

Guidelines for Writing a Statement of Intent for Graduate Studies in the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies (FCCS)

General Observations:

A statement of intent expresses your scholarly interests and applies them to a specific research project. When envisioning your project, think of it as an exercise in possibilities, but be strategic, because the project must be manageable within the time frame of the degree. The expected length is about two single-spaced pages.

Key Points to Cover in a Statement of Intent:

1. Purpose:

- ▶ Describe the research you will undertake, specifying your research question(s) and the type of project (major research paper, Masters thesis, or doctoral dissertation) being as clear, specific, and comprehensive as possible.
- ▶ At the beginning of this statement, provide a clear, one or two sentence summary statement of what you intend to do.
- ▶ Indicate specifically which texts, cultures, topics, and so forth will be included in your study, mentioning other aspects where relevant such as authors, cultural locations, theoretical issues, geographical regions, and historical periods.
- ▶ Indicate which faculty member(s) in FCCS might serve as potential supervisors of your project. It is expected that applicants to both Masters and doctoral programs in FCCS will develop this proposed research plan in consultation with a potential supervisor who has expertise in your research area before submitting the application for admission.

2. Intellectual Framework and Methodology:

- ▶ Identify the critical, historical, or theoretical framework within which you position your research.
- ▶ If the framework is theoretical, which theorist(s)? In what ways is this theory illuminating?
- ▶ If the framework is historical, why locate your analysis at this particular point in history?
- ▶ Explain your methodology by showing what intellectual and analytical work your study will undertake. For example, show how your study will historicize, theorize, deconstruct, analyze a specific aspect, contextualize, reconceptualize, or conduct a comparative analysis.
- ▶ Explain your project in stages, indicating how each stage facilitates the next.

3. Situate within Current Scholarship:

- ▶ Briefly indicate which scholars have recently published important work on this topic.
- ▶ Show how your approach intervenes in, challenges, or differs from current research.
- ▶ Is there a precise gap in current knowledge, or should a more gentle claim be made?

4. Significance:

- ▶ Explain the implications of your project and indicate how it will advance knowledge in the field.
- ▶ In other words, say why it matters: show what would be the impact of such a study. Think of this section as a response to a “So what?” or “Why is it significant” question.

5. Current Status:

- ▶ Give the admissions committee and potential supervisor(s) a clear sense of where you are in your academic career, and be specific about your current and previous degree(s).

6. Qualifications:

- ▶ Demonstrate how you are qualified and well positioned to undertake this research project. For example, show how your previous studies, work, or professional experience and training are relevant.
- ▶ For example, has your honours thesis on “x” topic, volunteer work in the community, or professional experience in “y” field provided the impetus or background for further study on this topic?

*** REMEMBER THAT CLARITY IS ESSENTIAL ***