Personal Statement Preparation

What is the purpose of a Personal Statement?
- Prepares you for your next steps
- Helps a committee get to know you beyond your test scores and transcript and allows you to highlight your unique strengths and competencies
- Provides a holistic view of who you are
- May be the only “interview” opportunity with the school
- Showcases what makes you different from other candidates and why you are qualified and a good fit for the program
- Demonstrates your writing ability, self-awareness, and motivations

What will you be asked?

General or Open-Ended Prompt: Some schools will simply ask for a “personal statement,” “letter of intent,” a "statement of purpose," or simply state "Tell me about yourself."
- Narrative style response
- Allows more freedom of what to include
- Relates back to why you are pursuing that particular field or program
- Shows your voice
- Not just a summary of your resume

Specific Topics or Questions: Some schools may ask multiple specific questions, which may need to be answered in different essays.
- Answer question(s) fully and stay on topic
- Consider what they are hoping to learn by asking that question
- Refer to relevant experiences or learning to support your answer

Reflection Questions to ask yourself before writing:
- What is distinctive about me?
- How can I help the reader get to know me?
- How do I stand out?
- What will make me a great professional one day?
- Why do I want to attend this program? How does it fit into my short and long-term goals?
- What major influences or accomplishments in my life have helped shaped me and what insights have I gained from them?
- How did I become interested in this field and what have I learned about it (and myself) that has stimulated my interest?
- What are some themes in my life experiences as it relates to my interest in the program or the institution I wish to attend?
- What are my motivations, values, and goals? What unique strengths and competencies have I developed?
- How will my personal qualities contribute to the field and program?
Your Next Steps

- Proofread! Have at least 2-3 others review your personal statement, including someone who knows you well and a professor or other professional in your field.
- Ask others what impressions your personal statement gives. Does it answer the question the prompt(s) ask? Does it relate to why you want to do this particular program?
- Reading your personal statement out loud, to yourself or others, may help clarify if there is cohesion or if anything is vague.
- It is normal to review a personal statement 2-3 times before deciding on a final draft.
- Visit the Career Connections Center and the UF Writing Studio for individual help and workshops on creating a personal statement.