Your Personal Statement (Statement of Purpose) allows you to describe yourself to the summer research programs you will be applying to. This statement will highlight your personal background, your academic and professional goals, why you are applying to graduate school, and the details of why you are qualified and ready for graduate school.

Each paragraph in your statement (sections below) will continue to build up the story of who you are, why you want to go to graduate school, and what you have done to prepare yourself for graduate school. Use the questions in each section below to craft your statement.

The word/character limits for this statement will vary depending on the program you are applying to. Keep in mind that they will typically ask for 500 – 1000 words (1 – 2) pages.

**First Paragraph: Introduce yourself, your interests, and your motivations.**

How/When did you become interested in your major/field of research/scholarly interests? Why are you interested in your major/field of research/scholarly interests? Was it through classes, readings, seminars, or conversations with people already in the field? What about this area of work excites you?

What makes you stand out from other applicants? Being first-generation? Belonging to an underrepresented population in higher education? How have cultural, familial, or personal factors influenced your educational journey?

Why do you want to get summer research training? How does your participation in the summer research program relate to your PhD goals/professional plans?

**Next 1 - 2 Paragraphs: Summarize your undergraduate research and your research training.**

How did you get involved in undergraduate research? Who is your research mentor? In general, what is the focus of the work done by your research mentor? What is your project? What are you responsible for? What technical things have you learned from your research? What non-technical things have you learned (Patience? Time Management? Organizational Skills?)? What have you learned about the field and about yourself that has further stimulated your interests?

Have you participated in a summer research program? What did you learn from the summer training? How did the training help prepare you for graduate school?

If you’ve had multiple research experiences (e.g. multiple research mentors or projects; multiple summer research trainings), try to describe all of them in chronological order or categorically.

Conclude with answering: Why is participating in the summer research program the next logical step for you, your professional development, and/or advancing your academic goals?

**Next Paragraph (Optional): Discuss the relevance of other activities you are involved in.**

Are you involved in other activities that relate to your preparations for graduate school? What are these activities? How do they relate to you being successful in graduate school?

**Final Paragraph: Discuss how you are a “fit” for (NAME OF UNIVERSITY) and their graduate program - THIS PARAGRAPH SHOULD BE SOMEWHAT UNIQUE TO EACH PROGRAM YOU WILL BE APPLYING TO!**

Why are you applying to this program/school? What is attracting you? Is it the type of program? **Are there faculty you are interested in working with or research projects that you are interested in on?** Why is this summer program the best choice for you? Why is (NAME OF UNIVERSITY) the ideal place for you to advance your undergraduate research training?

**After you are done with your statement, make sure you’ve completed the following checklist items:**

* You’ve addressed all items on the prompt clearly.
* You set yourself apart from other applicants with your unique background and origin story.
* You detailed clear example(s) of your work to describe what you did (Show. Don’t tell.).
* You described how you have grown from your work/research.
* You demonstrated evidence of relevant experience and preparation for graduate school; you’ve conveyed your conviction/passion/resilience/grit
* You made a convincing argument for your fit and suitability to the specific program you are applying to.