WHAT IS A PERSONAL STATEMENT?

Generally speaking,

- A narrative of your personal and academic trajectory, which aims to illustrate your motivations for applying to the program
- Distinct from a Statement of Purpose

But it varies from application to application...
VISUALLY, WE MIGHT REPRESENT IT LIKE THIS...

Your past....

- Internships
- Jobs
- Travel
- Studies

You are here, writing an application

Your future career and ambitions

Personal statement

- Use past experiences to illustrate what motivates you and why the program interests you

Statement of purpose

- What will you do on the program and how are you qualified to do it.
- How the participation in the program can propel you to achieve future goals
EXAMPLES

According to the guidelines of the Fulbright U.S. Student Program...

- This **1-page narrative** is designed to give the reviewers a picture of you as an individual.

- It is an opportunity to tell the committee more about the **trajectory that you have followed** and **what plans you have for the future**.

- Whereas the Statement of Grant Purpose focuses on what you will be doing in the host country, the Personal Statement concentrates on **illustrating the trajectory that brought you to wanting to apply for the grant**.
According to the guidelines of the Fulbright U.S. Student Program...

- The statement can deal with your personal history, family background, intellectual development, and the educational, professional, or cultural opportunities to which you have or have not been exposed; explain their impact.

- This should not be a reiteration of facts already listed in the Biographical Data sections or an elaboration of the Statement of Grant Purpose.
According to the guidelines for Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships...

- A personal statement regarding your planned use of the FLAS fellowship. This is a one-page, single-spaced, essay describing why this language study is essential to realizing your study and career goals.
WHY PERSONAL STATEMENTS?

Remember that they are not just funding the project, ...they are also investing in the researcher!
YOUR GOAL

To show your readers:

▪ Who you are.

▪ How you think.

▪ Why you are the perfect person to carry out the work depicted in your larger proposal.

▪ How you plan to reach your future goals

 ▪ This grant/fellowship could provide a stepping stone!
BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Review *all* of the resources about the specific grant.

- Know the format
  - Length, Font size, Headers, Footers, etc.
  - What components are needed?

- All grants have specific review criteria
  - Fulbright, NSF, Boren, Soros, etc.
  - Who is reviewing the grant application?
    - Know your audience
GENERAL ADVICE

Think about **what makes you tick!**

**Intrigue** your reader!

**Illustrate** what sparked your interest in your discipline or project!
GENERAL ADVICE

Use active voice.
- Avoid forms of the verb “to be”
- Avoid phrases like “I hope to…” or “I would like to…”

Show, don’t tell!
- Use concrete examples to illustrate your ideas.

Weave a narrative (with relevant material).

If discussing a setback or problem:
- State the facts then move on to positive statements
- What was learned? How did you grow from the experience?
  - Provide a character arc.

Be sure that the personal statement is part of the total proposal package.
COMMON MISSTEPS

Whining about setbacks
  • You want to illustrate growth, not provide excuses

Fantasy or exaggeration
  • Back up your statements with evidence

Disclosing too much personal information
  • Evidence has to be relevant to your overall proposal

Inappropriate humor and clichés
  • Written humor does not always translate

Annotated CV, chronological life story, resume in sentence form
  • Your work experience and educational history are included elsewhere
STRATEGIES

Do not leave the personal statement until the last moment!

Reflect

- What interests you about the work? How did you become interested in it?
- What past experience makes you particularly suited to your chosen subject?
- What’s most important/intriguing to you in life? Can you pinpoint why?
- What skills do you have? What responsibilities have you undertaken? Do you have special successes?
- How are you unique from others in your field?

Start drafting!

Don’t wait until you think it’s ready.

- Solicit feedback and talk it out!
GGC SERVICES

Funding Searches
One-on-one Consultations
Walk-In Hours
Workshop series
FUNDING SEARCHES

Funding search resources

- GGC consultants can help students find relevant funding sources:
  - Travel
  - Conference
  - Small or large research projects
  - Pre-Dissertation
  - Dissertation Writing

Email gradgrnt@indiana.edu to schedule an appointment

http://pivot.cos.com/funding_main
One-on-One Consultations

Help draft/edit grant proposals
- Either in-person or electronically via email or Skype

Schedule an appointment
- Email gradgrnt@indiana.edu
- Provide GGC with draft 48 hours in advance of consultation

External (non-IU) funding opportunities
WEEKLY WALK-IN HOURS

12:00pm to 2:00pm, Tuesdays & Fridays
Wells Library, Room E544 (5th floor, East Tower)

- Internal and external grants
- Funding searches
- General questions
GGC FALL 2016 WORKSHOP SERIES

Budgeting for Research
October 27, 3:00-4:00pm

All workshops will be in Social Science Research Commons, Woodburn 200

Each followed by a Walk-In Hour for individual questions
ANY QUESTIONS?

How to find us:
Herman B. Wells Library, East Tower, Office 544E

How to contact us:
Email: gradgrnt@Indiana.edu
Website: http://www.indiana.edu/~gradgrnt/
Twitter: @iugradgrants