**Part 1: Statement of purpose peer review**

You have written a draft of your own statement of purpose for a graduate program at UC Davis. Below is a chart that shows peer review partners.

|  |
| --- |
| **Peer Partners for Statement of Purpose Review** |
| **Sun** | **Yang** | **divinegunmail@gmail.com** | **Lu** | **Yiqing** | **timojojoj@gmail.com** |
| **Wei** | **Qijia** | **qjweiw@gmail.com** | **Pan** | **Yixuan** | **yixpan@gmail.com** |
| **Gao** | **Silin** | **silingao16@gmail.com**  | **Shao** | **Chengyuan** | **cyshao@ucdavis.edu**  |
| **Hu** | **Yuchen** | **notegeek7@gmail.com**  | **Su** | **Xiruo** | **zoeswan3333@gmail.com** |
| **Wang** | **Shuai** | **frswang98@gmail.com**  | **Tang** | **Yue** | **tyue2018@gmail.com** |
| **Du** | **Mengtao** | **mtaodu@gmail.com** | **Wang** | **Sujie** | **qtqtwa@gmail.com** |
| **Zhang** | **Hanyi** | **hanyizhang7@gmail.com**  | **Wang** | **Weihao** | **iseewwh796@gmail.com** |
| **Wang** | **Zexiao** | **wangzexiao0510@gmail.com** | **Wu** | **Yuheng** | **w843085105@gmail.com** |
| **Chen** | **Guorui** | **wonderboy.grchen@gmail.com**  | **Xie** | **Jingkai** | **corleonevito590@gmail.com** |
| **Chen** | **Pansheng** | **chenpansheng@gmail.com** | **Xu** | **Yuanyou** | **yuanyouxu515@gmail.com** |
| **Zhi** | **Dong** | **doozy.dongzhi@gmail.com**  | **Xu** | **Zixuan** | **923xuzixuan@gmail.com**  |
| **Gao** | **Gan** | **gaogan96@gmail.com**  | **Yang** | **Yue** | **kxyyang@ucdavis.edu** |
| **Ge** | **Youheng** | **geyouheng12345@gmail.com** | **Huang** | **Yizhou** | **timyzhhuang@gmail.com**  |
| **Hu** | **Yuhong** | **hrain3073@gmail.com** | **Yu** | **Hang** | **yuhang0580@gmail.com** |
| **Jian** | **Yue** | **jianyuelalala@gmail.com** | **Yu** | **Ke** | **hdvrew27794831@gmail.com** |
| **Li** | **Chengxi** | **lcx970715@gmail.com** | **Yuan** | **Lin** | **yuanlinzju@gmail.com** |
| **Lin** | **Nan** | **lnan3981@gmail.com** | **Zhang** | **Xiyuan** | **xiyuanzhang.gm@gmail.com**  |
| **Liu** | **Kaiwen** | **liukaiwen0@gmail.com** | **Sun** | **Yile** | **syl98622@gmail.com** |

**Instructions for sharing a google document with someone:**

1. **COPY** your partner’s gmail address from the chart above.
2. Go into your Statement of purpose and **click on the SHARE icon** 
3. In the PEOPLE box, type your partner’s gmail address.
4. Remember to ***uncheck* the Notify People Box**. Then, click OK. It will ask you if you are sure, click YES.
5. Check your SHARED WITH ME to see your partner’s document. Go into the document and read it, making comments in the margin.

