



GRADUATE PROGRAMS

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT

Do I Need a Personal Statement If I Have to Write a Statement of Purpose?

Use this decision guide to help you determine whether you need a personal statement in addition to your statement of purpose—and how to tailor your writing accordingly.

Decision Guide

1. The application asks **ONLY** for a Statement of Purpose (SOP):

- You **DO NOT** need a separate personal statement.
- Focus your SOP on academic/professional goals, preparation, and program fit.
-  **TIP:** Briefly include a personal story or motivation (1–2 sentences) to add context and personality.

2. The application asks for **BOTH** a Statement of Purpose **AND** a Personal Statement:

- You **MUST** write two separate documents.
-  SOP: Focus on research interests, career goals, and why you're applying.
-  Personal Statement: Share life experiences, identity, and your academic journey.
- Avoid repeating the same content—let each statement serve a unique purpose.

3. The application uses the terms interchangeably (or the prompt is unclear):

- Read the prompt carefully—it may ask for a mix of personal and professional content.
-  Write a blended statement that includes:
 - A personal introduction or story that motivates your academic interest
 - Your academic preparation and relevant experiences
 - Your short- and long-term goals
 - Why this program is a good fit for you

Final Tips

- Always read the instructions carefully—every program is different.
- If in doubt, contact the admissions office for clarification.
- Tailor your writing to each school and respond directly to their prompts.