**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**The general purpose of the Statement of Purpose (SOP) is to indicate strong research interest and your potential for advanced research. So this document will have more technical information and jargon. It will consist of your  motivational story;  education;  projects--academic and professional -- to show your expertise in the subject ; why you want to pursue the degree now; short and long term goals; why this school and lastly why you are a good fit for the school.**

**The accepted SOP format is given below:**

1. **Introduction**
2. **Academic Background**
3. Research/ Practical Experiences
4. **Work Experience**
5. **Why MS? Why now?**
6. Post MS Goals (This is what the SOP is all about—[after all it is a goals essay])
7. Why this particular university?
8. Extracurricular Activities/ Community Service (Optional)
9. Conclusion

**You need to create a draft of about 800-1000 WORDS**

**HOW TO CONSTRUCT YOUR SOP**

**To make this task easier for you, here are some questions, tips and guidelines that will help extract the right content from you.**

**Stage 1**

**Intellectual Origin Story**

Goal: To generate and organize the experiences that will make up the body of your statement of purpose

* 1. **What is the Statement of Purpose?**

Typically, graduate programs want to know four things in addition to seeing which of the five traits you possess:

* Why you're interested in your field
* Why you're qualified for graduate study in your field (*this is the most important part!*)
* What you'll contribute to your class
* Why the school is a good fit for you

In this section, we'll start laying the groundwork

* 1. **Intellectual Origin Story**

Graduate programs are interested in your experiences in your field of study. We call these experiences your **intellectual origin story** because they show how your interest and ability have grown over time. The origin story lays the foundation for your essay and also forms the crux of your SOP’s introduction.

* 1. **Components of a Story**

You're about to explain the most important events in your intellectual development. We've categorized these experiences to help you align your brainstorming with what schools want to see. You'll discuss:

* Catalysts: Experiences that sparked or confirmed your interest in your field.
* Academics: Experience in your field of study in an academic setting.
* Practical Experiences: Related to the curriculum
* Work: Experience in your field of study at work, if you've had a chance to work in it.
* Independent Learning: Experience in your field of study that you've pursued on your own time.
* Next Steps (essentially, your GOALS): Connecting your past experiences with your future as a graduate student and beyond.

**3) Limited Space**

There are at most four answer slots per category. Aim to fill all of them. Later, we'll prioritize these responses to include only the most important experiences in your essay. We will also help you identify the experiences that best showcase your traits, and we'll ask questions to help you expand your ideas.

**Stage 2**

**Catalyst**

\***Describe the experience(s) that sparked your interest in seriously pursuing this field.**

* ***Something from your personal experience that sparked your interest.***

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**Tips:** Try to avoid early childhood anecdotes, unless they are very unique and fundamental to your story— readers will assume that most people applying to this program were interested in the field when they were younger. Instead, you might focus on more recent moments that confirmed your commitment to the field.

* ***Something from your academic experience that sparked your interest.***

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Tips: An academic catalyst is a moment within an academic setting that sparked your interest in the field—this could include a class you took, a professor who inspired you, a group project, or research you conducted on your own. The important thing is that this moment inspired you to learn more about the field.

* ***Something from your work experience that sparked your interest.***

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**Tips:** Think about how your work experience has led you to this new stage in your journey. Consider whether there was a moment at work that made you want to learn more, shift your focus, or gain new skills in order to excel in your career.

**Academic**

\***List and describe the academic steps you have taken to grow your knowledge, in chronological order (e.g. relevant high-level coursework; research; conferences, mentorships, etc).**

* ***Your first academic step.***

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**Tips:** Include things like relevant high-level coursework, research, conferences, mentorships, etc.

* ***Your second academic step.***

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**Tips:** Include things like relevant high-level coursework, research, conferences, mentorships, etc.

* ***Your third academic step.***

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Tips: Include things like relevant high-level coursework, research, conferences, mentorships, etc.

* ***Your fourth academic step.***

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**Tips:** Include things like relevant high-level coursework, research, conferences, mentorships, etc.

**Stage 3**

**Practical Experiences**

**What relevant practical experiences have you had during or after your Bachelor’s degree?**

Please answer the following questions:

* ***Which projects did you undertake, what technical aspects were put to use, and what did you learn from them?***

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* ***Discuss all conferences, seminars, workshops you have attended or participated in? What did you learn?***

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* ***Have you prepared, presented or published any research papers? Give details***.

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* ***Discuss all your internships and industrial trainings (if any) in detail. Give details like where, what, when, how etc. What did you learn from each of them***?

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* ***Have you undertaken any independent research? If so, give details***.

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**Stage 4**

## **Work Experience**

**\*List and describe the professional steps you have taken to grow your knowledge, in chronological order (e.g. jobs held; professional development).**

* ***Your first work step***.

