Writing Assignment 4: Graduate and Professional Programs and Personal Statements

Due (first draft): Week 6 Friday

- If your statement is shorter than 2 pages, then you have to complete either a CV/resume (one page) or a job advertisement + cover letter.

Setup:

- Back up the work that you've done so far by going to `menu` and download `source`.
- Using the "folder" icon, create a new folder called `assignment4` in the same project `MATH 2794W PROJECT Your Name` (where you've kept all the files from your LaTeX assignments).

One of the most important parts of an application for graduate school is a personal statement (or statement of purpose). A good statement of purpose may not necessarily get you into a program, but a poorly written one could cause the committee to overlook your application (stolen from Purdue OWL).

Part 1/3: Gather information on prospective graduate or professional programs

(Task a) Take out a pen and a sheet of paper. Jot down careers or (possibly new) fields of study that you may like to pursue three years from now. Where would you like to live?

(Task b) Ask a mentor or professor (doesn't have to be your professor) or someone in your dream industry for a list of appropriate graduate program (Masters, Ph.D., or a professional program) at UConn or elsewhere —it does not have to be the math/stats-related program.

(Task c) Study the information and requirements for the ones on the list. Will this program be a good fit for your goals?

(Task d) Optional: Email a few current graduate students and professors, tell them that you are considering applying to the program, and ask specific questions (which are not already on the program's website): "Are you happy? Is the program supportive?" "Can you live comfortably on the graduate stipend?" "Did past graduates get jobs that they wanted?"
   If the program is located close to here, then you should ask them if they are available to meet you in person! For further tips on contacting people, see

owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/graduate_school_applications/graduate_school_applications_researching_programs/research_programs_profiling_faculty.html

Part 2/3: Pick a favorite graduate or professional program

(1) Based on your research, pick a program that you *might* like to apply to.

(2) Save the information about the program as PDF files `school4.pdf` (for example, by "print to PDF"), and upload `school4.pdf` to your `assignment4` folder. If it is easier to give me a link to the program's description, then please instead create a new blank text file `school4.txt` in your project, then put the link of the program in this blank file.

(3) For more information on researching programs, see

owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/graduate_school_applications/graduate_school_applications_researching_programs/index.html

The personal statement is your only chance to let the admission committee get to know you—you have fed them lots of data about yourself in your application, your personal statement allows you to give that data *meaning*. For more resources, see

owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/graduate_school_applications/graduate_school_applications_statements_of_purpose/index.html .

Part 3/3: Write a complete first draft to a personal statement

(Step A) After you closely read the information about the program and after your conversations with your mentors and current students and professors of the program, you should have some idea of characteristics that would make you a good fit (or not) for the program. Write down these characteristics.

(Step B) Write down what the prompts that the program gives for the personal statement. If these are not very clear, contact the admission office to clarify.

(Step C) On paper, write down a first rough draft of the statement. Read it out loud.

(Step D) Pick any standard LaTeX template for writing your file. For example, you can download egunawan.github.io/writing/hw/04/statement4template.tex (see statement4template.pdf) , upload it to `assignment4` folder and then and then rename the file `statement4.tex`.

(Step E) Type your paper in `statement4.tex` in your `assignment4` folder on Overleaf.

(Step F) Ask a friend to read it out loud to you, then edit it based on their feedback.

(Step G) Highly recommended but optional: make an appointment with a staff at either UConn Career Services[1] OR the Writing Center on the second floor of the library[2] (or both!)

Some helpful hints:

The final draft of your personal statement should make you happy enough to submit to your favorite graduate program. Take this seriously—it is not just worth points, it is worth your future! Please keep in mind the feedback you receive from your peers, myself, and UConn Career Services/ Writing Center on your first draft.

The personal statement should

- be tailored toward the graduate program to which you are applying—do sincere research on the program and department, and specifically tailor your personal statement to it.
- have good content: the personal statement should give a unique and personal story, and it should strive for depth, not breadth.
- have correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- have the appropriate formatting (general personal statements are **1–2 pages** in length)

Reminder:

If your personal statement is shorter than 2 pages, you would need to also complete either a CV/resume (1 page) or a job advertisement + cover letter (1 page).

Final thoughts:

- Check the standardized tests that you will need to study and sign up for.
- Check how many letters of recommendations (from professors and work supervisors) are required. Make sure your professors and supervisors are aware of your (strong) work so that they could write about it. If you are in a large lecture class, it's a good idea to attend office hours and ask thoughtful questions. See
  owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/graduate_school_applications/requesting_recommendation_letters.html
  for information for getting organized for requesting recommendation letters.
- For a general introduction to applying graduate programs in the US, see
  owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/graduate_school_applications/index.html.

---

[1]Make an appointment with UConn Career Services here: career.uconn.edu/schedule-an-appointment

[2]Make an appointment with the UConn Writing Center here: writingcenter.uconn.edu