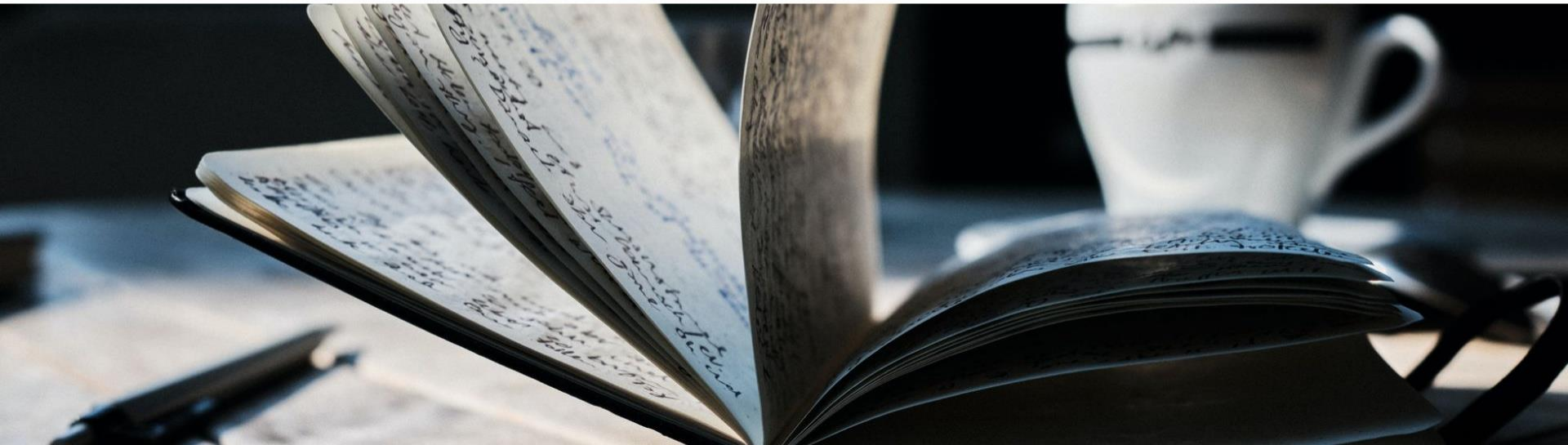# Writing for grad and professional school programs

# Who are we?



### Eden (she/her)

Lover of all thing's food! I love trying new foods, playing sports, fitness, and spending time with family and friends. I'm facilitating from the territories of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee Peoples.



### Becky (she/her)

I make windchimes from thrifted materials; I love apple crisp; and swimming with my dog. I'm facilitating from the territories of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee Peoples.

# What will we talk about today?

key terms

how writing is evaluated

things to write about

navigating disclosure

formatting conventions

# Key terms you might come across when preparing your application

- Personal Statement

- Research Proposal or Research Statement

- Statement of Intent or Letter of Intent

- Statement of Purpose or Letter of Purpose

- Personal Essay

- Secondary Essays

- Supplementary Information Form

# What is the purpose of this genre of writing?

- One part of an application to a graduate or professional school program

- Used by admissions committees to adjudicate applications

- A chance for you to communicate directly with the admissions committee

- A chance for you to say things in human words

# How will it be evaluated?

By Motivation

## What problem do you want to solve?

How do you know it's a problem? What have you learned about it over time?

