

Self-Introductions For Graduate Students



GRADUATE COLLEGE
Graduate Center

Self-introductions are situational and audience dependent. Are you talking with a colleague at a conference or an industry professional on a phone for an informational interview? What information is relevant for your conversation? How can you best introduce your career/professional identity? What is most important for them to know about you and your research, skills, and experiences? How do you create your personal professional identity that is distinct from your advisor's? These are all important considerations as you craft your self-introduction.

Have a clear outcome in mind as you create your self-introduction. What do you want this person to take away from your introduction? If you are talking about your research, you will want them to understand what you're doing, why it is important, and what you hope to achieve. If you are talking about your skills and experiences, you will want them to understand specific examples of your skills and the extent of your experience.

Consider what jargon or terms are most appropriate for the conversation. It is useful to tailor introductions for individuals in your discipline, individuals in your general field, and individuals not in your field. It is also helpful to have a brief 30 second version for a quick introduction and an expanded two-minute version that provides a more in-depth description of you and your work. Write out your self-introduction in full sentences so that you create a cohesive, yet succinct description of yourself. Be sure to practice this with friends many times before using it in public so that you have a crisp but not formulaic introduction.

SELF-INTRODUCTION OUTLINE:

Who Are You? I am a graduate student/postdoc in DEPT X or studying DISCIPLINE X at The University of Arizona. You can include the graduation date if you are close to graduating; this lets the person know you are ready for your next career step.

What do you do/study/skills/experience? What is the important information you want this person to know about you? Is this an academic or industry/ professional introduction?

Examples:

Introducing your research at a conference: "My research examines the constraints on women's production of art in early modern Europe and discusses the role of women engravers and how their work influenced creative works in the period."

Introduction to a potential employer, highlighting transferable skills: "I have 5 years' experience designing study plans, conducting qualitative research, and communicating stories using written narratives and visualizations."