

**WRITING A UNIQUE  
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**  
OCTOBER 2, 2015



# WHAT DO UNIVERSITIES WANT IN A GRAD SCHOOL APPLICANT?

**Excellence**

**Diversity**

**Individuality and creativity**

**Research experience**

**Integrity**

**Good fit**

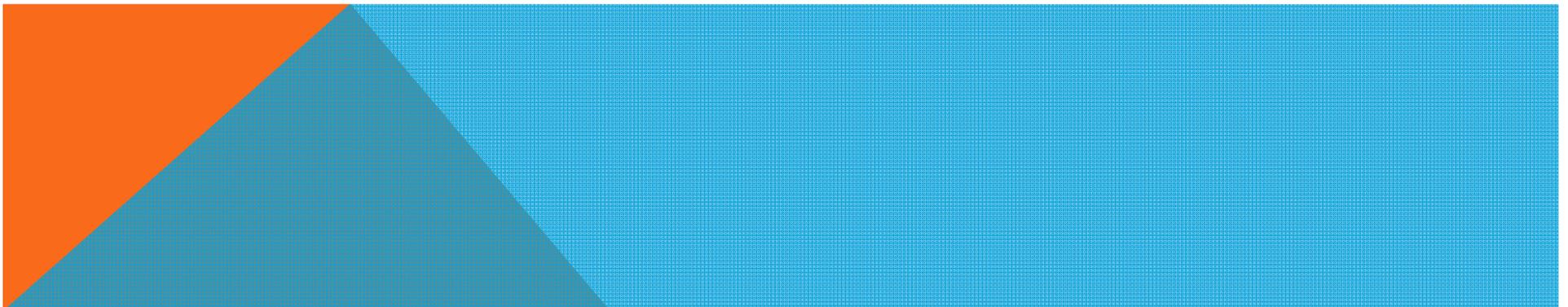


## **EXCELLENCE**

**If admissions were defined by perfect TOEFL and GRE scores, and high GPAs, then it would be very hard indeed to get into U.S. graduate programs.**

**U.S. institutions care about more than good scores and grades, but they usually have minimum requirements.**

**You will need to make clear how your excellence will contribute to a graduate program.**

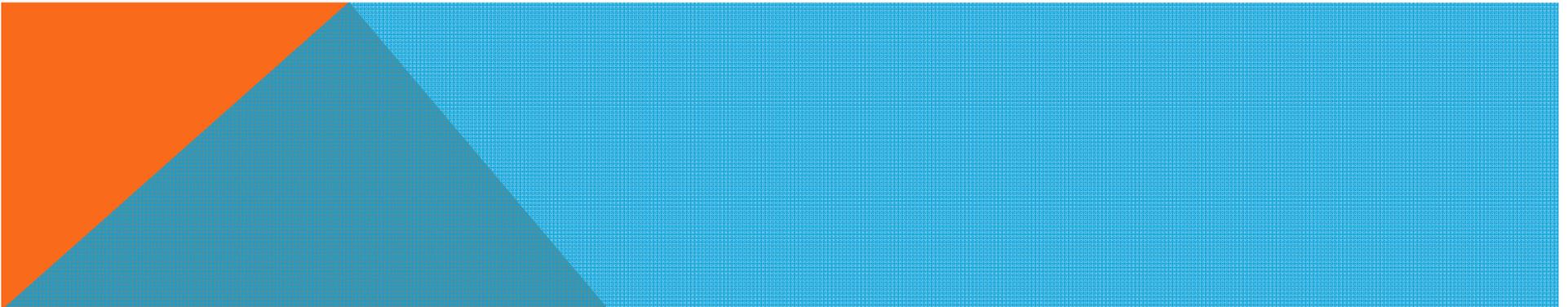


## **DIVERSITY**

**Vietnamese nationals have a particular value to U.S. institutions.**

**Diversity is a measure of excellence for many educational institutions.**

**Some universities will ask for a diversity statement. Think about how your background can contribute to new fields of study or inquiry.**