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Tips: You can include any work experience that helped inspire your decision to apply to graduate school, as well as any professional development experience. If you haven't entered the workforce, you can include internships and relevant volunteer experience here.

* ***Your second work step***.

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Tips: You can include any work experience that helped inspire your decision to apply to graduate school, as well as any professional development experience. If you haven't entered the workforce, you can include internships and relevant volunteer experience here.

* ***Your third work step***.

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Tips: You can include any work experience that helped inspire your decision to apply to graduate school, as well as any professional development experience. If you haven't entered the workforce, you can include internships and relevant volunteer experience here.

* ***Your fourth work step***.

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Tips: You can include any work experience that helped inspire your decision to apply to graduate school, as well as any professional development experience. If you haven't entered the workforce, you can include internships and relevant volunteer experience here.

## **Independent Learning**

\***List and describe any supplemental and/or independent learning related to your chosen field, in chronological order.**

***Your first independent learning step***

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Tips: This section is for any experience outside of the classroom or work environment. This could include independent research, mentorships, conferences, personal experiences that inspired you to learn more about this field, relevant hobbies, etc.

***Your second independent learning step***

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Tips: This section is for any experience outside of the classroom or work environment. This could include independent research, mentorships, conferences, personal experiences that inspired you to learn more about this field, relevant hobbies, etc.

***Your third independent learning step***

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Tips: This section is for any experience outside of the classroom or work environment. This could include independent research, mentorships, conferences, personal experiences that inspired you to learn more about this field, relevant hobbies, etc.

***Your fourth independent learning step***

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Tips: This section is for any experience outside of the classroom or work environment. This could include independent research, mentorships, conferences, personal experiences that inspired you to learn more about this field, relevant hobbies, etc.

**Stage 5**

**Why this course?**

* ***In 1-2 sentences, describe why you are prepared for this course of study, and what you hope to get out of the program.***

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**Tips:** Later in the module, we're going to use this answer as the basis for your thesis statement. So, think about the essential details that would convince a reader that you're prepared for this degree, and will benefit from the course of study you've chosen.

**Example:** An MBA with a marketing concentration will give me an edge over other creative people, who work in brand development. This degree will expose me to the business side of marketing, helping me better serve future clients and preparing me for a career as a marketing director.

\*Please answer all required questions and at least 3 total questions.

* ***What motivates you to pursue your degree?***

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**Tips:** Graduate study is rigorous, and readers want to know that you are highly motivated to pursue this degree. To prove this, show how the degree is essential to your goals.

**Example 1:** I am pursuing a law degree because I am passionate about prison reform. I want to become an advocate for incarcerated individuals, and am driven by my passion for social justice.

**Example 2:** I am pursuing an MBA because I am interested in consulting for a venture capital firm and would like a lucrative career so I can support my family.

* ***What do you plan to specialize in within your course of study?***

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**Tips:** You can keep this answer short. Just focus on the topics or specializations that most interest you and align with your professional goals.

**Example:** Within the field of computer science, I am most interested in cybernetics and applications of unsupervised machine learning.

* ***How would you summarize your research interest as a question, problem statement, or theme?***

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**Tips:** While your specialization will be very specific, this can be a broad question or statement within that field that encompasses your main curiosities

**Example:** With the rise of self-driving and connected cars, what steps should we take to ensure that these cars are safe from malicious actors?

* ***What are your research goals?***

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**Tips:** Think about both your short-term and long-term research goals. What is feasible for you to achieve during your graduate program? Then, dream big and think about the end-goal of your life's work of research.

**Examples:** In grad school, I hope to investigate the intersection of anaesthesiology and psychotherapy, looking at the potential uses of sodium pentothal to treat addiction and PTSD in conjunction with talk therapy. In the long-term, I want to develop innovative, compassionate treatments for individuals with PTSD, and bring these treatments into the mainstream.

## **Next Steps**

\***Describe why this degree is the next logical step in your intellectual and professional journey.**

***Your first reason why this degree is your next logical step***

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Tips: Getting a graduate degree takes a lot of time and effort. You've thought long and hard about this decision, and you might have expressed some aspects of it when you were talking about your ambitions. This section lets you write out your reasoning explicitly to make sure it's clear to admissions readers, and to you.

***Your second reason why this degree is your next logical step***

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Tips: Getting a graduate degree takes a lot of time and effort. You've thought long and hard about this decision, and you might have expressed some aspects of it when you were talking about your ambitions. This section lets you write out your reasoning explicitly to make sure it's clear to admissions readers, and to you.

**Stage 6**

**Goals**

**(Post-program short term and long term goals**)

* ***What are your goals immediately after graduation?***

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**Tips:** Think about what knowledge you hope to have after you graduate, and what you hope your next professional or academic step will be. Think about what job you would like to get after graduation, or the next degree you will pursue.

