



## **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE\***

The Statement of Purpose is of great importance and should be prepared with care. Not only does it provide LASPAU with essential information about your academic needs so that we can select an appropriate graduate program for you, but it is also sent to universities as one of the documents that form part of your application file during the placement process. The Statement of Purpose provides you with the opportunity to present yourself to a graduate admissions committee.

People in the graduate school admissions office and in the department will read this essay closely. From the essay, they will evaluate your ability to write and to express yourself articulately. They will also look for information on what you want to study, your background and your reasons for pursuing the proposed program of study.

Your Statement of Purpose should be clear, concise (only 1 to 2 pages), and in complete sentence structure. However, try to be as informative as possible throughout the Statement. Following is a sample outline of what should be included in your Statement of Purpose.

**OPENING PARAGRAPH.** Here, you want to introduce yourself and give your reasons for pursuing your proposed program of study. Explain why you chose this field, what motivated you, and what you plan on doing with the degree you earn.

**QUALIFICATIONS.** In this section, the aim is to build a foundation for your forthcoming work. You should discuss your experiences in the following:

1. Your university studies in general and how they relate to what you intend to do in graduate school.
2. Relevant professional experiences (i.e., jobs, community activities, leadership in school organizations), include your current work and position.
3. Your expertise and accomplishments in your field, including any research you have performed. If applicable, you should mention the project and name of the professor under whose direction you worked.
4. Explain (briefly) any discrepancies on your transcript which would include a lower performance in a particular semester or year. No details are necessary.
5. Mention any area of specialization you would like to pursue. If you are applying for a doctoral program, be sure to discuss in depth your proposed research/dissertation.

**BACKGROUND.** Here, you want to tell the school about yourself. You could include whether a family member in or someone in your community influenced your chosen field of interest. Also, you may want to give examples of personal attributes or qualities that you know will help you successfully complete graduate study. For instance, describe your determination to achieve your goals, your initiative and ability to develop ideas, and your capacity to work through problems independently.

**CLOSING PARAGRAPH.** Finally, leave the reader with a strong sense that you are qualified and will be successful in graduate or professional school.

Be sure to have a native speaker of English help you with the essay. Please also proofread the essay carefully to catch any spelling, typing or other errors.

---

\*Adapted from the web site of the Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin:  
<http://info.gradsch.wisc.edu/admin/admissions/purpose.html>