



Writing the Statement of Purpose

A) Things to Keep in Mind:

1. What the admissions committee will read between the lines: motivation, competence, potential as a graduate student.
2. Emphasize everything from a positive perspective and write in an active, not a passive, voice.
3. Demonstrate everything by example; don't say directly that you're a persistent person, demonstrate it.
4. You don't want to make excuses, but you can talk about the mistakes you've made as a learning experience.
5. If there is something important that happened (poverty, illness, excessive work, etc.), which affected your grades go ahead and state it, but write it affirmatively, that is, in a way that shows your perseverance.
6. Make sure everything is linked with continuity and focus.
7. The essay should be 500-600 words (1 to 1½ pages) single-space, typed, 12pt. font size.

B) Writing the Statement of Purpose:

Part 1: Introduction

This is where you tell them what you want to study. For example, "I wish to pursue an MS degree in Mechanical Engineering with an emphasis in controls."

Part 2: Summarize what you did as an undergraduate

- a) Important class or classes you took which stimulated your desire for graduate study, such as a specific project for a class.
- b) Research you did. Indicate with whom, the title of the project, what your responsibilities were, and the outcome. Write technically; professors are the people who read these statements.
- c) Work experience, especially if you had any kind of responsibility for testing, designing, or researching a product or apparatus.

Part 3: If you graduated and worked for a while and are returning to grad school, indicate what you've been doing while working: company, work/design team, responsibilities, what you learned. You can also indicate here how this helped you focus your graduate studies.

Part 4: Here you indicate what you want to study in graduate school in greater detail. This is a greater elaboration of your opening paragraph.

- a) Indicate area of interest, then state questions you might have which are associated with the topic, i.e. what you might be interested in studying. You should have an area of emphasis selected before you write the statement.
- b) Call the department or look on the web for information about the professors and their research. Are there professors whose interests match yours? If so, indicate this, as it shows that you have done your homework and are highly motivated. (Be sincere, however, don't make up something bogus just to impress people.)
- c) End your statement in a positive and confident manner indicating a readiness for the challenges of graduate study.