



Graduate School Personal Statement Template

Section	Purpose	Recommended Word Count	Your Word Count
1. Introduction & Academic Motivation	Introduce your academic interests and what inspired them.	80–120	
2. Academic Background & Relevant Experience	Highlight coursework, research, projects, and professional experiences that prepared you.	180–250	
3. Research Interests & Program Fit	Explain your research interests and why this specific program is the right fit.	150–250	
4. Career Goals & Conclusion	Connect the program to your short- and long-term goals.	90–150	
Total	Recommended total length	500–1,000 words	

1. Introduction & Academic Motivation

Target: 80–120 words

Brainstorm

- What first sparked your interest in this field?
- Was there a course, research project, internship, or personal experience that influenced you?
- Why do you want to pursue graduate study now?

Draft

My interest in _____ began
when

2. Academic Background & Relevant Experience

Target: 180–250 words

Brainstorm

Include experiences such as:

- Undergraduate coursework
- Research projects
- Thesis or capstone project
- Laboratory work
- Internships
- Professional experience
- Publications or presentations (if applicable)

For each experience, answer:

- What was your role?
- What skills or knowledge did you gain?
- How did it shape your academic interests?

Draft

3. Research Interests & Program Fit

Target: 150–250 words

Brainstorm

Consider:

- Your primary research interests.
- Questions or problems you want to explore.
- Faculty members, research groups, laboratories, or resources that interest you.
- Why this university is the best place to pursue your goals.

Draft

4. Career Goals & Conclusion

Target: 90–150 words

Brainstorm

Include:

- Your short-term academic or professional goals.
- Your long-term career aspirations.
- How graduate study will help you achieve them.
- What contributions you hope to make to your field.

Draft

Graduate School Personal Statement Checklist

Before submitting your statement, ask yourself:

- ☐ Does my introduction clearly explain what inspired my academic interests?
- ☐ Have I highlighted relevant coursework, research, or professional experiences with specific examples?
- ☐ Have I explained what I learned from these experiences rather than simply listing them?
- ☐ Have I clearly described my research interests or academic focus?
- ☐ Have I demonstrated why this specific graduate program is a strong fit by referring to its faculty, curriculum, or research opportunities?
- ☐ Do my short-term and long-term goals align with the program?
- ☐ Is my statement well organized, concise, and within the required word limit?
- ☐ Have I thoroughly proofread for grammar, clarity, and consistency?