**#1: FOCUS ON THE READER’S NEEDS**

What the writer writes is based on the needs of the reader. The readers of a statement of purpose have very specific expectations. The chart below lists these criteria based on these expectations. Answer the questions by choose, YES if the SOP completely fulfils the reader’s criteria, SOMEWHAT if it does a little bit, but could be improved, and NO if the criteria has not at all been fulfilled.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Yes** | **Somewhat** | **No** |
| **Introduction** |
| Does the document begin with a statement demonstrating intellectual passion for the field—what thrills or excites the writer about the research they’ve done or would like to do? |  |  |  |
| Does the introduction provide a BRIEF anecdote that illustrates what sparked and sustains the writer’s passion for the field? |  |  |  |
| Does the introduction end with a clear statement about the specific institution and program the writer is applying for? |  |  |  |
| **First Part of Body - focused on your 1) intellectual experience with the field and 2) your ability to be successful in graduate school** |
| Does the document convey that the writer has the energy and perseverance to succeed through examples of accomplishments and/or challenges they’ve faced and how they’ve overcome those challenges? |  |  |  |
| Does the document provide relevant experiences as concrete support, all vividly illustrated through detail, dialogue, and/or imagery, then explain how each experience might inform the research the writer would like to pursue in their graduate studies? |  |  |  |
| Does the document, through its examples, show the writer is familiar with the procedures and expectations of scholarship and professional training in their field by using the professional language of the field to describe their scholarly interests? |  |  |  |
| Does the document make the writer’s research/academic plans clear? |  |  |  |
| Do the qualities discussed in the document demonstrate the qualities of a graduate student: motivated, flexible/adaptable, creative/independent thinker, mature and professional? (Note, the writer should not say they are those things, but focus on a few experiences that SHOW these qualities.) |  |  |  |
| **Second Part of Body: links the writer’s interests to the specific institution and possibly to a specific faculty member’s work.** |
| Does the document specifically about research interests the institution’s graduate program? |  |  |  |
| Does the document mention specific faculty whose work the writer may be interested in and why? |  |  |  |
| **Conclusion: summarizes why the writer would excel in their studies, especially at the particular institution to which they are applying, and how this program will help them in the future.** |
| The writer describes what he or she would like to do after they receive a degree. |  |  |  |
| The writer explains how graduate study is an important step toward their professional plan? |  |  |  |

1. Based on what we’ve discussed and the questions above, what do you think are the STRENGTHS of this statement? Think about what your answered YES to. What expectations for a statement of purpose were fulfilled?
2. What do you think the weaknesses are? In other words, what did you answer SOMEWHAT or NO to that you think needs to be improved? Include brief advice you would give to the student.

**#2: Reduce wordiness and beautiful words**

Academic writers in North America usually state the point more directly with less wordiness and fancy words than in most other countries (unlike in poetry or literature). The beauty of writing is not more important than communicating directly. Write 1 or 2 sentences below that are wordy. Then, reduce wordiness as we did in class to make them more direct.

Sentence(s):

Revised sentence(s):

**#3: Put major points first and emphasize key points**

One of the most common features of North American writing is this direct, up front approach. Topic sentences reflect the general point of the whole paragraph.

* Would you say the topic sentences state the main point of each paragraph?
* Does each paragraph make a DIFFERENT point?
* Choose ONE topic sentence, reread the paragraph, and try to revise it so it better represents the main idea of the paragraph.

After graduating with a first-class degree from [redacted], University of [redacted], I felt I should gain some practical experience working in a research environment to gain first-hand knowledge of what the life of a research scientist entails.

My love of biology started in high school.

At undergraduate level, my interests became more focused.

Many people have asked me why I did not proceed directly to graduate studies after graduating.

In selecting the University of [redacted] I have been influenced by the way your research program addresses biological questions at the levels of molecule, gene and cell.

Topic sentence:

Revised topic sentence:

**#4 Reduce humility, modesty, politeness, and esteem**

North American writing demonstrates a general lack of humility, especially compared to most Asian writers. Compared to many other cultures, American academic writing has an overall lack of polite phrases or words of flattery.

Can you find any sentences that seem to be excessive in politeness? If so, type it below and revise it to be less humble, but still respectful.

Sentence:

Revision:

**#5 Write specifically and concretely**

Examples, analogies, and definitions are highly valued in North American scholarly writing. Clear examples and detailed explanations are used throughout a paper. State your point, use a transitional phrase like “for example,” then tell the audience how this example relates to your point.

Choose one of the examples the writer uses and copy/paste it below. As the reader, do you feel there is enough specific information so you can see how relevant the example is? What else would you ask the writer about this example to make it clearer? Write 1-2 questions below.

Example from text:

Questions I need answered for the example to make sense:

**#6 Show Critical Thinking**

Original ideas and showing analysis of others’ ideas are highly appreciated. One way to demonstrate original thinking in a personal statement is to match the writer’s qualities and experience with the program. Copy/paste a passage that shows the writer’s original thinking about how they fit into the program. Or, copy/paste a passage that you think COULD BE a good opportunity for the writer to show this connection, and make suggestions about how it would demonstrate the writer’s analysis of the program and their skills/experience.