**Example:** After graduation, I hope to scale my family's organic grocery store into a national franchise.

* ***What do you hope to have achieved 5 years after earning your degree? How about 20 years?***

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**Tips:** Dream big! Imagine the day you retire, and think about what you will have achieved. Then, consider the steps you will take in order to achieve those goals.

**Example:** Five years after earning my degree, I hope to be doing my surgical residency at a hospital in the tri-state area. After twenty years as a cardiothoracic surgeon, I hope to have been at the forefront of advancements to the field and have a long track record of publications and successful surgeries.

* ***How will your values, skills, and traits impact your future classmates?***

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**Tips:** Think about your defining traits and the impact you have already contributed to your academic and professional communities. Imagine how you will carry these things with you into the future, and how your presence will enrich your classmates' experience.

**Example:** I enjoy collaborating with others, and I'm a good leader. I think I'll be an asset to group projects because I stay organized, am good at delegating based on team members' skills and preferences, and enjoy balancing details with big-picture thinking.

**Your Ambition**

**Goal**

***Define what you hope to study in graduate school, and why you want to study it.***

1. ***Why Include Ambition?***

Graduate programs want to understand your reasoning for applying. They want to know how this degree will help you reach your goals, and what those goals are. So, it's important to consider what you want to do in the future and why it's meaningful. Although you won't dwell on your ambitions in your essay, they will provide context for the rest of what you write.

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1. ***What you’ll do?***

In this section, you'll find a list of questions. Read them all, and begin reflecting on your reasons for applying and what you hope to achieve with your degree. You'll select at least 3 questions to answer. Some particularly important questions are required; work on these first, and then answer the optional questions that you find interesting.

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1. ***How much to write?***

Write at least 1-2 sentences for your answers, and remember to add a title! Don't worry if you don't answer every question. The more content you generate here, the more you'll have to choose from in later sections.

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**Stage 7**

**Why this University?**

**CONNECTION & AMBITIONS**

\*These questions will help you connect identify reasons you want to attend related to your ambitions.

### *What do you plan to specialize in within your course of study?*

E.g.: Within the field of computer science, I am most interested in cybernetics and applications of unsupervised machine learning.

* ***List at least 2-3 required classes that align with your academic interests.***

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Tips: On the department's home page, look up the curriculum for the degree, and reach course descriptions to determine which are most appealing to you.

* ***What other classes, clubs, or opportunities within this specialization does the school offer?***

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Tips: After looking at recent syllabi, you can do a search for "Student life," or "[your specialization] + clubs" to find additional opportunities offered by the department.

* ***List at least 2-3 supplementary courses that best align with your interests, goals and/or prior experience.***

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**Tips:** Look at electives within the department's curriculum, and determine which are of interest to you. If the department allows for interdisciplinary study, you may look at other related departments that appeal to you.

* ***Does the school offer unique or specialized coursework that is not typically offered in similar programs? How does this coursework directly align with your experiences and interests?***

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Tips: You can find this coursework by looking at the department's curriculum and syllabi.

* ***Which classes, faculty members, or other opportunities will help you address this interest?***

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**Tips:** Look up the department's faculty members, read their bios, and Google any who interest you. Make note of any faculty publications or research that aligns with your interests. You may also look into internships and other professional development opportunities.

* ***What additional research or hands-on opportunities does this program offer? How will these opportunities help you build your understanding of your research interest?***

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Tips: Most programs have a newsletter or blog that features student projects and research opportunities. You may look here or in the department's curriculum.

### *How would you summarize your research interest as a question, problem statement, or theme?*

E.g.: With the rise of self-driving and connected cars, what steps should we take to ensure that these cars are safe from malicious actors?

* ***Which classes, faculty members, or other opportunities will help you address this interest?***

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Tips: Look up the department's faculty members, read their bios, and Google any who interest you. Make note of any faculty publications or research that aligns with your interests. You may also look into internships and other professional development opportunities.

* ***What additional research or hands-on opportunities does this program offer? How will these opportunities help you build your understanding of your research interest?***

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Tips: Most programs have a newsletter or blog that features student projects and research opportunities. You may look here or in the department's curriculum.

### What are your goals immediately after graduation?

E.g.: After graduation, I hope to scale my family's organic grocery store into a national franchise.

* ***What is the typical career path of graduates from this program?***

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Tips: Most programs have a 'Career path' section to help you see the typical trajectory of a graduate. If not, you may look up notable alumni from the program and make note of any whose career path matches your own. Your goal here is to help assess your fit, as well as how you might stand out from other candidates.

### *What are your research goals?*

E.g.: In grad school, I hope to investigate the intersection of anaesthesiology and psychotherapy, looking at the potential uses of sodium pentothal to treat addiction and PTSD in conjunction with talk therapy. In the long-term, I want to develop innovative, compassionate treatments for individuals with PTSD, and bring these treatments into the mainstream.

