

Crafting your research statement

Entry into McGill's Psychology program is very competitive. Many applicants have fantastic objective credentials such as GPA or GRE. Yet these scores don't tend to predict success in graduate school. At McGill and in the Seeing Human Lab, we are particularly interested in passion for the topic and in the ability and willingness to work very hard. We think these factors go together. The research statement is an important opportunity to set yourself apart, illustrate your writing ability, interests, and fit within the broader program.

The most important thing you can do to increase your chances of admission is to articulate why you would be a great fit for our Psych Science program. We are looking for a fit in terms of research experience and interests. **We are especially interested in applicants who have read some of our research, more importantly have thought critically about it, and most importantly have specific ideas for extending it in a novel direction.** I am looking for applicants who outline their research interests, propose interesting questions, and communicate their passion for these issues

A PhD is a major commitment and the field is extremely competitive. We want to see evidence that you know what you are getting into and that you will thrive. As you write your statement, you should address the following questions: Why are you pursuing a PhD? What are your core research interests? Why are these issues scientifically or practically important? How have your previous experiences informed these interests and prepared you for your PhD at McGill? Why is McGill (and the Seeing Human lab) well suited for pursuing these interests? What skills do you bring to McGill and which skills do you hope to acquire? Why is McGill a good place to develop these skills? Most importantly, how will these skills help you address your specific research questions?

Statements that answer these questions are truly informative. They tell our faculty why you want to complete your PhD at McGill, the issues you hope to address, the skills you bring, and the skills you hope to acquire. Address these questions clearly and in a compelling fashion will make your application more informative and increase your chances of admission.