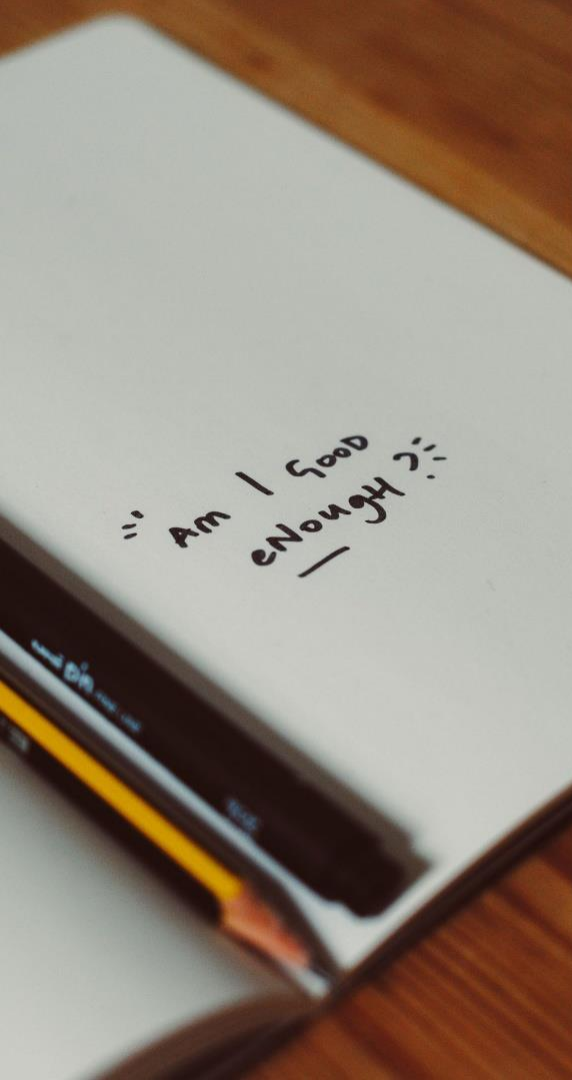## What is drawing you to this program?

What makes this a good next step for you? What makes this program a match for what you want?

## Who can you help with this degree?

How do you know they need help?

## Why are you interested in this topic?

What learning have you done in this area?

What is it, specifically, that you find genuinely exciting?

# How will it be evaluated?

## By Skills

### What are you good at?

How do you spend your time?

What do you do well?
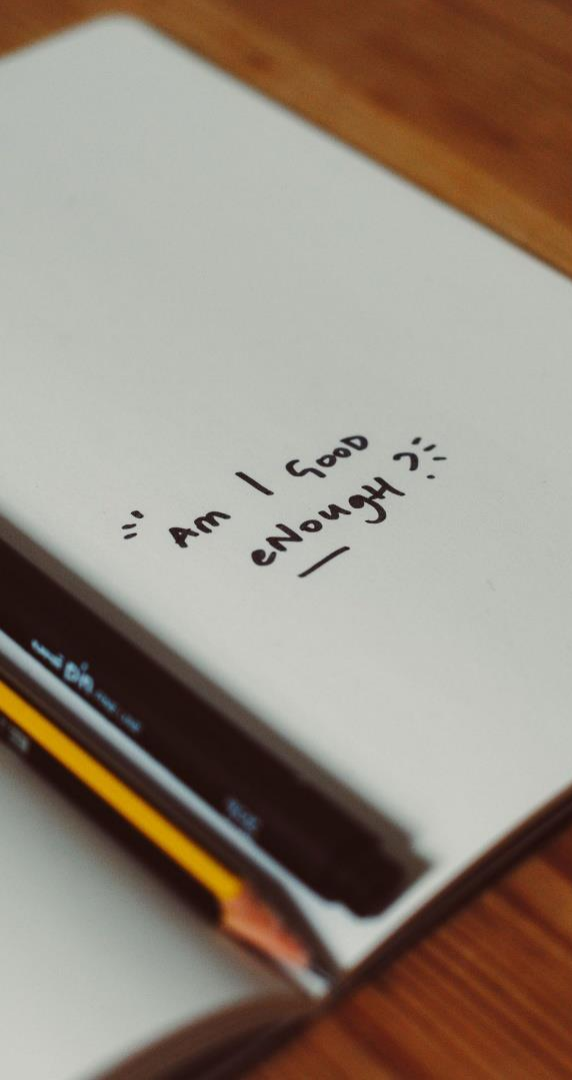
How do you know you do this well?

