

Statement of Purpose for Graduate School

Your statement of purpose (SOP) is your opportunity to **tell the admissions officer what the other parts of your application can't.**

It's how you can **express who you are in your own voice, with a selection of illuminating experiences.**

It tells the reader **who you are and who you can and will become as a result of graduate school.**

Understand the Goal:

- **Know what the program wants:** Each program has its specific prompt or focus. Read it carefully and tailor your SOP to address those points.
- **Showcase your passion and fit:** Demonstrate your genuine interest in the field and how your background aligns with the program's research or focus areas.

Crafting Your Content:

- **Start strong:** Hook the reader with an engaging introduction that your passion and interests.
- **Highlight your experience:** Briefly summarize your academic background, research experience (if any), and relevant work experiences that showcase your skills and preparedness for graduate studies.
- **Focus on research interests:** Clearly articulate your research interests and how they align with the program's faculty expertise or research areas. Show your understanding of current research trends.
- **Future goals:** Discuss your long-term career goals and how this graduate program will equip you to achieve them.
- **Be specific:** Use specific examples and achievements to illustrate your points. Personalize your writing and avoid generic statements.
- **Program fit:** Show why this specific program is the ideal fit for you. Mention faculty members you'd like to work with (if applicable) and how their research aligns with your interests.

Writing Mechanics:

- **Clarity and conciseness:** Write clearly, concisely, and professionally. Avoid jargon.
- **Active voice:** Use the active voice to demonstrate your initiative around your experiences.
- **Proofread meticulously:** Ensure your SOP is free of grammatical errors, typos, and formatting issues.

Additional Tips:

- **Get feedback:** Ask your career coach, professors, advisors, family, and/or mentors to review your SOP and provide constructive criticism.
- **Adhere to guidelines:** Follow the program's specific instructions regarding length, formatting, and submission requirements.
- **Start early:** Give yourself ample time to revise and refine your work.