



Understanding and Preparing Your Personal Statement

How to apply:

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.

What Should the Personal Statement Include?

Your Personal Statement should provide the admissions committee with a sense of you as a whole person, and you should use it to describe how your personal background and experiences influenced your decision to pursue a graduate degree.

You should also provide insights into how you will contribute to advancing Cornell's founding principle and institutional core value to provide a community of belonging. You may draw from your service, leadership, scholarly activities, or personal experiences that address:

- Expanding access to education and opportunity
- Cultivating collaborative learning and research environments
- Fostering community engagement

Within your statement, you may also include any relevant context around barriers you've encountered to make graduate education accessible to you, as well as ways in which you have demonstrated resilience and persistence in navigating these challenges.

The personal statement should reflect your unique perspective and experiences while illustrating how they have shaped your potential to contribute meaningfully to Cornell's academic and community life.

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 and/or relevant professional experience, and motivation for pursuing your intended area of academic focus during your graduate studies.