### What do you do that's different from other folks?

### What does it take to be good at this?

What does someone need to know, do, or learn?

When have you worked or learned in an environment like this?

### What have you observed or thought about that's relevant to this work?

# How will it be evaluated?

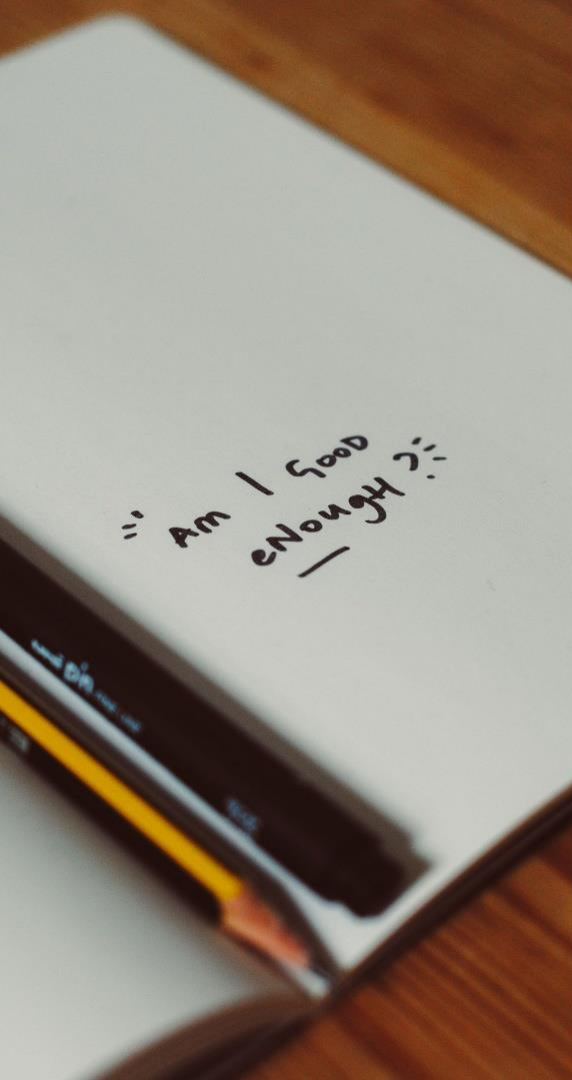## By Fit

**How did your interests motivate you to apply?**

**What do you want to learn and how do you want to learn it?**

How does this match the degree?

**How do your research interests match the faculty?**

**What are your goals when you finish this program?**

How do these match the program?

# What do I have to write about and what can I write about?

Each program will have experiences they'd like you to address. OFten folks share experiences that show your interest, ability, and skill in this disciplinary area or field of practice. Contacting the program could get you more transparent information. Some common themes include...

### Academics
- effective study habits
- relevant past
- research

### Lived Experience
- work or volunteer
- personal to self, family or friends
- foundational values
- something else!

### Other
- projects
- self-directed learning or work
- interpersonal skills

# How do I disclose life stuff?

You don't owe anyone a story.

Trust your sense of comfort with what and how you share.

Share details you want to; it's okay to leave some out.

It's okay if this brings up emotions for you.

# What are the formatting **conventions** of this document?

## Length

- Length varies by program
- 250 words to 2000 words

## Addressing and submitting the "letter"

- Letter format not required
- Document or text box

## Required parts

- Varies by program
- No direction or specific directions

## Ask for clarification

- You can always clarify requirements with the program you're applying to

# What are the unspoken **conventions** of this document?

### Essay-style

- Usually the only prose section of the application where you can say everything in human words

### First-person narrative

- Writing from your perspective about your life and experiences
- You can use "i" pronouns

### Sharing experiences

- Telling the committee about things you've done or experienced in your life that motivate your decision to apply

### This is hard!

- If you're feeling like this is tough work or like it's really hard to know what to share, that's real