

Personal Statement / Letter of Intent

The following will provide some general points to help guide this important component of your application process.

We encourage you to check each program you are applying to for their specific guidelines and suggestions.

Good Applications are:

Well Researched - Know the program, school, profession and yourself

- Have a clear understanding of the program
- Know the skills and knowledge needed for the profession or research area
- You'll also need a strong understanding of yourself

Insightful - Description is not enough

- Ask yourself questions to get to a level of insight expected.
- What do you want to learn and why?
- Why do I want x program or profession? ... Then ask "why" again

Credible - Your statements are backed up with evidence

- Provide examples, evidence, stories
- Think of the 3 R's when considering which stories to use: Relevant, Responsibility level and Recent (as possible)

Specific - Provide details, so they can have a "picture"

- Include enough details so the readers get a picture of the situation or experience.
- Don't assume the reader knows

Precise - Well articulated and efficient with words

- Review and fine tune your writing

Well Written - It doesn't have to be fancy, just well written

- Should be well organized, easy to follow and engaging to read.
- Vocabulary, grammar, essay structure, etc.
- Check and double check for grammar and spelling mistakes.



Personal - It is about your experience and represents you

- Give the committee a glimpse into the person you are and/or your interests motivations
- Ask yourself if this could be anyone's statement or is it uniquely yours – based on your perspective, attitudes, viewpoint.

Final Tips

- Start early. Give yourself ample time to make many revisions.
- Demonstrate your motivation and preparation.
- Target your writing to each school(s) and/or program(s) using your research about what they offer and how your skills, interests, and experiences align.
- Most important – ensure it is focused to the program and follows instructions/guidelines provided (ex. Word or character count, page limit, spacing, font size/style). Some may be specific while others are vague.

Resources

Additional Guides and Tips

<https://cloudfront.ualberta.ca/-/media/careercentre/documents/publications/personal-statement-guidebook.pdf>

<http://grad.unm.edu/resources/gs-forms/letter-of-intent.html>

www.grad.ubc.ca/prospective-students/application-admission/statement-interest

<http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/admission-letters/>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/642/01/>

Writing Supports

<https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/tools/tips/#fyiWRITING>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/>

- Application support is available through the Student Success Centre – appointments available through OSCARplus.mcmaster.ca

