

**WRITING A UNIQUE
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**
OCTOBER 3, 2014



WHAT DO UNIVERSITIES WANT IN A GRAD SCHOOL APPLICANT?

Excellence

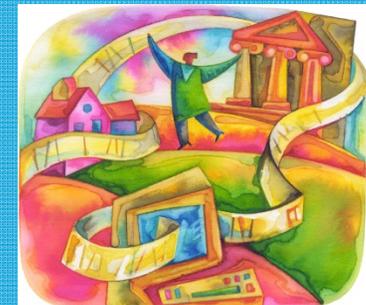
Diversity

Individuality and creativity

Research experience

Integrity

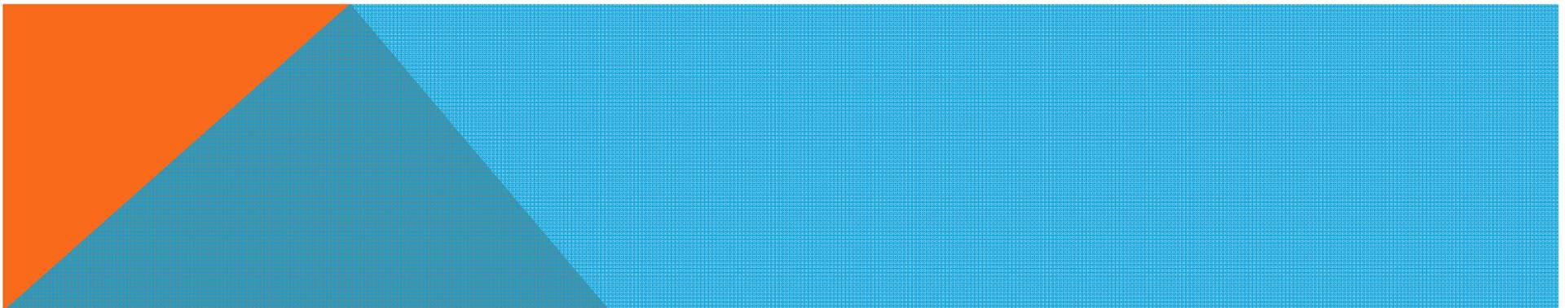
Good fit



EXCELLENCE

If excellence were defined by perfect TOEFL scores, GRE scores, and perfect GPAs, then there would only be Chinese graduate students in the United States.

U.S. institutions care about more than scores and grades, but they may well have minimum requirements.

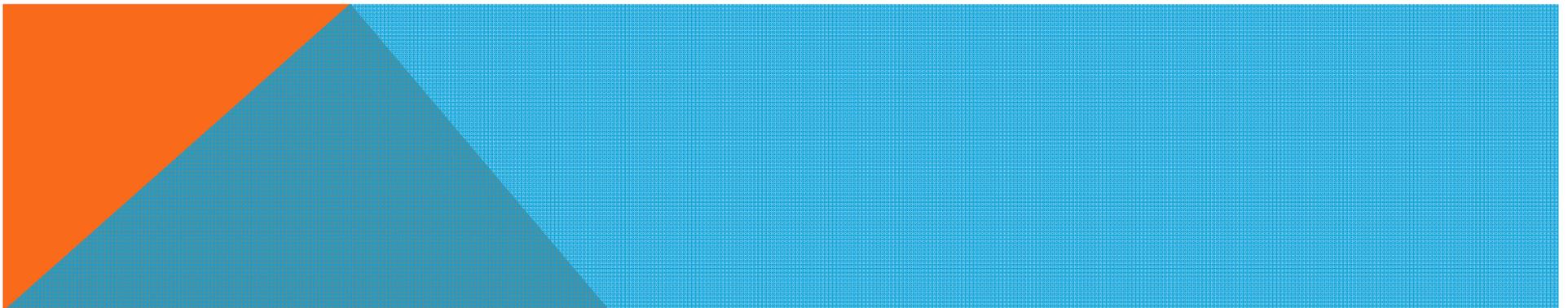


DIVERSITY

As a Vietnamese national, you have a particular value to U.S. institutions.

Diversity is seen as a measure of excellence for many educational institutions

Some universities will ask for a diversity statement.

