ENGLISH FOR PERSONAL STATEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANT PROGRAM
CENTER FOR INTENSIVE ENGLISH STUDIES
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
# PERSONAL STATEMENT VS STATEMENT OF PURPOSE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Personal Statement</th>
<th>Statement of Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needed for graduate school and fellowship applications</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 pages in length</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vary by culture and country</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of <strong>personal</strong> thoughts, feelings, and reflection (in relation to the application requirements)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of what the applicant has done and plans to do <strong>academically</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREPARATION: LOOKING AT YOU

- Unique attributes of your personal life story
- Your field of interest, why you chose it
- Personal success factors
- Goals (short and long term)
- What are you hoping to do with your education/award and how might it help you achieve your goal?
- Values, interests, and skills
PREPARATION: LOOKING AT THEM

What is the program looking for in ideal candidates?

- Carefully read about the program’s mission, vision, values, current research, faculty, curriculum, etc.

What is the school/committee specifically asking for?

- READ the question prompts carefully and be sure to answer EVERY aspect of the prompt
- EXPLAIN how you meet the specified qualifications
- SHOW how your values/goals/aspirations match those of the organization, program, and/or school
HOW DO I ALIGN MY STORY WITH THE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS?

From an international fellowship application specifically for women:

**Preference is given to women who show prior commitment to the advancement of women and girls through civic, community, or professional work.**

What kind of information would you need to include in a personal statement for this application?
LET’S PRACTICE!

See your handout for a sample personal statement with questions.
MORE PRACTICE: OPENINGS

Which one of these openings seems more compelling? Why?

• I was a good student in school and I have always wanted to be a teacher. I want to help students learn and grow. My goal is to foster their critical thinking abilities and to help them flourish academically…

• Every morning at 10:00 a.m. I come face to face with the power of language to free; it happens in a classroom. The students I teach at Seattle Central Community College come from night work in an industrial bakery, from a Vietnamese refugee camp, from a 9-to-5 job in a car wash, or from the day care center where they’ve left their children…
I’m a fourth year student at the Florida State University, pursuing a Ph.D. degree in Computer Science.

The two biggest research interests of mine divide into two large themes: linear modeling and machine learning methods.
After doing research on programs in my field, I found that the XXXXX program in Florida State University is the most appropriate program to further my professional development.

As a high performance student in my high school, I went to schools for free because of all kinds of scholarship I won.
• As a teacher of a course in public administration, I excel at clearly and effectively presenting government findings to other people, and I enjoy giving a presentation.

• I have worked as an instructor at the Center for Intensive English Studies for 5 years. CIES offers intensive English courses as well as...
SENTENCES FOR PRACTICE IV

• I received a $5,000 scholarship from XXX Foundation to cover a portion of my tuition at FSU.

• Therefore, I am applying for the scholarship to support my study in FSU.
RESOURCES

• Personal Statements from Purdue’s OWL: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/642/1/

• Personal Statements for Fellowships from Profellow: https://www.profellow.com/tips/5-powerful-personal-statement-openings-of-fellowship-winners/

• FSU’s Office of Graduate and Fellowship Awards: http://ogfa.fsu.edu/

• Academic Phrasebank—an excellent resource for academic writing: http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/introducing-work/