**When you have completed this peer review, COPY everything from the chart to here and PASTE it into the bottom of your Peer’s document so they can have a copy of this feedback in order to revise their statement.**

**Part 2: Personal Statement**

After we have gone through personal statements, complete the following:

**DIRECTIONS: Below is a personal sample statement. Read it carefully, and a conduct a peer review using the criteria for Personal Statement in the chart below, similar to your peer review for a statement of purpose. Then, complete your analysis of the six principles.**

For twenty-three years, my grandmother (a Veterinarian and an Epidemiologist) ran the Communicable Disease Department of a mid-sized urban public health department. The stories of Grandma Betty doggedly tracking down the named sexual partners of the infected are part of our family lore. Grandma Betty would persuade people to be tested for sexually transmitted diseases, encourage safer sexual practices, document the spread of infection and strive to contain and prevent it. Indeed, due to the large gay population in the city where she worked, Grandma Betty was at the forefront of the AIDS crises, and her analysis contributed greatly towards understanding how the disease was contracted and spread. My grandmother has always been a huge inspiration to me, and the reason why a career in public health was always on my radar.

Recent years have cemented that interest. In January 2012, my parents adopted my little brother Fred from China. Doctors in America subsequently diagnosed Fred with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD). My parents were told that if Fred’s condition had been discovered in China, the (very poor) orphanage in which he spent the first 8+ years of his life would have recognized his DMD as a death sentence and denied him sustenance to hasten his demise. It is not right that some people have access to the best doctors and treatment while others have no medical care. I want to pursue an MPH in Sociomedical Sciences at Columbia because studying social factors in health, with a particular focus on sociohealth inequities, will prepare me to address these inequities. The interdisciplinary approach of the program appeals to me greatly as I believe interdisciplinary approaches are the most effective way to develop meaningful solutions to complex problems.

My undergraduate education has prepared me well for my chosen career. Understanding the underlying structure of a group’s culture is essential to successfully communicating with the group. In studying folklore and mythology, I’ve learned how to parse the unspoken structures of folk groups, and how those structures can be used to build bridges of understanding. For example, in a culture where most illnesses are believed to be caused by witchcraft, as is the case for the Zande people of central Africa, any successful health intervention or education program would of necessity take into account their very real belief in witchcraft.

I now work in the healthcare industry for one of the largest providers of health benefits in the world. In addition to reigniting my passion for data and quantitative analytics, working for this company has immersed me in the business side of healthcare, a critical component of public health.

I intend to pursue a PhD in order to become an expert in how social factors affect health, particularly as related to gender and sexuality. order to become an expert in how social factors affect health, particularly as related to gender and sexuality. I intend to pursue a certificate in Sexuality, Sexual Health, and Reproduction. Working together with other experts to create effective interventions across cultures and societies, I want to help transform health landscapes both in America and abroad.

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|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expectations/Criteria | Yes | Somewhat | No |
| 1. Does the statement begin with an attention-grabbing narrative/anecdote?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the PS communicate a clear message about what makes the writer a strong applicant who is likely to have success in graduate school?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the writer discuss their own personal reasons for developing an interest in this field and applying to this grad program specifically?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the writer use specific examples to illustrate its key points with stories that demonstrate particular traits or references to scholars and works that have influenced the writer’s academic path?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. (Similar to the Statement of Purpose) Does the writer describe why they are a good fit for the program, and why the program is a good fit for them by discussing things about the program that appeal to them, how they will take advantage of those opportunities, and specific professors they might be interested in working with?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the writer use a variety of literary techniques to make descriptions vivid, but is not too informal?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. If the writer discusses challenges, do they put them in a positive light?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the statement end with the writer’s future plans?
 |  |  |  |

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2. What do you think the weaknesses are? In other words, what did you answer SOMEWHAT or NO to that you think needs to be improved? Include brief advice you would give to the student.
3. What suggestions would you offer the student if you could speak to them about this?

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Revised sentence(s):

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I intend to pursue a PhD in order to become an expert in how social factors affect health, particularly as related to gender and sexuality. order to become an expert in how social factors affect health, particularly as related to gender and sexuality.

Topic sentence:

Revised topic sentence:

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