

# PERSONAL STATEMENT – LETTER OF INTENT

Are you not sure what makes a good personal statement or letter of intent? The following will provide some general points to help guide you through this important component of your application process.

We also encourage you to research each program to find the specific document guidelines and suggestions.

## FIRST, WHAT DOES THE PROGRAM REQUIRE?

- Be clear if you are writing a personal statement or a letter of interest/intent.
- Follow the prompts and focus your responses.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

### Letter of Intent or Letter of Interest

- Usually required by academic/research-focused programs
- Represents your intellectual interest in the program
- Will be focused on the relevant academic and research experiences
- Showcases your fit with the department and intended research supervisor

### Personal Statements or Responses to Questions

- Usually required by programs that are preparing you for a profession or discipline
- Represents your personal insight into abilities, interests, motivations and experiences
- Illustrates your competencies and knowledge of the profession and program
- Showcases your fit with the program and profession

## 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 this program or profession? Then ask why again.

**Credible:** Your statements are backed up with evidence

- Provide examples, evidence and stories.
- Think of the three Rs when considering which stories to use: relevance, responsibility level and recentness.



**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 anything about you or your situation.

**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

- Your writing should be well organized, easy to follow and engaging to read.
- Use proper vocabulary, grammar, structure, etc.
- Check and double check for grammar and spelling mistakes.

**Personal:** It is about your experience, and it represents you

- Give the committee a glimpse into the person you are and/or your interests and motivations.
- Ask yourself if this could be anyone’s statement. 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 and program by being clear about what their program offers.

## RESOURCES

Additional Guides and Tips

- [Purdue University Online Writing Lab](#)
- [University of Alberta Personal Statements Guidebook](#)
- [University of British Columbia Statement of Interest](#)
- [University of New Mexico Letter/Statement of Intent](#)
- [University of Toronto Admission Letters](#)
- [University of Toronto Law Personal Statements Examples](#)

### [SSC Further Education Resources](#)

Application support is available through the Student Success Centre. One-on-one appointments are available through [OSCARplus](#) > Student Success Centre > Appointments > Careers.