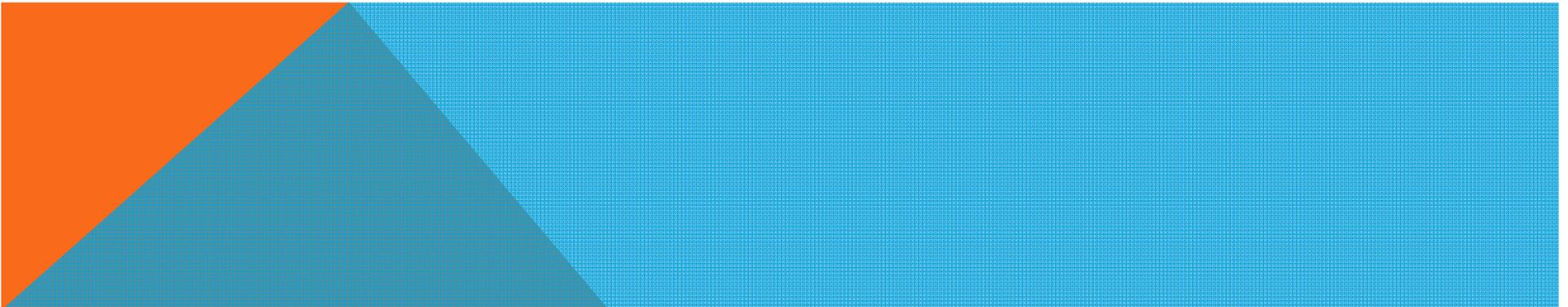


INDIVIDUALITY AND CREATIVITY

A personal statement should describe who you and what makes you special.

What is special about you and how will this individuality contribute to the graduate school in the United States?

Why should a university invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in your education?

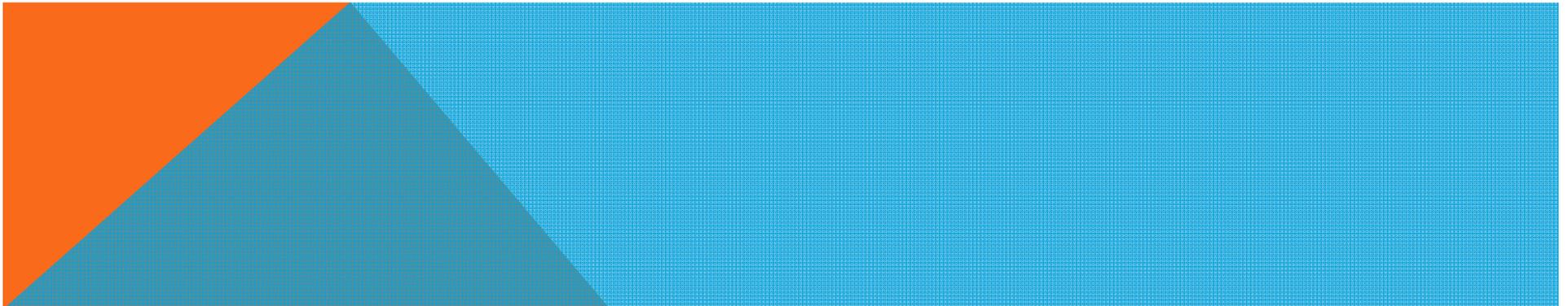


RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research experience is particularly important for admission to a graduate program.

If you don't have any significant research experience right now, you should try to get some, even if you must volunteer your time.

Without this experience, you may need to apply for a Master's degree initially, rather than a Ph.D.



INTEGRITY

No plagiarism

If you haven't done any research, don't say that you have.

Do not tell every member of the department that you want to work with him/her.

No exaggerations.

Be careful about what you say about women
other races.



GOOD FIT

Professors will be working with you for years, so they do have to like you and believe that you will fit on their team.

You could be turned away because there aren't enough or even any openings for new graduate students this year.

You need to be able to work with the professor and the other students.



WHO ARE YOU?

Who are you?

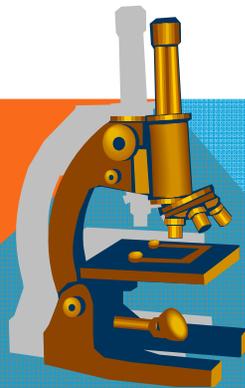
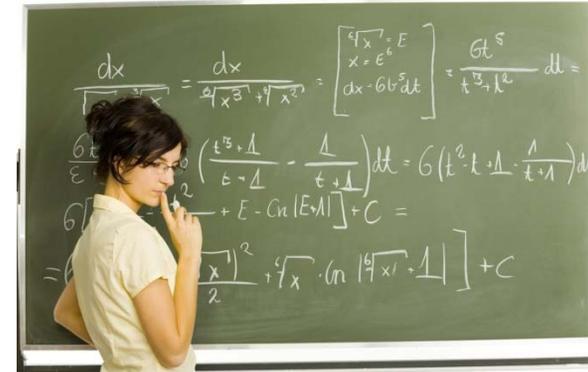
In what way are you unique?

Why do you want to go to graduate school?

What research experience do you have?

What are your goals?

What do you know about this university or department?



THE WRITING PROCESS



1. Brainstorm.
2. Write. Re-write. Edit. Re-write. Update. Edit. Rewrite.
3. Repeat.

Ask everyone you know for their feedback and their impression.

Ask your mentor, ask your friends in your field of study, ask your brother, ask your grandmother.



IMPORTANT TIPS

Ask a native speaker to review your essays.

Keep to the word limits that are in the application instructions.

Put all the deadline dates on a calendar.

Don't procrastinate.

Double check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

