

Computer Science 495 - Homework 4: Writing a Personal Statement / Statement of Purpose for a Graduate School Application

Due: Tuesday, February 23. Submit using Blackboard

Submissions will be graded on the following scale:

- 3 points: Submission contains no spelling or grammar errors and clearly explains to the reader why you wish to pursue a graduate degree
- 2 points: Submission contains no spelling or grammar errors, but does not make a convincing case that you are interested in pursuing a graduate degree
- 0 points: Submission contains any spelling or grammar errors.

The "personal statement" or "statement of purpose" is one of the more difficult steps in the graduate application process because there is little or no guidance provided by the graduate program about the statement. Once you know why the institution is requesting the statement, however, you will have some idea what to write.

From the graduate program's perspective, a personal statement has two primary goals. The graduate admissions committee wants to know:

1. Can this person express herself clearly using written English?
2. Is this person sufficiently motivated to undertake a graduate degree at our institution?
3. Why should we choose this person over another person with the same G.P.A. and background?

With this knowledge in hand, write a personal statement to support a hypothetical application to the Ph.D. program in computer science at "Eisenhower State University". If you are having trouble starting, use the following outline.

1. Why I like computer science.
2. Why I want a(n) {M.S., Ph.D.} in computer science.
3. Why I want to attend ESU.
4. Why my favorite area of computer science is {software engineering, distributed computing, automata theory, AI, etc.}.
5. What I hope to gain personally during my graduate studies.
6. What my ultimate career goals are (teach, research, get rich, help widows and orphans, etc.) and why a degree from ESU will help me achieve those goals.