

Statement of Purpose - Worksheet

When applying for graduate or professional programs, you may be asked to provide a “Statement of Purpose” or “Personal Statement”. This statement is your opportunity to share your achievements, qualifications and goals to admissions committee. Use this worksheet to help you brainstorm and reflect on your experiences that should be highlighted on your statement.

What’s special, unique, distinctive, and/or impressive about you or your life story?

What details of your life (personal or family challenges, history, people or events that have shaped you or influenced your goals) might help the committee better understand you or help set you apart from other applicants?

When did you become interested in this field and what have you learned about it (and about yourself) that has further stimulated your interest and reinforced your conviction that you are well suited to this field? What insights have you gained?

How have you learned about this field—through classes, readings, seminars, work or other experiences, or conversations with people already in the field?

What are your academic/career goals?

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Are there any gaps or discrepancies in your academic record that you should explain (great grades but mediocre LSAT or GRE scores) or a distinct upward pattern of your GPA if it was only average in the beginning?

Have you had to overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships (for example, economic, familial, or physical) in your life?

What personal characteristics (for example, integrity, compassion, and/or persistence) do you possess that would improve your prospects for success in the field or profession? Is there a way to demonstrate or document that you have these characteristics?

What skills (for example, leadership, communicative, analytical) do you possess?

Why might you be a stronger candidate for graduate school—and more successful and effective in the profession or field than other applicants?

What are the most compelling reasons you can give for the admissions committee to be interested in you?