Statement of Purpose

One of the most challenging parts to an application packet, the statement of purpose needs to reflect who you are and why you would be an asset to the graduate program to which you are applying. Some universities and programs have specific guidelines for the statement of purpose. Make sure you are following the program's guidelines and answering all questions they have asked. The statement of purpose should be unique to each program you apply to.

Identify your goals
- Consider why you feel so passionate about your subject area
- Recall experiences that confirmed the field you want to work and study in
- Evaluate your personality, aptitudes, and interests
- Explore career paths within your degree

Think about where you want to be after completing your graduate degree
- Know if you will be able to achieve your goals with your Master's degree or if a Ph.D. will be the natural next step
- Plan out your personal, educational, and career goals
- Be realistic

Write about your goals
- Explain your motivations
- Share snapshots of experiences that made you want to enter the field
- Show what steps you have already taken to meet your goals
- Tailor your past experiences and graduate school experience to your goals
- Keep your goals statement focused
- Commit to a single clear career path in your application

Cover all topics of interest
- Sell them on why their program is a good match for you
- Highlight your academic preparation for the program and future interests
- Relate personal stories or significant events that bring you and your background to life
- Discuss why you chose their program specifically
- Be knowledgeable about the program and what you plan on doing after graduation

Take your time
- Remember your audience is department faculty who makes admission decisions about each student who applies
- This is your chance to express who you are and your academic goals
- Convey your personality and intellectual abilities
- Give yourself time to write, review, and edit your statement of purpose without rushing
- Have one or two people read through and edit your document before it is finalized