Personal statements and graduate school interviews

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What is a personal statement?
What to know before starting?
Knowing the profile of the ideal student in the program is key to prepare your personal statement.
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The program the statement is for

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The instructions provided by the program for the essay

Programs often require different focuses for your statement, be aware of them and address them.
Committees go through dozens of essays, make sure you're using your unique experiences to tell a story that grabs their attention.

Your story is unique

Avoid repetition

If something is included elsewhere in your application don't repeat it on the statement unless you're adding more details.

Be clear and concise

While being creative when writing your personal statement might keep your audience engaged this can backfire if you're not getting your key statements across fast enough.
Writing the statement
Break it down

**Motivation**
What has motivated you to continue your education in the field you've applied to, this is especially important if you're changing careers.

**Relevant experiences**
All you have done in recent years that equipped you to become an excellent graduate student. Also, explain any shortcomings or challenges you've navigated.

**Why this program?**
Demonstrate you've done your research by including reasons why the program is right for you. Add details about the school's mission, vision, faculty, and other specifics to support your reasoning.
The interview process
The interview process

- First of all, relax
- Every interview process will be different
- Do your research
- Think about where does your research interests fit within the potential advisor's plan
- Listen carefully and keep your answers brief
- Match the interviewers' energy
- Come prepared with questions
Your turn to ask questions

- An interview goes both ways, come prepared with questions about the program and your potential advisor.
- Ask about expectations, mentoring style, funding, and current projects.
- Speak to their current students and ask for their honest opinion.
Resources

- Questions to ask a potential advisor:

- Writing a personal statement:
  https://cstw.osu.edu/sites/default/files/2020-08/personal_statements.pdf

- Personal statement worksheet:
  https://cstw.osu.edu/sites/default/files/2020-08/personal_statement_worksheet.pdf

- Make an appointment for the writing center at:
  https://osu.mywconline.com/
Questions?