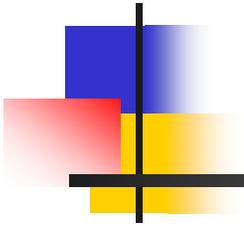
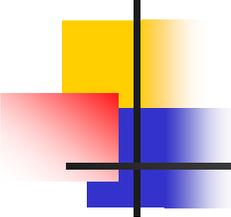


Writing an Effective Research Statement



**Heather Macdonald,
College of William and Mary**



Research Statements I

- **Picture** of you as a scientist
 - Your accomplishments and plans
 - Your approach
 - Context for your research
 - The significance of your work
- Sense of your **potential** - How likely are you to be successful in the new setting
- Tone and appearance



Research Statements II

It is expected that you will have begun to think coherently about research beyond your dissertation.

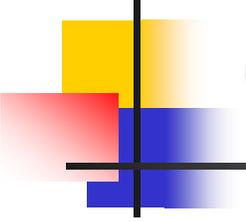
- The research statement tells
 - what you have been doing recently and currently,
 - in what direction you hope to go
 - how your research contributes to your field
- Along with your c.v., cover letter and letters of recommendation, it helps hiring committees assess your
 - areas of specialty
 - potential to get grants
 - academic ability
 - compatibility with the department or school

From Career Services, University of Pennsylvania



Undergraduate-only department (one perspective)

- Your potential
 - Ideas/plans for work beyond the PhD
 - Ideas/plans for working with undergraduate research students
 - If high-tech, indication that you understand departmental constraints and have a plan in mind
 - What you might do locally (especially regarding undergraduate research)
 - Ability to get some external funding (possibly)



Graduate program (one perspective)

- Your potential
 - Ideas/plan for work beyond the PhD
 - Is research cutting edge?
 - Ability (ideally, demonstrated) to get external funding; potential funding sources
 - Fit of potential collaborations internally and strength of external collaborations
 - Facilities/equipment needs



Suggestions: Content

- Write clearly and concisely.
- What excites you about your research?
- Where appropriate, acknowledge the work of others.
- Use language that shows you've begun to think of yourself as an independent researcher.
- If you have identified funding organizations likely to support your research, indicate that.

From Career Services, University of Pennsylvania



Suggestions: Format

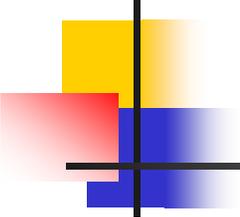
- Use heading (and subheadings), bullets, whitespace.
- Avoid page-long paragraphs.
- Length of 1-2 pages, 3 pages at most.
- Get feedback.
- Proofread.

From Career Services, University of Pennsylvania



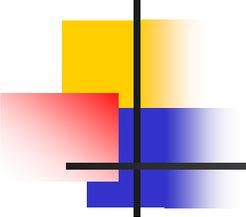
Other Points

- Different audience → different statements
- Your research statement needs to reflect YOU
- Get others to critically review your statement (content, tone, appearance)
- Everyone's will be different.



Some Starter Questions

- Research Accomplishments
 - Description of program (what are your goals, questions, ...?)
 - What are your major accomplishments (to the field, resulting publications)?
 - Why is your research cutting edge? Significant?
 - What methods, approaches, equipment do you use?



Some Starter Questions

- Vision of your research program
 - Description of program (goals, questions, ...)
 - Where do you want your research program to be in the next 5 years, next 20 years?
 - Why is it topical? Cutting edge? Significant?
 - Why are you excited about it?
 - How does your research integrate with your teaching?
 - What will your research program and group (i.e. students) look like in the future?
 - Potential collaborators?
 - Other points: funding, facilities/equipment