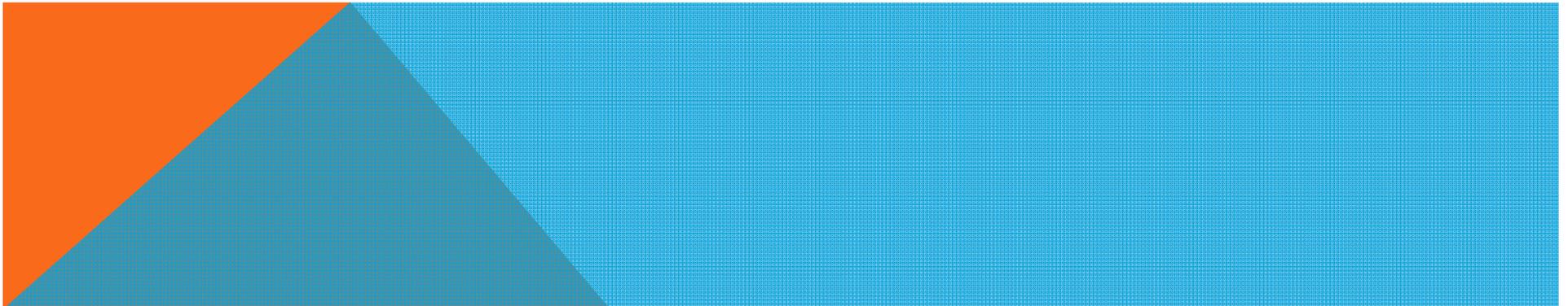


## **INDIVIDUALITY AND CREATIVITY**

**A personal statement should describe who you are 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?**

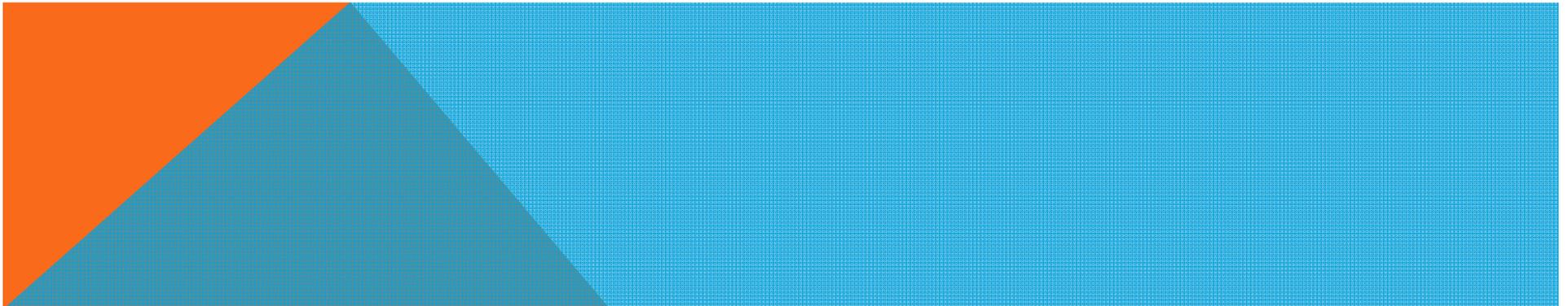


## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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 or her.

No exaggerations.

Be careful about what you say about women or other races.



## GOOD FIT

Professors will work 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 openings for new graduate students this year, so don't take offense.

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



**WHO ARE YOU?**

**Who are you?**

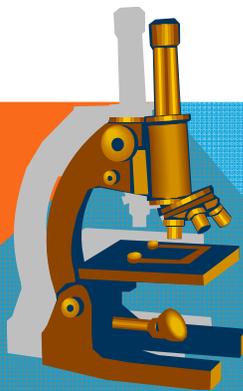
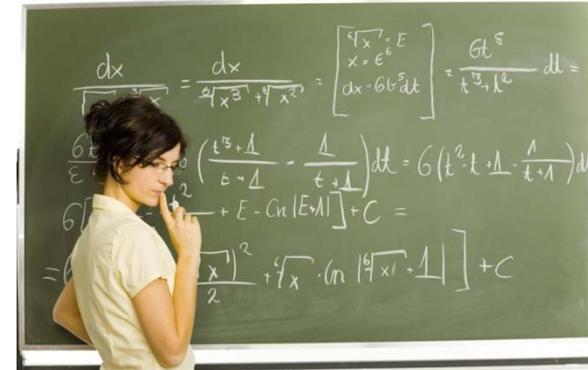
**In what way are you unique?**

**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.**
4. **Ask everyone you know for feedback. 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, but don't rely on them too much.**

**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**

