

## Writing Center Handouts

### Personal Statements

#### Getting Started:

Read the prompt carefully and determine your purpose. While some schools will ask for a general personal statement, others may ask a specific question.

Research everything! You must understand the university, the department, the professors in the department, the research areas of the faculty, and their values in order to advertise yourself most effectively.

#### Writing Your Personal Statement:

*(Adapted from Berkley University of California Career Center)*

- Take your time.
- Draft, revise, get feedback, revise some more, and proofread multiple times.
- Be objective, but not impersonal. Write directly and in a straightforward manner that tells about your experience and what it means to you.
- While you should not use overly academic language, it should be clear that you are knowledgeable about the research area or field you intend to join.
- Form conclusions that explain the value and meaning of your experience, such as what you learned about yourself and your field and your future goals. Draw your conclusions from the evidence your life provides.
- Be specific. Document your conclusions with specific instances.
- Get to the point early on and catch the attention of the reader.

#### Things to Avoid:

- Lecturing your reader
- Listing accomplishments that are already evident on your resume or CV
- Clichéd or overly general phrasing
- Sending the same personal statement to multiple schools
- Gimmicks or humor