate (no parent/guardian completed a baccalaureate degree)
 - racial, ethnic, and/or cultural background(s)
 - managing a disability or chronic health condition
 - experiencing housing, food, economic, and/or other forms of significant insecurity
 - being a solo parent
 - gender identity and/or sexual orientation
 - having served in the military
 - holding DACA, refugee, TPS, or asylee status