* ***List 2-3 faculty members you are excited to work with and explain why.***

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Tips: Look into the faculty's publications, research, current projects, and bios. If any faculty are role models for you or have followed a path that you aspire to, make note of them.

* ***Will this program allow you to work closely with faculty? If so, how will this help you reach your academic goals?***

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Tips: Search for research and mentorship opportunities in the department homepage, and look at the department's blog or social media for any highlighted collaborations between faculty and students. Then, imagine how you would take advantage of this opportunity and apply it to your own research.

### *What do you hope to have achieved 5 years after earning your degree? How about 20 years?*

E.g.: Five years after earning my degree, I hope to be doing my surgical residency at a hospital in the tri-state area. After twenty years as a cardiothoracic surgeon, I hope to have been at the forefront of advancements to the field and have a long track record of publications and successful surgeries.

* ***What resources does the program offer to help you reach your long-term goals?***

Tips: Look into mentorship opportunities, networking opportunities, job placement rates of recent graduates.

## **CULTURE**

\*Next, let's discuss the school's culture. You'll need to learn what goes on there and think about how you'll contribute.

* ***How does this program foster networking opportunities with peers, grads, and professionals? How will you take advantage of this?***

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* ***Does the department have any traditions that seem exciting to you?***

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* ***What is the culture within the department? (i.e. competitive, collaborative, etc). How does this culture align with what you're hoping to get out of a program?***

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* ***How does the school differentiate itself in its marketing materials? What appeals to you about these unique factors?***

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* ***Research the typical class size and teaching style in the department. How do these factors align with the way you learn?***

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* ***What industry/line of work do grads from the school come from and go to? Is this atypical?***

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* ***How do you see yourself contributing to the department's culture, traditions, and classroom environment?***

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**Other Things to Consider**

**WHAT COLLEGE WANTS FROM YOU**

1. **Your Primary Goal?**

Graduate admissions are complex, and every program has its own way of weighing certain aspects of the application. There's no way to predict what thousands of admissions readers are looking for in your application.

Or is there?

The answer is simple. Throughout all of your application materials, you should have one main goal: \*To PROVE you will be SUCCESSFUL in grad school and beyond

*Make this your mantra!*

1. **How Programs Define you?**

Graduate programs want to be sure that:

* You will graduate
* You will perform well in your classes and in any research you do
* Your graduate experience will help you achieve your goals
* You'll have a positive impact on whatever you choose to do in the future

1. **Proving you’ll be successful?**

Of course, there's no way to know for sure what the future holds for anyone. **Instead, graduate programs look for key personality traits that many successful candidates share.**

**THE FIVE TRAITS ARE:**

* **Drive**
* **Intellectual Curiosity**
* **Initiative**
* **Contribution**
* **Diversity of Experience**

1. **How we’ll use the traits?**

The rest of the modules are designed to help you showcase your most important traits in the context of your experience. You don't have to obsess over the traits, because we've done the hard work for you. However, you will write stronger content if you understand these traits and keep them in mind.

**CONTRIBUTION**

* Applicants who contribute are always coming up with ideas to improve everything they touch. Then, they act on those ideas in a way that is noticeable by their peers.
* They can proudly say “I made this happen,” or “I made this better than it was before.”
* These applicants may hold leadership positions in their universities or work environments, and/or they may make substantial contributions to other communities.

**DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCE**

* Applicants with a diversity of experience have a background, upbringing, or other life circumstances that have fundamentally shaped how they see the world.
* These experiences could be cultural, ethnic, religious, geographic, socioeconomic, or any number of factors that contribute to their unique perspective.
* These experiences can also be related to an applicant’s professional or academic interests—i.e., taking atypical academic or professional paths on the way to this degree.

**DRIVE**

* Driven students push themselves to succeed no matter the odds.
* Driven students usually have confronted difficult situations and emerged stronger, wiser, and determined.
* They are confident in their ability to solve new challenges.

**INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY**

* Intellectually curious applicants can point to academic and/or professional examples of times when they sought more than just the required knowledge needed to meet a goal.
* These applicants will go above and beyond their coursework to gain a deeper understanding of the subjects and topics that interest them.
* They love finding unique connections between their areas of interest and formulating new ideas.

**INITIATIVE**

* Applicants who take initiative are not willing to accept the status quo, but instead aim to challenge it, do things to improve, and generate outcomes.
* They are proactive in finding solutions and putting them into action.

## **SUMMARY**

## **[The 5 Traits: Contribution, Drive, Intellectual Curiosity, Initiative Diversity of Experience]**

We suggest having one to three traits rated higher than the others – after all, everyone has their strengths. Be honest with yourself, and don’t worry about what other people would think. These traits will play a critical role in the content of your essays, and it’s important that they accurately reflect who you are.